



UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

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UNDERGRADUATE DIVERSITY COURSE  
REQUIREMENT

*Approved Fall 2009*

*This proposal was crafted by the Curriculum Development Sub-committee of the University Diversity Committee, in response to student and faculty feedback at the 2006 University Diversity Retreat.*

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## CONTENTS

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- ◆ Diversity Requirement: Introduction.....4
  - Learning Objectives.....6
  - Criteria for Diversity Courses .....7
  - Implementation Plan.....8

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# DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT

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## Introduction

The President of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), Carol Schneider Geary, recently articulated the continuing demonstrable need for institutions of higher learning to support rigorous, intentional curricular and co-curricular programs addressing diversity in the United States. As Schneider Geary notes, however, to adequately address “diversity” in the context of the United States in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century means also to address issues of globalism and of civic engagement, both domestically and internationally. Schneider Geary argues that while higher education has produced solid work in the past several decades in the three areas critical for the education of future citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – global studies, U.S. diversity studies, and civil responsibility – the challenge facing us now is to connect these efforts in better ways without collapsing them.<sup>1</sup>

It is in this spirit that the University Diversity Committee at Pacific proposed a new “diversity requirement” for all students seeking an undergraduate degree at the University of the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> The diversity requirement would serve as a key curricular component of the University’s commitment to inclusive excellence and to producing students with strong intercultural competencies. As our community continues to work toward moving diversity from an aspirational value to a core value, it is

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Schneider Geary. “Civic Learning in a Diverse Democracy: Education for Shared Futures,” *Diversity and Democracy* 10.3 (Fall 2007): 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> A note on language: just as global studies, U.S. diversity studies, and civic leadership curricular efforts are inter-linked yet also crucially distinct, so are the terms “multiculturalism,” “gender studies,” “ethnic studies,” “queer studies,” “disability studies” “intercultural competence,” and “inclusive excellence” bound up but not coterminous with one another. Because “diversity” in its most capacious sense serves as an umbrella for all of these terms, far surpassing its initial usage as simply a demographic term, the University of the Pacific has chosen the term “diversity” for our efforts. See Janet Marie Bennett and Milton James Bennett’s “Multiculturalism and International Education: Domestic and International Differences,” *Learning Across Cultures: Intercultural Communication and International Educational Exchange*, Althen, Gary, ed. Washington DC: NAESA: Association of International Educators, 1994: 145-172.

especially significant that this proposed requirement aligns with several of the Strategic Directions articulated in *Pacific Rising 2015*, including:

- **Strengthen current and develop new academic programs of distinction** through investment in existing programs, national stature for the first-professional schools, and new academic hallmarks.
- **Advance faculty teaching, scholarship and research** by expanding faculty development and increasing resources for scholarship and research.
- **Pursue university-wide marks of distinction**
- **Advance integrated, multidisciplinary experiences** for undergraduates through a first-year experience, new accelerated programs, and three-campus, three-city opportunities.
- **Leverage collaboration for innovative learning experiences**
- **Cultivate diversity, intercultural competence, and global responsibility** by ensuring student competencies, making diversity an integral part of curricula and student life, creating a more diverse student body, maintaining the "Diversity Hiring Plan for Faculty," increasing faculty and staff ethnic diversity, and increasing training.

Furthermore, we are confident that this requirement complements and supports several existing University initiatives including the General Education Program, the intercultural competency component of the e-Portfolio, the Global Leadership Initiative, and Student Life's emphasis on Inclusive Excellence in co-curricular programming. This requirement strengthens core-skills development, both in and outside of the classroom, enhancing self-reflection, self-awareness, and students' ability to be aware of and connect with others in more meaningful ways.

What follows are student learning objectives, content criteria, and recommended pedagogical approaches for the diversity course requirement, as well as an implementation plan. This requirement will be implemented for students seeking undergraduate degrees at Pacific, beginning with the first-year students in fall, 2010. The requirement will be implemented for transfer students beginning fall 2011. All students seeking an undergraduate degree from Pacific will be required to take at least three units of approved coursework to meet the diversity requirement.

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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**First, students completing any approved “diversity course” will be able to articulate, in both written and oral forms, how notions of difference work within frameworks of social hierarchy.** (Difference may be defined by such notions as age, class, citizenship, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, language, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status.)

**Next, students completing an approved “diversity course” will also be able to do at least *three of the following four* tasks:**

1. Articulate their own developing understanding of social difference and its impact on their discipline(s), personal life and society as a whole;
2. Express, in both written and oral forms, their understanding of how ideas and beliefs about diversity and difference in the United States have changed over time, identifying relevant historical movements and players;
3. Demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of how social institutions and individuals respond to issues of difference;
4. Apply their understanding of relevant theory and/or historical analysis of diversity to a specific “societal problem” for the purpose of developing solutions.

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## CRITERIA FOR DIVERSITY COURSES

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**Courses designated “diversity courses” at Pacific will:**

- Be at least 3 units, or, if approved for less than 3 units, be combined with another approved diversity course so that the student takes at least 3 units of approved coursework to meet the diversity requirement.
- Analyze issues of difference within one or more societal and cultural contexts. Courses that engage in a comparative analysis of diversity are encouraged.
  - A. If the primary focus is on the United States, an effort should be made to place U.S. diversity issues within a global context.
  - B. If focusing on a non-U.S. societal context, the course must make connections to issues of difference within the United States.
- Complete at least *four of the following five*:
  - A. Analyze the intersections of social categories such as age, class, citizenship, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, language, marital status, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status;
  - B. Address how diversity (or the lack thereof) has influenced the discipline(s) of study;
  - C. Provide illustrations of ways in which structural, institutional, and ideological discrimination arise from socially defined meanings attributed to difference;
  - D. Focus on issues of diversity and difference across cultural, economic, social, and political institutions in historical and contemporary terms;
  - E. Include the study of the unequal distribution of power within the framework of particular disciplines and course content.

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## RECOMMENDED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

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- Incorporate active learning strategies (e.g. ungraded, in-class writing exercises, classroom discussion, peer-to-peer review of written assignments, web-based discussion forums, etc.);
- Course readings should offer diverse types of analysis and viewpoints. For example: first-person testimonies, historical documents, analysis of contemporary social conflicts, materials revealing or analyzing stereotypical representation of various social groups, etc.;
- Assess students' demonstration of the learning outcomes above, preferably in forms that include self-reflection and meta-cognition.

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## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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1. Establish a Diversity Curriculum Advisory Board to the Academic Affairs Committee. The board would be responsible for reviewing and recommending for approving syllabi of courses proposed as “diversity courses.” Membership of the board would include *at least* the following: a member from the Ethnic Studies program, a member from the Gender Studies program, a student, and the Assistant Provost for Diversity (*ex-officio*). However, faculty from all bachelor degree-granting units and the Library will be invited to participate on the board.
2. Offer faculty development opportunities for interested faculty to revise their curricula and/or pedagogies to meet the criteria for official diversity courses. The first of these opportunities was a five-day seminar led by the Power, Difference, and Discrimination program from May 18-May22, 2009.
3. Hold an open forum for all affected academic units in Fall 2009 to discuss the degree requirement.
4. Work with the Office of the Registrar, the Academic Affairs Committee, and the Council of Associate and Assistant Deans to create an attribute for designated courses and incorporation into CAPP to ensure smooth tracking of the degree requirement.