

Faculty Diversity Committee Minutes
April 17, 1998

Present: Peggy Firman, Rosabeth Gibson, Chuck Hommel, John Lear, Ben Reuler, Carrie Washburn, and Carolyn Weisz

The meeting began at 4:00 pm. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as written.

Announcements:

- 1) The YWCA Luncheon is April 22nd from 12:00 pm to 1:30pm.
- 2) David Montajano, Head of Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas, will speak Tuesday April 28th at 8:00 p.m. in the Inside Theater.
- 3) Kate Evens has been chosen as the Diversity House Coordinator for next year.

A lengthy discussion of the rough draft of the Committee's Curriculum Report ensued, which considered section by section the draft assembled by Carolyn Weisz. In addition to changes in the content, the following issues came up but were not resolved:

---Does the Faculty Diversity Committee wish to make an endorsement of one of the several models for curricular development proposed in the report?

---To whom should the report be circulated (only the Faculty Senate, or the entire faculty) and when (this spring, or next fall when discussion of the core commences)?

---Should the Faculty Diversity Committee sponsor an informal discussion with faculty and students in next fall?

Sections of the report were farmed out for revisions to those present for final approval at the next meeting, April 24.

A brief discussion followed on Chuck Hommel's draft of the Committee Senate Report.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lear

Faculty Diversity Committee Report:
U.S. Pluralism in College and University Curricula
April 30, 1998

I. Purpose of this document

In 1996-1997, the Faculty Diversity Committee forwarded the following resolution to the faculty:

We believe that it is important for our students to have courses that expose them to the diversity of cultures in the United States and that equip them to think critically about the nature of our cultural diversity and its impact on our society. A liberal arts education should enable our students to live and work in diverse, multicultural communities. Furthermore, if courses on multiculturalism meet core requirements, students who might not otherwise seek out these courses will consider seriously their value as part of a liberal arts education. Thus, we urge the faculty to include a component on multiculturalism in the core curriculum.

Building on this commitment to educating students about issues of domestic diversity, this report reviews research and discussion by members of the 1997-1998 Faculty Diversity Committee on the topic of domestic diversity in the curriculum. The purpose of the document is to inform faculty about the nature of dialogues on this topic and models of diversity-related curricular programs at other universities and colleges. These issues are particularly timely given the faculty's current discussions at Puget Sound about revising the core curriculum. The goal of this report is to facilitate informed dialogue among the faculty about options for incorporating a U.S. pluralism component into the existing or soon to be revised Puget Sound core curriculum.

The report is based primarily on discussions among members of the Faculty Diversity Committee, publications by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), reports of diversity related activities published on Diversity Web ([http://www.inform.umd.edu/Diversity Web](http://www.inform.umd.edu/Diversity%20Web)), and web searches of individual universities. The report is a joint effort produced by members of the 1997-1998 Faculty Diversity Committee: Flo Ariessohn (Fall), Kevin Barhydt, Michele Birnbaum, Peggy Firman, Rosa Beth Gibson, George Guilmet (Spring), Charles Hommel, Judith Kay, Martyn Kingston (Fall), Pat Krueger, John Lear, George Mills, Pedro Renteria, Ben Reuler, Carrie Washburn, and Carolyn Weisz (chair).

The report includes the following sections:

- relevant history;
- rationale for including a U.S. pluralism component in higher education curricula;
- models for including a U.S. pluralism focus in higher education curricula along with example of the models currently existing at specific institutions;
- assessments of specific programs;
- challenges of transforming curricula;
- conclusion;
- references for those interested in learning more about these issues.

II. Relevant History

A. Faculty Diversity Committee Curricular Initiatives

In Fall 1992, the Academic Dean's Office compiled a list of 53 courses with significant diversity content in response to the University Diversity Committee's May 1990 "Recommendations to the President." This list was developed using the definition of "diversity" contained in that report. That definition included racial, religious, ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural groups. It did not include gender, sexual preference, national origin, and physical disability. The basis for selection was an evaluation of syllabi on file in the Associate Deans office.

In academic year 1993-1994, at the request of the Faculty Diversity Committee Subcommittee on Curriculum the Academic Dean's Office produced a much expanded list of 209 courses in the Puget Sound curriculum which could be said to contain "diversity" or "pluralistic" content. The scope of the definition was broadened to include the concept of "pluralism," a strong suggestion from the major presenter in an FDC-sponsored curriculum workshop in Spring 1993. In addition by that year, the Faculty ByLaws for the FDC included the following definition: "'Diversity' shall include areas such as race/ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and physical ability." Courses were grouped into the following categories: American Pluralism, Europe, Asia, Latin and South America, and Other. Even though the definition included physical disability no OT/PT courses were included in the list.

In December 1993 the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Diversity Committee sent this list of "diversity/pluralism" courses to department chairs asking departments to review the list, to add or delete courses, and to provide more information on the courses and the faculty who teach them. The goal was to produce a brochure for students listing courses, which in the opinion of the department offering them, contained significant diversity/pluralism components. During Spring 1994 a total of eight out of 30 departments responded to the query. The project was passed along to the 1994-1995 Diversity Committee. It was not acted on during that year.

The difficulty in making any list of diversity/pluralism courses lies in what constitutes "significant" diversity in a course and who determines whether or not it fits in a list. For example, faculty may add courses to the list which in their minds deal with diversity issues but which in the minds of other faculty serve only to water down the list. There may also be variation in the willingness of faculty to self-identify. Finally the same course taught by different instructors may vary enough in content such that one would qualify and another would not, rendering any list useful for only for one term.

Analysis of the activities described above suggests a need to come to some consensus about what constitutes courses studying issues of diversity and/or pluralism.

In 1993-1994, Curriculum Committee added the following language to the Departmental Curriculum Review Self-Study Guide at the request from the FDC: "In what ways does the curriculum in your department, school, or program reflect the diversity of our society?"

B. Other recent initiatives

1. In 1996-1997 Minors in African American Studies and Latin American Studies were added to the curriculum. A new course was also added—LAS 100, Introduction to Latin American

Studies-- as the foundation course for the LA minor. These two minors, along with the long-standing minor in Women Studies, group existing courses into coherent programs and help to make more visible the extent of “diversity/pluralistic” content in the curriculum.

2. In Spring 1998 the University submitted a proposal to the Hewlett Foundation for a three-year Pluralism and Unity grant which will, if funded, provide funding for course development.

III. Rationale for a U.S. pluralism focus in higher education curricula

A focus on U.S. pluralism serves to:

- develop within students a sense of informed, active citizenship as they enter a society of increasing diversity by focusing on contemporary and historical issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class and religion in U.S. life;
- provide students with opportunities for studying concepts of justice and the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusion in U.S. society;
- encourage students to study their own inherited and constructed traditions and identities; and
- expand students' ability to critically analyze controversial and contemporary issues that stem from the gender, race, class, ethnic, and religious differences in U.S. society.

IV. Models at Other Institutions:

Over the last five years, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, supported by grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, has engaged in a project entitled, "American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning". A major component of this project involves working with 100 colleges and universities to develop or assess curricular initiatives related to diversity and U.S. pluralism. The AAC&U has published several documents on this project and created a web site (Diversity Web) showcasing the programs at many of these institutions. The models below represent examples of distinct approaches to incorporating a focus on U.S. pluralism in higher education curricula.

Model 1: Infusion

In this model, schools do not institute separate requirements, but attempt to infuse all departments, divisions, and general education courses with information about diversity and pluralism. AAC&U reports suggest that "the infusion model is most effective at smaller institutions that have very strong leadership on diversity, a substantial allocation of funds over time, and at which there exists a shared commitment to diversity as a core component of their institutional mission." (Humphreys, p. 32)

Advantages: ". . . attempts to avoid marginalizing diversity courses and to minimize the chance that students might view a single diversity course simply as forced sensitivity or 'tolerance' training." (Humphreys, p. 31)

Difficulties/limitations: Requires extensive faculty development and commitment. Difficult to achieve. Difficult to monitor. "(R)uns the risk of paying lip service to diversity." (Humphreys, p. 31)

Sample Institution:

- Bloomfield College in NJ: More than half of faculty engage in a semester-long interdisciplinary, faculty development seminar. There are campus-wide diversity

initiatives related to curriculum, co-curriculum, service learning, and recruitment of diverse faculty, students, and administrators.

Model 2: Required Course or Courses

AAC&U reports a national trend toward including separate but important foci on both global and domestic diversity in curricula: "Instead of folding U.S. diversity into an all-encompassing global diversity requirement, institutions are beginning to opt for at least two courses: one that focuses on world cultures and another that focuses on specific issues of U.S. pluralism" (Humphreys, 1997, p. 3).

Sometimes courses are required for all students during a particular year (e.g., sophomore seminar) or multiple courses are offered in a sequence. "These sorts of requirements also seem to be more successful if they are developed with an individual institution's mission in mind" (Humphreys, p. 33) Three models of U.S. pluralism requirements are described below.

A. Required Course Among Various Course Options

This option involves taking one U.S. pluralism course among a menu of available courses.

Advantages: Can build off existing courses and faculty expertise. All students are exposed to courses with specific learning goals. Encourages faculty and institutions to identify specific learning goals.

Difficulties/limitations: Difficult to assess how well each course meets common goals.

Sample Institutions:

- Haverford College: "Social Justice" requirement
- Temple University: Two courses required: one in "American Cultures" and one in "Studies of Race"
- Iowa State University: Requires courses in both U.S. diversity and international perspectives.
- University of California, Berkeley: Required course on "American Cultures"
- Occidental College: All first-year students participate in a year-long colloquium on U.S. pluralism. Colloquia are team taught and students also attend smaller seminars led by individual faculty members (e.g., Women of Color in the U.S., Los Angeles).

B. Single Course on U.S. Pluralism

All students take a single course. Courses vary somewhat but share a common set of readings and topics. This model may involve team-teaching.

Advantages: Reaches all students. Common experience. Easier to assess courses. Interdisciplinary focus.

Difficulties/limitations: Requires extensive faculty development.

Sample Institutions:

- SUNY- Buffalo: Requires students to take course during second year: "American Pluralism and the Search for Equality". Courses are co-taught by 2-3 faculty. Individual courses vary in content but share some similar readings. Faculty development seminars held each summer.

C. Course Sequence Requirements or Infused General Education Sequence

Diversity is infused in a sequence of required general education courses offered throughout students' undergraduate years.

Advantages: Courses build off each other.

Difficulties/limitations: Extensive faculty development and commitment of resources.

Sample Institutions:

- University of California, San Diego: Requires three quarter sequence (Diversity, Justice, Imagination) studying various dimensions of culture. Multiple courses meet each requirement.
- St. Edwards University: Requires all students to take six courses related to cultural studies (Literature and Human Experience, Understanding and Appreciating the Arts, American Experience, American Dilemmas, Identity of the West, Contemporary World Issues).
- Fairleigh Dickinson University: Requires a four-semester core curriculum on American pluralism and comparative world cultures (Perspectives on the Individual, The Quest for Freedom, Global Issues, and Cross-Cultural Perspectives).

V. Assessment of Diversity Issues in the College Curriculum

Although no assessments that differentiate curricular approaches were found in the literature thus far, the following assessments on diversity issues in the curriculum are relevant and significant:

Astin (1993) used a national longitudinal study to examine effects of diversity experiences on campus upon student attitudes and behaviors, and on academic progress and values. Astin found that faculty emphasis on diversity issues in courses had a positive effect on student openness to racial understanding and overall satisfaction with college.

Other research supports Astin's findings. Tanaka (1996) found that inclusion of racial and ethnic issues in the college curriculum had positive effects on white students' sense of community, cultural understanding, and general satisfaction with college. Drawing from a variety of studies that assess diversity initiatives on the college campus, Smith (1997) notes:

There is a significant body of literature which suggests that serious engagement of diversity in the curriculum, along with linking classroom and out-of-class opportunities, positively affect students' attitudes and awareness about diversity, as well as their commitment to education, and their involvement. Research also shows connections between taking such courses and increased satisfaction with college . . . The inclusion of cultural diversity content and perspectives in coursework has positive effects on critical thinking skills and knowledge acquisition (p. 36).

VI. Challenges of Transforming Curricula

The monograph *Core Curriculum and Cultural Pluralism* (1992) by the AAC&U is an useful guide to the obstacles and successes involved in initiating core revisions with diversity/pluralism components. The Cultural Legacies Project indicated that institutions were seriously committed to using general education curriculum to increase awareness of cultural diversity, both within the U.S. and among the peoples of the world, both historically and contemporarily. However, only about 25% of the total institutions included or proposed a required course on pluralism within the U.S. as part of the core. The authors note, "It may be easier and less threatening to engage difference at a distance -- where it is expected and anticipated and where one has no permanent responsibility as a citizen -- than at home."

With regard to implementing programs, the report notes that:

- 1) An institution can not import a core program: A successful program fits the local context, reflects the institutional mission and vision of the faculty, and meets student needs.
- 2) Core design and implementation is a three- to five-year process. Along the way, there are mazes, bogs, potholes, vistas, forked roads, dead ends, and watering holes. There are no short cuts.
- 3) The process is as important as the product; a good planning and implementation process improves chances for success.

VII. Conclusion

We hope that this document will help encourage and guide the Puget Sound faculty to transform the curriculum in ways that systematically incorporate issues of pluralism and diversity. We are reluctant at this time to make a specific recommendation to the faculty of one model for achieving this goal over another, particularly if it means recommending a diversity/pluralism requirement. While many of us support such a requirement, that decision must ultimately come from an informed discussion that involves the faculty at large. All of us on the Faculty Diversity Committee feel that much more needs to be done to incorporate issues of pluralism and diversity into the curriculum than is being done now. While the "infusion" model outlined above may prove most acceptable to many faculty, and in some ways reaffirms already existing efforts and plans, we feel that any pursuit of an "infusionist" model over some type of requirement must involve a concerted commitment from the faculty and the administration that goes well beyond current efforts.

IV. References and Resources

Astin, A. W. 1993. Diversity and multiculturalism on campus: How are students affected? Change, 25 (2):44-49.

Friedman, E. G., Kolmar, W. K, Flint, C. B., & Rothenberg, P. Creating an inclusive college curriculum: A teaching sourcebook from the New Jersey Project. NY: Teachers College Press.

Glazer, N. (1997). We are all multicultural now. Harvard Press.

Humphreys, D. (1997). General education and American commitments. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Nash, G. B. (1992). Red, white, and black: Peoples of early North America. Prentice Hall.

Schmitz, B. (1992). Core curriculum and cultural pluralism. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Smith, D. G. 1997. Diversity works: The emerging picture of how students benefit. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Takaki, R. (1993). A different mirror: A history of multicultural America. Little, Brown, and Co.

Tanaka, G. K. 1996. The impact of multiculturalism on white students. Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of California, Los Angeles. Abstract in Dissertation Abstracts International 57 (05): 1980A.

American Pluralism & the College Curriculum: Higher Education in a Diverse Democracy. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Web resources:

Diversity Web: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/DiversityWeb>
diversity-web@uemail.umd.edu

Univ. of Maryland Diversity Datatbase: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/diversity>

Diversity Connections: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/connections>

The following Diversity newsroom address (resource for journalists) has a curriculum topical category: <http://www.inform.umd.edu/diversitynews>
div-news@uemail.umd.edu