

May 16, 2022

Dear members of Academic Senate and colleagues,

The Asian Pacific American Staff and Faculty Association (APASA) congratulates and supports the De Anza College Academic Senate's recent expansion of voting rights to the three existing campus ethnic affinity groups: APASA, De Anza Latinx Association (DALA), and the Black Faculty, Staff, and Administrators Network (BFSA).

APASA affirms support for extending voting rights to affinity groups at De Anza College representing populations who have experienced exclusion from educational, economic, political and social opportunities freely granted to groups that have not been oppressed.

We assert the importance of voting rights to these affinity groups as essential to fulfilling the spirit of the 10+1 purview of the Academic Senate. For decades, De Anza's Academic Senate has recognized and sought to fulfill the college goals and objectives that relate to embracing equity and inclusion as core components of fulfilling our educational mission. The establishment of the IIS Division, the implementation of multicultural graduation requirements and the infusion of multiculturalism in all general education classes are examples of this proud history. Extending the voting rights is a logical extension of these efforts as a concrete expansion of democratic power and giving meaningful voice to the concerns and perspectives of those who have traditionally been excluded from meaningful access to institutional decision-making.

Furthermore, this issue was taken up last year at both IPBT and College Council that both make decisions directly impacting faculty and the delivery of educational opportunities to not only disproportionately impacted students but all De Anza College students. Voting rights were immediately approved and implemented because the voting members understood the importance of bringing in more voices and experiences to inform decision-making. So the Academic Senate's expansion of voting rights aligns with the voting rights that have already been granted in other shared governance spaces.

We also affirm the existence of affinity groups and affinity spaces and as scholars and hands-on practitioners of education, evidence, research, and direct experience show the many positive impacts resulting from these spaces. [[Please see the partial list of resources of peer-reviewed and published studies below demonstrating the impact and efficacy of race and ethnic-specific resources that have helped college students persist and meet their educational goals.]]

We celebrate the way that expanding voting rights to these affinity groups will create greater understanding among groups targeted by oppression. We stand with DALA. We stand with BFSA. We stand with the Multicultural Staff Association. We are a stronger, more responsive college when we can listen to the needs of students, classified professionals, and faculty who have felt that they have historically been not welcomed in higher education or their success was neither expected or valued. We stand with all affinity groups working towards a more equitable

and accessible system of education that is the heart of the open-access community college system we all work in.

After 32 years of APASA's existence and contributions to this college and district, this expansion of voting rights finally gives voice to those of us and those who came before us who have tirelessly contributed to the college unrecognized and unpaid labor to support and serve 48% or 8,943 of the student population, including 40% Asian, 7% Filipino, 2% Pacific Islanders, and the countless others who identify in the Other 3% category. All of these students have been directly served by APASA in the form of organizing graduations, fundraising for student scholarships, creating cultural activities for all community members and the infusion of AAPI perspectives throughout our educational offerings and services. We do this work through APASA because we know the value and impact of our work. And having a group such as APASA is critically important for those of us seeking solace, support, uplift, and affirmation when we are marginalized and targeted for violence as Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders, when we are cast in racist model minority stereotypes, and when our voices are not heard because of how we look and speak. Simply put, APASA and affinity groups like ours, help us survive.

The Academic Senate's actions last week are an important validation of our work and of our existence as a core element of the work of our college. Expanding voting rights to all affinity groups is a step towards honoring the equity goals and promises we have made to one another, that we have yet to fulfill. Thank you Academic Senate voting members for unanimously supporting this expansion of voting rights to APASA, DALA, and BFSAs.

Resources:

Catalano, D. C. J., & Jourian, T. J. (2018). LGBTQ centers: A queering of gender-aware practice. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2018(164), 41–50.

Hurtado, S., & Ponjuan, L. (2005). Latino educational outcomes and the campus climate. *Journal of Hispanic higher education*, 4(3), 235–251.

Kezar, A., Eckel, P., Contreras-McGavin, M., & Quaye, S. J. (2008). Creating a web of support: An important leadership strategy for advancing campus diversity. *Higher Education*, 55(1), 69–92.

Maramba, D. C., & Palmer, R. T. (2014). The impact of cultural validation on the college experiences of Southeast Asian American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55(6), 515–530.

Maramba, D. C., & Velasquez, P. (2012). Influences of the campus experience on the ethnic identity development of students of color. *Education and Urban Society*, 44(3), 294–317.

Museus, S. D., & Quaye, S. J. (2009). Toward an intercultural perspective of racial and ethnic minority college student persistence. *The Review of Higher Education*, 33(1), 67–94.

Museus, S. D. (2008). The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominantly White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(6), 568–586.

Museus, S. D., & Maramba, D. C. (2011). The impact of culture on Filipino American students' sense of belonging. *The Review of Higher Education, 34*(2), 231–258.

Palmer, R. T., Maramba, D. C., & Holmes, S. L. (2011). A contemporary examination of factors promoting the academic success of minority students at a predominantly white university. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 13*(3), 329–349.

Quaye, S. J., Harper, S. R., & Pendakur, S. L. (Eds.). (2019). *Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations*. Routledge.

Vaccaro, A., Daly-Cano, M., & Newman, B. M. (2015). A sense of belonging among college students with disabilities: An emergent theoretical model. *Journal of College Student Development, 56*(7), 670–686.