

## Final Report 1999-00

May 4, 2000

### **Recommendations**

Background and rationale for the following recommendations of the DPD Task Force are the subject of this

report. We recommend that the Faculty Senate of Oregon State University

1. Reaffirm its commitment to both the Difference, Power, and Discrimination (DPD) Program

and the associated DPD academic requirement in the OSU Baccalaureate Core;

2. Reaffirm the name Difference, Power, and Discrimination;

3. Approve the revised narrative and criteria for the Baccalaureate Core Academic Requirement; and

4. Establish the DPD Baccalaureate Core academic requirement as a separate category within the

Baccalaureate Core, including both lower- and upper-division courses, with approximately half at each level.

Maintaining the balance between lower- and upper-division courses should be the responsibility of the

Baccalaureate Core Committee, assisted by the DPD Director.

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### **Background**

Difference, Power, and Discrimination or DPD at OSU is comprised of two distinct elements: (a) an academic

requirement in the baccalaureate core, herein referred to as the academic requirement; and (b) related professional

development and cocurricular opportunities, herein referred to as the DPD Program. Our recommendations focus

on the academic requirement, but we believe the success of this requirement ultimately depends on the success

of the associated DPD Program. Fewer than 35 DPD courses have been developed and approved over a nine-year

period. Furthermore, there is a clear link between faculty development seminars in DPD content and the development and approval of DPD courses. The Task Force is making a separate report to Academic Affairs with recommendations regarding cocurricular and professional development opportunities in the DPD Program. Below, we seek Faculty Senate action on DPD academic policies and curricula.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Faculty Senate, and, more broadly, Oregon State University, reaffirm its commitment to both the academic requirement of the baccalaureate core and the associated Difference, Power, and Discrimination (DPD) program. Overall, DPD is a way for the University to exemplify its aspiration to "free people's minds from ignorance, prejudice, and provincialism and to stimulate a lasting attitude of inquiry," and to accept the charge of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education that it provide a general education for its students so that they will acquire "an understanding of other cultures and natures" in addition to their own.

Embedded within a variety of associated cocurricular activities, the DPD baccalaureate core requirement is a scholarly approach to issues of difference, power, and discrimination. It neither substitutes for nor replaces other diversity efforts across campus. We believe that a full commitment to the University's diversity mission requires these associated activities. (See Appendix A.) The baccalaureate core academic requirement of DPD is a central component of students' experience at OSU. Students enrolled in DPD courses, faculty who teach DPD courses, and other members of the OSU community need access to a variety of activities and opportunities to enrich the DPD academic experience.

## **Name**

We believe the name *Difference, Power, and Discrimination* (DPD) accurately describes the nature of the program. Moreover, we also believe that the name DPD reflects OSU's unique approach to addressing issues of diversity. We recommend that the Faculty Senate reaffirm the name Difference, Power, and Discrimination.

## **The DPD Requirement in the Baccalaureate Core**

We recommend that the following revised narrative and criteria be approved.

*Narrative.* The unequal distribution of social, economic, and political power in the United States and in other

countries is sustained through a variety of individual beliefs and institutional practices.

These beliefs and practices

have tended to obscure the origins and operations of social discrimination such that this unequal power distribution

is often viewed as the natural order. The DPD requirement engages students in the intellectual examination of the

complexity of the structures, systems, and ideologies that sustain discrimination, and the unequal distribution of

power and resources in society. Such examination will enhance meaningful democratic participation in our diverse

university community and our increasingly multicultural U.S. society.

*Criteria.* Difference, Power, and Discrimination courses shall:

1. be at least three credits;
2. emphasize elements of critical thinking;
3. have as their central focus the study of the unequal distribution of power within the framework of particular disciplines and course content;
4. focus primarily on the United States, although global contexts are encouraged;
5. provide illustrations of ways in which structural, institutional, and ideological discrimination arise from socially defined meanings attributed to difference;
6. provide historical and contemporary examples of difference, power, and discrimination across cultural, economic, social, and political institutions in the United States;
7. provide illustrations of ways in which the interactions of social categories, such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and age, are related to difference, power, and discrimination in the United States;
8. provide a multidisciplinary perspective on issues of difference, power, and discrimination;
9. incorporate interactive learning activities (e.g., ungraded, in-class writing exercise; classroom discussion; peer-review of written material; web-based discussion group); and
10. be regularly numbered departmental offerings rather than x99 or blanket number courses.

We draw specific attention to criterion #9 regarding interactive learning activities. This criterion is included

specifically at student request. The TEAM Task Force (September 27, 1999, pp. 5 - 6), for example, called for

courses with "interactive learning experiences" as one way to "improve the general campus community's ability to address race issues." The Task Force agrees that many OSU students are from relatively homogenous backgrounds, and they may have had few opportunities to interact with others who are different.

This criterion does not necessitate that every aspect of a DPD course involve interaction. There are many types of interactive learning activities, including some that lend themselves to large enrollment courses. For example, some faculty members use writing exercises such as "write-and-pass" in large classes. Others give formal assignments that require students to interview or talk with an individual who differs from them in race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and so on, and then write about what they have in common and how they are different. Others have developed web-based DPD class discussion groups that enable students to "talk" to each other about issues they might be less willing to discuss in person.

### **The Place of DPD in the Baccalaureate Core**

The central focus of DPD courses is how the distribution of power and ensuing discrimination are related to difference. DPD courses are designed to help students move beyond personal reflections about their beliefs and biases to a level of increased analysis and understanding of the complexity of the structures, systems, and ideologies that engender and sustain unequal distributions of power in society. Because DPD content directly addresses beliefs, experiences, and ideologies, and because DPD courses are expected to include interactive learning experiences, faculty who teach them need specialized training. In this sense, DPD courses are more like WIC courses than courses included in the Perspectives category. For these reasons, we recommend that the DPD academic requirement be given a separate category within the baccalaureate core.

*Baccalaureate Core Categories.* Under the current general education system at OSU, baccalaureate core courses occur in three categories: Skills, Perspectives, and Synthesis. *Skills* courses, which are primarily lower division, are designed to provide students with skills that will enhance their learning and communication.

*Perspectives* courses, which are primarily lower division, are designed to give students an understanding of the disciplines and the interrelationships among them. *Synthesis* courses, which are upper division, are designed primarily to foster a deeper integration and synthesis of understanding, abilities, and experiences.

Although DPD courses certainly stress interrelationships of disciplines and experiences, they cover specific kinds of knowledge regarding social structures and human interactions. By design DPD courses are neither primarily about obtaining skills, nor about particular disciplines, nor about the deeper interrelationships among disciplines. They focus on difference, its connection to discrimination, and how difference and discrimination result from and are reinforced by a set of power relations in U.S. society. They are about integrating a specific kind of knowledge, understanding, and sensitivity, which students from all walks of life will need to work, play, and live in an increasingly diverse society. The unique content and pedagogical nature of DPD courses and the misalliance of purpose between the existing baccalaureate core categories and DPD leads us to recommend that a separate category for the DPD academic requirement be established in the baccalaureate core.

*Course Level.* We find compelling reasons to include both lower- and upper-division courses within this new category. Therefore, we recommend that DPD include both lower- and upper-division courses, with approximately half at each level. Maintaining the balance between lower- and upper-division courses should be the responsibility of the Baccalaureate Core Committee, assisted by the DPD Director. Each student, in conjunction with an advisor, should choose carefully the level at which and the course through which the DPD requirement will be met. This recommendation is made after weighing the relative advantages of each level.

*Advantages of lower-division DPD courses.* Lower-division DPD courses have many advantages in that they:

- take advantage of the possibility that students may be more open and eager to learn about and consider
- diverse ideas and experiences early in their academic experience;
- assist students from relatively homogeneous backgrounds in obtaining, early in their university career, a context
- for understanding the experiences of individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds in the less homogeneous

- settings on campus and in our state and national environments;
- have the potential to influence students' academic (including choice of major, elective courses, and/or career)
- and cocurricular experiences (e.g., opportunities for travel, attendance at university lecture series, student involvement in governance); and
- provide for students the opportunity to influence other members of the OSU community and to help the University
- achieve its diversity mission.

*Advantages of upper-division DPD courses.* Upper-division DPD courses also have many advantages in that they:

- expose students to more sophisticated theories and more advanced analysis of the subject matter;
- provide a greater opportunity for a research experience;
- encourage interaction and interdisciplinary scholarship among students with a higher level of intellectual maturity;
- provide for students who desire it a DPD course with greater depth of content and smaller class size;
- provide opportunities for students to take advantage of internships and service learning experiences connected to DPD course content; and provide transfer students to OSU the opportunity to integrate an upper-division DPD course into their academic experience.

## **Appendix A**

### Essential Cocurricular Activities for Students, Faculty, and Staff at OSU

- Lectures (e.g., Department of Ethnic Studies Colloquium Series on Race, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity)
- Cultural events (e.g., Martin Luther King Month; Cesar Chavez Month)
- Films, film series (e.g., Feminist Film Festival)
- Workshops (Emily Blake and Robert Moore on Diversity Education)
- Conferences (e.g., Sacred Landscapes; National Coalition Building Institute)
- Leadership development opportunities (e.g., teaching Odyssey classes)
- Faculty-student forums (e.g. Experiences of Students of Color in the Classroom)
- Special collections (e.g., Photo Archives exhibit of migrant farm laborers)
- Faculty-student research / scholarly activities (e.g., intensive field courses; McNair Scholarship Program for
- Nontraditional Students)
- Cross-campus exchanges (e.g. OUS Global Graduates)

- Faculty and staff development opportunities (e.g., skill development, diversity training; DPD faculty seminars)
- Student-staff-faculty community involvement (e.g., Cross Cultural Perspectives in Public Education: Learning Through Listening)
- Service learning and volunteer opportunities (e.g., service as a DPD consultant to the University and the community)
- Specific activities tied to academic majors (e.g., academic major, minor, and course internships in communities of color; activism projects in Women Studies courses)