Diversity Curriculum Proposal

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The Diversity Curriculum Committee is delighted to discover that diversity is one of the essential elements of discussion among members of the Core Planning Committee (CPC). In the summary below and during the Fall Core Forum, we have detailed our reasoning and vision after a year and a half of extensive research for diversity in the core. We are convinced that by weaving diversity throughout the curriculum within the context of the CPC's careful considerations, the core at USD will be recognized as a national model for higher education.

Six key elements of diversity in the curriculum include:

- Courses that investigate diversity through the lenses of power and privilege
- Courses that are interdisciplinary (integrated across disciplines)
- Courses that build vertically (two course minimum over time)
- Courses that examine diversity within local and global contexts (one or both courses should focus on the US)
- Courses that emphasize <u>intersectionality</u> of race/ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability
- Curricular framework that includes a culminating experience focusing on diversity

We see the possibilities for these elements in the core curriculum we construct at USD and look forward to collaborating with the CPC on the shape of the core. We are eager to hear your ideas for implementing these recommendations.

Executive Summary

Past research shows that students and faculty benefit from developing a diverse curriculum. Diversity in the curriculum enhances critical thinking by raising new issues and perspectives, by broadening the variety of experiences shared, by confronting stereotypes on social, religious, economic, and political issues, on issues of gender, sexual orientation, and race/ethnicity, on substantive issues, on personal experiences, and exposes students to different perspectives, by allowing a broader variety of experiences to share, and by raising new issues and perspectives specific to an array of courses.

Currently, diversity in the curriculum at USD has undergone many criticisms: the course outcomes are broad and vague, with little oversight of course content and process once a course has been approved by the core curriculum committee. Findings from a survey of our students showed that the experiences of students in D courses varied from developing a critical awareness of diversity issues to little realization of diversity outcomes.

To address the status of our current D courses, the Diversity Curriculum Committee was formed, and within two years of research, had constructed a proposal for defining diversity, identifying learning outcomes, and recommending curricular structures that would support the work of diversity. Diversity is defined as:

> Diversity means difference, understood as an historically and socially constructed set of value assumptions about what / who matters that figures essentially in power dynamics from the local to the global. Some differences have been made to matter more than others.

Diversity becomes evident in the curriculum through the following outcomes:

Knowledge Outcomes:
Learning outcome 1: Become self-aware (cognitive restructuring)
- Develop a critical and reflective understanding that affirms and challenges how you are situated in relationship to other people and the implications of this knowledge.
- Understand and articulate what you and others contribute to stories of determination, resistance, and success that challenge histories.
- Explore how language and images form and inform your perceptions from the personal to the structural.

Learning outcome 2: Recognizing and respecting difference
- Analyze the struggles of people to attain a complex and productive understanding of historical and contemporary stories of difference.

Skills Outcomes:
Learning outcome 3: Conceptualize and articulate the complexities of difference
- Critically examine the intersections of race, ethnicity, religion, ability, class, gender and/or sexuality—from the local to the global—within the contexts of power relationships that lead to systemic inequities.

Outcomes 1-3 MUST BE COMPLETED prior to, and be evident in Outcome 4

Learning outcome 4: Experience and define difference through the work of social justice
- Apply knowledge of difference to address social issues and political concerns that impact everyday lives.
- Demonstrate critical and creative plans of action that recognize difference and that embody social responsibility.

The curriculum that supports these outcomes should include several key elements in order to ensure that the outcomes will be achieved successfully. Some universities use a single-course approach, but research studies show one course offered in isolation is not effective. Students simply do not have enough exposure to engage in diversity issues to effect critical changes. Based on these and other findings, the Diversity Curriculum committee has recommended the six key elements identified at the beginning of this essay be incorporated into USD's core curriculum.

To ensure maintenance of a curriculum in which the learning outcomes will be sustained, we also recommend that a committee of faculty review and recommend courses based on the definitions, outcomes, and curricular models discussed in this proposal. We believe that faculty who are interested in teaching courses in this curriculum would also benefit from workshops to facilitate development in diversity.

Introduction

In the 1950s and 60s, students of color fought for the rights of access to predominantly white institutions of higher education. Reconstructing the profile of the institution transformed a great deal more than the student population. Broadening diversity among students and faculty meant challenging and changing traditional academic curricular and co-curricular programs to embrace the larger institutional mission and vision committed to multiple voices within the university community. But bringing diverse students and faculty to campus is obviously not enough; the value of presence depends upon "diversity-related activities, such as curricular diversity and cross-racial interaction"; without effective curricular and co-curricular support, structural diversity in and of itself is an insufficient condition for "maximizing educational benefits" (Denson & Chang, 2008, p. 3). It is the purpose of this proposal to consider effectiveness in creating curricular support for diversity, particularly as it applies to the core curriculum.

Valuing diversity in higher education is an intrinsic part of USD's mission, affirming our commitment to "advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service." As a Roman Catholic institution, we ground our commitment to diversity on the principles of Catholic social teaching and their application to social, economic, political and cultural matters. As Pulido (2006) notes, CST's foundation is centered in the "inherent dignity" in the human person; "our human dignity and unique social worth in each person exist as a result of our existence and is not dependent upon social conditions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity" (p.188) "It requires us to work toward establishing structures of justice and grace that support and facilitate authentic human development and to challenge and work toward transforming those structures, institutions, policies and patterns of sin that deny the liberation of people and obstruct authentic human development." (pp 188-189). CST challenges us not just to tackle but eradicate racism, sexism, and classism in every form.

Diversity in the curriculum

Developing a curriculum that reflects the values of CST requires that faculty and students participate in a reflective self-analysis of privilege and identity. As Pulido (2006) explained, faculty "must be willing to explore how their personal and professional identity reinforce existing canons of intellectual privilege and knowledge through their curriculum, pedagogy, and perspectives" (p. 190). Students should be given every opportunity to explore all points of view regardless of social, political, or economic status. The "curricular agenda" must provide students with a "basic understanding of the actual world in which they live including issues of inequality, power relations, and racism" (p. 191). Pedagogy focused on diversity "situates our students within the community through internships, community service learning, survey, and/or ethnographic research" and "represents a pedagogy that challenges standardized and normative epistemologies where no 'boundaries or barriers' exist. Its point of departure begins where the oppressed and marginalized are situated" (p. 191). "It is a pedagogy that recognizes that the poor are the most exploited and marginalized of our society informed by CST that the moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members…CST directs us to the

experiences, insights and concerns of the poor providing us with the evidence necessary for more just systems of social life. It creates and fosters a liberated zone where knowledge and understanding are drawn from all traditions and perspectives and where the whole world of knowledge and ideas must be open to students" (p. 192).

Beyond a curriculum centered in the principles of CST, a growing body of research substantiates even isolated gains for students with diversity in the curriculum. In the prefacing remarks of this proposal and in our subsequent definition below, diversity is conceptualized expansively to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, and ability. As examples of research supporting diversity in the curriculum, we have focused primarily on race/ethnicity and gender/sexual orientation research literatures. Curricular/co-curricular programs focusing on racial/ethnic diversity have been shown to be positively associated with student learning outcomes such as intergroup attitudes (Lopez, 2004); racial prejudice and intergroup understanding (Chang, 2002); attitudes toward campus diversity (Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996); critical thinking skills (Nelson Laird, 2005; Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001); cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993); learning and "democracy" outcomes (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002); civic, job-related, and learning outcomes (Hurtado, 2001); academic self-confidence and social agency (Nelson Laird, 2005); social action engagement outcomes (Nelson Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado, 2005); action-oriented democratic outcomes (Zúñiga, Williams, & Berger, 2005); student leadership, self-examination, and expansion of thought through perspectivism; and changes the way white students read, consider, and research issues raised in class, and collaborate on class projects (Alger, et al., 2000).

Additionally, three key studies (Alger, et al., 2000) show critical gains for faculty teaching in a racially and ethnically diverse curriculum. Their surveys showed that a majority of faculty believe that diversity raises new issues and perspectives; broadens variety of experiences shared; confronts stereotypes on social and political issues, on racial and ethnic issues, on substantive issues, on personal experiences; exposes students to different perspectives; allows broader variety of experiences to share; raises new issues and perspectives specific to a diverse class. Faculty research is affected by diverse classes, faculty, and research teams. Curricular diversity also affects views that produce research and student research projects. Faculty are more likely to raise racial/ethnic issues; adjust course syllabus to include racial/ethnic issues; develop new courses; change evaluation criteria; change pedagogy to encourage discussion. Faculty of color and women are more likely to see positive gains for students, faculty, and institution, and are more likely to feel supported to handle and introduce diversity issues in class discussions.

Research on the experiences and outcomes of lesbian and gay college students by Longerbeam, et al. (2007) and Carpenter (2009) find these students are more likely to be involved in arts and music activities, as well as political and social activism than their heterosexual counterparts. Longerbeam, et al. (2007) also found lesbian and gay students were also more likely to have discussions with peers regarding issues involving human rights, multiculturalism, and politics. Gay men were more likely than heterosexual men to see growth in their ability to apply knowledge in different contexts, to report discussing academic or career issues with their peers.

Gedro (2010) examines the benefits of queering the curriculum in human resource management. She states, "Queer theory informs HRD [Human Resource Development] diversity curriculum because its fundamental purpose is to break down cognitive habits about sex, gender, and sexuality to educate and sensitize people to the complexities of sexuality, and the socially constructed and limiting nature of binary oppositions, particularly those related to gender and sexuality." It provides an opportunity for individuals and organizations to learn because it encourages one to question relations of power, privilege, and identity. Fletcher and Russell (2001) point out incorporating LGBT issues into the curriculum "is consistent with a teaching philosophy that emphasizes the overall diversity of human experience."

In January, 2011, a task force at USD was convened to revisit the "diversity requirement" in the core curriculum. It recognized that there were essential problems with the current "D-course" structure primarily in the ways that diversity was currently defined and expressed. We are poised for a major core reform process that will invite proposals for change and explore a variety of curricular models from other institutions. The task force will recommend a reconceptualization of the term "diversity" in its curricular application and its elaboration through the articulation of student learning outcomes; additionally, we propose dimensions or characteristics of curricular/co-curricular models that will serve as effective support for student learning. Finally, the task force was charged with proposing ways that diversity in the curriculum might be assessed to ensure its continual effectiveness.

Establishing that diversity is of critical importance to USD's undergraduate experience, this proposal will attempt to address and answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How do we conceptually define diversity and inclusion?
Research Question 2: What will students know? What will they do with this knowledge?
Research Question 3: What curricular approach(es) will effectively deliver opportunities to achieve the outcomes for diversity and inclusion?
Research Question 4: How do we best organize campus efforts that impact the ways in which diversity and inclusion are approached in the curriculum?

Defining Diversity and Its Outcomes at USD

Diversity means difference, understood as an historically and socially constructed set of value assumptions about what / who matters that figures essentially in power dynamics from the local to the global. Some differences have been made to matter more than others.

The study of diversity at USD entails grounding the stories of difference within their historical contexts and understanding their implications for contemporary lived experiences. Over the course of their undergraduate years, students develop a critical and reflective knowledge and understanding that affirm, challenge and amplify personal and social identities.

Alert to the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality in patterns of systematic exclusion in the United States, students are engaged with the struggles of people to gain access to

education and opportunity, agency and self-determination. The study of diversity at USD probes trajectories of resistance and mechanisms of change, as students examine the ways that individuals and groups have pursued self-affirmation and social transformation.

Infusing the curriculum with diversity from this perspective means that we expect students will learn to become self-aware, to recognize and respect difference, to conceptualize and articulate complexities of difference, and to experience and define difference through the work of social justice.

Knowledge Outcomes:

Learning outcome 1: Become self-aware (cognitive restructuring)
- Develop a critical and reflective understanding that affirms and challenges how you are situated in relationship to other people and the implications of this knowledge.
- Understand and articulate what you and others contribute to stories of determination, resistance, and success that challenge histories.
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Skills Outcomes:

Learning outcome 3: Conceptualize and articulate the complexities of difference
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Learning outcome 4: Experience and define difference through the work of social justice
- Apply knowledge of difference to address social issues and political concerns that impact everyday lives.
- Demonstrate critical and creative plans of action that recognize difference and that embody social responsibility.

Outcomes are simply expectations for student learning across curricular (and even co-curricular) programs. Curricular designs vary widely but some are more effective than others in reflecting the vision and rationale for diversity in the curriculum presented in this essay. These are identified and explained in the next section.

Curricular Designs

As we indicated earlier, six key elements are recommended for the curriculum: lenses of power and privilege, interdisciplinary courses, vertical structure, local and global contexts, intersectionality, and a culminating experience. Many of these features are identified in the "integrated" examples described below. But first, we'll review one-course strategies.

One-course Strategies

The one-course strategy can be implemented in at least two distinct ways. Some campuses require all undergraduates to take the same course with the same set of outcomes whereas other institutions offer an array of courses that will satisfy one requirement based on the same set of outcomes. The "same course" approach might rely, for example, on one curricular seminar with a shared syllabus and set of assignments that students complete frequently during their first two years in residence. This approach is limiting and is burdensome to implement and schedule. A second strategy for the one-course model specifies a unit-total requirement and allows students to select from a broad variety of courses across a number of disciplines. For example, University of Michigan requires students to complete a course on race or ethnicity for graduation from an array of course offerings. Course content emphasizes exploration of the meaning of race, ethnicity, and racism; racial and ethnic intolerance and resulting inequality as it occurs in the United States or elsewhere; and comparisons of discrimination race, ethnicity, religion, social class, or gender. University of California at Berkeley and SUNY-Buffalo take similar approaches.   We currently employ this second strategy in our core curriculum at USD but the set of outcomes developed for "D" courses lack definition and clarity of purpose, and their application has not been systematically explored and assessed. A major focus of the Diversity Curriculum Committee's research has clarified the conceptualization of diversity and the construction of four outcomes based on this conceptualization.

Increased clarification of our outcomes is not sufficient for our current curricular model . At USD, we have currently approved over 65 courses as "D" courses. Not all of these courses are offered every semester, but in any given semester, students choose from an array of "D" courses. In a recent student survey, perceived effectiveness of treatment of diversity issues varied widely by both discipline and course. Focus groups of students and student feedback to the Presidential Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity made it clear that issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender were not adequately addressed in our curriculum. We believe that the disparity in perceptions is because of the lack of clarity in diversity outcomes and the lack of systematic application of outcomes to course content. Current D courses are required to devote one-third of their courses to diversity issues, but such an approach makes it less likely that diversity will be thoroughly interwoven throughout the course as an essential foundation. The one-course strategy is simply inadequate. Supporting research (Antonio, 2001; Antonio, et al., 2004; Chang, 2002b; Whitt, et al., 2001; Bowen & Bok, 2000) indicates that developing cultural awareness and sufficient critical thinking skills are outcomes that far exceed the one-course strategy in providing students with the opportunity to learn. Students must have repeated

<u>strategies</u> throughout the four-year process to engage the central issues of cultural diversity from local to global levels.

Integrated curriculum

A second broad approach to building a diverse curriculum encompasses horizontally and vertically structured levels of integration. A horizontal approach includes linking courses across disciplines or across inside/outside class experiences. Vertical approaches are "developmental," spanning the four years of undergraduate work.

Horizontal approaches

Diversity themes can tie courses across disciplines through links or clusters. As an illustration, several courses might be tied by the common theme of "Hurricane Katrina" that links the disciplines of political science, economics, and environmental studies with ethnic studies. For example, Occidental College provides a year-long set of courses linking "cultural studies" colloquia and seminars for first-year students. The fall colloquia are team-taught courses in which faculty from several different departments join with students in the exploration of human culture from a variety of disciplinary as well as cultural perspectives. Each colloquium is followed in the spring by research seminars in which increased emphasis is placed on writing research-based essays, and on mastering the skills necessary to the location of relevant materials (in both print and electronic media), the construction of evidence-based arguments, and the conventions of academic discourse (see http://www.oxy.edu/x2313.xml for current listings).

Several institutions integrate curricular and co-curricular (inside/outside class) programs through "living learning communities" (LLCs): institutions which include LLCs with themes of diversity include larger state universities such as University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Illinois State University, Michigan State University, and Portland State University. But this model is also implemented at smaller liberal arts institutions such as Georgetown, Holyoke, and University of San Francisco. Georgetown offers a living learning community entitled "Justice and Diversity in Action (JDA)." Members of JDA

> …strive to create and sustain an environment that supports each one's work for social change, as well as each one's commitment to grow in knowledge of human diversity in all its aspects. Together, we seek to be open, honest, and sensitive in examining attitudes, prejudices, and actions that undermine respect for diversity and perpetuate injustice, as these arise both within and beyond the Georgetown Community. (see Appendix I for an elaboration of this Georgetown Living Learning Community.

LLCs are designed to help students make important connections between academic discussions and their "lived" experiences.

Vertical approaches

Some institutions identify core elements in an undergraduate curriculum that will span three or four years a student attends the institution. The rationale for vertical structure is that students must be introduced to, must practice, and then must exhibit mastery of the kinds of knowledge and skill outcomes related to diversity that we identified in an earlier section. Recognition that more than one course is needed over a span of time is echoed by critics like Bowen and Bok (2000). An example of vertical structure can be found in Santa Clara University's new core curriculum. In the first year of "foundations" courses, students take courses in the "Culture and Ideas" theme along with a first course in religion, theology, and culture. In the second year called "Explorations," students take courses in diversity and religion, theology, and culture. During the third year of "Explorations," take a third course in "culture and ideas," and a third course in religion, theology, and culture. Their model assumes that students will explore issues of identity in the first year, issues of local cultural difference in the second, and global issues in the third.

Santa Clara combines vertical and horizontal integration by linking coursework with "living experience" in their Residential Learning Communities (RLCs). One of the RLCs is called "unity," described as

> a four-year community open to all undergraduates who seek a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity as a catalyst for social and civic engagement. Unity offers students numerous opportunities to explore all aspects of diversity whether diversity interests are cultural, religious, gender related, and/or socio-economic. The exploration, understanding and appreciation of diversity are fostered through courses, co-curricular programming and residential programming" (SCU website).

Not everyone who attends Santa Clara is able to participate in the Unity RLC, but for those that do, it provides a richer co-curricular environment supportive of the three-year curricular program embedded in the core.

An additional combined vertical and horizontal curriculum is evident in the interdisciplinary approached to general education at Cal Poly University at Pomona. In the first year, students take courses in "Consciousness and Community," exploring myth, ceremony, and meaning as among the central elements; during the second year, students explore "Ways of Coexisting: Reform and Revolution," which engage students in urban and global issues (social space; domination, resistance, and revolution; traditional/transitional cultures). Students in the third year take a research colloquium that focuses on extends and synthesizes themes of study during the first two years.

At USD, we are just beginning the core curriculum revision process. The Diversity Curriculum Committee looks forward to the opportunities to work with and counsel the Core Planning Committee. Discussions during this inaugural year are promising. We see many of the key elements we have identified throughout the CPC presentations on the core, such as interdisciplinarity and integration

evident in both the horizontal and vertical models. We recognize that one course is an insufficient experience, curricular or otherwise, to achieve the set of diversity outcomes we feel represents excellence in undergraduate education. We will propose, as a central goal in our action plan for the year, working through the core curriculum revision process to advocate for the key elements of a curriculum that fully supports diversity as outlined in this document. Additionally, we propose that faculty learning communities be formed to help faculty prepare to offer diversity courses.

Establishing a faculty learning community will help to make a case for faculty development. In Alger, et al. (2000), researchers reported that faculty participants indicated being prepared to teach multi-racial/multi-ethnic classes is important. Student responses make it clear that not all faculty members are prepared to teach multi-racial/multiethnic classes: classrooms are unsafe environments for discussing marginalization and other negative power dynamics and students of color may experience racial profiling. If valuable educational opportunities are not to be lost, institutions need to offer their faculty training on ways to maximize the educational potential of classes focusing on diversity issues. Our faculty learning community will also consider the following possibilities: workshops and seminars on diversifying the curriculum; use of active learning methods; creation of supportive classroom climates; and dealing with negative group dynamics.

As we work for curricular change, the task force members along with the faculty learning community will become involved in the core revision process by presenting and participating in the core discussion and working forums; it will assist in governance through the Core Planning Committee, the University Senate, and the faculty assemblies in the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business Administration. As working subcommittees form, we will form one on diversity to work on revising our institutional undergraduate learning outcome of "cultural awareness, competence, and engagement at local and global levels" to an outcome which effectively captures the purpose and intent of diversity in the curriculum.

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Appendix I: Georgetown Living Learning Community: Justice and Diversity in Action

The members of Justice and Diversity in Action--called "JDA"--seek to advocate for justice, as individuals and as a group. Our members come from all schools in the University and include First-Years to Seniors; often there is good mix of international students as well as those who hail from the United States. Our focus includes the local, the national, and the international. There is no one prescribed issue or point of view--but rather a shared belief that problems of justice and diversity can be humbling in their complexity and call for all of us to be as open-minded and creative as possible.

Specific topics or issues vary, depending on the particular experience, concern, expertise, or passion each new member brings to the group. For example, individual members have been committed to:
- highlighting human rights abuses in Burma;
- remedying deficiencies in public education here in Washington, DC;
- hosting a holiday book gala and dinner which raises money and books to support the University's Angel Tree Book Drive
- supporting the "One" Campaign to end absolute poverty in our lifetimes;
- drawing attention to flaws in the imposition of the Death Penalty; investigating the persistence and effects of racism and other forms of discrimination;
- abolishing the use of anti-personnel landmines;
- and working to counteract damage to the environment;
- supporting GU students who have family members in the military, serving in harm's way;
- calling attention to the plight of undocumented Migrants in the US;
- supporting Women of Color;
- supporting GU's Chapter of STAND;
- Rally and Candlelight Vigil for Jena 6
- Dance and Birthday parties
- Nationals Baseball game
- Ramadan Iftar
- Floor retreat
- Disability awareness

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