

Modifications to Diversity Component of Proposed Gen Ed Program
February 9, 2007
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I. Rationale for Social-Cultural Diversity Requirement

The University of North Dakota takes pride in its mission to meet the individual and group needs of a diverse and pluralistic society through education, research, and service. The peoples served by and associated with the University vary widely; all must be valued for the richness their different cultures, heritages, perspectives, and ideas bring to this community. The University is, in part, a conduit through which individual perspectives and global interrelationships are enhanced by a learning and teaching environment that is aware of and sensitive to the diversity of its constituents. Diversity in the University is constituted by the full participation of persons of different racial and ethnic heritage, age, gender, socioeconomic background, and sexual orientation; or persons with disabilities; and of people from other countries. . . . See Statement on Institutional Diversity and Pluralism, UND University Senate, Feb. 4, 1993.

UND's general education program diversity requirement is designed to provide undergraduate students with the background knowledge and analytical skills to enable them to understand the concept of social-cultural diversity, recognize their own diversity and respect as well as appreciate the diversity of others, and analyze and apply knowledge of diversity to domestic societal and global issues. Students increasingly need to understand and work with issues arising from different dimensions of human diversity, such as age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, political status, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic background. These dimensions and their social and cultural consequences will have important ramifications for students' personal, professional, and intellectual lives, both for the time they are students and in later life. Students will be exposed to analytical frameworks within which these issues may be explored and understood, including cultural, ethical, humanities-based, social, political, and public policy analyses. It is UND's goal to prepare students through the study of human differences for responsible citizenship in an increasingly pluralistic and diverse society. Adapted from USC, Core/General Education, at http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/cat2006/undergraduate/usc_core.html.

From a practical point of view, research specific to UND (Gen Ed Longitudinal study, Gen Ed Cultures Assessment Committee) and broader educational research indicate that developing an appreciation for diversity is a lengthy process than cannot be addressed in a single class. The scope of diversity topics alone could justify a second course. Coupled with the fundamental changes (in understanding, in beliefs, etc.) that can be required to see another point of view, requiring at least two targeted exposures to this goal make sense for citizens of today's world.

II. Primary Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Require 6 credits of core social-cultural diversity coursework. This coursework may be selected from the 21 credits of 'breadth' requirements or the 3 credits of 'capstone' requirements.

Recommendation 2: 3 credits shall be selected from courses focusing on diversity in the United States, designated by 'U.' 3 credits shall be selected from courses focusing on global diversity, designated by 'G.'

Recommendation 3: At least 3 credits must be in the classroom. These could be either 'U' or 'G' credits.

III. Subsidiary Recommendations

UND currently uses a number of diversity statements. This is confusing and does not achieve institutional goals. UND should develop and adopt a concise, broadly accepted definition of diversity to guide the campus. The statement should be intended for use in all university publications, web applications, and other media where important institutional policies and principles are promulgated.

The administration should task development and adoption of an institutional diversity statement.