

**Diversity Curriculum Review Committee (DCRC) Report to the UVM Faculty Senate**  
**Thursday, May 5, 2016**

This report summarizes the work of the committee during the 2015-2016 academic year.

- I. **Committee membership** was established. With Professor Jackie Weinstock concluding her term as Chair, Alec Ewald volunteered to serve and was selected, and committee membership was per our by-laws.

This year saw two changes in the **organizational** place of the DCRC at UVM. By a November vote in the Faculty Senate, the diversity requirement formally moved into the General Education portfolio. And in early 2016, staffing support for the DCRC moved to the Faculty Senate office from that of the Provost.

As part of that move, the Committee re-evaluated the place of two of our three *ex officio* members: the Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, and the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning. (The third *ex officio* member is the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee.) By DCRC rules, they are designated *voting* members, but Faculty Senate rules say that administrators may not serve as voting members on Faculty Senate committees. While the Committee fully hopes and trusts that these two members of the Committee will continue their valuable service, our understanding is that they will no longer hold voting member status.

Finally, in early 2016 Professor Laura Almstead became the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee, as Professor Cathy Paris became President of the Faculty Senate.

- II. **Regular meetings** were held to fulfill the functions of the DCRC. Most of the Committee's in-person meeting time was devoted to consideration of courses submitted for the D1 (race and racism in the U.S.) and D2 (cultural diversity) designations, though the Committee also worked on policy issues for at least part of most meetings.

Fall 2015 meetings: October 5, 2015; November 16, 2015; December 7, 2015; December 14, 2015 (policies work only).

Spring 2016 meetings: February 11, 2016; March 24, 2016; April 28, 2016.

- III. The Committee **called for course proposals** to fulfill the two-part diversity requirement in a letter sent to all faculty, dated September 25, 2015.
- IV. The Committee **reviewed, discussed and evaluated** proposed diversity courses. The Committee has a very strong norm of evaluating such courses in its in-person

meetings, making exceptions and conducting e-mailed votes only in extraordinary situations.

- a. Ten courses were approved for the D1 designation; one was rejected.
- b. Twenty-two courses were approved for the D2 designation; one was rejected.
- c. Eleven transfer-credit petitions were approved; five were denied. (A sub-committee of the DCRC considers these petitions.)
- d. No alternative-activity credit requests were received, though one student contacted the Committee to learn whether a project might qualify.

Note that several course approvals in both categories came after initial submissions were revised at the Committee's request and subsequently approved, usually after conversations between the Chair and the faculty member in which the Chair relayed the Committee's requests and suggestions.

In May 2015, the Faculty Senate formally approved revisions to the fundamental *criteria* and specific *competencies* that UVM diversity courses must meet. (Please see this Committee's 2014-2015 report for a brief description of that revision process.) This year also saw more routinized use of the Courseleaf course-management system by the Committee.

Previous requirements, and the DCRC's practice, had been to require all submissions to consist of (a) a syllabus; (b) a diversity statement; and (c) responses to Courseleaf questions. In the course of 2015-2016, the Committee concluded that because the Courseleaf system now includes references to precise diversity competencies, a freestanding diversity statement was no longer necessary.

A final change related to course approvals this year was that, at the request of the Registrar's office and the office of the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, the DCRC can no longer designate courses for D1 or D2 credit at the *section* level: only a course number can be designated. The only exceptions are special topics courses (with Honors College 086, 185, and 186 courses understood to be *de facto* special-topics courses).

- V. Working with our staff colleagues, the Committee engaged in significant **other business** related to its charge to "monitor...experiences in the Diversity Curriculum" and to "support and develop the faculty's capacity to offer diversity courses."
1. The Committee discussed, revised and approved two letters initially drafted by a DCRC sub-committee in spring of 2015. In May of 2016, these letters moved through the Curricular Affairs Committee and the office of the Faculty Senate President and were sent to UVM Provost Rosowsky and the UVM Council of Deans, respectively. The letters relate to concerns we have fielded

regarding the experiences of diversity-course instructors at UVM, and our interest in gathering further data related to these courses.

2. The Committee substantially revised our web pages, updating and somewhat streamlining guidelines for submitting course proposals.
  3. Working with colleagues in the Registrar's office, the Committee revised our policy regarding retroactive approval of UVM courses for D1 and D2 credit. The new policy should be easier for faculty and students to understand, and easier for the Registrar's office to manage.
  4. Multiple members of the Committee participated in the November 2015 professional development learning day organized and hosted by the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, "Maximizing Multicultural Learning in the Classroom." In addition to other events, we hosted two panels focused on proposing and teaching D1 and D2 courses.
  5. Multiple members of the Committee participated in a January meeting with assessment guru Barbara Walvoord, as part of advance planning and discussion related to assessing outcomes of diversity courses. (Assessment will be formally directed outside the DCRC.)
  6. The Chair met more than once with administrators, faculty and staff in the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS) in a continued effort to manage the complexity created by the simultaneous, overlapping-but-not-identical University D2 requirement and the CAS Non-European Cultures (NEC) requirement. The Chair also attended, as a representative of the DCRC, a brown-bag event hosted by CAS related to diversity-course teaching.
  7. The Chair attended, at the invitation of students and as a representative of the DCRC, an advanced Critical Race & Ethnic Studies (CRES) seminar, to discuss their experiences and curricular ideas. The Committee then hosted, at its April meeting, a presentation by two CRES students of their group's model syllabus for a proposed all-University course on race and racism in the U.S.
  8. In the interest of consistency and efficiency in Gen Ed practices, the Faculty Senate President, the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee, and the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning convened an April meeting of representatives from the Sustainability and Diversity Committees.
  9. The Committee created, with the help of staff colleagues, a simple e-mail list consisting of all recent D1 and D2 instructors, February 2016. The list was subsequently used occasionally by faculty convening groups teaching diversity-related courses.
- VI. The Committee expresses its **sincere gratitude** to Catherine Symans, Laurie Eddy, and Tiera Porter for their excellent work with the Committee this year, as well as to Sharon Haas for website maintenance and revisions.
- VII. The Committee hopes to continue work on significant **unfinished business**.

1. The Committee looks forward to continued collaboration with the Office of the Provost, the Council of Deans, and other University leadership related to the experiences of faculty teaching diversity courses.
2. The Committee needs to devise and begin to implement a process to review existing D1 and D2 courses, as per our charge. This was discussed several times during the year, and we reviewed a previous Committee draft plan for a “rolling” system of course review. No further action was taken in 2015-2016.
3. The Committee may wish to engage in a more sweeping revision and streamlining of our webpages.
4. The Committee may wish to collaborate with our colleagues in the Registrar’s office to streamline the transfer-application process, which could be more clear in its on-line presentation and more consistent in the documents submitted by applying students.
5. Continued attention to the Courseleaf process will be necessary. There are a few small changes to the diversity-course elements of Courseleaf that could be made this summer (our understanding is that Courseleaf can only be changed once per year, during the summer). More generally, it would help our Committee to have a way to “roll back” a course only to the instructor, for cases in which we are asking for a more detailed explanation of how a specific competency is met, for example – or at least to have a way that all contributors to the process could facilitate such a rollback without the course needing to pass through four or five levels of approval prior to returning to the DCRC workflow. Finally, continued faculty “education” about Courseleaf is advisable: since they interact with it rarely, it makes sense that most faculty are unfamiliar with how Courseleaf works (indeed, some have never heard of it).
6. Continued attention to the complexity created by the D2/CAS NEC situation will be necessary. Frequent conversations, presentations in the Faculty Senate and CAS faculty meetings and Deans’ meetings, continued collaboration with the CAS Curriculum Committee and CAS student-services staff, and at other gatherings is strongly advised.
7. Continued attention to making sure faculty and other student advisors understand the essence of the diversity requirement is necessary. In our experience, it is common for faculty to describe the diversity requirement as “a D1 and a D2.” In fact, the University requirement can be summed as “a D1 and *either* a D2 or a second D1.” For students in CAS (our largest college), taking a D2 that satisfies the CAS NEC requirement is most strategic, but it is particularly important that students in other colleges understand the University requirement accurately.
8. The DCRC should consider an “on-boarding” process for new members. Deans and Associate Deans, meanwhile, should make sure their school or

- college is represented on the DCRC, as per our by-laws, and that their representative will be able to participate fully in the work of the committee.
9. Current rules call for the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee to serve as a voting *ex officio* member of the DCRC (as well as other committees). We expect to honor this requirement in 2016-2017 by having the CAC Chair *or the Chair's designate* serve on the DCRC.
  10. The DCRC needs to stay in a process of conversation and collaboration with our faculty colleagues. The members of the DCRC derive tremendous intellectual reward from reading our colleagues' syllabi and pedagogical reflections – yet at the same time, we must implement the standards of the University's requirements. Some faculty regard DCRC review of their syllabi not only as intrusive and heavy-handed but as an assault on fundamental norms of academic autonomy. This is a continued challenge in our work, and the arrival of outcome-assessment procedures and a process for review of existing diversity courses both have the potential to exacerbate tension.

Report submitted by Alec Ewald, Chair, DCRC

On behalf of 2015-2016 Committee members:

Jacqueline Weinstock, Human Development & Family Studies (CESS); Susan Kasser, Rehabilitation and Movement Science (CNHS); Pablo Bose, Geography (CAS); Nikki Khanna, Sociology (CAS); Joanne Pencak, Grossman School of Business; Chyi-Lyi Liang (CDAE); Cathy Paris, Plant Biology (CALS) (*ex officio*, as Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee); Wanda Heading-Grant, Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (*ex officio*); Brian Reed, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning (*ex officio*).

Patricia Stokowski (Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources), Fall 2015.

Shana Haines (College of Education and Social Work), Spring 2016.