May 13, 2024

James A. Steintrager, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

RE: (Systemwide Senate Review) Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H)

Dear Jim,

The UC Riverside Academic Senate Executive Council discussed the Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H) on April 22, 2024 along with the attached comments received by local committees responding to the task to review: Undergraduate Admissions and divisional faculty executive committees. All bodies engaged in vigorous discussion and are excerpted below.

The Executive Council had a lengthy discussion. Some members expressed that it is important for the UC to be engaged in honest deliberation around the proposal and not mask dislike of Ethnic Studies as an area in objections related to other issues. For instance, issues around workload necessary to implement state mandates have already been addressed but are still being brought up. Many members felt it would be beneficial to have Area H though concerns were raised regarding whether locally funded schools would be able to afford to offer it.

Council also discussed the apparent muddying of the discussion of areas in contrast to requirements. This point is also noted by the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions:

The proposed revision of SR 424 concerns the addition of “Subject Requirement h.” In contrast, the term “Area H” appears in the titles of UC documents on this topic. There is no Area H; the proposed revision would not add one. Requirement h is to be satisfied using subject areas A-G. Reference to Area H could complicate our attempts to communicate the regulation to potential applicants, their schools, and their parents. SR424 already makes careful distinction between courses and units. We might need to add a distinction between requirements and areas.

UA also discussed that the revision adds admission ‘requirement h.’ It states that at least one of the courses used to satisfy existing subject requirements a-g must be a course in Ethnic Studies. I include the content of UA’s memo herewith. Their discussion questioned why this should become a necessary UC admission criterion since AB 101 (2021) establishes that ethnic studies will become a high-school graduation requirement. A positive vote may be primarily a matter of managing good relations between UC and the State legislature. A negative vote risks signaling a lack of commitment to ethnic studies, despite the ethnicity components in our colleges’ breadth requirements. Ideally the ‘h’ admission requirement might allow us to raise the level of these college breadth requirement courses.
Five lines of reasoning were given for approving the revision. It addresses the Senate’s prior concerns. It offers ample flexibility without increasing the overall course or unit count. Ethnic studies courses are associated with improved academic success for some groups. A survey of California schools finds all but about one fifth already have courses or planned courses that satisfy requirement h as currently framed. Yet another revision seems unlikely to achieve substantive improvement.

Several concerns led to a negative vote. SR 424 could be seen as complicating the delicately negotiated political process leading to the State law. The systemwide Board on Admissions and Relations with Schools noted that some schools are struggling to meet AB101 by 2025-26. Low-resourced private and parochial schools could be most impacted. BOARS had also expressed concerns that the guidelines remove the autonomy of high schools to develop ethnic studies courses reflective of their communities.

The faculty Executive Committee of the School of Business was not supportive of Ethnic studies as an admission requirement to UCR. Per their comments, they assert that evidence in the proposal supports that taking an Ethnic studies class may help students in a variety of ways, including increase their likelihood of applying to college, but not that it is necessary for their ability to succeed in college. It does not seem appropriate to add a barrier for admission (for in-state, out-of-state or international students) without strong evidence that a lack of this will impinge students’ ability to succeed at UCR.

The faculty Executive Committee of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences expressed strong and enthusiastic support for the proposal. The CHASS FEC commented that the proposed amendment entails a non-additive requirement of ethnic studies in order to be admitted to the UC system. In other words, no additional courses are required. Instead, an existing course that fulfills requirements A-G would also need to fulfill the ethnic studies requirement. This is in line with AB-101, the California state requirement for graduating high school students to take an ethnic studies course by 2030.

The faculty Executive Committee of the School of Medicine expressed concern that making h a requirement could create a barrier to admission; and noted the following:

- some high schools in the state of CA currently do not have ethnic studies in their curriculum. It might be an obstacle for high schools to add this additional subject to their curriculum. They stated that this creates an additional barrier for a CA student to get accepted to a UC school and it seems counterintuitive.

The Committee offered these alternatives for including Ethnic Studies courses:

- switch one of the A-G requirements to ethnic studies.
- make ethnic studies a [first-year] requirement at the UC instead of adding the burden to CA high schools.
- It should be noted that it might not work with all majors – especially those impacted majors with strict course plans.
- make this program a part of UC scouts, which allows students to make up courses online that their high schools do not offer.

The Committee would like more discussion on:

- if the UC system plans to implement this requirement, how could we be certain that this does not impact students from high schools that cannot include ethnic studies in their curriculum?
• how could we be certain that this new requirement is not putting students from an area where high schools cannot implement this program at a disadvantage?

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this important proposal.

Sincerely yours,

Sang-Hee Lee
Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Monica Lin, Executive Director of the Academic Senate
    Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office
April 17, 2024

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
   Riverside Division

From: Peter M. Sadler, Chair
       Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Re: [Systemwide Review] Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H)

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions discussed the proposed revision of Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H) at its meeting on March 15, 2024. That meeting lacked the quorum needed for a vote. The subsequent call for an email vote netted only three responses, with two in favor and one opposed to the revised regulation.

The revision adds admission ‘requirement h.’ It states that at least one of the courses used to satisfy existing subject requirements a-g must be a course in Ethnic Studies. Our committee discussions questioned why this should become a necessary UC admission criterion since AB 101 (2021) establishes that ethnic studies will become a high-school graduation requirement. A positive vote may be primarily a matter of managing good relations between UC and the State legislature. A negative vote risks signaling a lack of commitment to ethnic studies, despite the ethnicity components in our colleges’ breadth requirements. Ideally the ‘h’ admission requirement might allow us to raise the level of these college breadth requirement courses.

Five lines of reasoning were given for approving the revision. It addresses the Senate’s prior concerns. It offers ample flexibility without increasing the overall course or unit count. Ethnic studies courses are associated with improved academic success for some groups. A survey of California schools finds all but about one fifth already have courses or planned courses that satisfy requirement h as currently framed. Yet another revision seems unlikely to achieve substantive improvement.

Several concerns led to a negative vote. SR 424 could be seen as complicating the delicately negotiated political process leading to the State law. The systemwide Board on Admissions and Relations with Schools noted that some schools are struggling to meet AB101 by 2025-26. Low-resource private and parochial schools could be most impacted. BOARS had also expressed concerns that the guidelines remove the autonomy of high schools to develop ethnic studies courses reflective of their communities.
Footnote:
The proposed revision of SR 424 concerns the addition of “Subject Requirement h.” In contrast, the term “Area H” appears in the titles of UC documents on this topic. There is no Area H; the proposed revision would not add one. Requirement h is to be satisfied using subject areas A-G. Reference to Area H could complicate our attempts to communicate the regulation to potential applicants, their schools, and their parents. SR424 already makes careful distinction between courses and units. We might need to add a distinction between requirements and areas.
February 26, 2024

To: Senate

From: School of Business Executive Committee

Re: Proposal: Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H)

The School of Business Executive Committee considered the proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H). We do not support Ethnic studies as an admission requirement to UCR. The evidence in the proposal supports that taking an Ethnic studies class may help students in a variety of ways, including increase their likelihood of applying to college, but not that it is necessary for their ability to succeed in college. It does not seem appropriate to add a barrier for admission (for in-state, out-of-state or international students) without strong evidence that a lack of this will impinge students’ ability to succeed at UCR.
April 11, 2024

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Chair
    Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair
      CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Proposal: Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H)

The CHASS Faculty Executive Committee (EC) at the University of California at Riverside has reviewed the Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H). As the Faculty EC of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, where the interdisciplinary department of Ethnic Studies is located, we strongly and enthusiastically endorse and support the proposed amendments. The proposed amendment entails a non-additive requirement of ethnic studies in order to be admitted to the UC system. In other words, no additional courses are required. Instead, an existing course that fulfills requirements A-G would also need to fulfill the ethnic studies requirement. This is in line with AB-101, the California state requirement for graduating high school students to take an ethnic studies course by 2030.

As described on the UCR CHASS website (chass.ucr.edu), “CHASS stands committed to social justice and supports our faculty whose rigorous and responsible scholarship refuses to shy away from acknowledging the enduring fact of inequality. In the face of competing claims to truth, the work of UCR faculty is driven by carefully ascertained evidence.” This proposed required ethnic studies course directly aligns with our College’s commitments to both academic freedom and social justice. It also aligns with UCR’s stated mission “to transform the lives of the diverse people of California, the nation, and the world through the discovery, communication, translation, application and preservation of knowledge - thereby enriching the state’s economic, social, cultural and environmental future.” That is because ethnic studies cultivates critical thinking, centers the perspectives and histories of marginalized peoples, and questions norms and uneven power relations.

In summary, the CHASS Faculty EC strongly supports the proposed Area H and encourages the adoption of the policy as written.
April 10, 2024

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine


Dear Sang-Hee,

The Committee reviewed the proposal for the Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H). Dr. Kaul introduced the proposal to the Committee regarding the addition of ethnic studies to UC’s required prerequisites for undergrad admission.

The Committee expressed concern that making this a requirement could create a barrier to admission. They noted the following:

• some high schools in the state of CA currently do not have ethnic studies in their curriculum. It might be an obstacle for high schools to add this additional subject to their curriculum. They stated that this creates an additional barrier for a CA student to get accepted to a UC school and it seems counterintuitive.

The Committee offered these alternatives for including Ethnic Studies courses:

• switch one of the A-G requirements to ethnic studies.
• make ethnic studies a freshman requirement at the UC instead of adding the burden to CA high schools. It should be noted that it might not work with all majors – especially those impacted majors with strict course plans.
• make this program a part of UC scouts, which allows students to make up courses online that their high schools do not offer.

The Committee would like more discussion on:

• if the UC system plans to implement this requirement, how could we be certain that this does not impact students from high schools that cannot include ethnic studies in their curriculum?
• how could we be certain that this new requirement is not putting students from an area where high schools cannot implement this program at a disadvantage?

Yours sincerely,

Marcus Kaul, PhD
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine
4/10/24

To: Sang-Hee Lee, Division Chair of the UCR Division of the Academic Senate and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

From: Katherine Meltzoff, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee


The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the [Systemwide Review] Proposal: Second Review of Proposed Senate Regulation 424.A.3 (Area H). Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

Our committee did not have any comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Katherine Meltzoff
Faculty Executive Committee Chair
School of Education
University of California, Riverside