

Attachment #2

President's Commission on Cultural Diversity
 Inclusive Conception of Diversity

Components Types	Experiential, Interactional	Material	Social, Cultural	Intellectual
Race/Ethnicity	Global Community National Community Pennsylvania Lancaster County Millersville University Community			
Gender				
Material/Class				
Sexual Orientation				
National Origin				
Religion				
Age				
Physical Ability				

President's Commission on Cultural Diversity
Proposal for Gen Ed Diversity Requirement

Proposal:

- To require at least one, and preferably two, diversity-related courses as non-credit components of the Gen Ed curriculum in a manner like the Writing (W) requirement.
- Courses can be double- or triple-counted for major/minor/Gen Ed credit, W credit, and Diversity (D) credit.
- Courses can critically explore one or more types of diversity in one or more of their components in a variety of ways.

Rationales:

- **Institutional Statement on Our Ideal Campus Climate** – says that we firmly believe diversity is part of MU
- **Demographic Shifts in the Commonwealth and the US** – prepares students for grappling with changing populations of PA and the US
- **Professional Preparation for Our Students** – Exposure to diversity issues means a deeper sense of teamwork and additional preparation
- **Match Between Visible Diversity on Campus and Our Curriculum** – Diversity is already on campus, but curriculum has not caught up
- **Linkages Between the Local and Global** – Experiences with diversity at one level of social life can be translated into others
- **Recruitment and Retention of Faculty and Students** – Bringing the best from a variety of backgrounds means we need to have a curriculum that represents everyone
- **Match Between Our Commitments** – Diversity requirement fulfills promise made by MU Mission Statement

Preliminary Estimate of Number of D Courses (based on old D proposal + prima facie reading of Catalogue):

118 Total Courses: 19 G1 courses 2 G2 courses 40 G3 courses 33 P courses 48 W courses

DRAFT

To: General Education Review Committee

From: Scott Schaffer, Chair, President's Commission on Cultural Diversity

Date:

Re: Proposal regarding the Diversity designation in the new General Education curriculum

The President's Commission on Cultural Diversity (PCCD) wishes to comment on the proposal to designate, but not require, courses as reflecting a concern with cultural diversity. In particular, we would recommend to the General Education Review Committee the following proposition, namely that

The General Education curriculum should require at least one, and preferably two, courses as meeting a non-credit Diversity requirement, in a manner similar to the W course requirement.

In the same way that major, minor, and elective courses can meet the University's four-course Writing requirement (which does not increase credits in the General Education curriculum), we believe that including one or two courses as meeting a Diversity requirement in the same way would not add credits to the General Education curriculum (thereby preserving those credits for major or minor requirements), and would also make a statement that we believe a concern with cultural diversity is, as Stephen A Privett, S.J., President of University of San Francisco, argues, "not a political agenda, but the necessary ingredient of a quality education in the 21st century."

It should be noted that the common-sense conception of "diversity" – as reported in the recent campus environmental scan done in the midst of the institutional identity project – as being the same as "issues of race" is not necessarily the notion of cultural diversity with which PCCD approaches the issue. There are, in fact, multiple components of social life through which cultural diversity manifests itself – or, put another way, cultural diversity appears when we consider issues of *gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, national background or placement in the global system, material/economic background, religious background, age, and physical ability*. All of these aspects of diversity impact on the ways in which people interact with one another and create both opportunities and challenges for the fostering of community and a collective civic life and public sphere, and each of them contribute cultural elements to a given social situation. Likewise, there are four components of cultural diversity, regardless of the aspect of social life we look at, namely: experiential and interactional components; social and cultural components; material components; and intellectual components. When we explore the intersections of these various types and the components of people's lives that they contribute to our community, there are a lot of ways that cultural diversity manifests itself, few of which actually involve race or ethnicity.

Additionally, it should be noted that campus events over this past year – both positive, such as the Creating Caring Communities initiative, and negative, like the September incident at the Student Memorial Center – have shown that diversity needs to be a critical component of our educational process here – not only for white, upper-class, heterosexual, physically able students, but for all of our students. We cannot expect to produce respectful and productive citizens of the Commonwealth in a situation in which our educational process is disconnected from the experiences of the members of our community, regardless of their background.

Finally, it should be noted that this is not simply a matter of “teaching tolerance.” Rather, if our institution is claiming an identity that reflects our desire to prepare students to be productive and engaged citizens, our emphasis needs to be on the understanding of the varieties and manifestations of all types of cultural diversity in our community, our state, the nation, and the world so that instead of merely tolerating the existence of others who are different in various ways, we make a steadfast effort to produce students who are respectful and accepting of the validity of those differences and their contributions to our society.

We believe the following represent compelling reasons why a Diversity requirement should be an integral component of a revised General Education curriculum.

Institutional Statement on Our Ideal Campus Climate: MU has chosen in its Mission Statement to identify itself as an institution that offers “a curriculum that is rich and multifaceted, by serving as a model of a pluralistic community, and by providing leadership in this regard to the greater community.” As well, the University fosters “the examination, development, and understanding of personal values and appreciation of the values of others.” While we can rely upon good advising – which many of us would agree occurs probably only 50% of the time, though we certainly hope it is more frequent – to foster students’ examining of these issues, we make a stronger statement that supports our mission by requiring students to take courses that are specifically identified as addressing diversity issues of the varieties listed above.

Demographic Shifts in the Commonwealth and the US: By the year 2050, European-descended Americans will represent only 53% of the US population. According to the Census Bureau’s 2050 projects, the ethnic breakdown of the American population will be 50.1% white (down from 69.4% in 2000), 24.4% Hispanic American, 8% Asian American, and 14.6% African American. Women will continue to outnumber men by mid-century, and by 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be over 65 years old. And even with advances in medicine, people with varying kinds of disabilities will still represent a significant portion of the population. Given these shifts, we believe that it is imperative that we begin cultural diversity education now so that our students, and by extension the communities they participate in as alumni, will be prepared to live well with people from a variety of backgrounds and abilities.

Professional Preparation for Our Students: Concomitantly with these demographic shifts, we will also find significant shifts in the populations with which our students will be working as professionals. In addition to these internal demographic shifts,

immigration, as well as the continued globalization of the economy, will bring our alumni into increasing contact with people from all over the world. In order for them to be well-prepared professionals operating in an increasingly diverse society (MU Mission Statement, paras. 1, 3, and 6), our students need to be exposed to a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. A diversity requirement would help this preparation process. This is particularly crucial for students in the School of Education, who would then enter the workforce being prepared for a diverse student body, thereby enhancing their desirability as teachers and MU's reputation as being truly engaged with the needs of the community.

Match Between the Visible Diversity at MU and Our Curriculum: While our minor programs in African-American Studies, Latino/Latina Studies, Women's Studies, and Gerontology (and the developing program in Asian and Asian-American Studies) represent significant and diverse contributions to the educational opportunities MU provides to its student body, they are options for students, and those who pursue these minor opportunities are generally either those who are committed to working in those fields (Gerontology) or who personally identify in some way with the minor. They therefore "preach to the converted," offering their insights only to those who are already interested in the topic and issues and not doing as much as is possible to foster a diverse and inclusive campus community. A diversity requirement as part of the General Education curriculum would ensure that those who would benefit most from discovering the experiences and insights offered by the different groups who make up the Millersville, Commonwealth, and North American community will have the opportunity to gain these insights, growing personally (MU Mission Statement, paras. 3, 4, and 6) as well as being better prepared professionally.

Linkages Between the Local and the Global: A diversity requirement provides an excellent opportunity for our students to begin to see the linkages between local phenomena and national and global patterns. As one of the General Education objectives is to provide opportunities for students to extend knowledge into new areas, and one of the types of learning on Bloom's Taxonomy is the recognition of patterns (analysis), requiring students to learn about the experiences of people from varying backgrounds, whether in the US or at the global level, will enable them to see patterns of commonality between their own local, regional, national, and global experiences and those of others, thereby providing students with a deeper basis to develop a greater sense of community through their practices in society.

Recruitment and Retention of Faculty and Students: MU has been highly successful within the PASSHE at recruiting faculty and students from a variety of backgrounds, and there has been an institutional commitment to ensuring that this recruitment continues and that our community reflects the diversity of the Commonwealth. However, the retention of faculty and students, as well as the need to increase recruitment of people from diverse backgrounds, requires that we create a campus climate *in all its forms* that supports and values the contributions they bring to the MU community through their experiences and ways of knowing the world. As more and more of our competitor institutions bring diversity requirements into their curricula, our not having one will

represent a hindrance to our efforts to bring the best faculty and students from a wide variety of backgrounds to campus.

Match Between Our Commitments: The MU Mission Statement highlights a number of core commitments to which the University holds “steadfastly”: “intellectual development”; “to prepare its students to live in an increasingly diverse, multicultural, and technologically complex society,” by “offering a curriculum that is rich and multifaceted [and] by serving as a model of a pluralistic community”; “to open avenues for personal, social, and cultural growth essential to the development of an educated and productive person”; “foster[ing] the examination, development, and understanding of personal values and appreciation of the values of others”; and a pledge to “encourage imagination and curiosity, unfettered discourse, the exchange of divergent and controversial opinion, [and] multicultural awareness and understanding.” We have also committed ourselves to a greater international awareness and understanding (MU Academic Affairs Master Plan). Yet, to merely suggest to students through advisement that they “should” take courses identified as having a diversity component demonstrates that we are not fully or steadfastly committed to these goals. A diversity requirement would demonstrate conclusively that we truly believe in our mission and are ready to mandate that students who come to MU will graduate having a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diversity of the nation and the world.

Additional Notes

This focus on including a diversity requirement in the General Education curriculum is by no means an attempt to radically transform the curriculum, to prevent the teaching of traditional texts and ideas, or to mandate that students change themselves through exposure to diversity-related courses. Rather, following from Otten (2003: 19), we believe that:

A diversity-sensitive curriculum can lead to both academic achievement and growth of the students’ personalities:

- A diversified curriculum can help bridge differences, both on campus and in society. Learning about diversity and global cultural traditions brings groups of students together rather than dividing them.
- Diversifying and expanding the knowledge base of the college curriculum does not prevent students from studying traditional texts and core contents of their major discipline.
- Diversity courses challenge students to think in more complex ways about identity and history, and avoid cultural stereotyping.¹

Likewise – and just as in any other course, regardless of its content – there is no way to mandate that a student comprehends or will implement the course materials, whether professionally or personally. We have no guarantees of student learning in any type of

¹ Matthias Otten, “Intercultural Learning and Diversity in Higher Education.” Pp. 12-26 in *Journal of Studies in International Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 2003.

course, and a diversity-related course is no different. Rather, we believe that the requirement to be *exposed* to issues, ideas, and experiences of people who can be characterized by the eight types of diversity included in this proposal will have a *higher likelihood* of having a positive impact on our students (and by extension, the communities and professions in which our students will be embedded) than a mere suggestion that students expose themselves to these issues, ideas, and experiences, which in essence amounts to no requirement at all.

Assessment of Diversity Courses and Learning

Courses being proposed as meeting a Diversity requirement should be subject to the same evaluation processes that pertain to other General Education or other classifications (G1, G2, G3, P, W, or DL). Any type of reaccreditation process that pertains to these courses should be extended to include Diversity courses; as well, whenever significant changes are proposed to D courses, they should be re-evaluated with regard to these proposed assessment guidelines.

As indicated above, there are at least eight types of diversity that have cultural components to them: sex/gender, race/ethnicity, material background, sexual orientation, religion, national background and placement in the global system, and physical ability. Courses that contain significant components relating to one or more of these diversity categories can be submitted for consideration as Diversity (D) courses.

As well, there are four significant components to cultural diversity issues that intersect with each of these types of diversity and that are reflected in the backgrounds of our students, faculty, and staff: experiential and interactional components; material components; social and cultural components; and intellectual components (or ways of knowing the world). Courses proposed as D courses should be able to specify the particular components of cultural diversity they examine.

Assessment for Inclusion as D Course in General Education Curriculum

Courses that are proposed as D courses should be assessed according to some, if not all, of the following criteria (adapted from Meacham [accessed 2006]²), in addition to other Gen Ed criteria the course proposed to meet:

- 1. What types of diversity does this course address, how are they addressed, and in what context are they addressed?** (Sex/gender, race/ethnicity, material background, sexual orientation, religion, national background/placement in the world system, age, physical ability)
- 2. What components pertaining to these types of diversity does this course address?** (Experiential/interactional, material, social/cultural, intellectual)

² Jack Meacham, "Assessing Diversity Courses: Tips and Tools," *DiversityWeb*. Accessed October 27, 2006 at <http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/Sp.Sm00/courses.html>.

3. What are the course objectives pertaining to the examination of these types and components of diversity?

An emphasis on critically evaluating the types of diversity the course is concerned with is expected. There are a variety of ways this could take place. One example is the Williams College approach, in which diversity-related courses “include an explicit and critical self-reflection on and immersion in a culture or people”:

- Through comparative study of cultures and societies;
- Through curriculums that encourage “empathetic understanding” of diverse groups by “recreating the social, political, cultural, and historical context of a group to imagine why within that context, those beliefs, experiences, and actions of the group have emerged”;
- Through study of “power and privilege”;
- Through “critical theorization” in which students explore the ways scholars analyze cross-cultural interaction;
- Through “cultural immersion,” which could involve study abroad or through foreign language courses that “explicitly engage in the self-conscious awareness of cultural and societal differences, traditions, and customs.”³

4. How will this course assess these particular course objectives, and how do those assessment practices pertain to the diversity objectives of the course?

Certain kinds of tools, such as multiple-choice objective exams, may not be appropriate for evaluating particular kinds of diversity-learning course objectives. Situational evaluations (through presentations and interpersonal interactions), self-evaluation essays, and other types of critical written work may be better suited for assessing diversity learning.

5. How will “diversity learning” in particular be assessed by this course?

Courses that deal with diversity-related issues have to assess diversity learning in ways that are different from other courses, particular since there is no objective way that this can be assessed. Asking students to assess their own and others’ learning through statements like “This course helped me to understand myself and others in ways other than stereotyped groups and categories” and “I have been able to see connections between the material in this course and real-life situations I might face in my family, on the job, or as a citizen” enable faculty to get a clearer sense of the success of diversity learning.

6. How does this course propose to manage the classroom-related issues that can arise with regard to diversity-related teaching and learning?

Courses with diversity-related components, particularly components that pertain to students’ own backgrounds or their perceptions of themselves, can result in intense

³ Scott Jaschik, “Next Generation Diversity,” *Inside Higher Education*, October 27/2006.
<http://insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2006/10/27/williams>.

and personally relevant discussions, as well as substantial changes in how students perceive themselves. Those who participate most frequently in class discussions may not be voices that are representative of the entire class, and other students may feel marginalized within the classroom. Faculty who propose courses for inclusion in the D course listing should be prepared to discuss how they will maintain a classroom environment that will foster diversity learning and respect.

Final Assessment of D Courses and Diversity Learning

Courses that are proposed for inclusion in the D course listing and the faculty teaching them will not necessarily have these elements reflected in a standardized course/professor evaluation instrument. Faculty proposing D courses should be willing to discuss how they would want their courses evaluated *in addition to the standardized evaluation instrument* so that the particular challenges of teaching D courses can be reflected and appropriate feedback can be garnered by the faculty member, GERC, and other interested bodies.

Course/Faculty Evaluations and Reappointment/Tenure/Promotion Decisions

Faculty evaluations for courses in the D course listing should be evaluated in the context of the course, the faculty member's self-assessment of their professional development and responsibilities, and the General Education and institutional objectives pertaining to diversity, particularly Objectives 1 and 6.

A Closing Note

Globalization, immigration, demographic shifts internal to the United States, and the challenges presented by the "clash of civilizations" thesis presumed in current American domestic and foreign policy are all happening, regardless of what we do in our General Education transformation process. These are fundamental forces that will shape the ways in which our students now and in the future interact with others in their personal, academic, professional, and civic lives. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the US, and the world our students face will not be one that operates on the principles that we were brought up with, and our students should be prepared for these shifts in the world.

An increasing number of universities across the US are instituting diversity requirements in their curricula, if not radically transforming their General Education programs to reflect an increased concern with national and global diversity. If we do not institute a diversity requirement, we will increasingly find ourselves "left behind," unable to recruit students who want to be exposed to the ideas and experiences of peoples from varying backgrounds and situations and faculty who believe that a commitment to diversity is an intrinsic part of who they are as educators. An institution such as Millersville that strives to be on the "cutting edge" of new programs and approaches to teaching and learning must be willing to keep abreast, if not ahead, of similar institutions if we want to truly be at the forefront of higher education.

Likewise, It is ethically incumbent upon us as educators in an institution that is so clearly committed to serving as a resource for the communities in which we are embedded to

provide our students with the tools necessary for life-long learning; and with regard to the cultural and demographic shifts that are coming over the next decades, it is particularly important that our students are enabled to deal with the impacts of these changes on their lives. Instituting a non-credit Diversity requirement in the General Education curriculum will ensure that our students are at the very least exposed to the experiences, issues, and ideas that pertain to these shifts and are thereby enabled to become the kind of productive citizens we want to send out into the world.