

Practitioner's Essay

Navigating Hostile Terrains, Building Across Difference:

AB 1460 and the SJSU Ethnic Studies Collaborative

Yvonne Y. Kwan, Soma de Bourbon, and Christopher Cox

ABSTRACT

Situated with the passage of California Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460), this practitioner paper discusses how faculty at San José State University (SJSU) have built coalitional networks to respond to pressures from the neoliberal university for a quick, but not necessarily Ethnic Studies-expertise-informed, implementation. Unlike campuses that had more robust standalone Ethnic Studies departments, SJSU did not have equal footing across all the different units: African American Studies (AFAM) and Chican@ Studies (CCS) have departmental status, but tenure-line faculty density for both are disproportionately low compared to other departments in the College of Social Sciences (COSS). Additionally, Asian American Studies (AAS) and Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) exist as programs housed in the Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, with AAS as a minor program and NAIS as a nascent program. To address how we worked together to implement AB 1460, fulfill the need to offer CSU General Education (GE) Area F courses, and build capacity across differences, we address three main points: (1) the promises and pitfalls of GE in a neoliberal university system, (2) strategies for coalition alliance between the programs of AAS and NAIS, and (3) opportunities for growth and expansion.

INTRODUCTION

Asian American Studies (AAS) was one of the original Ethnic Studies (ES) cognate fields founded at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Third World Liberation Front, and the anti-war movement in the late 1960s. Guided by core tenets rooted in community service and solidarity with other oppressed “Third World” peoples, activists and agitators at San José State University (SJSU), then College, fought alongside peers at San Francisco State College (now University) and University of California, Berkeley for an autonomous AAS program. The Progressive Asian American Coalition (PAAC), under the leadership of SJSU student Dan Kubo, strategized with members of Associated Students (including Roy Hirabayashi, Steve Takakuwa, James Lee, Matsuo Furuyama, Steve Wong, and Hisashi Takeuchi) and other Asian American organizations on campus. PAAC served to build student interest by “making noise” and drumming up “good trouble,” while members of Associated Students worked with university faculty and administrators, including Dr. Kichung Kim (English), Dean of Students Dr. Paul Sakamoto, and Ombudsperson Mike Honda, to help institutionalize AAS.

A proposal for the bachelor’s degree in AAS was submitted in Winter 1970, but it was later rejected.¹ Refusing to give up, the writers re-strategized to submit an AAS minor degree proposal that would be later approved in Spring 1970. With this, the AAS Program officially launched in Fall 1970; for the next decade or so, AAS would be staffed primarily with lecturer faculty and coordinated by student workers until tenure-track hires were made. Its first would be Dr. Gregory Yee Mark, who would later leave SJSU and ultimately retire as an Emeritus Professor of Asian American Studies at Sacramento State. Since its founding, the tenure density in AAS, as well as the other ES units on campus—including African American Studies (AFAM), Chican@ Studies (CCS), and Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS)—has remained low, and faculty attrition has been high due to structural challenges, including but not limited to high cost of living in San José and disproportionate service burden of minority faculty.

Historically, ES fields have posed a fundamental challenge to dominant epistemological and methodological paradigms of traditional academic disciplines. While ES can be a liberatory space for students, community organizers, and its other practitioners, it has also been a space of agitation and contestation—which are often antithetical to the priorities of administration. This can be seen by the

longitudinal systematic disinvestment and underinvestment of AAS. This is evidenced by the 1975 student protests against budget cuts and takeover of then-SJSU President J.H. Bunzel's Office, the 1979 eviction of AAS from Barracks 9 into a smaller office location, the 1987 proposed consolidation of all ES programs into one department, and the 2012 restructuring of the AAS program from the Department of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, which later merged with Sociology and became the Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences (SISS)—AAS's current home. Despite herculean efforts by Drs. Hien Duc Do, Alex Yamato, and Wendy Ng to garner administrative support for the program and grow AAS into a major and a standalone department, AAS did not experience linear progress, but instead a pattern of "cyclical progress and cyclical regression"—wherein regression was often more prominent than progress. Now, AAS continues to be a minor program housed in SISS along with the programs of Sociology; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS); and NAIS, a nascent program with one new faculty member and no active courses as of Fall 2023. In Fall 2024, AAS will begin to accept its first students majoring in Asian American Studies (BA). This, in large, is due to the momentum garnered by Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460) and the hires in AAS made ahead of the bill's implementation.

In this practitioner essay, we situate the passage of AB 1460 within the neoliberal university as we address how ES faculty built coalitional networks across the ES disciplines to advocate for and implement the California State University (CSU) ES bill. Unlike campuses that had more robust standalone ES departments, SJSU's do not have equal footing across all the different units. AFAM and CCS have departmental status, but their tenure-line faculty density are disproportionately lower than that of other departments in the College of Social Sciences (COSS). And recall, AAS and NAIS exist as programs in SISS. As evidence of the lack of institutional support for ES prior to the passage of AB 1460, in Spring 2020, there were only four tenured and seven tenure-track faculty across all the ES units. Today, there are five tenured and seven tenure-track, a net gain of one tenure-line faculty member. Given this outlook, to address how we worked together across differences to implement AB 1460, fulfill the need to offer CSU General Education (GE) Area F courses, and build capacity across difference, we address three main points: (1) the promises and pitfalls of GE in a neoliberal university system, (2) strategies for coalition alliance between the programs of AAS and NAIS, and (3) opportunities for growth and expansion.

PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF GE SERVICE IN THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

In the mid-1970s, inaugural AAS tenure-track professor Dr. Gregory Yee Mark and AAS lecturer and former acting program coordinator Jiro Saito shepherded the curricular approval of AAS to fulfill the state requirement for American history and institutions—classes we still teach today that satisfy CSU GE Area D (lower-division Social Sciences) and American Institutions. Shortly after, bureaucratic procedures changed such that programs and departments would be funded based on neoliberal metrics such as enrollment; so strategically, the AAS program, along with the other ES departments, began offering many sections of GE courses.² Over time, however, the funding schema became centralized by college. Nonetheless, teaching resources for AAS were already rooted in fulfilling large numbers of GE courses and service to the university—thus, thwarting possibilities of expansion into a major or more robust program without concerted administrative support.³

This support largely would not come until after the passage of AB 1460 and the disbursement of the requisite state funds associated with the bill. The passage of 1460, however, was fraught. When the CSU Chancellor's Office (CO) ignored the 2016 CSU Task Force on ES recommendations of institutionalizing an ES graduation requirement via an Executive Order, California State Assemblymember Shirley Weber decided to write AB 1460 to supersede the CO's resistance. Soon after, ES faculty and students, along with the California Faculty Association, would advocate for its passage. While many campuses lacked sufficient structural support to fulfill the law's requirements, we recognized that without the law, a CSU-wide ES requirement would remain a pipe dream due to ignorance and neoliberal value judgments about ES as a field that does not have high yield market value or direct pipeline into job security and the middle class.

At SJSU, a Sense of the Senate (SOS) Resolution was published on August 8, 2019, ahead of the passage of AB 1460. The resolution, titled "Opposing AB-1460 while Supporting ES Programs at San José State University," perfectly encapsulates the contradictions that exist simultaneously in a neoliberal university: opposing 1460 while claiming to support ES. The SOS states that 1460 "intervenes inappropriately with the development of curricula which is the purview of faculty." While faculty control is not necessarily neoliberal, many "faculty," especially those who serve on the Academic Senate, were either antagonistic of or misunderstood the purpose of an ES graduation requirement. Despite

its establishment over fifty years ago, ES's goals of anti-colonialism and anti-racism still do not align well with that of a neoliberal institution that values profit and "scientific" accolade over social critique—an opinion held by many scholars and administrators from traditional disciplines. Furthermore, the resolution claimed that SJSU already supported ES, citing an upper division multicultural/diversity requirement that could be offered by any field of study—not necessarily ES. Lastly, the Academic Senate never extended an invitation to meet with ES faculty as a collective to discuss potential collaborations or consultations prior to publishing their resolution.

Such oversight, or as some might see as benign neglect or blatant disrespect, continued well after AB 1460's passage. SJSU's Academic Senate actively opposed the bill, but the university administration charged the same body to spearhead the implementation of the impending requirement after it was signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in August 2020. Simultaneously, conversations about implementation ensued between the CSU CO, CSU Statewide Academic Senate, and CSU Council on Ethnic Studies (CSUCES). As the co-authors of this essay served as general members on the CSUCES and caucus members of their respective cognate ES caucuses, we found that university implementation processes were superseding ES faculty expertise and input. The first coalitional fight across all the ES units came prior to the establishment of GE Area F by the CSU CO and CSU Board of Trustees in November 2020. In early October 2020, the Chair of the SJSU Academic Senate created a meeting invitation about the ES GE requirement—even though the Ethnic Studies Collaborative (ESC) 1460 Implementation Group was actively resisting such terminology as the law only stipulated that one ES course be a graduation requirement, not lower-division GE. In the following excerpt, we can see how these conversations were had in an email from Yvonne Kwan to the then-Academic Senate Chair:

To clarify, based on the information I have received from the CSUCES, the AB 1460 ES requirement is not determined to be a GE requirement, so the administration's calling it so is causing some confusion and misinformation. Per the law, neither the CO nor the Statewide/SJSU Academic Senate are allowed to make these unilateral decisions. Moreover, statewide, ES faculty and the CSUCES are fighting against such narratives. So, in the true spirit of collaboration, the CSUCES encourages all parties to use the appropriate terminology: AB 1460 ES Graduation Requirement.

Also, we look forward to working with the Academic Senate about the AB 1460 ES Graduation Requirement, but as other CSU campuses have done, the CSUCES would like to see the [SJSU] Academic Senate work with ES faculty first—the experts in the field—before engaging in greater dialogue with faculty who do not have expertise in our field. Many of the ES faculty are wondering why we have been marginalized from the planning and why we aren't asked to help with developing a creative approach that honors the law.

Later that October, the SJSU Senate Chair of Curriculum and Research reached out to faculty campuswide. To colleges that do not house ES, it stated, “Although we would not teach these courses, these courses could have an impact on our curriculum.” Such sentiments would lead to questions like, “Why can't we make an Engineering class fit the ES requirement?” “I'm a Person of Color. Why can't I teach ES?” “Why can't we just crosslist? I teach about people of color in my class.” The audacity and assumptions associated with such questions made it clear that fellow non-ES faculty and administrators did not respect or understand that ES requires training and is a field of expertise. They conflated identity politics with the field instead of truly seeking to understand that a systematic analysis of power, systems, and race undergird the discipline.

Ultimately, the fight for a general graduation requirement was lost in November 2020 after the CO directive for Area F was published—but not all hope was lost given that this gave ES faculty a chance to unite to put forth an implementation plan that would be led by faculty experts who would ensure that only ES courses would be approved as Area F courses. With advocacy and pressure on the administration, a GE Area F Review Panel (GRP) led by ES faculty was created to write the GE Learning Outcomes and course vetting procedures. However, in line with the systemic underinvestment and support of ES in the past, there were no tenured faculty who could serve on the GRP, so three tenure-track (including Soma de Bourbon) and one lecturer faculty volunteered to serve and represent their respective ES cognate fields. The first two GE Area F courses were created by AAS, and once the process was codified, it was shared with CCS and AFAM to ensure a smooth approval process through the college and university curriculum committees. As of Fall 2023, NAIS is undergoing curriculum review. SJSU has yet to offer any NAIS courses, but we expect the first NAIS Area F to be available in Fall 2024. Given

the complex history of NAIS at SJSU, the next section will address how NAIS and AAS ES faculty came together to ensure that a bona fide ES-based NAIS program would be developed at SJSU.

FIGHTING FOR NAIS AT SJSU: AAS AND NAIS COALITIONS

From the 1970s to December 2022, SJSU had a Native American Studies minor housed in and taught by the Department of Anthropology. Despite decades-long efforts by NAIS scholars like de Bourbon to move the minor out of Anthropology or to create an ES-centered NAIS minor, efforts were thwarted by questions from often the same well-meaning, ill-informed colleagues from departments across campus who did not understand that the core tenets of NAIS were rooted in Native sovereignty, or about Anthropology's problematic colonized relationship with "studying" Native people (Ramirez 2007; War Jack 2019). Like that of the other ES disciplines, the work of creating NAIS was seen as part of a fight against traditional academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and history that had been doing research on Native people and extracting resources from Native communities (Deloria 1999; Ramirez 2007; Simpson 2007; Tuck 2009, 2010; Tuck and Yang 2014a, 2014b; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Wolfe 1999). Vine Deloria Jr. (1969), one of the founders of American Indian Studies, argued that Indian people should reject the work of social scientists who continue to collect knowledge about Native people without ever working for or with Native people. This is why it was problematic that of the courses that would count towards SJSU's then minor in Native American Studies, eight were in the Department of Anthropology, including courses such as "Bioarchaeology" and "Historical Archeology," and eight of the courses were from a variety of departments across campus. Of the sixteen, only one course was offered by an ES unit.

Discussions about the contradictions embedded in the Native American (Anthropology) minor were oftentimes contentious. They were particularly prominent when the SJSU Ethnic Studies Collaborative was created by the College of Social Sciences in Spring 2019—before the passage of AB 1460. In its founding, the ESC was envisioned by then-Dean Walt Jacobs and then-ESC Director and CCS professor Dr. Magdalena Barrera (now Vice Provost at SJSU) as a codified group that would leverage faculty strengths to lead new research and mentorship initiatives. As ES-affiliated faculty and students along with cocurricular partners with student affinity centers (including Chicana/Latina Student Success Center, MOSAIC Cross Cultural

Center, and UndocuSpartan Student Resource Center) gathered to identify priorities, the issue of the Native American Studies minor came to the fore. Given that de Bourbon was a then lecturer in Sociology, AAS, and WGSS, she formed coalitional alignments with AAS to advocate for a bona fide autonomous NAIS program that would not be housed in Anthropology. This gained momentum in Fall 2019 when Kwan was appointed as Director of the ESC, despite being a third-year assistant professor, because there were so few tenure-line faculty in ES.

A little over a year after ESC's founding and in the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, the charge for 1460 implementation would change the nature of the ESC, setting in motion a need for continued strategic coalitional development across all the ES units—but especially between NAIS and AAS, given their structural marginalization with non-departmental status. With AB 1460's passage, Kwan and de Bourbon would also come to serve as SJSU representatives on the CSUCES; from there, they formed the ESC 1460 Implementation Core, inviting other active members in AFAM and CCS to join with hopes that ES faculty would maintain control of curriculum decisions through the GE Area F GRP.⁴ While on the CSUCES, de Bourbon and Kwan also found that NAIS and AAS programs across CSU also shared coalitional alignments, as seen through parallel struggles of statewide marginalization.

While SJSU ES faculty were fighting to ensure that AB 1460's directives would be implemented in alignment with ES faculty experts' input, they were also navigating tenure line searches for ES hires in Fall 2020. That fall, Kwan served on a search committee that would yield two Ethnic Studies tenure-track assistant professors (specific ES cognate field was to be determined by the top candidates). Offers were ultimately made to two assistant professors in Asian American Studies. Having been a long-time lecturer, de Bourbon had just been hired onto the tenure-track, and so served as a volunteer, non-voting advisory member on a search committee for a senior search for NAIS. Unfortunately, this was a search that was destined for failure due to administrative mismanagement. While all the ES departments and programs, as well as then-Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Kathleen Wong(Lau),⁵ supported an autonomous NAIS program or department, we encountered resistance from the Dean of the College who refused to identify a home department for the line.

Working with SJSU Provost Vincent Del Casino, de Bourbon and Kwan organized to have Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy (California State

Polytechnic University, Humboldt) and Dr. Joely Proudfit (California State University, San Marcos) provide guidance and discuss with our campus how to build a strong NAIS program. They would also consult with administrators how to best conduct a senior search in NAIS. Dr. Craig Stone (California State University, Long Beach) also joined the panel at the Provost's invitation, making for a robust group of experts to lead a discussion on building a place-based, autonomous NAIS program or department. Drs. Baldy, Proudfit, and Stone were also collaborators and allies with Kwan on the CSU-wide AAS Caucus. A virtual panel was held in December 2020 attended by over one hundred people. Unfortunately, the panelists were verbally attacked in the chat repeatedly by anti-Native faculty members from the Anthropology Department, with no intervention made by the moderators from the Provost's Office.

When the senior search launched, the ESC struggled to get the administration to agree that the hire would be placed with one of the ES departments or an interdisciplinary department like SISS. Despite explaining the implications stemming from AB 1460 and stipulations that only ES course prefixes could satisfy the graduation requirement, administrators did not heed our suggestions. Ultimately, the search failed. It was not until well after the passage of AB 1460 and two college deans later that we finally created an autonomous NAIS program—housed in SISS with the other interdisciplinary programs, as initially suggested.

Currently, AAS and NAIS continue to work together with the other ES cognates in the ESC. In Fall 2023, NAIS scholar Dr. Kerri Malloy transferred his line from the Department of Humanities into SISS to develop NAIS Area F and program courses. In alignment with the democratic transfer of leadership from CCS (under Barrera) to AAS (under Kwan) and then AFAM (under Boyce), Malloy now directs and leads the ESC as a representative of NAIS. Because de Bourbon's line lies in Sociology, despite her disciplinary expertise in NAIS, she does not expect to represent the NAIS program or want SOCI prefix courses taught by her to be considered for the Area F requirement as this creates a slippery slope for other disciplines and prefixes to demand the same consideration. Ultimately, we are all proud of our concerted strategies for maintaining autonomy in the implementation of Area F and the growth of our individual programs that were made possible through coalitional alignments afforded by the funding and intellectual clarity through AB 1460.

CONTINUED OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Capacity Building: CSUCES and the Development of the CSU-Wide AAS Caucus

While the fight for AB 1460 has been rife with disciplinary politics, it provided a seed for campus-specific and CSU-wide power building. Despite neoliberalization of the university along with years of stagnation and benign neglect, ES faculty have leveraged AB 1460 to strategize across the CSUs—and within their campuses—to reclaim autonomous spaces and invent new possibilities. The CSUCES provided a space and opportunity for ES units in the twenty-three-campus system to be less fractured and siloed. While there were times of conflict and disagreement, there was also an established space for dialogue around issues of implementation, especially about the CO's track record of approved non-ES community college courses as an equivalence for Area F and the University of California's parallel fight for a statewide ES requirement. Moreover, the CSUCES gave ES programs across the CSUs an ability to only organize into caucuses that offer a critical space for networking and problem solving within and across caucuses. Kwan and SJSU AAS were only able to be effective allies given what they were able to learn from colleagues in the CSU-wide NAIS caucus.

Moreover, through the leadership of senior AAS scholars like Drs. Gina Masequesmay, Barbara Kim, Jocelyn Pacleb, Tracy Buenavista, Mai-Nhung Le, ChorSwang Ngin, and Timothy Fong, Kwan was able to help establish a CSU-wide AAS/APIDA Caucus. No matter the rank or title, many members have come together to listen to each other's struggles and strategize steps moving forward. Early caucus meetings revolved primarily around implementation strategies, but they have also morphed into spaces of mentorship and collaboration. As a caucus, we have presented in collaborative panels at the Association for Asian American Studies, invited one another to speak about curriculum and research at our respective institutions, and laughed and cried together when sharing the trials, tribulations, and joys of being CSU ES faculty. Moreover, this Special Issue of *AAPI Nexus* is also a testament to all the direct work of the caucus and the related advocacy that has propelled efforts to provide CSU students, and the greater public, with disciplinary knowledge and language to understand social critique around issues of sovereignty, settler colonialism, racism, and power. None of this would have been possible without AB 1460.

Programming and Curriculum Development

When AB 1460 first went into effect in Fall 2021, Kwan learned through CSU AAS Caucus meetings that each campus was provided a base allocation of \$300,000, with additional amounts provided to campuses based on full-time equivalent students (FTES) and the percentage of Ethnic Studies courses offered (CSU Coded Memo B 2021-02 plus attachments). For 2021-22, SJSU was allocated \$812,000. In October 2021, Kwan inquired with then-ESC Director Dr. Travis Boyce, then-COSS Dean Walt Jacobs, and Provost Vincent Del Casino about such funding because administrators had failed to communicate this information to the ES units. In November 2021, we submitted funding proposals but received no follow-up until the following semester. Then, in November 2022, the Provost shared a memo on AB 1460 Fund Distribution that would supersede each unit's original recommendations and would include hidden costs like a \$115,000 charge for reducing lower-division Area F courses to lower course caps of forty to thirty-five for pedagogical reasons approved by the Academic Senate. From January to September 2023, budget discussions had still yet to be settled despite the respective ES chairs' and coordinators' efforts in working with three different COSS deans: Walt Jacobs, Heather Latimer, and Anne Marie Todd.

Funding discussions around AB 1460 have been fraught. But nonetheless, ES faculty pushed hard as a collective to ensure that funds were properly used to support the implementation of AB 1460. In times of budget shortfalls, there have been suspicions of foul play and a lack of transparency, but in addition to asking for clarity and audits, we nonetheless forge forward to prioritize the fulfillment of Area F requirements. While other campuses have utilized strategies of cross-listing, SJSU has held strong against this strategy to ensure ES units have control over faculty assignments and the course content and pedagogy associated with Area F courses. While this has yet to happen, for non-ES departments and individuals who are qualified and interested in developing and teaching new Area F courses, our respective ES units are willing to buy out their teaching assignment to have the faculty teach under our prefix. Moreover, that respective ES unit would also get the respective FTES. If non-ES appointed faculty are truly invested in teaching ES (and not just the funds or FTES associated with Area F), then this model should be amenable to all involved. As of Fall 2023, SJSU is offering forty-one Area F courses: eleven from AAS, fourteen from AFAM, and sixteen from CCS. Because of larger

SISS departmental dynamics and the desire to have an in-person program, AAS only offers one online course while the other units have at least nine. While AAS has five tenure-line faculty, on par with CCS and three more than AFAM, AAS has not been able to offer more Area F classes due the need to also provide other GE classes in Area D and S.

Per AB 1460, state funds are allocated for fulfilling Area F requirements. However, this includes—but is not limited to—paying for salaries associated with teaching Area F sections, as insisted upon by SJSU administration. Thus, to address the diverse needs of each unit and provide a foundation for sustained growth, the ESC has requested that a portion of AB 1460 funds be used to meet individual programmatic needs and those of the collaborative as our stability and growth also ensures our university’s ability to fulfill the statewide mandate. With our advocacy, the 2021-22 funds were supposed to be distributed as follows: \$400,000 to the ESC and \$100,000 to each respective ES unit to be expended on Area F-related matters by Spring 2024. But given that we have yet to receive a full disbursement of the funds, and with constantly changing budget directives and procedures, our budget analysts are still working with the college and the university to fully acquire these funds. Nonetheless, each unit has been able to access some funds to support GE assessment, program retreats, curriculum development, faculty search expenses, and programming—ensuring that each unit can sustain the demands and interests generated by AB 1460.

Program Growth and Continued Impact

In April 2023, AAS, under the leadership of Kwan, coordinated a successful reunion event with over 180 attendees to host a retrospective that would bring together the founders of Asian American Studies at SJSU—as well as other significant Asian American figures associated with SJSU across the past five decades—to discuss the significance of AAS and AB 1460. In addition to commendations and recognitions from Congress, the California State Assembly, and the City of San José, AAS established the first-ever SJSU Asian American Studies Alumni Association under the leadership of alumni including La Donna Yumori-Kaku, former California Assemblymember Paul Fong, Vickie Taketa, and Carolyn Morimoto. This momentum is reflective of the tremendous growth AAS has experienced: from one minor in Fall 2020, to over forty in Spring 2023.

All this was largely due to the energy afforded by discussions around AB 1460 as well as strategizing, organizing, and outreach

efforts of the AAS faculty. Such efforts, too, stem from the community building made possible through the program retreats funded by AB 1460. During the Fall 2022 and Summer 2023 faculty retreats, AAS tenure-line faculty and the SISS department chair were able to have focused time to not only reflect on the past, but also plan for future growth. In these reflections, AAS found that the faculty want AAS to be a home where alumni can return to and foster generations of mentorship and community building/networking. As AAS has learned from our alumni, the immediate issues facing our communities can shift here and there, but there is a core critique against racial injustice and dominant power structures that unites us all. SJSU and AAS should be a place where people feel empowered and drawn to return to their roots.

Many alumni have noted that they love SJSU—not because of the institution, but because it allowed students, faculty, and staff to come together in community. AAS wants the institution to be a place where students and alumni can develop a stronger bond and connection: students can come to study, make friends, join movements, and become changemakers alongside their faculty. A core mission of the AAS faculty is to ensure that we uplift communities and “serve the people”—a founding tenet of Asian American Studies (Ishizuka 2016). In building this core tenet into our Area F, as well as Area D lower-division course offerings, we can provide students a solid foundation to do good in the world: not only as a minor or possible majors, but students may be forever impacted by just taking one to two of our classes. Area F has allowed us to plant a seed of positive social change that can continue to grow and develop well after a requirement is completed—this was the heart and the purpose of AB 1460.

Notably, as efforts have aligned with the spirit and intent of AB 1460, Nina Chuang—former SJSU Associated Students President, current field representative of California Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, and former AAS minor—helped pen and pass a Sense of the Senate Resolution (passed Spring 2023) that would institutionalize the Day of Remembrance and recognize the role that SJSU played in the incarceration of people of Japanese descent during World War II. Moreover, Tida Ngov, a student in Bioengineering and minor in Biology, was part of the first class to fulfill the AB 1460 requirements. After taking the AAS Area F course on “Introduction to Asian American Studies,” they would go on to become an AAS minor and a Real-World Exposure & Advocacy in Community Health (REACH) program intern in

Summer 2023 at Asian Health Services (AHS) in Oakland. In addition to receiving direct clinical experiences, Ngov conducted research on health client/user feedback on anti-Black racism and services offered by AHS. Their culminating experience presentation demonstrated a critical understanding of how racism and stereotypes affect health care access and treatment.

Kayla Le, a major in Forensic Science (Biology concentration), was also part of the first class of AB 1460 students at SJSU. After taking several AAS courses and declaring it their minor, Le would go on to not only serve as a Community Organizer at the Center for Asian Pacific Islander Student Empowerment (CAPISE) and Research Assistant at the Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Minoritized People Mental Health Lab (BIPOC – MPMH), but also a 2023 Summer Community Organizer for Lavender Phoenix (formerly APIENC), a grassroots organization that builds power with and for trans and queer Asian and Pacific Islander people. According to Le, “[O]ne of the main benefits [of AAS], especially as an Asian American person, is getting to understand my own history and learning about local histories that I had never heard of before, even though I have grown up in San José my entire life. Being able to understand the historical issues that have impacted and continue to impact the [Asian Pacific Islander] community has given me space to learn how to grow and heal as an Asian American navigating my own identity.” While AAS has been serving the SJSU community since 1970, AB 1460 afforded us greater opportunities for growth and development that we never had before.

CONCLUSION

While there continue to be challenges associated with funding distribution and the staffing of AB 1460 classes, it was because of AB 1460 that we at SJSU and the CSU-wide system have been able to come together as field experts and practitioners to build a sustainable community of care across universities and fields. There may be differences in approach and context, but AB 1460 was a door that opened for many of us whom have long been subjected to the benign neglect of the neoliberal university. To date, because of demands brought on by AB 1460, AAS has hired two tenure-track faculty and one full-time lecturer; CCS has hired two tenure-track faculty; AFAM has hired two tenure-track faculty; and NAIS has had one tenure-track faculty line transfer. Pending negotiations with campus administration, each unit is expected to hire one additional tenure-line faculty member to start in Fall 2024. For

the first time in almost fifty-five years, AAS will accept its first class of AAS majors in Fall 2024. And within the next five to ten years, AAS is also slated to become a standalone department. Growth is not linear, and we expect the momentum to ebb and flow; but with the funding, as well as curricular and programmatic opportunities afforded to us by AB 1460, the AAS Program will continue to build coalitions with CCS, AFAM, and especially NAIS to ensure that we actualize the dreams for each of our units and honor AAS's core tenet of serving the people—our fellow Spartans and beyond.

NOTES

1. No records of the original rationale for rejection of the 1970 AAS major proposal have been found.
2. Jessica Whyte (2019, 19) describes neoliberalism as "...an amoral economic ideology that subordinates all values to an economic rationality." It promotes a market-based approach to social organizations.
3. With a broader goal of combatting inequities rooted in structural racism and social inequities, ES research and pedagogies often focus on outcomes that are not easily measured in financial terms, as compared to more lucrative majors and fields like those in STEM. Thus, the requisite monetary support necessary for program growth did not manifest. Baseline operations were functioning only so that AAS could provide GE courses for students to fulfill their requirements and expedite graduation speed and improve graduation rates.
4. Around this time, in Fall 2020, Dr. Travis Boyce was hired to chair AFAM, so Kwan continued to lead efforts on AB 1460 implementation as Dr. Boyce acclimated to a new system and learned the ins and outs of being a co-director of the ESC. He took over completely in Spring 2021 while Kwan continued to support behind the scenes, especially with budget discussion.
5. Prior to AB 1460, during de Bourbon's first years as a lecturer at SJSU, Dr. Kathleen Wong(Lau) was hired as SJSU's first Chief Diversity Office (CDO) because of a hate crime committed against an African American student by his white roommates in Fall 2013 (Kaplan 2013; Martinez 2013). A coalition of Black students, faculty, staff, and their allies were able to leverage the publicity from the hate crime to force the university to (1) back out of the plan it had almost pushed through to downsize African American Studies from a department to a program, (2) open a Black student success center, (3) start the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and (4) hire the first CDO. Wong(Lau) previously worked at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) with Native faculty and students, and came to SJSU wanting to support Native faculty, staff, and particularly students. When then-students Joey Montoya and Mirium Mosqueda wanted to revive the Native American Student

Organization (NASO) at SJSU, Wong(Lau) gave them her complete support. As the advisor to NASO, de Bourbon first met Wong(Lau) at a NASO event where they discussed the oddity of an NAIS minor in Anthropology, and Wong(Lau) was one hundred percent in support of moving the minor out of the department. Wong(Lau) fought hard, but for her efforts was verbally attacked by professors in the Anthropology Department and told by her superiors to back off.

REFERENCES

- California State University. 2016. "CSU Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies." ethnicstudiesreport.pdf (calstate.edu).
- Deloria, Vine Jr. 1969. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: Macmillan Company.
- Kaplan, Tracey. 2013. "San José State students accused of tormenting black roommate are charged with hate crimes." *The Mercury News*, 20 November. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/1622F16A0B797830>.
- Michael Martinez. "San José State students charged with hate crime against black roommate." *CNN*, 22 November. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/21/justice/san-jose-state-racial-bullying/index.html>.
- Ramirez, Renya K. 2007. *Native Hubs*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- San José State Academic Senate. 2019. *SS-F19-1 Sense of the Senate Resolution, Opposing AB-1460 while Supporting Ethnic Studies Programs at San José State University*. California: San José State University.
- Simpson, Audra. 2007. "On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, 'Voice' and Colonial Citizenship." *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue* 2007: 67–80.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Tuck, Eve. 2009. "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities." *Harvard Educational Review* 79: 409–27.
- . 2010. "Breaking up with Deleuze: Desire and Valuing the Irreconcilable." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 23: 635–50.
- Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. 2014a. "R-Words: Refusing Research." Pp. 223–48 in *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities*, eds. Django Paris and Maisha T. Winn. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publication, Inc.
- . 2014b. "Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20: 811–18.
- War Jack, LaNada. 2019. "Native Americans and the Third World Strike at UC Berkeley." *Ethnic Studies Review* 42(2): 32–39.
- Wolfe, Patrick. 1999. *Settler Colonialism*. London: A&C Black.
- Whyte, Jessica. 2019. "The invisible hand of Friedrich Hayek." *Political Theory* 47(2): 156–184.

YVONNE Y. KWAN is an associate professor of and program coordinator for Asian American Studies at San José State University (SJSU). Kwan has served as Director of the Ethnic Studies Collaborative at SJSU, leading efforts in the implementation of the California State University (CSU) Ethnic Studies Graduation (AB 1460) Requirement. Kwan currently leads the CSU-wide Asian American Studies Caucus and serves as a representative on the statewide-CSU Council on Ethnic Studies. In 2021, Kwan was lead organizer of the Southeast Asian American Studies Conference. Her research explores how social trauma though not verbalized or articulated, for children of survivors, they can still develop the capacity to both identify with and experience the pain of previous generations. Kwan is also the Lead Principal Investigator on a Santa Clara County research collaboration that seeks to document the oral histories of local Asian American activist-elders.

SOMA DE BOURBON joined the San José State University (SJSU) Department of Sociology & Interdisciplinary Social Sciences in 2020 as an assistant professor after seven years as a lecturer in the College of Social Sciences. De Bourbon received her BA in Native American Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and PhD in the History of Consciousness Department from the University of California, Santa Cruz. With Blackfeet Indian and French ancestry, she is also the faculty advisor to the Native American Student Organization at SJSU and a Board Member of the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley. Her interest is community-based participatory research with Native American and Indigenous communities, and for the past several years, has collaborated on several mixed-methods participatory action research studies in the Bay Area on assessing community perspectives on reimagining safety in the context of complex social crises.

CHRISTOPHER COX is a senior lecturer in the department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences at San José State University (SJSU). He is ABD in the EdD program in SJSU's Lurie College of Education, and his current research centers on the impacts of neoliberal policies on public education. He has won multiple recognitions for his teaching and service, including SJSU's Outstanding Lecturer of the Year award (2017) and the Excellence in Service-Learning award (2010). Cox is an active member of the California Faculty Association, and currently serves as the Associate Vice President for the Council of Racial and Social Justice, North. He also serves on the steering committee for the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL), an organization of lecturer faculty from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.