

## Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Diversity Core Requirement Submitted to the Academic Senate, Fall 2012

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This report is respectfully submitted to the Academic Senate by Peter Murrell (Education), Brian Norman (English), Barnaby Nygren (Fine Arts), H. Lovell Smith (Sociology), Marianne Ward (Economics) and Martha Wharton (Academic Affairs). This report outlines the charge, process and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Diversity Core Requirement.

### **COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND CHARGE**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Diversity Core Requirement was convened by the Academic Senate in spring 2012. The committee was comprised of five faculty members, from all three schools, and the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity. The committee was provided a five part charge, listed below:

1. Develop a set of learning aims for all courses that satisfy the Diversity course core requirement. The aims may differ in wording by area (Global, Local, or Justice), but should be parallel in structure (e.g. if “Justice” has a learning aim that deals with content expectations, then “Global” and “Local” should have a similar aim).
2. Develop an assessment plan (What should be assessed; how it will be assessed (e.g. what types of direct or indirect evidence might be used, must direct evidence be presented); how frequently or when will it be assessed at the course and program level) for each learning aim.
3. Review the current course approval process (e.g., what information is needed to determine if a proposed course should be approved) and make recommendations if needed.
4. Review the process for course reapproval and make changes in this process as needed (especially in light of bullets 1 and 2)
5. Review the current organizational structure of the Diversity subcommittee within the UCC and determine if this structure can achieve the requirements of approving and reviewing courses and assessing the Diversity course requirement. Develop an alternative structure if needed.

This report, and two accompanying documents, “Diversity Course Requirement Aims and Outcomes” and “Application for Diversity Course Designation” contain the committee’s process, rationale and recommendations with respect to the five items listed above.

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### RATIONALE AND PROCESS

The goal of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Diversity Core Requirement was to create documents useful for three main constituencies: faculty offering diversity-designated courses or developing new ones, members of the committee tasked with reviewing diversity course applications, and faculty and administrators involved in university-level assessment efforts. The committee sought to clarify the aims of the existing diversity course requirement, striking a balance between specificity and brevity as we articulated what is common to diversity-designated courses across disciplines and categories. The committee also drew on existing documents and conceptions of diversity at Loyola in crafting assessable language. In thinking about the application, renewal, and assessment procedures, we were mindful of faculty time and therefore devised what we believe is the least intrusive process that maintains a commitment to a meaningful diversity course requirement.

While courses throughout the curriculum can and should touch on diversity-related issues, the committee believes that the official diversity course designation should be reserved for those courses with particular depth of inquiry. That is why the committee decided to retain the policy that the focus of a given course must fall under one of the three categories (global, domestic, justice), though we acknowledge that many courses will likely draw to some degree on multiple areas. The revised application for diversity designation implements the definitions and learning aims outlined in this document, as well as incorporates assessment data in a renewal process.

Throughout our process, we remembered that, while the diversity course requirement is a key contributor to the university-level diversity learning aim, it is not synonymous with it. In this way the diversity learning aim is the same as all other university-level learning aims: no one course, department, or unit has sole responsibility for critical understanding, eloquentia perfecta, and so on. For this reason the ad hoc committee has proposed that this aim should be assessed using the same mechanism as the other university-level aims, following the model used for critical understanding. Our committee's work and recommendations will provide guidance and data for that future effort.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to items 1 and 2 of the charge provided by the Academic Senate, we recommend the adoption of the learning aims and assessment process outlined in the document “Diversity Course Requirement Aims and Outcomes”. The document provides course goals, learning aims and learning outcomes for each diversity category (global, domestic, justice) and provides suggestions for assessment at the course and university levels. Upon review of the current course approval and re-approval processes, items 3 and 4 of the charge from the Academic Senate, the ad hoc committee developed the “Application for Diversity Course Designation”. This document is a revised version of the previous application for diversity course designation that we updated to be consistent with our recommendations regarding learning aims and assessment procedures. We recommend that this revised “Application for Diversity Course Designation” be adopted for both initial approvals and reapprovals of the diversity course designation.

The final issue that this ad hoc committee was asked to address relates to the organizational structure of the Diversity subcommittee within the UCC. We recommend that the Diversity subcommittee retain its place within the UCC and also retain its current representative structure. The UCC, as the university committee charged with review of the core curriculum, is in our estimation the most appropriate body to review matters relating to the diversity course core requirement. In particular, maintaining oversight of all aspects of the core within a single committee will promote a coherent core curriculum that is closely aligned with the undergraduate educational aims.

As the committee charged with the review of applications for the diversity course designation, the Diversity subcommittee of the UCC will also receive applications for reapproval of the diversity course designation. As the process for course approvals and reapprovals moves forward, the Diversity subcommittee will be faced with a temporary backlog of courses needing reapproval. We recommend that the UCC devise a staggered process for course reapprovals that allows for the temporary backlog to be cleared within four semesters.