2018-2020 UMD Diversity Education Task Force Report & Recommendations

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Background

- 2016 Student demands and May 2017 campus murder of Lt. Richard Collins III prompted formation of task forces

- Joint President/Senate Inclusion and Respect Task Force report released spring 2018
  - Offered 9 recommendations to improve campus diversity and inclusion climate
  - Educational and curricular issues were delegated to a separate faculty-led Diversity Education Task Force (DETF)

- DETF asked to consider how education and engagement in civic issues could contribute to campus community and students' capacities

- Charge
  - ✓ Review provisions for diversity education & make recommendations for improving them
  - ✓ Consider General Education and other educational efforts
  - ✓ Consider provisions for civic education and engagement

Context and Focus

- Since mid-March 2020, our context has altered radically
  - ✓ Instructional delivery has migrated online due to pandemic
  - ✓ Murder of George Floyd has prompted global demonstrations and acknowledgement of racial inequities
  - ✓ University has new leadership
- In September & October 2020, DETF sought feedback from key constituents and revised recommendations

Focus of our report

1. What are the characteristics of effective diversity education? How might this overlap with civic engagement education?

2. What range & depth of diversity and civic engagement education is currently offered on campus?

3. What steps should be taken to build on, modify, and strengthen diversity and civic education at UMD?

4. How might these changes be introduced and scaled for delivery to undergraduate students?

Findings

2016 ASHE Report

- Campus infrastructure has huge impact on teaching & learning about identity-based differences

- Effective programs support students' identity development & promote perspective-taking, empathy & intergroup learning

- Students' first-year experiences are formative; greater attitude change occurs with 2+ courses

- Faculty need ongoing development to create culturally inclusive classrooms

Current Status

- UMD offers a patchwork of campus-wide & college specific educational programs

- General Education currently requires 2 diversity courses
  - ✓ 2 Understanding Plural Societies OR
  - ✓ 1 Understanding Plural Societies + 1 Cultural Competence

- ✓ Optional experiences: Global Classroom courses, Education Abroad, Global Studies minors, etc.

Current Campus Climate

- Hate-bias incidents have created uncertainty regarding campus leaders' commitment to diversity & inclusion

- Black and Latinx members feel less safe and less institutional commitment

- Many D&I initiatives exist within campus units; however, these largely duplicate effort and isolate impact

Goals and key constraints

Goals for proposed changes in diversity & civic engagement education

- Reflect on how culture & background factor into own identity formation

- Recognize that societies have embedded systems that confer power & privilege on some more than others

- Develop empathy for social & material costs of exclusion & marginalization

- Appreciate & respect cultural differences, including internalization of UMD values

- Develop skills needed to engage & communicate constructively with others who differ from oneself

Constraints on proposed changes for diversity & civic engagement education

- Changes should not hinder students' degree progress by adding more required credit hours

- Incorporate voluntary activities with required ones to reduce pushback

- All members of the University community need to be involved in this initiative

- Colleges should be involved in the development & delivery of diversity education to their students

- Diversity education requirements need to be scaled & deployed in ways that do not overload TLTC and ODI staff, whose guidance is essential for successful implementation

DETF Recommendations

- Introductory activities for new students
  - ✓ Offer online training module to set stage, communicate UMD values, and connect with Terrapin Strong
  - ✓ Incorporate UNIV100 enhancements (e.g., launch instructor learning community, use board game)
  - ✓ Incentivize instructors and students to participate in First Year Book activities

- General Education
  - ✓ Modify the diversity requirement category labels and learning outcomes (including a required outcome focused on racism) and require one course in each category
  - ✓ Incorporate more explicit diversity content into Academic Writing and Oral Communication

- Optional diversity and civic engagement credentials
  - ✓ Offer microcredentials to incentivize student pursuit of these opportunities and highlight value of microcredentials to employers
  - ✓ Expand available programs (e.g., Maryland Volunteer Corps)

- Major degree requirements
  - ✓ Ask all departments to include discipline-relevant diversity education (in the form of workshops or coursework) into their majors

Supplemental information on General Education proposal

Understanding Structures of Racism & Inequality

1. Analyze racism as a form of historical & systemic discrimination that intersects with other forms of power & oppression. (required for all courses with this designation).

2. Analyze social policies, ideologies, or institutions that give rise to structural inequalities and sustain power differences based on race/ethnicity and other social categories.

3. Reflect on and critically analyze one's own identity including race/ethnicity, cultural values, norms, and biases, and how these affect one's perceptions of individuals with different identities.

4. Identify, describe, and empathize with the experiences of individuals who have been marginalized in societal disputes due to racial and other forms of systemic inequity.

5. Analyze differences among forms and traditions of thought or expression in relation to cultural, historical, political, and social contexts, as for example, dance, foodways, literature, music, and philosophical and religious traditions.

6. Use a comparative or intersectional framework to examine the histories, experiences, and perspectives of two or more social groups (a) within a single society or historical time frame, or (b) across different societies or historical times.
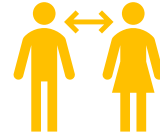
Navigating Diverse Social Environments

1. Reflect deeply on critical similarities and differences between one's own and others' identities and social positions due to racism and other systems of oppression.

2. Identify, reflect on, and demonstrate the language and behaviors used to convey respect for people of similar and different social backgrounds.

3. Identify, describe, and empathize with the experiences of individuals who have been marginalized in societal disputes with more powerful social groups.

4. Communicate effectively (i.e., listen and adapt one's own persuasive arguments) with others from different social backgrounds to establish and build coalitions.

5. Demonstrate skills to work collaboratively within and across social groups to achieve mutual goals.

6. Use skills to identify and reach consensus on resolutions for shared problems in conflicts across social groups.

   (At least one from #4-6 is required for all courses with this designation.)

THANK YOU
DETF Members

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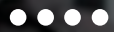
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