



March 18, 2021

MPC Academic Senate Members,

As you may know, this semester there is a Math course taught in Spanish at MPC. Students who enroll in this class are obliged to take ESL. While we believe the ESL support is very important for some students, and it should be offered as an option, many students in our campus and our state are bilingual. The obligation to take ESL discourages a significant group of students who were initially excited about these new opportunities.

A few students have indicated that this requirement to take ESL is a form of labelling. The Spanish Department attended a conference on “The Politics of Cultivating Future Bilingual Latinx Teachers in California’s Central Valley.” In this conference, Dr. Patricia López clearly stated that this requirement to take ESL, if you decide to take any course in Spanish, is a criminalization of Spanish and a criminalization of bilingualism.

In California, we had Proposition 227 that passed in 1998, which established this kind of requirement. The great news is that in 2016, Proposition 58 was approved by a wide margin. More than 73% of voters in California voted to repeal the bilingual education restrictions enacted by Proposition 227.

At MPC, we seem to be following the regulation established in 1998. If this is the case, we would like for our MPC Administration to review Proposition 58 and take away this requirement to take ESL. The MPC Administration is willing to look into it but we just wanted the community to be aware of this issue.

As members of the community, we can see that this is simply an artificial institutional barrier and a disrespectful message towards bilingual people. This requirement seems like a form of linguistic oppression telling many of our students that their language and culture are not good enough, and we know how this quickly translates in our actions and policies into “*You* are not good enough”.

For Spanish-speaking Latinos in the U.S., the Spanish language is a component of identity that is often viewed as fundamental to their human experience. We should be culturally responsive.

We are not being responsive to the community we serve. More than 48% speak Spanish at home in Monterey County per the U.S. Census Bureau, 2019.

As we know, representation matters. It makes a difference in our students’ motivation. Dual Language Institutions are proliferating because bilingual opportunities are beneficial for *all* students. Bilingualism is an incredible asset.

We hope that we can discuss this ESL requirement that is discouraging bilingual students from taking courses in Spanish, and we hope the ESL component can continue to be an *optional* support for those who need it. If it is an *optional* support, we will be more ready to welcome our whole community.

Thank you,

**Spanish Department. Monterey Peninsula College**  
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