Resolution Supporting Undergraduate Diversity Requirement

Sponsored by: Kristen Hosey, GPSS Secretary; Moroni Benally, Native American Students; Sam Li, Biobehavioral Nursing and Health Systems; Adam Sherman, GPSS President; Melanie Mayock, GPSS VP; Vera Giampietro, GPSS Treasurer; Christopher Lizotte, Geography; Trond Nilsen, Industrial Engineering; Kimberly Shertz, Law; Alexandra Kaufman, Nutritional Sciences.

Written by: Kristen Hosey, GPSS Secretary

Resolution Number: 04.12-13

WHEREAS, the University of Washington claims “valuing and honoring diversity” as one of its core values; and

WHEREAS, a goal of the University of Washington is to produce respectful educated global citizens ready to address, “the world’s most pressing challenges” [University of Washington]; and

WHEREAS, many of the world’s most pressing challenges involve people of vastly different perspectives, powers, and privilege; and

WHEREAS, a central value of the University of Washington is to enable students to “expand their world views to better understand their responsibilities as members of an increasingly interconnected and global society” and

WHEREAS, professional workplaces increasingly require employees to have or gain diversity competencies, including both knowledge of and commitment to diversity and skills such as communicating respect for others who are different [Diversity]; and

WHEREAS, a diversity credit requirement is an established curriculum approach to achieving essential student learning goals at educational institutions across the State of Washington and the nation, including many of University of Washington’s peer institutions [Contreras]; and

WHEREAS, the academic study of diversity fosters critical and analytic thinking, challenges students to evaluate assumptions and behaviors, and encourages a vibrant intellectual community free of bias and prejudice; and

WHEREAS, a diversity credit requirement will assist students to develop the skills they need to interact effectively and engage diverse perspectives and backgrounds both in the workplace and in day-to-day life and assume responsibilities associated with global citizenship; and

WHEREAS a diversity credit requirement will assist students to graduate with a better understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives on global society; and
WHEREAS, the ASUW Student Senate already passed R-18-7: A Resolution in Support of a Diversity Credit Requirement during Session 18 with a vast majority approval; and

WHEREAS, the resolution passed by ASUW Senate has merely been revised in conjunction with members of the Faculty Council on Academic Standards (FCAS), the Faculty Council on Multicultural Affairs (FCMA), the ASUW Board of Directors, and the UW Students for Diversity Coalition; and

WHEREAS, the most substantive of these revisions are in the form of rewording in order to address implementation concerns;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON:

THAT, the GPSS reaffirms its support of a diversity credit requirement for all undergraduate students; and

THAT, specifically, the GPSS supports the principles and intents of the student-initiated and FCMA-sponsored proposal as follows:

“As part of the General Education Requirements, undergraduate students at the University of Washington will be required to take one course (3 to 5 credits) focused on diversity from a list of approved courses, all of which already satisfy other Area of Knowledge Requirements. No additional credits will be added to those needed for graduation with a bachelor’s degree. Five credit courses would have at least 60% of the content focused on one or more aspects of US and/or global diversity.

‘Diversity’ is a general term used here to cover a wide variety of courses across the disciplines: courses that focus on race, class, gender, gender identity, nationality, sexuality, ethnicity, ability, religion, and age. UW documents, such as the diversity minors at UW Bothell and UW Seattle, provide examples of such courses. Courses in various departments cover topics such as the histories, cultures, and experiences of people of diverse backgrounds; social justice and global issues related to diversity; the effects of institutions—government, education, science, politics—on diverse individuals and groups; thinking critically about power, inequality, marginality, and social movements; and communicating effectively across differences. The definition of diversity aligns with those definitions used for requirements at other State of Washington higher education institutions.”; and

THAT, a copy of this resolution be forwarded to George Dillon the FCAS chair, Angela Ginorio the FCMA chair, Provost Ana Mari Cauce, the co-chairs of the Task Force on Diversity in Undergraduate Learning Betty Schmitz and Ed Taylor, James Gregory the Student Diversity Coalition and Faculty, MEChA, BSU, First Nations, Filipino American Student Association, and the Polynesian Student Alliance.
Presented to GPSS for approval on May 22, 2013
Approved on May 22, 2013

Sources:


