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# PSU Proposes Race Studies Mandate

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Oregon, in 2019 Vermont and Washington passed similar laws, and a new Connecticut law requires high schools to offer an ethnic-studies class by 2022.

Washington Education Association President Kim Mead said these efforts are important for minority students.

“We know that when students see themselves, and their experiences and cultures in the classroom, they are more engaged in learning, which translates to academic success,” she said.

Johnson said the Faculty Senate was presented with two motions, one to have race and ethnic studies for all students by offering a domestic course that focuses on racism in the United States, and an international course on colonial racism in Europe.

The second motion concerns the makeup of the committee that will design the race and ethnic studies curriculum. Johnson said it should be composed primarily of faculty from the School of Gender, Race and Nations, which includes Black Studies; Indigenous Nations Studies; Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies;

and Chicano/Latino Studies.

“We are the experts in the field of race and ethnic studies, which is what we do throughout our departments,” he said. “Others can be on the committee, but we argue that other departments don’t solely focus on race and ethnic issues.”

Some, he said, are concerned about pushback from students who don’t want to take a race and ethnic studies course, Johnson said, so his proposal includes more support for professors.

“Professors may have to deal with students who lack knowledge or just don’t think they should have to take the course,” he said. To ease the burden on professors, the proposal is recommending that teaching race and ethnicity classes count toward a professor’s teaching load and tenure.

Johnson said there is strong student support for the proposal across the school, including the Associated Students of Portland State University.

“We think this will make Portland State a more attractive place for those interested in race and ethnic studies, but also to students who are Black, indigenous or people of color, too,” he said.

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**FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2021  
4:30 - 6:00 PM**

Oregon Educators are invited to hear Nikole Hannah-Jones  
Moderator - Ken Boddie, KOIN News Anchorman

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- NHJ, CREATOR OF THE 1619 PROJECT

Nikole's lead essay, "Our Democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true," was awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize

If you have questions, please send them to [ORABSE.org@gmail.com](mailto:ORABSE.org@gmail.com)  
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