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Legislative and Governmental Relations Division - Office of the Chancellor

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East Los Angeles College to Offer California's First Community College Central American Studies Program

MONTEREY PARK, CA – East Los Angeles College (ELAC), the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), and Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo (D-51) will be joining together on Friday, August 19, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. on the ELAC campus to announce the new Central American Studies program. This launch of the program is historic as it will be the first Central American Studies program offered at a California community college.

The program will be housed in the ELAC Chicano/a Studies department and students who complete the requirements can earn an Associate's of Arts (AA) Degree in Central American Studies. Five transferable CSU and UC courses in Central American Studies will be offered, including the Central American Experience, Central American Literature, Introduction to Central American Studies, Central American Arts, and Central American Film.

"Central Americans are the fastest growing demographic across the country according to a 2021 study by the Pew Hispanic Center. In California alone, Salvadorans make up the largest population outside of the country of El Salvador followed closely by people from Guatemala and Honduras. Given the history of civil strife in Central America, many 1.5 and second-generation Central Americans who immigrated or were brought to the US as children, don't know the history of their countries of origin, nor the contributions of the Central American diaspora to the United States," said Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo (D-Los Angeles). "As the only Salvadoran immigrant elected to the California legislature and co-author of AB101, which ensures Ethnic Studies are a high school graduation requirement, I applaud East Los Angeles College for their commitment to the Central American community and advancing much-needed academic discourse."

"I offer my congratulations to the faculty and staff of East Los Angeles College for their bold leadership in establishing the first Community College Central American Studies Program in the state. This will be an incredible learning opportunity for all LACCD students," said LACCD Board President, Gabriel Buelna, Ph.D. "This new curriculum prepares our students to become well-informed, 21st-century citizens and professionals in an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse world and job marketplace."

"The Chicano/a Studies department has always been a vital part of ELAC and this new program will continue to provide quality diverse educational options to our students. I applaud the department's leadership in making this program a reality. East Los Angeles College serves diverse communities within our service area and this program will create learning opportunities for students to embrace and celebrate diversity through an equity-minded and rigorous academic program that will be the first of its kind for a community college in the nation," said ELAC President Alberto J. Roman.

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“East Los Angeles College historically has paved the road for the development of Ethnic Studies programming. The Department of Chicana/o Studies is excited to establish a program focused on the Central American experiences and perspectives, which is the first of its kind in the community college system in California and the nation,” said ELAC Department of Chicano/a Studies Chair Beatriz Tapia. “We are committed to educating all of our diverse Chicana/o, Central American, and Latina/o students by providing them with a relevant and challenging curriculum that will prepare them to transfer to a 4 -year institution and beyond. This program will further prepare students for careers that center the experience of Central Americans and overall, our increasingly diverse community.”

“At LACCD, we have advocated aggressively in support of ethnic studies because it provides a critical view and better understanding of our society’s intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, which ultimately helps our students build a more informed, racially-just and inclusive future,” said Chancellor Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. “The Central American Studies Program at East Los Angeles College further diversifies and amplifies our curriculum and makes today’s urgent call for racial equity and social justice a reality.”

About Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo

Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo was elected as the representative of the 51st Assembly District in December of 2017. She is currently the Chair of Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on State Administration, and a member of the Assembly Committees on Appropriations; Budget; Health; Housing and Community Development; and Utilities and Energy. Assemblymember Carrillo represents the communities of East Los Angeles, Northeast Los Angeles, and the neighborhoods of El Sereno, Echo Park, Lincoln Heights, Chinatown, and parts of Silver Lake.

About the Los Angeles Community College District

We are the Colleges of Los Angeles! LACCD (www.laccd.edu) is the nation’s largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California’s diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. Follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/LACCD>, @LACCD, and on Twitter, [@laccd](https://twitter.com/laccd), and Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/laccd_edu/ @laccd_edu.

About East Los Angeles College

ELAC is the largest of nine two-year community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), www.laccd.edu. More information about ELAC is available online at <http://www.elac.edu/>. Follow ELAC on social media, Facebook @Eastlacollege, Twitter @Eastlacollege, and Instagram @ELACHuskies.

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