

Global-Multicultural Subcommittee Proposal

Overview

In response to changes brought about by the globalization of world economies and cultures, American colleges and universities are increasingly emphasizing that students develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successfully navigating a global and multicultural society. The American Association of Colleges and Universities includes “knowledge of human cultures” and “intercultural knowledge and competence” among its essential learning outcomes (LEAP Report). Among the values recently articulated in UNLV’s Focus 50-100 plan is the commitment to “building a diverse and inclusive community that is respectful, supportive, enabling, and nurturing.” At the September 2007 General Education Retreat, university stakeholders ranked “diversity” and “globalization” as the third and sixth most important student learning outcomes.

Based on these facts, and after a review of information including benchmarking of institutions noted for their progressive general education outcomes and input from Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity Christine Clark, the global-multicultural subcommittee recommends the following outcomes language and curriculum revisions.

Outcome

- Students will develop an understanding that reflects self-awareness within a global and multicultural society.

Objectives

- Demonstrates knowledge of the history, philosophy, and geography of world cultures.
- Understands diverse perspectives linked to identity, including race, gender, and ethnicity, both in American and international contexts
- Understands the concept of social justice
- Displays curiosity about other cultures, e.g., familiarity with a non-native language or experience living in a different culture
- Functions effectively in diverse groups
- Listens respectfully to diverse views
- Demonstrates awareness of one’s own place in and impact on the world

Proposed New Global-Multicultural Requirement

Students must complete 12 credits of global-multicultural credits. Six credits must be completed in global courses, and six credits must be completed in multicultural courses. Three credits each of global and multicultural courses must be completed at the lower division and three credits each must be completed at the upper division. Any and all global-multicultural courses can also count toward distribution requirements [if maintained] and a total of six credits can be counted toward a major, minor, or concentration.

Global Requirement

Six credits must be taken in courses with global designation. Credits earned while participating in a UNLV sponsored study abroad program can be applied to meet 3 credits of this requirement. Language courses can be applied to satisfy 3-6 credits of this requirement.

Global courses focus on different areas of the world outside the United States (Asia, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Europe), including comparative culture courses and international language courses.

Global courses aim to accomplish the following:

- Develop students' awareness of the different ways that people experience and organize the world and openness to learning from those who differ from one's own culture .
- Enhance students' appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of human experience through the study of global cultures and languages.
- Develop students' awareness of and respect for the interrelatedness of world cultures, economies, and politics.

Multicultural Requirement

Six credits of multicultural courses must be taken. There are two categories of multicultural courses students must take:

- **Racial Ethnic Studies and Race Relations in the United States** (3 credits) courses focus primarily on constructions of race, racialization and race relations in the historical and/or contemporary experiences of racial-ethnic groups in the United States; and/or historical and/or contemporary debates and controversies over these constructions and experiences in the United States context.
- **Perspectives on Cultural Diversity** (3 credits) courses focus on either issues of identity, a comparative study of two or more social groups within a single society or historical time period or across societies or historical periods, or an **intersectional analysis of dimensions of difference** [simplify or cut?]. Courses in both categories are offered at both the lower and upper division levels.

Other Recommendations

- **Faculty Development:** Groups such as the Teaching and Learning Center; the new Research Center for Race, Class and Social Justice and Institute for Multicultural Education and Diversity Training; and the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion receive support from the University to collaborate in developing effective faculty development experiences specifically oriented toward the revision of old courses and the creation of new ones to meet these new requirements. Special attention should be paid to the development of courses at the upper division.
- **Intergroup Dialogues:** 1 credit hour discussion sections attached to courses, enable students to communicate effectively, through written, oral and other forms of communication (e.g., structured partnered and small group activities); to analyze concepts and implications of diversity; and to understand and articulate the importance of diversity within and among cultures and societies AND articulate how diversity helps shape the role of the individual and the interconnections and relationships within and among groups across societies and cultures (including non-Western societies and cultures).
- **LEAD-US program:** Develop a four-semester, living-learning community entitled Leadership in a Diverse U.S. Society (LEAD-US). The purpose of the program is to prepare UNLV students to work, live and lead in an increasingly diverse workplace, country and world. This four-semester experience, focused on the many aspects of leadership and diversity in the United States will use the general education curriculum as building blocks for three-fourths of its academic requirements. The residential component of the program will allow students to engage in academic and community activities, which will significantly enhance their experiences and growth. Deliberately structured cross-group living arrangements will complement and enhance the classroom experiences of students in the program.
- **Assessment:** These larger goals should be assessed as part of an on-going assessment process that employs mixed methods in exploring these important questions. These assessments should involve quantitative longitudinal assessment activities (through surveys, etc.) that will help us to understand the nature of students experiences and their educational development at the time that they enter college, the nature of their experiences and educational development at regular intervals throughout their college experience, and the role that students' experiences with diversity while at UNLV has in enhancing these important outcomes. While quantitatively oriented studies yield important information about how engagement with diversity in college adds value to the educational experiences and outcomes of students, they provide limited information about the nature of students' experiences and the meaning that students give to these experiences. These important research questions are best explored through qualitative assessment activities (i.e., focus groups, individual interviews, ethnographies). These assessment activities can (and should) be included as part of a comprehensive and integrated program of assessment that focuses on the undergraduate experience at UNLV.