GENERAL EDUCATION DIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS: WHAT THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE SAYS ABOUT STRUCTURING THESE CLASSES

Nolan Cabrera

Questions: What does the empirical scholarship say about what constitutes effective diversity requirements? What are their core components? How many courses need to be completed by individual students before we can expect them to be effective? How well/not well does the UA’s current structure align with what the scholarship says on this issue?

As the University of Arizona (UA) begins to grapple with what it means to be an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) issues of racial climate and intergroup relations on campus are becoming increasingly important to understand and address. The specific purpose of this white paper is to:

1. Explore the relationship between taking diversity courses and student outcomes as demonstrated within empirical scholarship
2. Understand from the scholarly literature what constitutes ‘best practices’ in terms of offering courses that fulfill a ‘diversity requirement’ (e.g., content, length, and pedagogical approach)
3. Chart a path forward for the UA to intentionally define and shape the diversity requirements it offers to fulfill this general education requirement

This is even more pressing with the current revamping of general education requirements at the UA.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT/INCLUSIVE TEACHING CAMPAIGN: AN EFFORT BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT TO LAUNCH A COURSE GUIDE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT USE

Mónica De Soto Vega

Question: How can the English Department inform undergraduate students enrolled in First-Year Writing (FYW) courses about instructors’ positive usage of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and inclusive teaching practices?

Knowing Latinx student learning is enriched from courses that recognize and value students’ backgrounds and culture, I wanted to develop an electronic and easily accessible course guide for undergraduate students to find instructors/faculty whose course content centers around culturally relevant topics, recognizes and respects diverse student identities, and/or courses known to foster inclusivity. This guide is geared to the 88% of new UA students enrolled in First-Year Writing (FYW) courses and freshman students enrolled in Tier I English General Education courses. The toolkit developed for English is one various UA departments/programs might utilize. The toolkit will include:
1. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and Inclusive Teaching Inventory Survey (Qualtrics) for faculty and graduate student instructors. Survey purpose is to identify ENGL courses that employ CRP and Inclusive teaching methods/perspectives to include in CRP course guide.

2. CRP Course Guide (electronic/paper) for campus wide distribution to undergraduates in UA cultural centers, student support programs, theme dorm communities, and relevant majors/minors.

3. Student interest survey (Qualtrics). Survey purpose is to provide students an opportunity to indicate courses of their choice and inform them of registration procedures.

OIA MINI-COURSE “BUILDING INTENTIONAL LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS”

Mascha Gemein

Question: How can instructors leverage their own identities and values to build meaningful relationships with students of diverse backgrounds?

When striving for more inclusive classrooms, many efforts focus on diversifying the course materials and curriculum but fall short in addressing the key agents in a culturally diverse and competent classroom: the teachers and students and their respective cultural identities and heritages. Scholarship on the experiences of Latinx and other minoritized students has identified an urgent need for more culturally responsive teaching philosophies that can render evidence-based practices more effective for the entire student population. To foster an environment in which teachers and students engage in self-reflection and communication in ways that leverage individual cultural experiences, I will pilot a new professional development program, starting this fall semester.

“Building Intentional Learning Relationships,” a new OIA Mini-Course, is designed to help instructors integrate cultural humility into their reflective practice of teaching so as to inform pedagogical strategies. Course modules combine evidence-based practices from positive psychology, research on the affective domain of learning (values, attitudes, behaviors), and the broad scope of storytelling – from science communication to counternarratives – in higher education. Participants will invest a total of 10 hours over 5 days in online modules and synchronous webinars. A showcase and feedback session takes place one week later. 

https://oia.arizona.edu/content/8

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Kasi Kiehlbaugh

Question: How might we increase the adoption of evidence-based, culturally responsive teaching practices across the university?

The opportunities that I identified to develop capacity-building activities in support of culturally responsive pedagogies and practices are based on Charles Henderson’s four categories of change strategies to improve the adoption of evidence-based teaching (Henderson, 2012): disseminating curriculum and pedagogy, developing reflective teachers, developing policy, and developing shared vision. Institutional change is most likely to occur when strategies target both the
individual and the institution. I initiated nine distinct educational development activities across the four change categories, some of which are ongoing. These activities included working with campus leaders to bring in outside experts on inclusive teaching practices to give a workshop and meet with campus leadership; exploring the use of UA Vitae as a reporting tool for faculty to document diversity, equity, and inclusion activities; attending the AAC&U Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) Institute; creating a new Specialist position within the Office of Instruction and Assessment (OIA) focused on Instructional Innovation for Student Success; becoming a trainer for the Yale Mobile Summer Institute on Scientific Teaching, which will be offered at UA next summer; and obtaining institutional commitment to support the Arizona Science, Engineering, and Math Scholars (ASEMS) program by formally moving the program into the Office of Student Success and Retention Innovation (SSRI). These and other activities served to build capacity at the faculty level for the increased adoption of inclusive practices.

**Inclusive View of Teaching and Service**

Maurice R. Magaña

**Question:** How can the UA better support faculty who disproportionately perform mentorship and service labor that often goes unrecognized in promotion and tenure review?

This project was one of three carried out by the student experience working group. The intervention made by this project is to change the university level policy for evaluating faculty promotion and tenure to include an “inclusive view of service.” This means addressing the well-documented inequity in mentorship within higher education. Research and points to the fact that women, men of color, and members of the LGB community are more frequently called upon to mentor and support students and junior colleagues. In order to address this, this project proposes to change the way that tenure and promotion are evaluated to ensure that mentoring responsibilities are fairly shared across professionals and that engagement in mentoring is recognized in substantive ways that translate to meaningful rewards and recognition. This project adapted the UA’s “Inclusive View of Scholarship” in order to formally and systematically include mentorship into the other two evaluation areas (teaching and service). The proposal is being introduced to various university level committees and stakeholders by Dr. Andrea Romero and myself.

**Developing Equity-Minded Student Leaders**

Lupita Mendez

**Question:** How can we better support collaboration between faculty and student leaders around equity and social justice?

Student leaders who have the skills to engage in issues of social justice, racial justice, and equity will be better role models and more competent campus leaders. By providing course buy-outs or stipends for faculty with expertise in equity, the university could create opportunities for faculty to collaborate with UA staff to provide training to student leaders and build capacity across campus to provide inclusive, equitable, and supportive peer leadership. This project proposal was developed with input from various campus offices that employ student leaders, from faculty, and from student leaders themselves.
DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION ROADMAP

Nadia Alvarez Mexia, Ricky Hernández, and Aileen Wong

Question: What initial communication strategies could be developed to inform and engage our community (internal and external) and inspire action around the University of Arizona’s designation as a HSI?

A team of leaders comprised of three University of Arizona staff and faculty members led an effort to develop a communication plan for the University’s new Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation and its associated initiatives. The goal of this project was to create a plan that would target the most effective route for dissemination of information along with creating a mechanism for engagement with desired audiences and key stakeholder partners. This process involved meetings with communication experts, HSI leadership, faculty, staff, and University brand and marketing representatives. From this planning process, we have developed a “Communication Roadmap” that documents our efforts and outlines a plan with targeted goals for HSI communication including: branding, a website, and integration of assets for structured sustainability.

BUILDING BLUEPRINTS FOR OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT OF DIVERSE GRADUATE STUDENTS

Vanessa Perry

Question: How can we address the racial disparity of advanced degree attainment by increasing the number of Latinxs participating in UA graduate programs?

During 2019, Vanessa Perry worked to develop a series of outreach and recruitment recommendations for graduate programs wishing to increase the number of Latinxs who apply, as well as suggestions for modifications to the application process that may minimize some barriers experienced by Latinx students. While executing this project, Dr. Perry also uncovered recommendations for Latinx student retention. These findings may be helpful in addressing larger, systemic educational attainment disparities for Latinxs seeking advanced degrees at University of Arizona, a Hispanic Serving Institution.