

## **Proposal to simplify the Diversity Competencies**

### **Action:**

The Diversity Curriculum Review Committee seeks through this action to revise, simplify and strengthen the competencies achieved through the completion of the six-credit diversity requirement at UVM. Currently courses with the D1 (Race and Racism in the US) and D2 (Diversity of Human Experience) designations must meet a selection from among 14 competencies in 4 broad categories. We seek to reduce these 14 competencies to 4 more clearly articulated and simplified ones, in order to make the expected outcomes of diversity courses clearer to students and faculty, and to make assessing these outcomes more straightforward.

### **Context:**

UVM's diversity requirement is intended to provide undergraduate students with the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to function productively in a complex global society, by fostering an understanding of and respect for differences among individuals and groups of people.

All UVM undergraduate students must successfully complete the following two requirements prior to graduation:

- One 3-credit course from Diversity Category One (D1) (Race and Racism in the U.S.), to be taken as early as possible after matriculation to UVM - preferably no later than the sophomore year); and
- A second 3-credit course from either Diversity Category One (D1) or Diversity Category Two (D2)(the Diversity of Human Experience).

As of Fall 2019, UVM currently has 66 x D1 and 192 x D2 courses on its permanent roster. These courses will begin the process of a 5-year regular review during 2019-2020. All other general education requirements at UVM have four competencies that help to shape curricula and assessment of outcomes. Only the diversity requirement has as many as 14.

### **Rationale and Justification for Action:**

UVM's diversity requirement is the oldest of its general education requirements, initially approved in 2006. The roster of courses that fulfill this requirement is significant and distributed across almost all colleges, departments and programs. The DCRC has spent much of the past three years reviewing and revising the active courses within this roster from 541 courses in 2017-2018 to 285 in 2019-2020 and putting together a review schedule for all current and proposed courses.

The DCRC also recognizes that having so many competencies and apparent outcomes for the diversity courses has led to considerable confusion and misunderstanding regarding what is intended by having students take the D1 and D2 courses. This confusion is present not only for students but for faculty and staff as well. Central to undertaking our review of existing courses and to making the objectives of the diversity requirement clearer to all stakeholders therefore was to clarify the required competencies. Accordingly, an important task undertaken during 2018-2019 by the DCRC as well as by the inaugural cohort of the University Diversity Fellows Program was a revision of the competencies, from 14 down to 4 to remove repetition and confusion and to make them work better with our broader general education requirements.

These revisions were done in tandem and through an iterative process between these two bodies and with input from other relevant groups on campus and are thus submitted for approval by Senate. Below please see the existing and proposed new competencies for the D1 and D2 courses.

### **Existing Diversity Requirement at UVM**

#### **CATEGORY 1 (D1) RACE AND RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES**

Courses in this category have as a primary focus race and racism in the United States as it pertains to ALANA populations. A D1 course must promote an understanding of:

- Race and racism in the U.S.;
- The meaning of power and privilege;
- The importance and impact of diversity and multiculturalism in U.S. society

#### **CATEGORY 2 (D2) THE DIVERSITY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

Courses in this category focus on expanding students' cultural awareness. A D2 course is intended to:

- Promote an awareness of and appreciation for the diversity of human experience in all its forms including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disability; and/or
- Foster an understanding of global and international issues including the flow of people, cultures, diseases, and capital or other resources within or across political and geographical boundaries.

## Diversity Requirement Competencies and Intended Outcomes

	Competencies	Intended Outcome
<b>At least one competency from the first two categories (Awareness and Knowledge) must be addressed by the course. Indicate which competencies are being met, and how.</b>		
Awareness	Develop an awareness of the diversity of individuals, cultures, and communities within the U.S and globally.	Develop an awareness of diversity
	Develop an awareness of one's identities, attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions.	Develop an awareness of identity and be able to engage with people of different and similar identities
	Develop an awareness of how one's identities, attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions influence how one interacts with or views those who are similar to or different from oneself.	
	Develop an awareness of the influence and impact of diversity-related concepts such as intersectionality (i.e., the intersection of multiple dimensions on diverse cultural identities), power and privilege, and so forth at the individual, group, and systems levels.	Develop an awareness of diversity-related concepts
Knowledge	Cultivate knowledge and an understanding of the histories, traditions, values, contemporary issues, experiences, demographics, and practices linked to diverse identities and groups within the U.S. and globally.	Understand history, traditions, and values of diverse groups
	Cultivate an understanding of foundational concepts such as diversity, culture, equity, equality, social justice, power/privilege, etc.	Understand core diversity concepts
	Cultivate an understanding of the origins and systemic nature of prejudice, injustice, discrimination, and oppression directed toward people of diverse backgrounds	Understand systemic nature of injustice
<b>At least one competency from the last two categories (Skills and Integration and Application) must be addressed by the course. Indicate which competencies are being met, and how.</b>		

Skills	Develop critical thinking skills to enable one to analyze information and evaluate arguments from diverse viewpoints and multiple perspectives.	Analyze information and evaluate arguments from diverse viewpoints
	Develop the written and oral communication skills necessary to engage in intellectual discourse about diversity-related topics.	Be able to talk about diversity
	Develop interpersonal skills that support respectful, meaningful, and effective interactions with those from diverse backgrounds, including understanding the intent and impact of one's actions.	Be able to effectively engage with those from diverse backgrounds
Integration and Application	Develop the ability to recognize and name dynamics (e.g., identity-related, cultural, power) at the individual, group, and systems levels that are present when exploring issues related to diversity.	Be able to recognize dynamics at the individual, group, and systems levels
	Engage skills to problem-solve and to develop action plans that address diversity-related issues and situations.	Be able to problem-solve and develop action plans
	Develop the ability to effectively intervene and respond to acts of bias or intolerance, as well as to resolve conflicts that occur across differences.	Be able to intervene and respond to bias incidents
	Develop the ability to effectively facilitate the learning and development of others around diversity.	Be able to teach others about diversity

## **Proposed Diversity Requirement at UVM**

### **CATEGORY 1 (D1) RACE AND RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES**

Courses in this category have as a primary focus race and racism in the United States as it pertains to ALANA populations. A D1 course must promote an understanding of:

- Race and racism in the U.S.;
- The meaning of power and privilege;
- The importance and impact of diversity and multiculturalism in U.S. society

### **CATEGORY 2 (D2) THE DIVERSITY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

Courses in this category focus on expanding students' cultural awareness. A D2 course is intended to:

- Promote an awareness of and appreciation for the diversity of human experience in all its forms including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and disability; and/or
- Foster an understanding of global and international issues including the flow of people, cultures, diseases, and capital or other resources within or across political and geographical boundaries

### **Diversity Requirement Competencies**

D1 courses must focus on race and racism in the US in more than 50% of the course content	
D2 courses must focus on diversity of human experience in more than 50% of the course content	
Courses fulfilling the diversity requirement must address at least 3 of the following 4 competencies	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Competency</b>
Awareness	Develop an awareness of the diversity of individuals, cultures, communities within the U.S and globally, one's own identities, attitudes, beliefs, values, and assumptions including intersectionality across difference.
Knowledge	Cultivate knowledge and an understanding of the histories, traditions, values, contemporary issues, experiences, demographics, and practices linked to diverse identities and groups including an understanding of foundational concepts such as diversity, culture, equity, equality, social justice, power/privilege, especially as they develop an understanding of the origins and systemic nature of prejudice, injustice, discrimination, and oppression directed toward people of diverse backgrounds.
Skills	Develop critical thinking skills to enable one to analyze information and evaluate arguments from diverse viewpoints and multiple perspectives including the written and oral communication skills necessary to engage in respectful, intellectual discourse about diversity and inclusion.

Integration and Application

Develop the ability to recognize and name dynamics (e.g., identity-related, cultural, power) at the individual, group, and systems levels that are present and develop skills to problem-solve and to develop action plans that address diversity-related issues and situations