

Diversity and Cultural Competence Requirements in the proposed GE Program

Our 2020 Strategic Plan places great emphasis on our commitment to diversity and belonging. The General Education program plays a crucial role in developing students in these broad areas. The current GE program has a Cultural Competency requirement, a language requirement, and a World Civilization requirement. Many other requirements also emphasize diversity and can help to develop cultural competence.¹ The proposal for a revised General Education Program seeks to expand and deepen our current requirements, formalizing where these take place while acknowledging that they appear throughout the curriculum at informal levels.

To this end, the proposal for a Revised GE Program includes (1) a Diversity course requirement in the Connections portion of the GE program and (2) a continuation and revision of the Cultural Competency requirement. We also suggest working with Housing and Residential Life (HRL) to ensure that cultural competence is addressed through their programming.

Diverse Perspectives Course Requirement

A course that deepens student understanding of the diverse cultures and traditions within the United States with a focus on marginalized stories and perspectives.

Students who complete a course with a diversity component should be able to:

- Understand the systematic ways various groups have been stripped of power and marginalized;
- Articulate the roles and contributions of minoritized groups and/or historically excluded groups;
- Transfer this knowledge to other contexts as they prepare to be servant leaders in a diverse world.

A pursuit of learning in diversity, especially at a Christian institution, implies that we study diversity with the goal of upholding inclusion, equity, and belonging in the university and the body of Christ. Otherwise, we simply learn for the sake of knowledge of others and “outgroups,” rather than learning with an eye to love those on the outskirts of society as Christ loved those same groups. Toward that end, these classes should focus on the intersections of at least four of the following areas with a primary focus on two:

- Race and ethnicity
- Immigration
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability (and health)
- Socioeconomic status (social class)
- Nationality and citizenship
- Religion
- (Age)
- (Body)

¹ Examples include: REL 301: Christianity and Culture, HIST 204: America of the American Peoples, the Literature requirement and the Human Institutions and Behavior Requirement.

Cultural Competency

This course requirement already exists in our catalog. Its PLOs are as follows:

- Learn to value diversity and similarities among all peoples;
- Develop skills in order to effectively respond to cultural differences;
- Assess their own sociocultural identity and role in broader social and cultural systems;
- Adapt to cultural contexts of communities they serve;
- Understand how to use cultural competence to inform institutional and community efforts that address social inequality.

While there is overlap between a cultural competence requirement and a diversity course requirement, these are distinct entities. The former is a skill that is developed while the latter is content that is learned. Many faculty are already addressing diversity in their classes at several levels, but may not necessarily be addressing the skills that are correspondent to cultural competence. At the same time, the committee is concerned that many of the courses listed under our cultural competence designation are more rightly diversity courses. While we may very well practice cultural competence, we do not currently have a faculty that is widely trained in cultural competence or its pedagogy. Accordingly, we propose the following:

- Narrow the learning outcomes for Cultural Competency. PLO #1 should happen, specifically, through the Diverse Perspectives requirement, as well as through the curriculum.
- Re-consider the courses that currently count toward cultural competence in light of revised PLOs and shift some into the diversity category.
- Offer other pathways to cultural competence, such as:
 - HUM 295 - work with IP to develop a curriculum for IP that utilizes this unique opportunity to develop cultural competence;
 - Inclusive Leadership - The content and ownership of this course is to be determined. The general idea is to offer students an elective one unit, skills-based class that provides students an opportunity to understand and practice what it means to seek diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. If we are training students to live lives of purpose, service and leadership, it is in line with our mission to ensure that they practice inclusive leadership.

Language

One area of immediate improvement is how we *express* our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through our curricular offerings. We say very little on our web presence and even in our catalog about the work that faculty are doing to comprehensively address and uphold diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our curriculum from unique and Christian perspectives.