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**Northwestern University
Curricular/Co-curricular Requirement Proposal
February 2013**

Submitted by the Academics/Education Working Group

The Academics/Education working group (a sub-group of the University Diversity Council) has been tasked with identifying opportunities to enhance the learning of Northwestern's students. While the group identified several possibilities, it determined that the priority of the group should be to focus on a curricular and co-curricular requirement for undergraduate students. The group has been working for the past seven months on how this could be realized while also providing for autonomy by schools in how the requirement might be implemented. We are releasing this draft of our proposal to encourage productive dialogue and feedback.

To quote Carol Geary Schneider, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Colleges and universities require a particular study for graduation when they believe it important to their students' social functioning, both as human beings and as citizens." The working group believes that a focus on social groups other than the students own, and of various groups' struggles for recognition and equality, will better prepare them for the world around them. Moreover, there is a significant body of literature that suggests that serious engagement of diversity in the curriculum, along with linking classroom and out-of-class opportunities, positively affects students' attitudes and awareness about diversity (Smith & Wolf-Wendel, 2005).

Finally, there will be significant start-up and on-going resources required to develop and sustain the curricular and co-curricular courses and programming, and the working group is continuing work to determine what those will be. A comprehensive plan to assess all aspects of the initiative is currently being developed.

Following is the draft proposal.

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Curricular/Co-curricular Requirement Proposal

Introduction

One of Northwestern University's strategic planning goals is to "close the gap between intentions and outcomes to connect individuals from widely diverse backgrounds and life experiences to a truly inclusive community." The plan also states "we are unwavering in our resolve that diversity at Northwestern means far more than disparate groups sharing common space." In order to more fully demonstrate our commitment, the University must not leave learning to chance. This document represents a proposal for an undergraduate student curricular and co-curricular Northwestern "signature" requirement in the area of **Social Inequalities and Diversities**. It is our hope that students who will have fulfilled this requirement will have been changed in a way that makes them *distinctly Northwestern*.

The Academics/Education Working Group of the Diversity Council has been meeting for six months with the goal of instituting a curricular and co-curricular requirement for all Northwestern University undergraduates (except SCS) in the area of **Social Inequalities and Diversities**. Our committee is comprised of representatives from across Northwestern's undergraduate schools. Weinberg, the School of Communication, Medill, and the School of Education and Social Policy have put forth their own resources to jumpstart the piloting of a course that would meet the goals of this proposed requirement. Other undergraduate schools are also discussing curricular initiatives that would fit the diversity requirement. However, University-level coordination, direction, and incentives, as well as a timeline and process for requesting University resources, are needed to launch the initiative and to communicate to the schools that this is a desired endeavor. It is clear that moving forward with such a cross-school initiative will require the bold leadership of the President, Provost, and Diversity Council, backed by appropriate resources for schools, departments, faculty and graduate students to design, develop, implement, evaluate, and maintain this requirement.

A review of the websites of the other institutions that comprise the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) shows that Northwestern is the only institution that does not have a diversity-related academic requirement. Please see appendix 1 for information about other institutions requirements.

The Requirement

Starting with the academic year fall 2015, we recommend that all undergraduate students be expected to complete a course within the **Social Inequalities and Diversities** curriculum (to be compiled/developed) as part of the fulfillment of the graduation requirements.

The working group proposes that each school within the University (except SCS) institute a requirement of one academic course and one co-curricular component for all undergraduate students, to be completed within a student's first two years at Northwestern. Students would take one course chosen from a list of courses that are designed to achieve the learning outcomes described below. Within each school faculty members would submit candidates for this new category of course, and each school would collate and disseminate a list of approved courses. The course could count toward a school's distribution requirement (not an additional course) and each school would determine how to incorporate the requirement into its

curricular structure.

Learning Outcomes

The main focus of the Social Inequalities and Diversities curriculum is on the United States, although it does not exclude global perspectives. While race has been prominent in student discussions and activism, it will be considered alongside other important subject positions, such as gender, sexuality, class, and ability status. Key themes across courses will be inequality, power, privilege (institutional and personal), and agency.

Through completion of a course in the curriculum, students will achieve the following learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate expertise in interdisciplinary scholarship on social inequalities and diversities, and intersectional frameworks with the primary, but not exclusive, focus on the United States.
- Expand their ability to think critically about issues in political, social, scientific, economic and cultural life stemming from the diversity of experiences related to social inequalities and diversities.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the impact that histories, institutions, and structures have had on individual identity, including their own, and engage in self-reflection.
- Recognize their own positionality in systems of inequality, engage in self-reflection on power and privilege, and learn to engage productively with others who are different.

These learning outcomes link this requirement to the University's strategic pillar of "Connecting Our Community," since the courses will signify a unifying *academic and intellectual* experience to complement new University social traditions, such as the March through the Arch.

Course Development. Within the curriculum, students will not just learn about difference, but also engage each other to learn what has brought them all together here at Northwestern. For this reason, we are most excited about incentivizing schools to develop courses, some of which would be large lecture courses with small discussion sections, and all of which would create a unifying intellectual energy around issues of diversity and social inequality and around their Northwestern identities. While there are likely existing courses that could be modified to meet the learning goals listed above, simply repurposing current courses may not make the bold statement that the committee wishes to make. The courses developed by individual schools would be made available to students across schools.

Pedagogy. Pedagogical approach is of great importance to the success of these courses. An active-learning approach – e.g., discussion, reflection, and experiential learning opportunities – as opposed to exclusively lecture is likely to produce the kinds of learning outcomes we have described. In order to employ active-learning techniques, large lecture courses would need to be supported by trained TAs, who might team-teach the lecture and who would run associated small-group discussion sections.

Funding. Just as it takes creativity, people, space, and money to put on the March through the Arch, placing approximately 2,000 freshman and sophomores (assuming half take in their first year and half their second year) in new and redesigned courses across the undergraduate schools will take substantial resources. Funding is critical not just for course development, but also for training of faculty and graduate students, and assessment of the courses. Even faculty and graduate students who are trained in the area of social inequality and diversity will require a robust system of training to ensure that they are able to conduct the difficult dialogues that are necessary.

Deans are the most equipped to estimate specific budget needs depending on how they plan to include the requirement in their curricula, but we expect that this endeavor will generate need for new faculty lines, dedicated graduate fellowships, and perhaps even undergraduate TA opportunities. Also, for these courses to be innovative, impactful and appealing to students, they must also be supported through resources for professional development and training for faculty, staff, and students.

Course review. A university-wide committee would review all courses that are recommended for the curriculum and serve as a space for sharing best practices and for discussing pedagogical challenges in diversity teaching. This committee would be charged with providing guidance on course design, reviewing proposals, and offering feedback to faculty on proposed courses.

Assessment. Courses in the **Social Inequalities and Diversities Curriculum** will use clearly articulated assessment methods that align to program goals, including the stated learning outcomes. Assessment will address the initiative at all levels, from resources used to activities implemented to short- and long-term, individual- and University-level outcomes.

Co-curricular Component

One of the learning outcomes for the courses in the *Social Inequalities and Diversities* curriculum is to “learn to engage with others who are different.” While the in-class pedagogy will provide opportunities for discussion, the opportunities for students to engage in meaningful, honest small group dialogue may be limited. Also, there is no guarantee that the class composition will provide the demographic diversity that is most effective for this type of learning.

The co-curricular proposal is to utilize the *Sustained Dialogue (SD)* model to organize diverse students into small groups to build relationships and develop strategies to improve student relations. An intended outcome of the model is to move students from discussion to action. The model is based on developing a relationship first before solving a misunderstanding or conflict. Sustained Dialogue helps students make time to understand the different perspectives of individuals they otherwise would not meet. Engaging in these conversations not only enables them to interact comfortably with all kinds of people, but also helps build relationships across community divides. SD equips students with communication skills necessary for increasingly diverse academic, social, and work environments. This will further prepare students for their lives beyond Northwestern.

The expectation of the co-curricular requirement is that the students select the best date and time for their schedule, from a list of Sustained Dialogue group offerings, and attend weekly meetings with their group for the duration of one quarter. The groups will be facilitated by trained student peers and/or graduate students and overseen by Student Affairs staff.

In order to continue learning beyond the classroom, there will also be a database of other co-curricular programs and events (not required), related to diversity which faculty may use at their discretion to complement the academic course content. This database will provide a centralized resource for faculty teaching the *Social Inequalities and Diversities* courses. For example, students could attend a co-curricular event (e.g. MLK Commemoration event, history/heritage month events) and write a critical reflection paper afterwards. This database will be maintained through the Office of the Provost.

The sustained Dialogue model offers a robust assessment tool, which provides students the opportunity to self-assess growth and development using pre- and post-participation questions. There's also the opportunity to aggregate assessment data at the university level.

Trained student facilitators use dialogue and action to help build a more cohesive, engaged, and diverse university community. In doing so they are not only adding value here at Northwestern, but they will also take their leadership and facilitation skills with them and continue to impact their communities and workplaces. These students, as well as others who take on leadership roles to engage difference as strength, provide a valuable service to the university. It is recommended that a zero-credit notation should be made on a student's transcript to recognize their contributions to creating a more diverse and inclusive university community.

Appendix 1: CIC Institutions and Diversity Requirement

Diversity Requirement	Institution(s)
Multiple Course Requirement	Michigan State University, Purdue University, University of Maryland
Single Course Requirement	Indiana University, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, University of Illinois, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, University of Minnesota
Undefined/Partial Requirement	University of Nebraska
No Curricular Requirement	Northwestern University University of Chicago

Institutional Descriptions from Websites

Indiana University

Indiana University requires each department and program to devise a “Diversity in the United States” requirement.

As approved by the Bloomington Faculty Council, the faculty of each undergraduate degree-granting unit shall adopt a degree requirement appropriate to their curriculum that addresses issues of diversity in the United States. Adoption of a requirement that has a focus on the issues of diversity and cultural, racial, ethnic, class, age, ability, sexual orientation, religious, and gender discrimination within the context of the United States would be especially useful in achieving the objectives of enhanced understanding of diversity.

Michigan State University

Michigan State requires students to complete two courses to fulfill their diversity requirement as part of their general education.

MSU undergraduates must complete courses in at least two of three diversity categories (“D”, “N” & “I”) as part of their requirements. “N” – emphasizes national diversity; “I” – emphasizes international and multicultural diversity and “D” – emphasizes both national and international/multicultural diversity.

Ohio State University

Ohio State requires their students to take one course under their “Diversity in the United States” category, part of the institutions general education requirement.

The goal of courses in this category is to foster an understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States in order to help you become an educated, productive, and principled citizen.

Penn State University

Penn State requires one course in their “United States Cultures” category as part of their general education requirement.

A course that fulfills the United States Cultures requirement must strive to increase students' understanding of contemporary United States society. Such a course need not focus exclusively on the present and may concern a historical subject.

Courses with the United States Cultures designation will include two or more of the following components and will include those components in the graded evaluation of student performance:

- 1. Cultivate student knowledge of issues of social identity such as ethnicity, race, class, religion, gender, physical/mental disability, age, or sexual orientation;*
- 2. Convey to students knowledge of different United States values, traditions, beliefs, and customs;*
- 3. Increase student knowledge of the range of United States cultural achievements and human conditions through time;*
- 4. Increase student knowledge of United States social identities not in isolation, but in relation to one another (for example, the interaction of race or gender with socioeconomic status);*
- 5. Introduce students to interpersonal communication and interaction issues among United States cultures.*

Purdue University

Purdue requires their students to take one course from each of the following categories: Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Gender Issues, and Individual and Society. The goal of these courses is to *develop an awareness of issues of diversity, gender and cultures other than their own.*

Rutgers University

Rutgers requires one course from its “Diversity and Global Awareness” category, part of their general education requirements.

The requirement is one course, credit bearing and worth at least 3 credits, from an approved list of courses. Courses fulfilling this requirement engage students in theoretical issues and political debates pertaining to questions of "diversity," namely race, ethnicity, language, migration and diasporas, gender, and sexualities. These courses must juxtapose two or more visions or methods, which would enable an understanding of an increasingly globalized world. Sample topics include the following: histories of religion, social movements, cultural conflicts, racial tensions, visual culture and representation of transnational identities and differences, international feminisms, and sexual prejudice. Study abroad does not automatically satisfy this requirement, although individual courses taken abroad may qualify.

University of Chicago

No diversity requirement. However, there is an optional sequence that students can take as part of a different GE requirement called “Self, Culture, and Society.”

"Self, Culture, and Society" studies problems basic to human existence. The sequence starts with the conceptual foundations of political economy, as well as theories of capitalism and modern society. Students then consider the relation of culture, society, and lived experience. Finally, students consider the social and cultural constitution of the person, with examination of race, gender, and sexuality

University of Illinois

Curricular diversity requirement titled "Cultural Studies: Non-Western Cultures/US Minority." Requirement calls for one course as part of a student's general education.

University of Iowa

Iowa's one-course requirement is termed "Values, Society, and Diversity." It is part of the University's general education requirement.

These courses explore fundamental questions about human experience from a variety of perspectives. You will consider topics in relation to your own values and actions and will gain a deeper appreciation of how cultural differences arise and the importance of diversity.

University of Maryland

The University of Maryland requires students to take two courses to fulfill their "Diversity" requirement. Two categories of courses comprise the Diversity requirement: Understanding Plural Societies and Cultural Competence.

Rather than affirm or celebrate difference, courses in the Diversity requirement investigate the complexities of human difference and commonality. The Diversity requirement emphasizes the promises and problems of plural societies and the challenges that must be addressed to achieve just, equitable, and productive societies. Courses in the Diversity requirement explore the gritty struggles through which plural societies are established and maintained.

University of Michigan

The University of Michigan has a "Race and Ethnicity" curricular requirement for all students as part of their general education.

These courses address issues that arise from racial or ethnic intolerance and meet the following criteria:

1. *Required content. All courses satisfying the requirement must provide discussion concerning:*
 - a. *The meaning of race, ethnicity, and racism;*
 - b. *Racial and ethnic intolerance and resulting inequality as it occurs in the United States or elsewhere;*
 - c. *Comparisons of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, social class, or gender.*
2. *Required focus. Every course satisfying the requirement must devote substantial, but not necessarily exclusive, attention to the required content. Although it is hoped that many of these courses will focus on the United States, it is not required that they do so. Courses that deal with these issues in other societies, or that study them comparatively, may also meet the requirement.*

University of Minnesota

Students at the University of Minnesota are required to take one course in four of the following five areas: Civic Life and Ethics, Diversity and Social Justice, Environment, Global Perspectives, Technology and Society. Several of these themes, particularly the Diversity and Social Justice theme, focus on issues of diversity and inequality. However, the university does not have a specific diversity requirement.

University of Nebraska

Though not specifically stated as a diversity requirement, the University of Nebraska has two components of their general education requirement that get at pressing issues of diversity and inequality.

Exercise individual and social responsibilities through the study of ethical principles and reasoning, application of civic knowledge, interaction with diverse cultures, and engagement with global issues.

ACE 8. *Explain ethical principles, civics, and stewardship, and their importance to society.*

ACE 9. *Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.*

University of Wisconsin

Curricular diversity requirement titled "Ethnic Studies." The university requires one three-credit course.

All students must take one course of at least 3 credits, which is designated as an Ethnic Studies course. The ethnic studies requirement is intended to increase understanding of the culture and contributions of persistently marginalized racial or ethnic groups in the United States, and to equip students to respond constructively to issues connected with our pluralistic society and global community. Many ethnic studies courses also fulfill other breadth and other requirements.