

Practitioner's Essay

Femme Labor(ing) for Asian American Studies/Ethnic Studies:

Women of Color Faculty Reflect on the First Years of AB 1460 Implementation

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ABSTRACT

This practitioner essay highlights the work of three women of color scholars involved in the implementation of Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460), the recent state law mandating Ethnic Studies as a General Education requirement in the California State University system. We are guided by the political and embodied legacies of AB 1460 and arrive here, standing on the shoulders of student activists to document the ongoing activist work of Ethnic Studies. We come to this work and to this essay from an intentionally transdisciplinary place to reflect on implementing AB 1460 on our campus, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. Together, we discuss our praxis in building an interdisciplinary curriculum and amplifying the presence of Asian American Studies in the university, approving cross-listed course proposals, and securing resources to support Ethnic Studies faculty. In this process, we hold space for the emotional and femme of color labor, as well as the tensions and possibilities, that revealed themselves during the implementation of AB 1460.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in 1988, Lillian H. Jones chronicled the history, impact, and future of the Ethnic and Women's Studies (EWS) Department at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona):

Although new policies at our university require all classes in [General Education] to now have a “cross-cultural” and/or “cross-disciplinary” approach, the requirement of having completed an Ethnic and Women’s Studies class before graduation is still not likely to be implemented in the immediate future (1988, 10).

Jones was not far off in stating that an EWS graduation requirement would not happen in the immediate future. Fast forward to August 17, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460) requiring that starting in 2021, all students attending the California State University (CSU) system are required to take one three-unit Ethnic Studies course before graduation (Weber, 2020, Assembly Bill No. 1460). This General Education (GE) requirement is certainly a victory for the field of Ethnic Studies, the CSUs, and all who work in institutions that were initially made to not include faculty and students of color from working-class backgrounds. Institutional change has happened, and yet, we have yet to arrive at a place of communal and embodied celebration.

It took more than fifty years to have an Ethnic Studies graduation requirement at the CSU system, and even in the post-AB 1460 period, Ethnic Studies faculty at various campuses face profound institutional challenges. These challenges are largely bureaucratic, led by campus leaders with little or no knowledge that Ethnic Studies is a legitimate field with its own pedagogy, theories, methodologies, and production of knowledge. In addition, the development of Ethnic Studies at each CSU campus is not uniform as each sister campus has their own unique university and academic culture. Evelyn Hu-DeHart reminds us that:

Program definitions vary from campus to campus and change over time. The curriculum or course offerings are not uniform and do not conform to a prescribed pattern, although they generally fall within the broad categories of historical, sociological, and cultural (2001, 106).

At some campuses, Ethnic Studies was already visibly present as a college, department, or program. While in other campuses, Ethnic Studies and/or the specific area of studies such as African American Studies, Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, American Indian/Native American Studies, and Chicanx/Latinx Studies had to be built. The collection of writings in this issue of *AAPI Nexus* speaks to the challenges in implementing Area F and/or Ethnic Studies on our different campuses.

As three transdisciplinary-trained, femme-identified women of color scholars at Cal Poly Pomona, we represent the fields of Asian American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Cultural Studies, Disability Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Public Policy, and Urban Planning. We are also members of the Ethnic Studies Faculty Implementation Committee (ESFIC) at Cal Poly Pomona, one of the committees established in our university to oversee the implementation of AB 1460. Our individual cross-disciplinary trainings, the collaboration we created across disciplinary and department boundaries, and our lived experiences as women and femme of color faculty have shaped how AB 1460 has been implemented and translated at our university.

Drawing from Asian American Studies and intersectional feminist histories and frameworks, we discuss the trajectory of the implementation of AB 1460 at Cal Poly Pomona. We reflect on the neoliberal pressures of the university that led to what we refer to as “reluctant” gatekeeping roles in the implementation process. Through these frameworks, we provide insight and meditations about the successes and challenges of creating cross-listed courses for the GE requirement and the expansion of an Asian American Studies curriculum across the university. We consider how our experiences can contribute to ongoing conversations about how the different modes of labor of femme-identified women of color faculty need to be recognized, uplifted, and valued as we are fundamental to institutional change in academia. Rooted in our experiences, we discuss the possibilities and alternatives of how to defend and grow Ethnic Studies while resisting the neoliberal university.

ETHNIC STUDIES AT CAL POLY POMONA

Cal Poly Pomona is one of three polytechnic universities in the CSU system. Our student community is primarily from the Inland Empire area of Southern California, which includes the eastern areas of Los Angeles County, the southwestern areas of San Bernardino County, and the northwestern areas of Riverside County. In 2020, our student population was forty-nine percent Latine, twenty-one percent Asian American, fifteen percent White, and three percent Black.¹ Cal Poly Pomona is also designated as a Hispanic- Serving Institution (HSI) and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). As a polytechnic university, many students are interested in technical fields that legibly translate to post-college careers such as engineering, architecture, and business. As exemplified

by our motto of “learn by doing,” there is an emphasis on the professionalization of our students to apply their knowledge and obtain technical skills through their coursework. Though the majority of our students attend Cal Poly Pomona for these technical fields, the social sciences, arts, and humanities are vital in providing students a well-rounded “poly” education. Broadening and enhancing the polytechnic experience, the EWS Department historically has, and continues to, provide critical thinking and engagement on how race, class, gender, sexuality, and disabilities permeate people’s daily lives. The EWS Department also centers how students can be both active knowledge producers and agents of change.

The historic student-led Ethnic Studies Movement of the 1960s led to the growth of Ethnic Studies departments, programs, and classes across university campuses. In 1968, the Cal Poly Pomona administration responded to pressure from faculty and students by creating centers for Black and Chicano/American Indian Studies. These centers were foundational to the establishment of the Ethnic Studies Department in 1973 within the School of Arts—now the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences (CLASS) (Jones, 1988). Reflecting the scholarly growth of Women’s Studies in academia, in 1982 the Ethnic Studies Department changed its name to its current one: Ethnic and Women’s Studies Department. In 1994, the B.A. in Gender, Ethnicity, and Multicultural Studies (GEMS) was approved and was added to Cal Poly Pomona’s Academic Master Plan (Academic Programs Committee, 1994). Soon after, EWS moved out of the School of Arts to the School of Education, now the College of Education and Integrated Studies (CEIS). In 2021, after long and contentious discussions on the growth and direction of the department, EWS faculty voted to return to CLASS.

Today, the EWS Department provides two programs where students can either earn a B.A. in GEMS or a B.A. in a GEMS Pre-Credential. Students in other majors interested in complementing their degrees can minor in African American Studies, Native American Studies, Asian Pacific Islander Studies, Chicana/o Latina/o Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Multicultural Leadership Studies. Throughout the years, the number of EWS faculty and lecturers has fluctuated. Current faculty, which includes a sizeable number of lecturers, have backgrounds in Ethnic Studies, American Studies, Cultural Studies, Urban Studies and Planning, and Education.

At Cal Poly Pomona, the Ethnic Studies GE requirement, also known as Area F, has primarily been implemented through new

cross-listed courses with EWS.² The Ethnic Studies graduation requirement and the campus's Area F cross-listing practices have led to breaking silos between departments, but they have also made it clear that the administration and some non-EWS departments had their own mis/understandings and plans in implementing Area F. For some administrators, Area F was synonymous with campus diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. For some non-EWS Departments and their faculty, it was an opportunity to increase their full-time equivalencies (FTEs). For the EWS Department, while we did have a brief celebration with the passing of AB 1460, we quickly entered into a bureaucratic dance with campus leaders and faculty dancing to a different tune.

The Academic Senate established ESFIC to ensure that faculty were part of the implementation process and to review proposals for cross-listing Area F courses. This committee was critical to ensuring the integrity of the cross-listed courses, but we soon found that it would involve a tremendous amount of labor from us and other committee members—especially our emotional labor.³ When identified in academia (Bellas, 1999), the emotional labor that is expected of women and people of color has been defined as “the invisible institutional ‘care work,’ including listening and problem solving” (Green, 2015, n.p.). Women of color faculty, especially those in Asian American Studies, have been inconsistently recognized for their mentorship and care work for their peers and students who are also women of color (Vö, 2012). It is this gendered and racialized labor we carried with us into our committee work for ESFIC.

Reaching out to colleagues at other sister CSUs to ask how their campuses were implementing Area F was helpful and supportive, but it also made some of us who were doing the work to implement it uncomfortable, especially when discussions turned to cross-listing courses. We quickly recognized that our cross-listing policy had to be updated. For some of the authors in this article, learning that other CSU campuses did *not* cross-list led to frustration and a questioning of our own work. From those not familiar with the committee's work, we were seen as accomplices to the administration's implementation plans (this was far from the truth). And ultimately, we felt alone.

Yet, we learned that Cal Poly Pomona is not the only campus that had cross-listed Area F courses. Reviewing university catalogs of all twenty-three CSU campuses, we found five other campuses with cross-listing practices: CSU Monterey Bay, East Bay, Fresno, Chico, and Los Angeles. Among these campuses, CSU Monterey Bay has the

highest number, with all twenty-one Area F courses as cross-listed. Cal Poly Pomona has a total of twenty-three Area F courses, with eighteen cross-listed. East Bay, Fresno, Chico, and Los Angeles have two to four cross-listed Area F courses. Other CSUs such as Dominguez Hills, Northridge, Sacramento, and San José, to name a few, do not cross-list and have kept Area F courses in their respective departments or programs. While the historical development of Ethnic Studies requires a deeper examination that is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to underscore and acknowledge that institutional histories, the role of campus leaders, and resources (or lack of) have a part in the development of Ethnic Studies at CSU and elsewhere.

While the sheer number of classes that were developed and approved for Area F at Cal Poly Pomona can be seen as a marker of success, we also shed light on how these numbers reflect the pressures of working within a neoliberal university. As public institutions have adopted capitalist principles that champion free market logics in our policies and practices, neoliberalism has contributed to the commodification of higher education in which it is seen as an investment and product. This challenges the mission of the university as a place of intellectual growth and learning. It has impacted the governance of universities, our pedagogy and scholarship, and our relationships with each other and students. Neoliberal demands in the university define our worth according to whether we meet specific metrics that measure and quantify our productivity as scholars, such as with peer-reviewed publications and grants, and as teachers, such as with student enrollment rates and graduation timelines. We are also measured according to the degree of service we engage in, such as by our involvement in multiple administrative committees and our outputs from that service. Thus, for ESFIC, these neoliberal demands placed value on the number of courses we would ultimately approve. Yet, simply presenting the number of courses that were approved by ESFIC in a short span of time makes invisible the emotional labor of primarily junior faculty women of color who worked to ensure a solid Ethnic Studies foundation.

We know that it is critical in our analysis of Area F that we discuss not only the outcomes of the implementation process, but that we also accentuate the invisible emotional labor and taxation experienced by us and our fellow committee members that led to these outcomes. As faculty committed to resisting the neoliberal university in our change-making, we enter into this conversation about Area F and its implementation as deeply feeling educators. We have been taught to

enter the university sterile; we have learned that the academy has no place for mess, for our affective leaks. There is no room for our softness in, as bell hooks (1984; 1995) writes, the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. For a comprehensive analysis of our labor, both visible and invisible in ESFIC, we advocate that policy implementation and affective impact should not be disentangled. Here, we seek to resist academia's reinforcement of Cartesian dualism; we resist the teaching that emotions and the body that produces them are feminized and subordinate to the masculinized mind, to intellect (Ahmed, 2004; Cvetkovich, 1992; Spelman, 1989).

In the following sections, we discuss our experiences with the process of cross-listing and the challenges, possibilities, and unexpected outcomes that emerged. Though faculty had little to no say in this process, there were ways that we pushed back through our labor in ESFIC. We discuss nurturing spaces for women of color faculty to build community with one another beyond the limits of university bureaucracy. It is here that we want to make visible our, and our colleagues', various labors.

THE FRAMEWORKS GUIDING OUR PRAXIS

While our committee work is part of the university bureaucracy, we position our work in ESFIC as inspired by, and as a necessary part of, the history of activism that founded Ethnic Studies. In 1968, the Third World Liberation Front, a cross-racial alliance of African American, Asian American, Latine, and Native American student activists at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University, SFSU), initiated the largest student strike in history leading to the establishment of the College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU as well as departments and programs across other CSUs and universities. Student activists demanded more representation among the student body and faculty; however, the Ethnic Studies movement was primarily a movement demanding substantive changes in our institutions. It was and continues to be a movement of liberation and resistance that questions the traditional principles of knowledge production and pedagogical practices that marginalized working-class communities of color, of which many of our CSU students were and continue to be a part of. The movement called for the centering of the lived experiences of students of color and their communities, both local and global, in their education. Ethnic Studies recognizes them as critical creators and owners of their knowledge and histories. Praxis is a defining part of

Ethnic Studies as these principles are meant to be embodied by faculty and students to continuously challenge and transform the university through their scholarship, teaching, and service.

Ethnic Studies continues to be a field that centers the original activist principles of liberation, community, anti-racism, and anti-imperialism. It is also a field that necessitates a transdisciplinary lens. As Lisa Lowe (1998) argues, interdisciplinary scholarship, especially within Ethnic Studies and Gender Studies, is a critical intervention in academia. It has the possibility to disrupt and challenge Eurocentric, masculine paradigms of knowledge production that have often othered, exoticized, marginalized, and exploited non-White racialized groups as subjugated objects for research. Lowe further argues that Asian American Studies in particular helps to further interdisciplinary studies as the history of Asian American racial formation highlights the contradictions of citizenship and nation-state building that necessitates an intersectional analysis of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Linda Trinh Võ (2012) further traces how Asian American Studies has evolved since its founding and argues how it must evolve to reflect the lived experiences of different generations and waves of Asian migration to and within the United States. This situates Asian American Studies as an important transdisciplinary field that synthesizes different disciplines and the lived experiences of different Asian American communities. From these exchanges, Asian American Studies has created new holistic approaches to knowledge production that are unique as its own field.

However, the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies, and specifically Asian American Studies, in the university has also been critiqued for shifting away from the original activist principles. Since the 1990s, Asian American scholars—including Suchen Cheng (2005; 2010), Lisa Lowe (1998), Gary Okihiro (2014), and Glenn Omatsu (2016)—have noted the paradox of institutionalizing Asian American Studies as being a critical part of the transformation of the university, but that the scholars in that field also must now work within the neoliberal demands of the university. Antonia Darder further argues that universities have adopted neoliberal multiculturalism practices which emphasize:

Public recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance of multicultural subjects, [but] based on an ethos of self-reliance, individualism, and competition, while simultaneously (and conveniently) undermining discourses and social practices that call for collective social action and fundamental structural change (2012, 47).

Because of ongoing pressures to defund Ethnic Studies in universities and the simultaneous embrace of multicultural neoliberalism, faculty of color may also feel pressure to conform to these neoliberal pressures for not just personal and professional survival, but also the survival of their programs, departments, and colleges. It is within this context of the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies and the implementation of AB 1460 that Asian American Studies faculty must contend with today.

As women of color educators in Ethnic Studies, we are also acutely aware of the normalization of white masculinity in the neoliberal university; we feel its affective impacts on our bodyminds.⁴ The history of activist organizing for Ethnic Studies and AB 1460 concretizes the ways in which we are influenced by what scholar Molly Benitez names our “affects of labor”: “the visceral and active consequences of our working environments that metabolize through our bodies and produce our identities, relationships, and communities” (2021, n.p.). There is kinship between affect and our experiences as women and femme-identified community of color and the spaces we are expected to hold in the university. We are expected to, in the midst of our academic labor, also negotiate emotional labor (Lawless, 2017). This gendered and racialized imbalance regulates and taxes our experiences.

But there is also no space for, or valuing of, our affect. It is antithetical to the ways that public administration and policymaking in academia are presented as “gender neutral” spaces and practices. Feminist critiques of these fields show how masculinity is a dominant frame that shapes the policies and practices of our institutions and remains an invisible norm that structures our behavior, our decision to assimilate or to resist (Hawkesworth, 1994; Stivers, 1993). As Camila Stivers (1993) argues, the masculine culture in public administration theory and practice is systemic, contributing to and perpetuating power imbalances. Decision-making in administrative practices has historically valued a regressive, normative form of cultural masculinity that rewards decisiveness, based on expressed behaviors of rationality and dominance. In fact, since the 1990s, it is the neoliberalization of public administration that has normalized the rhetoric and expectations of effective public leaders to emulate white masculine traits of CEOs and business executives. And this has carried over to our universities.

It is not lost on us that on our campus, women of color—some of whom are queer and/or disabled—are the primary members of ESFIC.⁵ We are involved in the labor—both academic and emotional—of

ensuring that our cross-listed courses are approved in alignment with Ethnic Studies and AB 1460. And yet, emotional labor is not something that is structurally discussed; as femme-identified women of color, we have been taught that in place of softness and affect, our academic practice and experience must center rigor in all its reified masculinized and racist tendencies. ⁶ Brandi Lawless acknowledges this tension:

Emotional labor is an inherent part of teaching and research and should be central to discussions on academic labor and the neoliberalization of the university. While caring and emotion are a part of academic work, they are not a part of academic professionalism and training (2017, 86).

Here, Lawless also documents the increased level of service and emotional labor that women of color take on. How can we discuss this labor in relation to Area F when affect and affective labor are invisibilized in academia? How can we discuss femme labor when we still experience sexism in the university?

Guided by the work of feminists and queer scholars in the burgeoning field of Critical Femininities Studies, we shift this masculinist and racist rhetoric by acknowledging that softness *is* the root of our labor in the university. Critical Femininities Studies scholar Andi Schwartz defines softness as “a combination of hyperfemininity, emotionality, relationality, and vulnerability” (2020, 2). Here, softness, and the affective in general, is positioned as a political tool, as a form of resistance. It is something that we intentionally recenter in our work. It is a feminist and queer act to bring emotion and softness into a conversation about policy and administration, and yet, it is perhaps the most authentically activist thing we can do.

OUR EMOTIONAL LABOR AS RELUCTANT GATEKEEPERS IN THE UNIVERSITY

As one of the six CSUs that encourages other departments outside of an Ethnic Studies Department to cross-list Area F courses, the GE Area F Coordinator for the campus (Shayda Kafai), the EWS Department Chair (Jocelyn Pacleb), and the members of ESFIC (all the authors) are positioned as the reluctant gatekeepers of Area F. The tensions that live in this affective place are also rooted in the history of Ethnic Studies. As women of color who teach within this discipline, gatekeeping feels distinctly colonial and oppressive; it is violent and diverges from the relationship-based culture that we live and teach

within. Our goal as a collective in ESFIC is to create a generative space for Ethnic Studies scholars to synthesize their home disciplines within the pedagogies and praxes of Ethnic Studies. And yet, in this role, we are overburdened with emotional labor.

Because of the neoliberal pressures of the university, the cross-listing structure created added invisible labor and equity concerns for Ethnic Studies faculty—especially within the EWS Department. The implementation of AB 1460 at Cal Poly Pomona set up the possibility for faculty with limited to no prior connection with Ethnic Studies to propose courses. As representatives of Ethnic Studies in our university, we had to educate colleagues about the field and how core principles of the field were translated in AB 1460. There was repeated messaging that Ethnic Studies was not a course to promote DEI in a traditional field, nor a course that simply had “race” or “ethnicity” in the title. Not all courses that included Asian Americans, as well as the other historically racialized groups, honored the genealogy of the field nor interrogated community experiences of racialized groups in a way that questioned traditional academic assumptions of knowledge production and methods of scholarship and teaching. Thus, ESFIC had to evaluate both the course and the instructors: we needed to assess if the cross-listed course was aligned with at least three of the five core competencies as stated in the new law *and* if the instructor had the training and understanding of Ethnic Studies. As a result of this dual labor, our service in ESFIC led to our emotional and psychological burnout. We had to not simply defend an academic field, but one that was a critical extension of our academic identity and belonging in the institution. Additionally, as a community involved with Area F implementation, we moved aware that we are not an autonomous community; we are swallowed by the neoliberal university’s bureaucracy and all that it entails.

In Shayda’s role as GE Area F Coordinator, for example, she was tasked with holding consultation meetings with faculty throughout the university. Often, these meetings are the first places where faculty learn about whether they qualify to teach an Ethnic Studies course; we pause here to emphasize that even the word “qualify” carries with it emotions that have an affective impact on the bodymind. Our process for determining qualification is multi-pronged. Faculty submit a cover letter, C.V., and a statement of support from their department chair. This packet is then shared with the members of ESFIC, and we use a detailed rubric to determine eligibility. This rubric assesses the faculty’s

education; scholarly research, professional experience, and creative activities; teaching experience; community engagement and service; and lived experience. The rubric was one of the first documents that ESFIC collaboratively created within the first semester of our formation, and it continues to be a living document subject to edits and improvements. In creating this rubric, ESFIC members were intentional that the goal was to identify how the faculty was engaged with the discipline and not be another neoliberal measure of the faculty's productivity. As we discussed the wording of the rubric, we considered the constraints of the university on our work and that faculty would possibly be speaking to different disciplines as interdisciplinary scholars. It is a mindful and "care-full" process and we arrive to our decisions as a collective; and yet, as a community of color, as predominately a community of women of color, and as intersectional feminists, we do not conceptually align with the label of "gatekeepers" that is placed upon us.⁷

As a young junior faculty of color, Shayda was consistently overwhelmed with anxiety and anticipation when she entered into Zoom meetings with colleagues who either did not have sufficient Ethnic Studies training or expertise, or when colleagues would insist on conflating Ethnic Studies with DEI work. Whether it was their intention or not, the space was a highly charged one and demanded affective labor. Placed in the role of gatekeeper, she was expected to ingest the frustration: *"If I don't qualify now, how can I qualify in the future?" "I have already gone to some conferences. Will I qualify if I go to more?" "Doesn't professional development count?"*

Emotional labor is also involved throughout the process of approving, providing feedback, and supporting faculty with uploading the Expanded Course Outline (ECO), and there is an acutely embodied/enminded affective impact here.⁸ It is time, energy, and exhaustion; it is the resonance of people-pleasing that Shayda was taught as a first generation daughter of Middle Eastern immigrants; it is the anticipation of mothering, "nurturance, altruism, and self-abnegation" (Bellas, 1999, 98) that is expected of her—expected of all of us, women, women of color, and people of color—within the academy. Shayda has felt a profound expectation of needing to approve and appease upon entry. She navigated recognizing and celebrating each faculty member's time and labor in creating proposals even if they, ultimately, did not qualify to teach an Area F course. Part of

this included holding space for their disappointment and exasperation, for their affective leaks that held the most weight, that took up the most space.

Laureen Hom, a junior faculty in the Political Science Department, proposed an Asian American politics class. The cross-listing structure provided an opportunity to introduce classes in a way that reflected her interdisciplinary training in Asian American Studies, Urban Studies, and Public Policy. The development and teaching of this new Asian American Studies course had both institutional and personal impact. It was one of three new Asian American Studies cross-listed GE courses, the largest increase in courses at Cal Poly Pomona focused on the four historically racialized groups.⁹ The course helped to expand the Asian American Studies curriculum and expose more students to Asian American Studies. But, for Laureen, it also provided the possibilities for a space of community building with faculty and students where she could continue to grow as an Ethnic Studies scholar despite being housed in another department.

While Laureen was developing a course that was within her expertise, there was still tremendous labor and uncertainty involved with navigating the university bureaucracy. She did not face any challenges with the other ESFIC members in ensuring that the course met the GE learning objectives, nor were there any concerns about her background as an Ethnic Studies scholar, specifically as an Asian Americanist. But as a junior faculty still gaining familiarity with the university bureaucracy and processes, Laureen had to quickly learn how to create an ECO and the specific expectations of a GE course proposal. She also had to be mindful to present the proposal in a way that was legible to the Academic Senate and other committees that were a part of the approval process and had no Ethnic Studies training. Even after ESFIC approval, Laureen still held lingering concerns about the impact of the course on the labor of others. How does this approval process add an additional burden to not simply herself, but to other ESFIC members—especially those sitting on the Academic Senate, such as Jocelyn, who have to continue to be stewards for these courses as it went through the different stages of the university bureaucracy? While the course has now been officially approved, we still must be reluctant gatekeepers because of the cross-listing structure. As the course is in the Political Science Department, what future emotional and intellectual labor will be involved to ensure that the course stays true to Asian American Studies, especially if there are

times when Laureen cannot be the instructor? This is also an ongoing question for the other seventeen cross-listed Area F courses in other departments.

DREAMING AFFECTIVE DREAMS IN SUPPORT OF ETHNIC STUDIES FACULTY

Just as much as we document the challenges of implementing AB 1460 at Cal Poly Pomona, our article also centers the necessity of dreaming our way forward. As writers, we invite you to pause here, to breathe deeply, and to reflect on the affective responses inherent in the movement building work that is Ethnic Studies—and, most integrally, in the spark needed to get us here. We think of abolitionist community lawyer, organizer, and educator Talila A. Lewis who wrote that the gift of the most marginalized is their “dream work”:

Indeed, dreaming is among the most difficult and brave kinds of advocacy work . . . When we create space for ourselves and others to dream, we embody recurring hope, active love, critical resistance, and radical change. We are reminded that those who came before us dreamed of that which no one thought could exist—that their dreams are the reasons that we are now living the “impossible” (2018, n.p.).

The dream work of student organizers and faculty at SFSU created pathways of imagining: what would it feel like to learn the histories of communities of color in the classroom? What would it feel like to, as Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner writes, not be a “guest in someone else’s house” (1994, 335) as a student of color in academia? Theirs was a gut desire for coalition building and for decolonizing knowledge, and so much of these dreaming practices as well as the protests that they resulted in were rooted in affect.¹⁰ As scholars and educators, we have been engaging in this dream work practice during our work with Area F.

Our work with other colleagues in ESFIC has helped nurture the possibilities to expand a transdisciplinary university culture that supports Ethnic Studies. In our first year as a committee, we were informed the university was supporting cluster hire efforts as a part of the implementation of AB 1460 and was tasked to develop a report to the Provost. We did not create a generic report about cluster hires; we centered our work to push for the resources needed for the retention and success of Ethnic Studies faculty, especially if they were hired outside of the EWS Department. Through these efforts, we were able to

lay the groundwork for institutional change in the university, including the establishment of the Office of Interdisciplinary Ethnic Studies (OIES). This cross-departmental community building was and continues to be a critical component in the ongoing coalition building to support and defend Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly Pomona.

We also have been seeking pathways forward that resist the neoliberal academy and normative practices based in white supremacy and masculinity. We embody and practice interventions by, for example, beginning all of our ESFIC meetings with bodymind check-ins and a sharing of access needs. Recognizing the need for a space of femme mentorship and community building, Shayda also organized a women of color reading group which is not just an intellectual space, but also a space of joy and collective care for us. As women of color alert to the resistance to softness—the framing of softness as antithetical to professionalism—we intentionally insert our bodyminds into the process. This intentionality has everything to do with slowness, with slowness as rebellion, as political action, in resistance to neoliberal pressures that force us to move quickly with limited care and thought to our personal and community well-being.¹¹

MOVING FORWARD: PAUSING AND SLOWING DOWN

Like many CSUs, Cal Poly Pomona had to quickly implement AB 1460 with little to no input from faculty in Ethnic Studies departments or programs. Area F was implemented with such great speed in the first three years that it has now left us with unintended consequences. In her role as the EWS Department Chair, Jocelyn reviewed data on enrollment and FTEs for both EWS and for departments with cross-listed Area F courses. As a pedagogical practice and to ensure students develop strong engagement with course materials, enrollment in EWS courses is capped at forty students. In the second and third years of AB 1460, Jocelyn saw an alarming increase in the enrollment cap of Area F courses in non-EWS departments. One department had a cap enrollment that was over one hundred. The high enrollment in non-EWS departments raises concerns whether students are receiving a strong foundation in Ethnic Studies. High enrollments for non-EWS departments also translate to high FTEs. In a campus that uses FTEs as one factor in the consideration of future new tenure-track hires, we were concerned that cross-listing Area F courses was becoming an FTE-generating opportunity.

Our goal as a committee, now, is to return to slowness. We pushed back and expressed our concerns to the Office of Academic

Programs and the Academic Senate. Heading into the fourth year of implementation, we have officially paused reviewing and approving new Area F cross-listed courses. ESFIC will instead focus on assessing the current approved cross-listed courses. We approach this new phase recognizing and mindful of the emotional labor this shift may bring for us and our colleagues. We will continue our meeting practices that hold space for ourselves and our colleagues, including accessibility and bodymind check-ins. We are mindful that many faculty who teach the Area F cross-listed courses are junior and adjunct faculty of color, and that the idea of an additional assessment of their courses can contribute to more feelings of insecurity among those already the most precarious in the university. They too are subject to the pressures from the administration to meet neoliberal demands of course enrollment that may impact how they teach their courses. As we develop these new rubrics and protocols, we will continue to honor the intellectual integrity of Ethnic Studies while also moving away from punitive practices that characterize the masculine culture of the neoliberal university. The assessment will provide support for Ethnic Studies faculty through the OIES and help us to further navigate the necessary conversations about the FTE inequities with the administration. Through activist practices of softness and slowness, we hope that our work will continue to nurture generative spaces of community as we move forward to rectify the unexpected consequences that have occurred.

Slowing down processes has been a critical part of the history of Ethnic Studies activism both inside and outside the university. We know that “by slowing down—to listen and read what others have to say, to expand our experiences by getting out of offices and classrooms—we can do our best scholarship, teaching, and mentoring. We learn by living” (Mountz et al., 2015, 1247). We seek to return to this place of pace, of thoughtful and intentional collaboration. By slowing down collectively, we can resist the neoliberal pressures rendering invisible the work of femme-identified and women of color scholars in transforming university culture and structures. We also send the message that our successes in implementing AB 1460 are not purely based on the number of new cross-listed courses and other metrics. AB 1460 brought the possibilities of expanding and nurturing Ethnic Studies in our universities. By slowing down, we can recenter our role as teacher-scholars and become more than solely in service to the university bureaucracy. We can reclaim our intellectual joy and build community that brings us back to our roots in Ethnic Studies.

NOTES

1. We use the term *Latine* in this article to hold space for individuals of all gender identities who have Latin American heritage. Language has power and can change. Thus, we recognize that the conversations within the community about creating an inclusive group identity will continue to occur.
2. A cross-listed course is a single course that is offered collaboratively through more than one department. At Cal Poly Pomona, the collaborating departments must consult regularly about the course (faculty assignments, evaluation, scheduling, etc.) and the department or program that is funding the course receives the FTEs.
3. Emotional labor was coined by Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983), and while it originally was used to identify the additional labor of women in the service industry, it has since been applied to other sectors of life and work.
4. *Bodymind* is a term coined by Mad Studies scholar Margaret Price (2015) and used by critical disability studies scholar Sami Schalk (2018). They argue that the body and the mind are not separate entities, that in fact, they reciprocally inform one another.
5. As of academic year 2022-23, our ten-member committee was comprised of people of color; nine of our ten committee members identified as women of color.
6. Anne Cvetkovich (1992) explains that not only does the university amplify Cartesian dualism, but sexism and cis-heteropatriarchy rigidly connect femininity with emotion and sentimentality, traits that are actively viewed as weaknesses.
7. Disability Justice activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018) uses the word “care-full” to delineate a process that is intentionally full of consideration and care.
8. Performance artist and scholar Petra Kupperts (2014) crafted “embodied/enminded” as a way to speak to the ways that situations and feelings impact both our bodies and our minds.
9. Among the approved cross-listed Area F courses, three were Asian American Studies, two in Latina/o Studies, and three in African American Studies. Prior to AB 1460, GE included three Asian American Studies, three Latina/o Studies, two African American Studies, and two Native American Studies courses. GE courses on Asian Americans have doubled in the first three years of AB 1460.
10. The focus on affect, what Ann Cvetkovich calls the “affective turn” and the creation of Affect Studies, was informed by the writing of Black and Latinx/Chicanx feminists like Audre Lorde, Cherríe Moraga, and Gloria Anzaldúa, but more “attention for the affective complexity of the lives of BIPOC people [is needed]” (Berlant et al., 2022).
11. Scholar-activist Tricia Hersey (2022) guides us in our centering of slowness. She writes about the racialized sleep gap, and the role of sleep as a modality of resistance against white supremacy and capitalism.

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