

Report of the Diversity Subcommittee of the URCC

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Introduction

The University-wide Diversity Planning Committee delivered a report entitled *Diversity at Kent State University: Report of the University-Wide Diversity Planning Committee, March 1, 1996*. The 39 member committee consisted of faculty, administrators, and students from across the University. The committee recommended that undergraduates be required to fulfill a diversity requirement. Criteria were established. In 1997 the Educational Policies Council established the University Requirements Curriculum Committee and assigned it the following tasks related to the diversity requirement: 1) refine criteria for diversity courses; 2) issue a call for diversity course proposals; 3) review and approve diversity courses. The Diversity Course Requirement was implemented in fall 1999 with the stipulation that students take two diversity courses. Beginning in 2001, the Diversity requirement stipulated that one course must focus on domestic and one on global diversity.

As stated in the 2014 KSU Catalog,

The purpose of Kent State's diversity requirement is to help educate students to live in a world of diverse communities, many of which are becoming increasingly permeated with cultural and ideological differences. The study of diversity is intended to promote awareness of local and global differences, to identify shared values, to improve understanding of one's own culture, and to encourage people to explore and respect differences.

The diversity requirement is part of the university's broader efforts to encourage, both at the university and beyond, the development of communities in which all members and their contributions are recognized and valued. Diversity courses provide opportunities for students to learn about such matters as the history, culture, values and notable achievements of people other than those of their own national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, physical and mental ability, and social class. Diversity courses also provide opportunities to examine problems and issues that may arise from differences, and opportunities to learn how to deal constructively with them.

The Diversity Course Requirement is described in the catalog:

<http://www2.kent.edu/catalog/2014/info/courseinformation/diversity>

The First Periodic Review of the Diversity Requirement was completed in 2009. The report concludes with the following recommendations:

1. The URCC review current Diversity Requirements before the next 5-year review,
2. All diversity instructors discuss with their students the function of their course, at a minimum indicating which diversity learning goals listed in the catalog are particularly appropriate to their course,

3. The URCC consider other ways to help all students understand the importance of the Diversity Requirements, such as a student handbook and/or syllabus inserts,
4. The Faculty Professional Development Center provide support for faculty assigned to teach diversity courses to ensure that they are high quality and fulfill the intended diversity functions,
5. The office of Academic Assessment develop means for assessing diversity course learning objectives,
6. The URCC review the diversity catalog statement, and
7. Diversity reviews take place in 5 year cycles, beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year.

In response to the recommendations, several actions have been taken.

Recommendation 1: The review of the diversity requirements began in 2011-2012 before the 5-year review was due in 2014 with the formation of a Diversity committee of URCC. The committee met to receive its charge and to interview experts and units within KSU. A summary of the interviews can be found in Appendix A. We continued to meet throughout the 2013-2014 academic year to prepare this report.

Recommendation 2: Faculty teaching diversity courses were asked to include specific diversity course goals on their syllabi and discuss with students why the course fulfilled the diversity requirement. In 1997, the co-chair of URCC wrote a memo to the Provost which encouraged faculty teaching Diversity courses to make explicit the diversity goals in their syllabi and also expand on these themes wherever appropriate. See Appendix B.

Recommendation 3: A syllabus insert for diversity courses was created by URCC to help students understand the diversity requirement and the course goal: *Diversity courses provide opportunities for students to learn about such matters as the history, culture, values and notable achievements of people other than those of their own national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, gender, physical and mental ability, and social class. Diversity courses also provide opportunities to examine problems and issues that may arise from differences, and opportunities to learn how to deal constructively with them.*

Recommendation 4: To our knowledge, the Faculty Professional Development Center has not offered support for faculty teaching diversity courses (per email with Director, David Dees).

Recommendation 5: To our knowledge, the Office of Academic Assessment has not developed a means for assessing diversity course learning objectives.

Recommendation 6 will be discussed in the current report.

Recommendation 7: The diversity review is now part of a 5-year cycle.

2014 Review of the Diversity Requirement

The report that follows is the second review. Drawing from the URCC's spring 2009 *First Periodic Review Report*, the current committee was charged to evaluate the Diversity Requirement to:

1. Determine the degree to which the goals are currently being met,
2. Determine whether or not revision of the policy and catalogue statement is needed,
3. Determine whether or not methods of assessment need to be revised,
4. Make recommendations for the future of the Diversity Requirement by consulting with experts and units within the University, e.g., the Office of Global Education and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,
5. Develop and promote ways for professors to effectively communicate to students the values represented by the Diversity Requirement.

Methodology

The Diversity Subcommittee began by addressing the first charge: *Determine the degree to which the goals are currently being met*. Our initial plan was to examine select syllabi for each of the diversity courses to determine which diversity goals were included. We planned to follow that with a survey of a random sample of students who had taken those courses, much in the same vein as the first periodic review. We planned to study the extent to which each of the diversity criteria were met. However, before we took up that enormous task, we decided to review the original proposals to URCC to gain a broad overview of the criteria that were included in each proposal. We decided to look at criteria rather than goals because specific criteria were to be used in the curriculum proposals.

Our specific research questions were as follows:

Question 1: What is the frequency of criteria as they appear in the proposal – overall for all courses and by discipline?

Question 2: Do some criteria “cluster” around domestic diversity and other around global diversity? Or are the criteria essentially the same for each (global or domestic)?

Diversity proposals were collected and coded based on the criteria used when the diversity requirement was put into effect and can be found in Appendix C. Note that the University Catalog does not distinguish between global and domestic diversity criteria.

The protocol can be found in Appendix C. As stated in the Curriculum Guidelines

<http://www2.kent.edu/provost/curriculum/guidelines/upload/curriculum-guidelines-2014.pdf>

(p. 59) diversity course proposals are to *Explain how the course addresses specific diversity requirement objectives and criteria as a primary purpose*. All four committee members coded a subset of the 117 proposals to establish inter-coder reliability. We could not find criteria specifically stated in 40 proposals. Once deleting the proposals that did not specifically

designate criteria, 77 proposals (66% of the total were examined further (37 domestic and 40 global). The total number of criteria is 11. In the 37 domestic diversity proposals, the median number of criteria included was 5; the mean was 5.2 and the range was 1-9. In the 40 global diversity course proposals, the median number of criteria included was 5; the mean was 5.2 and the range was 1-13. The descriptive analysis was intended to allow us to determine which criteria were predominant in the diversity courses, and which criteria, potentially, were not being addressed in the diversity courses as a whole. It also allowed us to determine if domestic and global diversity courses were addressing the same criteria or if there are essential differences.

Results

Appendix D and E present a summary of the coding completed by the four Diversity Committee members. Appendix D summarizes the number of domestic diversity proposals that included each of the diversity criteria. Appendix E summarizes the number of global diversity proposals that included each of the diversity criteria. The modal domestic criterion (identified in 31 of 37 proposals) was 'address diversity issues, particularly those involving unequal and/or discriminatory treatment.' It should be noted, however, that this same criterion was also identified in 30 of 40 global proposals, making it the second most frequent global criterion. Other dominant domestic criteria included 'examine patterns and trends of diversity in the U.S.' (26), 'engage issues of racial or ethnic perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes' (26) and 'understand how one's own culture shapes one's perceptions, ideology and values' (25). The modal global criterion (identified in 32 of 40 proposals) was 'encourage global awareness and sensitivity.' Other dominant global criteria included 'study Western and non-Western cultures in a world context' (27) and 'study Western and non-Western cultures from a comparative perspective' (23).

Finally, the least frequent criteria identified in both domestic and global proposals were 'participate in special programs that promote understanding' (2 each) and 'learn systematic techniques for dealing constructively with problems arising out of cultural differences' (3 domestic and 6 global).

Discussion

According to a curriculum proposal from the Chair of the LER Committee to EPC (March 4, 1997) (see Appendix B), an argument for having a separate domestic and global diversity requirement was *"the most urgent need of students...to learn more about, and become more sensate to, diversity issues in this country, especially race relations but also issues of gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.* and that this domestic course is *a moral and sociopolitical imperative.* At that time, there was only a unified diversity requirement (students were required to take two diversity courses but the policy did not distinguish between domestic or global diversity) and there were more courses that were deemed to meet the global diversity requirement.

However, concern about equity (what is proposed to be a domestic concern) appears to be a common criterion in the global diversity courses as well. Indeed, “Educating for Global Connections and Local Commitments,” the tagline for the American Council on Education’s (ACE) initiative to engage higher education institutions in examining the collaboration potential between diversity/multicultural education and internationalization, argues that cultural competency among 21st-century graduates has become imperative as the job market globalizes and the workforces continues to diversify. In order to become responsible, productive citizens, our students must understand their own cultures and those of their neighbors at home and afar. By engaging higher education institutions in examining the collaboration potential between diversity/multicultural education and internationalization, we seek to address these needs” <http://www.acenet.edu/events/Pages/At-Home-in-the-World-Institute.aspx>. The work of higher education faculty engaged in this ACE initiative supports the need for a continued discussion about the distinction between a domestic and diversity requirement.

The lack of emphasis in the diversity proposals on active engagement of students in diversity related programs/issues is problematic as well. The two least frequent criteria (‘participate in special programs that promote understanding’ (2 each) and ‘learn systematic techniques for dealing constructively with problems arising out of cultural differences’ (3 domestic and 6 global)) is not consistent with the first diversity review’s encouragement of experiential learning experiences for students. The latter criterion (techniques for dealing with problems) encourages the action imperative – what to do to overcome the problems arising out of ‘difference.’ Our own Experiential Learning Requirement (ELR) supports the belief that active engagement with diversity is essential for a KSU student.

Recommendations

We presented the results of our work to the URCC on March 14, 2014. The URCC agreed that what needs to be done is beyond the scope of URCC. URCC is charged with administering the diversity requirement (review and approve courses) not changing it. Our study can be considered one of the first steps in reviewing the diversity requirement.

Based on the results of the 2014 study of the original diversity proposals, the following recommendations are made:

1. Investigate the distinction between domestic and global diversity.
2. Encourage inclusion of curriculum/activities that would promote interaction with difference and actions to negotiate/overcome difference.

Beyond the scope of the study, but relevant to consider in a review of the diversity requirement are the following recommendations:

3. Review the current diversity criteria for relevance in the 21st century.
4. Write learning outcomes rather than criteria so that it would be possible to assess student growth.

Appendix A

Summary of Meetings Conducted by the URCC Diversity Committee in 2011-2012 to Discuss the Diversity Requirement

Meeting with Mary Anne Saunders (Executive Director, Office of Global Education (OGE))

- A Globalization Task force has been created to report on globalization at KSU: 1) study what other universities are doing, 2) collect research, 3) conduct surveys.
- Saunders suggested that the distinction between global and local diversity, while recognizing important differences in the United States, is no longer needed. She suggested the two be conflated.
- Saunders suggested that multiculturalism should be weaved into multiple courses (rather than be taught in one course taken by everyone).
- We need to find ways to encourage faculty to adapt their courses toward a more global approach.
- Assessment should include “cross cultural competencies.” Are students better able to solve problems (cross culturally) in a more nuanced, sensitive way?
- In the classroom, emphasis should be placed on EL. For example, we should look into international service learning experiences and encourage more short-term learning abroad programs.
- How can we begin a campus-wide discussion about diversity? (We need effort by the university, the units, and the faculty. We need support from the Provost and Deans, particularly for seed money.)

Meeting with Ken Cushner (Professor, EHHS, former director of OGE)

- Cushner defined the goal as follows: Improve students’ ability to understand multiple perspectives and a variety of histories, communicate ideas effectively and solve problems, and accept ideas other than their own.
- Emphasis should be placed on intercultural experiences (including the use of technology) over the mere provision of information. These experiences should be required at the unit level and offer some kind of relationship with the “other.” We might offer some version of “100 commitments,” 100 activities that enhance cultural awareness.
- Suggestions: establish a Globalization Committee with consultants to work with each unit, offers an “Intercultural Validation” to be listed on diplomas, encourage conversation-partner programs,” encourage competence in a foreign language.
- Cushner recommended use of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to evaluate diversity courses. He noted that K-12 teachers tend to be Ethnocentric.
- Cushner emphasized that intercultural competence is a long term process.

Meeting with Alfreda Brown (Vice-President, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)

- To be successful, KSU should work on “infusing” diversity across the curriculum.
- Emphasis should be placed on helping students understand their own perspective and the perspectives of others, and on creating EL opportunities. One way to do this is to offer students’ more opportunities to have conversations with persons different from themselves.
- Good advising is essential. What is the message students come away with about the value of diversity courses?
- We might work toward offering a Global Certificate Program (which would, among other things, pair international and local students)
- The committee should look at the Diversity Action Plan and Vision Statement.

Memo from Larry Andrews, Chair of URCC to Myron Henry, Provost, regarding Proposal to Reconfigure the LER Program to Accommodate a Diversity Requirement (March 4, 1997)

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE
THE HONORS COLLEGE
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
KENT, OHIO

TO: Myron Henry, Provost
FROM: Larry Andrews, Dean; Chair, LER Curriculum Committee *la*
SUBJECT: Proposal to Reconfigure the LER Program to Accommodate a Diversity Requirement
DATE: March 4, 1997

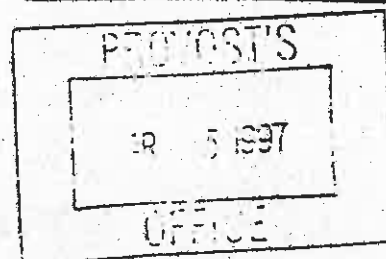
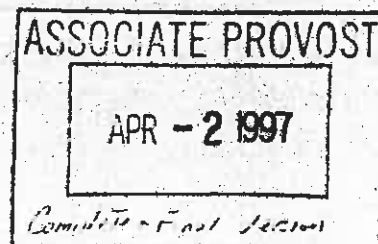
The Liberal Education Requirements Curriculum Committee submits the attached proposal for consideration by you and the Educational Policies Council at its March 17 meeting.

We have attached a formal resolution, which, if EPC prefers, can be divided into three parts for separate votes.

Please let me know if additional information is needed for the proposal. At EPC I would be willing to take the Council through the proposal with overheads and perhaps with the help of one or two LER committee members, if you think that would be a good idea.

The following members of the LERCC have my heartfelt gratitude for their wisdom and hard work:

Bill Anderson, Education
Shirley Barton, Regional Campuses
Terry Kuhn, Undergraduate Studies
Nancy Mitchell, Fine & Professional Arts
Dennis Nygren, Music
Liz Sinclair-Colando, Business
Jeannie Sneed, Chairs & Directors Council
Tom Sosnowski, History, Stark
Connie Stopper, Nursing
Darrell Turnidge, Arts & Sciences
Carlos Vargas-Aburto, Technology
Mark Weber, Libraries



**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COUNCIL**

March 17, 1997

Resolution

**REVISION OF THE LIBERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS TO
INCORPORATE A DIVERSITY COMPONENT,
REDUCE THE LER CORE FROM 39 TO 36 HOURS, AND
REVISE THE STRUCTURE OF THE LER CURRICULUM COMMITTEE INTO A
UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, the purpose of Kent's diversity requirement is to help educate students to live in communities permeated with cultural and ideological differences; and

WHEREAS, the study of diversity is intended to raise consciousness about domestic and global differences, to identify shared values, to improve understanding of one's own culture, and to encourage people to explore and respect differences; and

WHEREAS, the "Report of the Liberal Education Requirement Curriculum Committee of the Educational Policies Council" (1993) called for "cultural diversity and multi-cultural perspectives in the LER"; and

WHEREAS, the Kent State University Diversity Report (1993) called for appropriate action in curriculum, staffing, and other areas; and

WHEREAS, the Kent State University Strategic Plan (1994) includes diversity as a major component for development; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate Diversity Follow-Up Committee urged action on the recommendations of the University Diversity Report (1994); and

WHEREAS, the Educational Policies Council Subcommittee on Diversity in the Curriculum recommended the establishment of a university-wide diversity requirement (1996); and

WHEREAS, a university requirements curriculum committee will simplify the curricular process, and

WHEREAS, the Provost has requested curriculum committees to review and respond to the report of the Educational Policies Council Subcommittee on Diversity in the Curriculum (1997), now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Educational Policies Council hereby approves

- (1) Establishment of a two-course diversity requirement. One course is a component of the Liberal Education Requirements and the other allows for maximal overlap with LER, major, and minor requirements. Through catalog year 2000-2001 it is recommended that one of the two courses address domestic issues. Beginning with catalog year 2001-2002 it is required that one of the two courses address domestic issues.
- (2) Reduction of the Liberal Education Requirements program from 39 to 36 hours to accommodate a two-course diversity requirement. The three-hour reduction is to come from LER Category III, Humanities and Fine Arts.
- (3) Revision of the Liberal Education Requirements Curriculum Committee into the University Requirements Curriculum Committee.

These changes are to be effective for all undergraduate students with an effective Catalog year of 1999 or later.

Appendix C

Protocol – Diversity Course Proposal Analysis

Identifying Information

Date of application for Diversity status:

Academic discipline (i.e. English, Sociology):

Specific course name & designation:

Domestic diversity focus

Global diversity focus

Criteria

Address diversity issues, particularly those involving unequal and/or discriminatory treatment

Compare positive and negative implications of various parochial or “...centric” perspectives

Encourage global awareness and sensitivity

Examine patterns and trends of diversity in the U.S.

Engage issues of racial or ethnic perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes

Explore ways to communicate and participate constructively in a diverse community

Foster appreciation of aesthetic dimensions of other traditions and cultures

Learn systematic approaches to understanding cultural differences and commonalities

Learn systematic techniques for dealing constructively with problems arising out of cultural differences

Participate in special programs that promote understanding other peoples

Study Western and non-western cultures in a world context

Study Western and non-western cultures from a comparative perspective

Understand how one’s own culture shapes one’s perceptions, ideology and values

Appendix D
Domestic Diversity Coding Summary

Number of courses meeting the domestic diversity requirement (N=37)

Number of Proposals	Criteria
31	Address diversity issues, particularly those involving unequal and/or discriminatory treatment
14	Compare positive and negative implications of various parochial or "...centric" perspectives
12	Encourage global awareness and sensitivity
26	Examine patterns and trends of diversity in the U.S.
26	Engage issues of racial or ethnic perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes
19	Explore ways to communicate and participate constructively in a diverse community
9	Foster appreciation of aesthetic dimensions of other traditions and cultures
19	Learn systematic approaches to understanding cultural differences and commonalities
3	Learn systematic techniques for dealing constructively with problems arising out of cultural differences
2	Participate in special programs that promote understanding other peoples
9	Study Western and non-western cultures in a world context
9	Study Western and non-western cultures from a comparative perspective
25	Understand how one's own culture shapes one's perceptions, ideology and values

Appendix E
Global Diversity Coding Summary

Courses meeting the global diversity requirement (N=40)

Number of Proposals	Criteria
30	Address diversity issues, particularly those involving unequal and/or discriminatory treatment
22	Compare positive and negative implications of various parochial or "...centric" perspectives
32	Encourage global awareness and sensitivity
6	Examine patterns and trends of diversity in the U.S.
16	Engage issues of racial or ethnic perceptions, attitudes and stereotypes
8	Explore ways to communicate and participate constructively in a diverse community
19	Foster appreciation of aesthetic dimensions of other traditions and cultures
19	Learn systematic approaches to understanding cultural differences and commonalities
6	Learn systematic techniques for dealing constructively with problems arising out of cultural differences
2	Participate in special programs that promote understanding other peoples
27	Study Western and non-western cultures in a world context
23	Study Western and non-western cultures from a comparative perspective
15	Understand how one's own culture shapes one's perceptions, ideology and values