Assessment Report for Diversity Core Courses

Academic Years: 2010-17

1. What Was Done

The Diversity Core Committee reviewed all the courses that were proposed for Diversity Core designation. The proposals included detailed rational addressing the Core Diversity criteria as well as a syllabus. To evaluate the proposals, committee members focused on the following questions:

1. Does this course “focus in in-depth analytical and critical attention to difference and to historical, cultural, and/or racial social contexts, with an emphasis on class discussion and active student engagement”?

2. Does this course fulfill one of the below three criteria?

   A. The course examines identity in relation to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, ability, and/or other axes of difference.

   B. The course teaches a language other than English and includes the examination of the culture(s) that speak(s) the language.

   C. The course examines the historical, political, cultural, and/or social forces that foster systemic disparities based on difference, and critically examines concepts of difference within these systems.

3. Do students who complete the course acquire at least one of the following?

   A. An analytical and critical understanding of diversity within societies, nations, and cultures.

   B. Knowledge of a language other than English and the culture(s) that speak(s) that language.

   C. An analytical and critical understanding of particular, traditionally marginalized, or less frequently studied societies, nations, and/or cultures and an understanding of cultural difference in relation to those societies, nations, and/or cultures.

Courses that met the criteria were approved for six years. On the sixth year, if instructors wish to continue offering their courses with a Diversity designation, they must reapply. This entails sending the Diversity Committee, their current course syllabus and rationale for reapproval. Hence, the committee is constantly reviewing diversity courses to assure that they continue to meet the diversity criteria.

In the past three years, in anticipation for this review the committee has reached out to departments offering diversity courses and asked that the students’ learning outcomes, as they pertain to diversity, be assessed. The committee offered departments the following assessment guidelines:

---

Proposed Assessment Strategy

1) *Each course instructor will be required to add a section to his/her course proposal – both for new course proposal and for renewals – that addresses what type of assignment will be used to*
assess the effectiveness of the course in meeting the stated learning outcomes for Diversity. This might include a specific exam, paper assignment, or, in the case of the language courses, a verbal communication requirement. Sample questions for an exam/paper/other assignment could be as follows:

- Using [insert course and subject specific material], explain the concept of race and how it is culturally constructed. Discuss how this affects modern views and understandings of race in [insert subject specific material]?
- Using [insert course and subject specific material], explain the concept of divinity and how it is culturally constructed. Discuss how these varying understandings affect interactions between societies and religions and how they influence conflict in [insert subject specific material]?

Or, for language classes, a sample assessment assignment might address the following question:

- Does the student’s performance on the exam/assignment indicate that he/she understands, reads, speaks, and writes the language at a level appropriate to the term of study?

2) For each class, a random sampling of 5-10% the students who write the assignment will be taken for assessment.

3) Because of the diverse nature of Diversity, the actual assessment will be carried out by the Department in which the course is offered, as these faculty members, are, by definition, the most qualified to address the subject matter of the course. Each class is already in an assessment rotation schedule established by each Department as part of its own assessment policy for their degree offerings. When a class with a D designation is assessed for the Department, the assessing faculty member (e.g., Japanese language instructor, anthropologist, historian, etc.), who is not the department member actually teaching the class that semester, will also assess the effectiveness of the class for the Diversity learning outcomes.

4) To demonstrate that the course has successfully met the proposed learning outcomes, two-thirds of the assessment group (66%) must pass the assignment with a C grade or higher.

2. What Data Were Collected

A. The committee collected assessments for 25 Core Diversity courses (MSU offers a total of 43 Diversity courses). It requested that the assessment focus on the effectiveness of the course in meeting the stated learning outcomes for Diversity. Due to the diversity of the courses offered (some are seminars, while others are dispensed in large lectures format), the assessment style varied greatly. For instance, foreign language and culture courses, used the ACTL proficiency metrics to assess the extent to which students acquired “Knowledge of a language other than English and the culture(s) that speak(s) that language.” A political science course evaluated students’ responses to a final exam question that focused on the following diversity learning outcome: “An analytical and critical understanding of diversity within societies, nations, and cultures.” While literature courses tended to assess students’ papers in relation to this same learning outcome. Most evaluators chose to assess a random sample of students’ works, while others assessment all the students’ answers to a particular question, written or oral exam.
3. What Was Learned
Assessments indicated that over 95% of students completing the diversity courses we examined have reached the expected learning outcomes as outlined above.

4. How We Responded
The committee is recommending ongoing assessment of diversity courses and continuing the requirement for reapplication of core designation every six years.