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We, the undersigned members of the CSU World Language Council, representing the World Language Departments of all 23 campuses of the California State University system, wish to register our forceful opposition to the major reduction of units in Arts and Humanities in the singular GE transfer pathway as recommended by the Special Committee on AB 928 in its March 7, 2022 memo to the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) and subsequently approved by ICAS on April 25, 2022.

CSU currently requires 9 units of lower-division Arts and Humanities in the GE C category: 3 in Arts (C1); 3 in Humanities (C2); and 3 in either C1 or C2 (on some campuses this third course is referred to as C3, yet topically it is still either C1 or C2). The current recommendation deletes the third course, leaving only 3 units in Arts and 3 units in Humanities.

"Humanities" covers a vast number of disciplines, including languages, history, literature, philosophy, et cetera. This recommendation could put the various fields in fierce competition, to the detriment of all. For the vast majority of students, lower division GE courses are the only way they receive exposure to languages other than English (LOTE). Previous reforms have already whittled down the opportunities for students to become proficient in languages and cultures, and **this latest effort will effectively put language study, and many language programs, in serious jeopardy**, contradicting the mission, vision, and values of the CSU.

It also has to be noted that California's demographic has changed fundamentally in the last twenty years. The recent 2020 census indicates that 27% of California residents are foreign born, and public and private organizations are in urgent need of multilingual personnel with multicultural perspectives. The State Department of Education recognizes the need, and is promoting the Global California 2030 Initiative, which has the goal of ensuring that by 2030 at

least one half of all K-12 students participate in programs leading to proficiency in two or more languages. According to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, "To better prepare students to succeed in the changing economy and to strengthen California's own rich mixture of cultures and languages, **California needs to vastly expand opportunities for students to learn a second and possibly even a third language.**"

In this context, CSU students need more exposure to language study, not less. This is as much a question of access as of equity. Students in the UC system must demonstrate proficiency in a Language other than English as a graduation requirement; the required proficiency level ranges from a minimum of intermediate for most students (equivalent to three or four college quarters of study) to advanced (six quarters or more) at some campuses and for some majors. The CSU has no such requirement, and instead relies on high school programs -- which greatly vary in quality, resources, and types of languages offered. Students at universities with greater resources and students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds will continue to have access to comprehensive language training. **Reducing our students' ability to gain language and culture proficiency effectively puts our students at a disadvantage.** If the CSU system is serious about serving our students and the state, then we should adopt a language graduation requirement as recommended for the UC system.

Exposure to the humanities, in particular to languages and cultures, is essential as we prepare our students to become empathetic humans, able to make intellectual, moral, and ethical sense of the world in which we live. A foundation built on the ability to understand the human experience in any culture, in any part of the world, will help our students become citizens of the world, capable of addressing the challenges we face as communities and as nations. **Removing the third GE C courses will effectively eliminate one of the pathways students take to minor or major in a language** and to learn about the cultures with which they will deal in their communities and professional lives.

As we all know, there have been major cuts to humanities and languages in public universities nationwide. Humanities and languages in UC will continue to flourish, as UC administrators recognize their value. In CSU, where budgets are so tight, some fields are considered expendable.

Given the language and cultural diversity of California, the proposed reduction in Arts and Humanities GE directly contradicts the mission of the CSU, which seeks to "advance and extend knowledge, learning, and culture, especially throughout California" and "prepare significant numbers of educated, responsible people to contribute to California's schools, economy, culture, and future." **The CSU cannot declare that we are committed to pursuing social justice and the public good or serving first-generation, low-income, and/or immigrant college students and families if we effectively promote an English-only education in a state in which almost 40% of its population speaks another language at home.**

For all of these reasons, we, the undersigned members of the CSU World Language Council, vehemently oppose the ICAS recommendation, and exhort you to prioritize the Humanities in general, and language and culture study specifically.

Signatories

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