

To: Connie Hopkinks

From: Arnoldo Carlos Vento

Re: Ethnic Studies-U.S.

Connie:

What a coincidence! I just finished writing a 22 page article on *Chicano Studies: From the Seventies to the Twenty First Century...* for the journal *Genre*. (Special issue dedicated to Chicano Studies). Although I am in pain, I managed to get it out (I am on medical leave),,,,, on your questions:

Regent Connerly—How can knowledge of the fastest growing culture in the U.S. be harmful? To suggest that this curricular offering is segregated implies it is only for Chicanos/as and/or the Ethnic group. To the contrary, the main target is mainstream society...they are the ones that need to know and understand this group, the Spanish-Speaking Mestizo, that will constitute, along with other minorities, over 60-70% of the population by the middle of the XXI Century.

Benefits---Doesn't Regent Connerly know that the next industrial giant will be Spanish-Speaking America south of the border? All professions interacting with this new economic boom will have to learn not only Spanish but understand the culture fully.

On the rise or decline?---if they are declining, it is because University administration is trying to downsize along with Corporate America (The University is a business after all). Generation X is more interested in multicultural studies than they are about Washington or the political moves that Regents make. In my classes dealing with Chicano and Mexican Literature and Culture (which are full each semester), I have more Anglos than Spanish-surnames. Is there interest?....

In my recent book entitled *Mestizo: The History, Culture and Politics of the Mexican and Chicano* (Lanham:University Press of America, 1998) I discuss and analyze Mestizo culture with all of its positives and negatives. There is a need to understand identity among all Mestizos as well as a need to purify their culture by eliminating many of the undesirable sociocultural European concepts that were gestated in eras of repression (racism, religious intolerance, demeaning of women, destructive individualism, economies that create inequities etc.) Both the Anglo culture and the "Hispanic culture" need to get rid of the negative values that are counterproductive in this fragmented society. On the positive side, Mestizos, from Alaska to Argentina, have some very positive cultural characteristics (Family unity, love of Nature, holistic healing practices, respect for the elderly, highly spiritual and hard working ethic etc.) that are in line with trends for the XXI Century. There is much to learn from the Native-American side of the Mestizo that is futuristic. This is why these types of courses are needed.

OTHER INTERVIEW-Rodolfo Acuña-Chicano Studies,Cal State-Northridge.

