

What we still know: Dean's Statement on SF State's Fiscal and Intellectual Health

After pouring over budget figures that I received only yesterday contradicting budget figures that the College, the Chancellor's office and others had seen for the past several years from the same official university sources, I must first state what I no longer know. With conflicting budgetary data, we no longer know definitively whether the College is receiving an unfair or a fair share of the Academic Affairs budget.

The first thing we still know from the experiences of the College, the students, colleagues across campus and the public media who have requested and received conflicting records is that the university at this moment is incapable of producing transparent, reliable and meaningful budgetary data to answer critical questions regarding its fiscal health and the relationship of its fiscal health to the operational tasks of implementing its mission, vision and strategic goals, particularly its value of equity.

What else do we still know?

- We know that the College of Ethnic Studies will be constrained to an allocation that does not truly constitute a budget, because a budget is a realistic financial plan to provide adequate revenues to address the services and products being required.
- We know that fully implementing this allocations means cutting all funding to the Cesar Chavez Institute, the college's primary support for faculty research, creative work and partnership projects with students and community; cutting all work study student funding; cutting core graduate classes making it impossible to earn a master's degree in Ethnic Studies, cutting all classes that would replace teaching faculty on sabbatical (unless the university violates contract and cancels these earned sabbaticals all together); defunding the Student Resource and Empowerment Center which provides advising and counseling to students; basically cutting any expenditures that are not directly funding the salaries of existing tenure track faculty member and permanent staff; and suspending for the next several years all future hires even to replace retired faculty or faculty recruited to teach at other institutions.
- In fact, we know that the allocation does not even provide enough funding to even pay the legally required salary of tenure track faculty members and permanent staff, guaranteeing the College an artificial deficit even before the College copies a single document, buys a single piece of equipment or funds a single piece of material to support a student or faculty member's work. Specifically, Academic Affairs has provided \$76,136, \$114,052, and \$275,096 *fewer dollars* per year respectively for the last three years than is required to pay the mandatory salaries, and this is the practice proposed for the future.

We know all of these unsupportive facts at a time when we still know that interest in Ethnic Studies as a primary major, secondary major, minor or the primary source of general education is growing. We know that in particular the Latino student body is growing at SF State, just as we will be forced to shrink Latina/Latino studies. We know that we make these cuts just as a Stanford based research studies has commended our partnership with the SF Unified School Districts as nothing less than amazing in how it increased the grade point average of students in the high school ethnic studies class that we helped design, improved their school going behavior, and improved their grades in other classes, especially STEM courses. We know that we do this just as the SF State institutional research team is providing evidence that students who take ethnic studies at SF State are more likely to

graduate than those who do not, and these results like the ones in the high school are true for students of color and white students. Finally, we know that we shrink the College of Ethnic Studies on the eve of receiving the Chancellor's soon to be historic report from his Task Force to Advance Ethnic Studies.

These are only a few of the things we still know in relationship to Ethnic Studies, and we hope that by making our case others on campus will make theirs. We in the College have focused only on our situation in the spirit of the famous masthead from the Freedom's Journal admonishing "We wish to plead our own case", meaning that we respect that all free people are only free when they plead their own case, and a free society advances on each pleading her or his own. Therefore, we do not make the claim that we are the only in this situation. We make our case hoping to empower our friends and colleagues to plead their own.

More directly, if it is true that all units in Academic Affairs are in the same proverbial boat, or even just most of them, then most or all are receiving initial allocations with built-in deficits. If they have built-in deficits and constitute all or most of Academic Affairs, it follows directly that Academic Affairs must be running a continuing deficit, a deficit probably of a magnitude that constitutes an existential threat to the fiscal and academic well being of arguably one of the Cal State's flagship campuses. This would make all of Academic Affairs, as the president put it, one of those "...programs, including colleges, that run annual deficits..." which must "adapt to a new budgetary discipline moving forward."

It is here that the College asserts lovingly that we are making this wake up call to the university with no venom or animus. We make this wake up call to determine whether, like the University of California at Berkeley recently discovered, we are sitting on a financial bubble about to burst and disrupt our university and its ability to serve our students. The College of Ethnic Studies remains steadfast in its commitment to work tirelessly with the whole of Academic Affairs and the campus to restore equity, or, in the case that all of Academic Affairs units are truly in the same situation, fiscal solvency and academic excellence for all. The first step in this work is clear, transparent budgetary data that demonstrates what is the actual case, followed by a campus wide consultation deploying the full intellectual powers of the range of shared governance to assure fiscal health that serves equitable and strategic deployment of those finances in the service of our students and our constituent communities.

Submitted respectfully in your service,

Kenneth P. Monteiro, Ph.D.

Dean of the Nation's First and Only College of Ethnic Studies @ SF State