



## DIVERSITY CENTER

### DIVERSITY DAYS: THROWBACK THURSDAY

**Date:** Thursday, September 10, 2020

**Time:** 10:00am – 11:00am

**Topic:** Third World Liberation Front - How student activism among students of color at San Francisco State University formed to fight for an Ethnic Studies course resulting in a five month student strike. (Between the Black Student Union, Latin American Students Organization, Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) the Filipino-American Students Organization, Asian American Political Alliance, and El Renacimiento (Mexican American student organization) formed at San Francisco State University to call for campus reform to create an Ethnic Studies course resulting in a five (5) month student strike, the longest student strike in history).

#### **Objective:**

- Observe and reflect the importance of student activism
- Focus on the importance of why BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) demanded for an Ethnic Studies course
- Importance of mass mobilization and strategic pathways to make a difference
- Importance of self-identity and reflection of communities of color heritage in academia

#### **Opening Questions/Discussion Questions:**

- What prompted for these student clubs/organizations to start organizing for an Ethnic Studies course?
- Why was it important for these specific student groups to self-organize and demand for a Ethnic Studies course?
- What strategies and tactics did these student clubs/organization use to reach their goals?
- What challenges did the Third World Liberation Front face? How did they overcome them or not overcome them?
- What is your observation and reflection of the administration involving the police force?

#### **Show/Watch:**

- [San Francisco State Strike 1968, Black Students & Third World Liberation Front](#) (Youtube – 19:50 mins)
- [Centers for Educational Justice & Community Engagement – Multicultural Community Center](#) - Watch Youtube Video (33:35 mins) and MCC History Timeline (website)

#### **Definitions:**

- twLF - Third World Liberation Front



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- Self-identity – the recognition of one’s potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to social context
- Activism – the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change
- Student Activism – work by students to cause political, environmental, economic, or social change. Although often focused on schools, curriculum, and educational funding, student groups have influenced greater political events
- Mass mobilization – a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of a demand for a particular development objective through face to face dialogue
- BIPOC – Black, Indigenous, People of Color
- SOC – Students of Color
- Ethnic Studies – the interdisciplinary study of difference – race, ethnicity, and nation, but also sexuality, gender, and other such markings – and power, as expressed by the state, by civil society, and by individuals. Ethnic Studies is an academic field that spans the humanities and the social sciences such as anthropology, history, literature, sociology, political science, cultural studies, and area studies were conceived from an inherently Eurocentric perspective. Its origin comes before the civil rights era, as early as 1900s.

### **Resources (Facts, Links, and community involvement):**

[Berkeley Library – The Third World Liberation Front and the History of Ethnic Studies and African American Studies](#)

[The Student Strike That Changed Higher Ed Forever \(NPR\)](#) (Watch YouTube link 3:39 mins)

Jimmy Garret and Jerry Varnado helped assemble various black groups on campus into the very first Black Student Union (BSU) at San Francisco State (now San Francisco State University). BSU began with two-pronged effort: 1) to press the school to admit more black students and 2) to persuade parents of black high schoolers to send their kids to SF State.

Asian and Latinx students heard about the movement and wanted similar treatment. BSU leaders suggested the myriad ethnic groups join with each other and the BSU, so they could battle the administration together. This new group called itself the Third World Liberation Front. “It was a vehicle to politicize students of color” says SFSU historian Jason Ferreira.

Strike started on Nov. 6, 1968 after BSU and Third World Liberation Front heard that George Murray, a popular graduate student who taught freshmen English, held a job for the Black Panther, and was fiercely anti-Vietnam, and his politics got him suspended from campus.

Strike ended March 20, 1969. The administration established a College of Ethnic Studies and responded to student demands – agreed to accept virtually all students of color for the fall semester of 1969. This movement gave rise to similar departments around the country to create Ethnic Studies departments.



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Ethnic Studies evolved out of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s and early 1970s that contributed to growing self-awareness and radicalization of people of color such as African-Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and American Indians. Ethnic Studies departments were established on college campuses across the US country and grown to encompass African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Raza Studies, Chicano Studies, Mexican American Studies, Native American Studies, Jewish Studies, and Arab Studies.