

CORE Diversity Task Force Recommendation

I. Introduction

On October 7, 2003, Provost William Destler convened the CORE Diversity Task Force and asked them to advise him on ways that the University of Maryland could continue to be a leader in diversity education. Chaired by Professor Bonnie Thornton Dill and Dr. Robert Waters, the specific charge was three-fold: (a) to evaluate the current CORE Diversity requirements and assess their effectiveness in accomplishing the goals, (b) to consider ways the campus might encourage additional courses that advance multicultural perspectives, and (c) to consider the possibility of creating a new living/learning program built around multicultural issues.

Interestingly, but not coincidentally, the timing for this review corresponded with the fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, which ruled educational segregation illegal nationwide. Both the State and the University of Maryland were key locations in the development of this landmark legal decision and both were profoundly affected by its implementation. As the work of the Task Force progressed, its members also participated in the *Provost's Conversations* programs on the *Brown* decision, learning about this history and our institutional place within it. As a result, we became increasingly convinced that the context for reconceptualizing CORE Diversity requirements for our students today involved three considerations: the particular history and current status of this state and institution regarding school segregation, the university's mandate and responsibilities as a land-grant institution to serve its citizens, and the institution's unique contributions to diversity in higher education today¹.

The first successful case to challenge the "separate but equal" provisions that supported school segregation was brought against the University of Maryland Law School in 1935. That decision, which admitted the first African American student into the law school, began the process of redefining citizenship in the state of Maryland so that the people to be served under the land-grant mission of the University of Maryland, College Park would one day include African Americans.

Since the 1980's as our state, society and campus communities have become increasingly diverse, this institution has been among national leaders in launching, advocating for and sustaining a range of initiatives designed to achieve a truly multicultural institution. Nevertheless, challenges remain. For example, research results generated by our faculty involved in the *Diverse Democracy Project* indicate that

¹One of the documents that had considerable impact on the committee's deliberations was Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill's presentation at the Provost Conversation on Diversity on April 13, 2004. A copy of that presentation with data on the racial/ethnic composition of faculty and students at the University and current school segregation in the State of Maryland is included in the Appendix of this report.

students at the University of Maryland arrive on the campus from high schools that are very segregated. This is especially true for our Black and White students, suggesting that faculty and administrators at the University of Maryland have much work to do in helping students realize all the benefits of being on a diverse campus.

Our recommendations for changes in CORE Diversity represent a modest attempt to build on our strengths and to enhance student learning by conveying the relationships between historical legacy and contemporary issues in ways that will better prepare our students to be knowledgeable, critical and engaged citizens in addressing the challenges of the future. Our expectation is that these recommendations will also assist all students at the University of Maryland realize the educational benefits of membership in a diverse campus community.

II. Overview of Recommendations

After extensive study and discussion, the Task Force offers six recommendations to enhance undergraduate students' understanding of Diversity. These recommendations affect:

1. General education program (CORE) Diversity course requirements
2. Processes for implementing course requirement changes
3. Course review processes for CORE Diversity courses
4. Assessment of diversity experiences
5. Faculty development
6. Diversity-Themed Living/Learning Program

III. General Education Program (CORE) Diversity Course Requirement Recommendations

The Task Force has concluded that the Diversity course requirement in the undergraduate general education program (CORE) should be revised in the following ways:

- *Students should successfully complete two three-credit Diversity courses instead of one, for a total of six credits.*
- *There should be two categories of courses: Racial-Ethnic Studies & Race Relations in the United States, and Perspectives on Cultural Diversity. Students should successfully complete one course in each category.*
- *Students should successfully complete this two-course requirement by taking one course at the lower-level (100-200) and one at the upper-level (300-400).*

Discussion

As we suggested in the introduction to this document, our understanding of

diversity has expanded dramatically since the initiation of the CORE Diversity requirement in 1990. At that time, the phrase "Human Cultural Diversity" permitted students to learn about people and cultures not then represented in many courses, and the one-course requirement was a reasonable addition to a general education curriculum that had no prior requirement. Nearly a decade and a half later, however, we believe that neither the phrasing nor the one-course requirement is adequate. In fact, few members of the task force believe that two courses will ensure that students can adequately navigate our multicultural world, either on campus or off after they graduate. Yet, the addition of a course to the general education requirement, along with the senior-year assessment presented later, does increase the possibility that students will encounter and examine dimensions of difference and identity not likely in a single course, and it should not be cost-prohibitive.

Precisely because we understand diversity to be complex, we have defined the foci of the two categories of courses in ways that will encourage student learning about the multiple layers and dimensions of diversity.

Category 1. Racial-Ethnic² Studies & Race Relations in the United States

The particular histories of the State of Maryland and the mandate of the University to serve the citizens of this state through its land-grant status challenge us to equip our students with a knowledge of the specific histories that have shaped human relations in the state and continue to play a role in its social, economic and cultural life. These factors encourage us to recommend that one course be devoted to learning about the experiences, cultures and relations among racial-ethnic peoples and groups in the United States. By requiring one course in this category, we do not dismiss the existence and importance of other forms of human diversity. Rather, we acknowledge that in this nation, and particularly this state and this campus at this time, racial-ethnic identity remains a profound marker of social difference. We are convinced that students at this university should be asked to think knowledgeably and creatively about such issues in order to contribute to the well-being of the state and of the society at large.

Courses in this category will:

- explore the specific histories, cultures, and sociopolitical contexts of the core groups racialized in U.S. history: African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, Native American Indians, and European Americans;
- examine these issues either within single groups or in a comparative context -

² "The term *racial-ethnic* refers to groups that are socially and legally subordinated and remain culturally distinct within U.S. society. It is meant to include (1) the systematic discrimination of socially constructed racial groups and (2) their distinctive cultural arrangements. Historically, the categories of African American, Latina/o, Asian American, and Native American were constructed as both racially and culturally distinct. Each group has a distinctive culture, shares a common heritage, and has developed a common identity within a larger society that subordinates them." (From: Baca Zinn, M. & Dill, B.T., *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, Philadelphia, PA: 1994,p.11).

with each other, or within U.S. or transnational contexts;

- examine constructions of race, racialization and race relations in the historical and/or contemporary experiences of racial-ethnic groups in the United States; and
- explore historical and/or contemporary debates and controversies over these constructions and experiences.

Category 2. Perspectives on Cultural Diversity

Because understandings of diversity have grown rapidly over the last 10 -15 years, our conceptualization of diversity needs both greater depth and specificity. Courses in this category will reflect the expansive scholarship and theory of recent years that (a) recognizes the complexity of diversity, (b) accepts the importance of exploring the relations among categories of human difference, and (c) acknowledges that forms of social and cultural difference are not neutral and involve relations of power and privilege among individuals and groups. They will explore one or more of the following dimensions of experience and/or analysis and attend to the dynamics of power that mediate relations among social groups constituted by racial-ethnic, religious, cultural, class, national, gender, sexual orientation or identity, religious, linguistic, familial, ability-oriented, and appearance-oriented heritages, practices, beliefs, and/or social attitudes.

Courses in this category will engage:

- the relationship of personal identity to social and group identities, especially those derived from racial-ethnic, national, and other group identities listed above;
- comparative studies of the experiences, cultures, relations, and/or contributions of two or more social groups or constituencies within a single society **or** across societies, **and** within a single historical time frame **or** across historical time frames; and
- intersectional analyses of dimensions of difference; that is, explorations of the ways in which such aspects of identity and social structure as race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, nationality, disability, among others, intersect with one another in constituting identity itself, as well as, experience and social formations.

The recommendation for both a lower-level and an upper-level course is to provide students the opportunity to deepen their understandings of this subject and to encourage departments and colleges to develop courses for their majors that examine these issues in relationship to their particular field of study. Lower-level courses will be introductory in nature, providing an overview, definitions of concepts and terminology, and identifying the relevance of issues in the course to both self and society. Upper-level courses will involve more focused, in-depth and complex analysis; will have more

demanding reading and writing assignments that require integrating, synthesizing and building on previous knowledge; and may also require more thoughtful and involved explorations of the relationship between theory and application.

Diversity course requirement language for Undergraduate Catalog

Current: Cultural Diversity courses focus primarily on: (a) the history, status, treatment, or accomplishments of women or minority groups and subcultures; (b) non-Western culture or (c) concepts and implications of diversity.

Proposed: There are two categories of Social and Cultural Diversity Courses:

Racial-Ethnic Studies and Race Relations in the United States courses focus primarily on specific histories, cultures, and sociopolitical contexts of the core groups racialized in U.S. history either in a comparative context with each other, or within U.S. or transnational contexts; and/or constructions of race, racialization and race relations in the historical and/or contemporary experiences of racial-ethnic groups in the United States; and/or historical and/or contemporary debates and controversies over these constructions and experiences in the United States context.

Perspectives on Cultural Diversity courses focus on either issues of personal and social identity, such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion, nationality, disability, among others; a comparative study of two or more social groups within a single society or historical time period **or** across societies or historical periods; **or** an intersectional analysis of dimensions of difference.

Courses in both categories are offered at both the lower-and upper-division levels.

IV. Process for Implementing Course Requirement Change Recommendations

We offer four recommendations for implementing the revised Diversity course requirement:

- *Begin implementation for incoming freshmen in fall semester 2006. Students who enter prior to that time would be covered under previous requirements.*
- *All existing courses would remain as currently developed and approved until their five-year approval has expired, at which time they can be resubmitted with revisions as necessary to meet the new requirements.*
- *The existing CORE Diversity committee should be charged with the responsibility for developing criteria for and reviewing courses submitted for the revised requirement. They should also make final determinations of course-category fit.*
- *The upper-level course that a student takes to meet the proposed CORE requirement be allowed to satisfy the Advanced Studies requirement under*

CORE.

Discussion

We realize that existing diversity courses are approved for five years, and current courses are at various points in their five-year cycle. Some current courses, and perhaps many, will likely fit the two recommended categories, and we believe they can meet the revised requirement. Given the state of the budget and the likely disruption to departments' planning, we do not expect that all departments will be able to develop new courses overnight; consequently, the overall implementation of the revised requirement will be gradual. Ideally, faculty who teach current diversity courses will revise them to meet the goals of the new categories in time for their five-year review. In addition, allowing the upper level CORE Diversity course to qualify as an Advanced Studies course under CORE will help diminish the perception that the additional diversity course requirement will be unduly burdensome.

V. Course Review Process Recommendation

There is currently no regular review of CORE Diversity courses that parallels the review of CORE Distributive Studies courses. We, therefore, recommend that the CORE Diversity Committee be charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing a process for the regular review of CORE Diversity courses that parallels the review of CORE Distributive Studies courses.

Discussion

As new courses are developed and/or old ones revised, it will be important for the CORE Diversity Committee to develop a systematic review process ensuring that courses continue to meet established guidelines. In addition to a campus-wide review, we would encourage colleges to review their diversity course offerings. The review of CORE Diversity courses conducted by Professor Linda Williams for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences provides an appropriate model for a college-level analysis of Diversity courses. Thus, we recommend that:

- *All colleges engage in a collaborative review of CORE Diversity courses within their departments in a way that involves full-time faculty at all levels of the assessment process.*
- *Relevant concerns in this review include the content and pedagogy of Diversity courses as redefined in this document, the extent to which Diversity courses are taught by full-time faculty, and the role of Diversity courses in both general education and major requirements.*

Ideally, the college assessment process will lead to the creation of new Diversity

courses at the upper level within all colleges, oriented toward the intellectual mission of the particular departments and/or colleges.

VI. Faculty Development Recommendations

We recognize that revising existing courses and creating new courses that fulfill these requirements is a time-consuming process that merits recognition and support for participating faculty. We also acknowledge that many new pedagogic strategies for teaching of diversity issues have emerged in recent years, from intergroup dialogues to new electronic technologies. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that:

- *Groups such as the Center for Teaching Excellence; the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity; the Curriculum Transformation Project; and the Office of Human Relations Programs receive support from the University to collaborate in developing effective faculty development experiences specifically oriented toward the revision of old courses and the creation of new ones to meet these new requirements.*
- *Special attention be paid to assisting faculty and departments in the development of courses at the upper division level, especially those linked to the major.*

VII. Assessment of Diversity Experiences Recommendation

The Task Force believes that the larger goals of equipping students to understand the implications of diversity and to participate fully in a diverse society cannot be achieved with only two courses. We also recognize that the University provides many other opportunities for students to engage these issues inside the classroom and outside the classroom in residence life and other University co-curricular contexts. The Task Force recognizes the importance of doing regular, ongoing assessment in forwarding the institution's efforts to understand the nature of students' diversity-related experiences as well as the impact that these experiences have on other important educational outcomes. We therefore recommend that:

- *A senior-year assessment be included as part of an ongoing assessment process that employs mixed methods in exploring these important questions.*
- *These assessments should involve quantitative longitudinal assessment activities (through surveys, etc.) that will help us to understand the nature of students' experiences and their educational development at the time that they enter college, the nature of their experiences and educational development at regular intervals throughout their college experience, and the role that*

students' experiences with diversity while at Maryland have in enhancing these important outcomes. This type of analysis yields important information about how engagement with diversity in college adds value to the educational experiences and outcomes of students.

- *Qualitative assessment (i.e., focus groups, individual interviews, ethnographies) will be an essential component in the overall research design. These tools can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of students' experiences and the meaning that students give to these experiences. This type of data will extend the knowledge gathered from quantitatively oriented studies.*
- *The Task Force believes that these assessment activities can (and should) be included as part of a comprehensive and integrated program of assessment that focuses on the undergraduate experience at Maryland.*

Discussion

The campus should be strongly encouraged to design and administer, through CAWG, an assessment of student perceptions of diversity experiences on campus (both curricular and co-curricular) that includes examining the impact of diversity courses and involves full-time faculty at all levels of the assessment process. A particular emphasis on a senior-year assessment would also provide an opportunity for colleges to develop a way to assess their graduates' preparation to engage these issues in relationship to work settings or in the substantive content in their field of specialization. The committee strongly encourages colleges to find creative ways in senior seminars, internships, capstone courses, etc., to help students examine issues of diversity specifically as it applies to their major field of study.

The information gathered through this assessment process should inform the CORE approval process, academic and co-curricular programming, the deliberations of senior-level administrators, and all our knowledge of the tangible educational benefits of our diversity for all students.

VIII. Diversity-Themed Living/Learning Program Recommendations

The Provost undertake the development of a four-semester, living/learning community entitled, Leadership in a Diverse United States, (LEAD-US).

Discussion

The purpose of the program is to prepare University of Maryland students to live, work, and lead in an increasingly diverse workplace, country, and world. This four-semester experience, focused on the many aspects of leadership and diversity in the United States, will use the CORE curriculum as building blocks for three-fourths of its academic requirements (see below). The residential component of the program will allow the diverse group of students accepted into the program to engage in academic

and co-curricular community activities, thereby significantly enhancing their comfort with, and facility for, diversity-related experiences, as a core part of their preparation to become leaders in a range of diverse societal contexts. Deliberately structured cross-group living arrangements will further enhance students' growth in this direction. The residential component of this program as a whole will complement students' diverse classroom experiences. Results from the Spring 2003 CAWG Campus Climate Survey suggest that students at the University of Maryland would greatly benefit from a diversity-themed living/learning program. Student comments in focus groups indicate that their perceptions of others' experiences are largely based upon their own backgrounds. While undergraduate students are initially attracted to the University in part because of our diverse student body, they are often unable to embrace differences due to a lack of awareness and fear of engaging students from different backgrounds. One student stated that "there is the intimidation of exposing oneself, as well as the intimidation of embracing one's own self and heritage while managing the opinions of others in their own group regarding these differences." Focus group participants indicate that they look to the University to provide opportunities for them to learn about other cultures, to learn from students of different backgrounds, and to create opportunities to facilitate access to the benefits of being part of a diverse student body.

Students in living/learning programs such as Gemstone and College Park Scholars most frequently feel the strongest sense of community. According to the climate report, living with others who share a common experience and sharing space with them on a regular basis contributed heavily to the development of a sense of community among the students. One student stated, "I'm part of the Gemstone Honors Program. You see the same people in and out of class and it builds community. Since it is a living/learning community it has helped me tremendously." To create this sense of community, learning, and growth in a diversity-themed living/learning program, with its inherent opportunities and challenges, would be a major achievement for the students and for the University of Maryland.

LEAD-US will focus on upper-level students who began their higher education experiences at Maryland (sophomore/junior year and higher) and transfer students who will be entering the University in the junior year. There will be 50 (approximately 25 returning and 25 transfer) students in each class/cohort. Given that there will be two cohorts, the program would cap at 100 students. In order to ensure that all the students in the program realize the benefits of participating in this diverse learning community, racial-ethnic, gender, religious, and sexual orientation-related diversity will be one of the important factors considered in selecting students for the LEAD-US program.

The program will focus on an upper-level experience for several reasons:

- The junior year provides a natural point from which to build on the experiences students gain in related learning communities that focus on the first two years, including International Education Services' Global

Communities and Language House, College Park Scholars' American Cultures Advocates for Children, and CIVICUS, among others.

- Students are more academically and emotionally prepared at that time to deal with the opportunities and challenges presented by living in a diversity themed residential community. The transition from high school to college is complete, and students have likely spent at least one year in a university setting engaging diverse student populations.
- LEAD-US will link its CORE components with upper-level academic experiences in the various academic departments, with mentoring opportunities, and with career planning and placement services.

Members of the Task Force realize that several significant hurdles will have to be overcome to make this program a reality. The residential facility – ideally centrally located on campus – should also provide lounge, community, and seminar space for the program's 100 students. Space should also be provided for unique cultural demands on these students, e.g., private and safe community prayer space for participating Muslim students. Ideally, this space could be part of a **Transfer Center** that all transfer students can gravitate to for transcript articulation, transfer orientation, and other related matters. The University will also have to revise its housing policy to give priority to the 25 transfer students who would enroll in the program each year.

Why Leadership in a Diverse United States?

- A focus on preparing University of Maryland students for leadership in a diverse U.S. will complement the proposed new element of the CORE Diversity Requirement: to focus on specific histories, cultures, and sociopolitical contexts of the core groups racialized in U.S. history either in a comparative context with each other, or within U.S. or transnational contexts; and/or constructions of race, racialization and race relations in the historical and/or contemporary experiences of racial-ethnic groups in the United States; and/or historical and/or contemporary debates and controversies over these constructions and experiences in the United States context.
- The Campus has a responsibility to produce leaders of tomorrow with the skills to respond to the ever-increasing diversity of the State of Maryland and the nation. The body of research emerging from the Diverse Democracy Project documents that college graduates who are exposed to a meaningfully diverse curricular and co-curricular higher education experience are hired faster, promoted earlier, and earn more money sooner than those who are not.
- Recent collaborative initiatives from Academic and Student Affairs are focusing on the related issue of civic engagement in the United States.
- An additional benefit of the LEAD-US program is that diversity-related programs could be piloted through LEAD-US prior to being launched to the campus at large. LEAD-US students can also serve as a focus group for the University's faculty and

administration on transfer and diversity issues. Given the leadership that Maryland provides in learning communities and diversity, this would be a unique model, worthy of emulation at other institutions and a source of potential external resources.

Why Transfer Students?

- LEAD-US will help improve retention and degree completion rates for transfer students by making them part of a cohort of students who will be connected to each other and move through the program in a structured, coordinated fashion.
- Transfer students significantly contribute to the diversity of the undergraduate student body.
- Transfer students merit outreach programs that allow them to connect with the campus to become life-long contributors to the campus as valuable alumni.
- Recruitment of a diverse group of transfer students will enable the University to reach out to the diversity immediately around us, particularly in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.
- The focus on transfer students will provide an important link to students at Maryland's community colleges, especially students of color.
- This program provides a direct response to recommendations made by prior task forces addressing transfer students; in particular, the identified need for this population of students to have access to both diversity experiences and living/learning experiences on par with those available to non-transfer students or students whose college careers originate at Maryland.

Administrative Home

The administrative home for this living/learning community will be Undergraduate Studies (UGST).

- Undergraduate Studies' current living/learning communities (e.g., College Park Scholars, Beyond the Classroom, and Honors) already have administrative structures and procedures in place to work with the Offices of Undergraduate Admissions, Resident Life, the Registrar, etc.
- Undergraduate Studies has experience with interdisciplinary initiatives; e.g., the Asian American Studies Program, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies, and College Park Scholars.
- Undergraduate Studies also houses Letters and Sciences (L&S). If any of these students have yet to declare a major, L&S could provide dedicated advising to that subpopulation of this learning community.
- Undergraduate Studies has experience partnering with non-academic units on both curricular and co-curricular endeavors. By design, LEAD-US will require that additional such partnerships be established.

The initiative would build its programmatic and curricular initiatives upon the collaboration with colleges such as Education, Arts and Humanities, and Behavioral

and Social Sciences. Undergraduate Studies has experience in such collaborations (e.g., Scholars). As with similarly situated programs, we hope that successful completion of the program will be noted on a student’s transcript.

Program Content

First Semester	Revised Diversity Leadership course (3 credits). Serves as CORE/Advanced Studies.
Second Semester	New Comparative Ethnic Studies Course (3 credits). Serves as CORE/Advanced Studies.
Third Semester	Dedicated Junior English sections (3 credits). Serves as CORE Fundamental Studies.
Final Semester	<p>Group Project/Experience (1-2 Credits). Serves as Upper-Level Elective.</p> <p>Capstone experience in which students work in groups that are strategically crafted to maximize diverse interaction. This experience could be modeled after comparable substantive and/or otherwise culminating experiences in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gemstone • College Park Scholars’ Science Discovery and the University’s semester-long Problem-Based-Learning projects, which culminate in poster session presentations during Undergraduate Research Day. • Urban Studies and Planning Program’s “Langley Park Project”. <p>Faculty at the department level in a range of relevant disciplines will also work with LEAD-US students to ensure that they receive discipline-specific advice and mentorship during their LEAD-US capstone experience.</p> <p>Intergroup Dialogue Experience (1-3 Credits). Serves as Upper-Level Elective if three (3) credit option is exercised. May also serve as part of the required and elective coursework for a proposed minor.</p> <p>During one of their four semesters in the LEAD-US program, students must also enroll in at least a single, one (1) credit Intergroup Dialogue (EDPL 338 or a cross-listed section).</p>