

Diversity and Common Ground Program Review Report

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1. Procedure

Of the 96 courses approved to satisfy the Diversity and Common Ground requirement, 53 were being offered, in 29 departments, to a total enrollment of just over 2800 students, during the Fall 1998 term, when the data for the program review was gathered.

Relatively early in the term (Oct 14, 1998) materials were distributed to chairs of departments with Diversity and Common Ground (DCG) course offerings for the term, and to faculty teaching those courses. Each faculty member was asked to provide a course syllabus and to complete a questionnaire for each different DCG course for which s/he was responsible. In addition, faculty were informed that a student questionnaire would be provided later in the term, and were asked to use a small portion of time in each class to allow students to respond. (The student questionnaires were distributed on Nov. 25, 1998.)

An accompanying letter categorically stated that this effort was a program review directed at the DCG course offerings and not at individual faculty members in any way.

Members of the staff of Undergraduate Studies and the DCG subcommittee counted, reviewed and analyzed the documents which were returned from these solicitations. The following reports on those results.

2. Results

a) Course Syllabus

Most of the faculty returning questionnaires also provided a course syllabus, as requested.

Members of the DCG subcommittee reviewed these syllabi, attempting to discover in them several things: 1) communication to the student that the course satisfied a DCG requirement; 2) communication to the student regarding the various means by which the course would satisfy the DCG requirement; 3) discussion or mention of the several topical areas which the appropriate college's DCG course approval guidelines mandate for DCG courses.

In general, analysis of many of these documents was difficult. For instance, if all the syllabus provided was a list of reading assignments, unless the evaluator was familiar with the readings it was not possible to extract topical coverage.

The syllabi we received were, if not altogether disappointing, then on the whole, unenlightening. Several instructors -- ___ out of ___ -- either did not reply to our request for information at all or did so without including a syllabus. Of the syllabi we had to analyze, however, it's possible to make a few broad generalizations:

- Almost none made explicit mention of the course's DCG status, let alone of the ways in which the course was designed to address issues pertaining to DCG.
- A handful of what we would consider exemplary syllabi did include specific course objectives, readings and assignments whose descriptions clearly, reflected the aims of DCG as outlined by the relevant college.
- Most of the rest of the syllabi provided little or no information by which we could evaluate the course's effectiveness in carrying out DCG goals.
- Many of these latter courses seemed at best to address DCG only minimally, either by providing students with "exposure" to cultural, social, or linguistic practices of diverse groups of people, in the absence of any clear analytical or interpretive framework; or by incorporating one or two short units, lectures, or reading assignments touching on the experience of women or ethnic minorities with respect to the discipline or the subject-matter of the course—without this being a substantive emphasis of the course as a whole.

b) Faculty questionnaire

As of the end of Fall, 1998, 56 questionnaires of the 70 solicited had been returned, with the majority (40) coming from AHSS. CPS returned 9 and CNRS returned 7. A sample questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

We had hoped to elicit from these questionnaires a sense of how successfully the faculty delivering the courses felt they were able to incorporate DCG content into the underlying course material.

Two-thirds of the faculty members responding to the questionnaires indicated that they had received NO orientation from any source concerning the DCG nature of the course. Further, two-thirds of the faculty indicated that they provide NO information to students (whether in syllabus or orally) concerning the DCG nature of the course.

The desires most frequently expressed were for clarification of DCG course expectations and training for faculty. Other comments reflect the degree of disagreement and confusion surrounding the existing goals of DCG. Several respondents (5), for example, noted the difficulty and complexity of addressing non-racial diversity in DCG courses. Some faculty (5) see behavioral and attitudinal change as an important goal of DCG, while others see such a goal as "reeking of P.C." Several faculty members indicated that as a result of the questionnaire they would in the future inform other faculty members and their students about DCG policy.

c) Student questionnaire

Faculty members in all 70 Fall 1998 DCG courses were asked to administer, collect and forward to UGS the Diversity and Common Ground Course Evaluation forms. A sample form is included as Appendix B. On these questionnaires, there were six questions which requested an "agree/disagree" response, two which sought to elicit information about the student's reasons for taking the course and his/her awareness of the DCG requirement, and an open-ended question inviting the student to comment about the course in the context of DCG as well as about the DCG requirement itself. Note that the six quantitative questions also invited comments.

UGS received 52 sets of responses, from a total of 1460 students. These responses are summarized in Appendix C. The responses to the first six questions, which sought to elicit the student's opinion about how well the course met generic DCG goals and objectives, were quite heavily weighted in the "agree" direction, suggesting general student satisfaction. But the written comments reveal a disturbing counterpoint to these apparently benign numbers.

First, most students simply didn't write any comments. For instance, in one RS course, of the 20 student responses, there were 2 written comments; in a Geography course, of the 51 responses there were 7 written responses; in an Oceanography course, of the 28 responses, there were 3 written responses.

Of the comments provided, some were superficial:

Good course!

I learned so much.

I don't know what the heck your [sic] talk'n about.

Highly recommend this course to everyone.

This class I learned tons... more than any of my other classes

Good, fun course!

When you ask silly questions you get silly answers. So I don't expect you to learn very much about the nature of the courses in this dept. Try use the phrases "culturally diverse people" and "culturally diverse environment" a little less.

But from the serious student comments, that is, those which provided an opinion and evidence to sustain that opinion, we can read a commentary on the numerical responses.

There are clearly a number of courses which appear to students to be "perfect" DCG courses. In these courses, students seem to perceive the DCG content as primary, rather than a side-effect, and they provide appreciative commentary [note that all student comments have been preserved as written]:

I have learned more in this class about race & ethnic issues and my own attitudes than I have in the whole of my life. And I'm old!. Thank you. Excellent class!

I find that this course in particular, unlike some of the other courses that fall under DCG, does meet all the requirements that were listed in it's description in the catalog. I think that the DCG should help individuals see that equity is not being met for all individuals within American and the rest of the world. These courses should gives us ideas and tools that we can use to change the problems, such as oppression in our community.

I've taken 4 or 5 other course which are considered DCG classes, and they may have filled one or two of the guild lines. This course ... meets all of these guidelines and truely exemplify what a DCG course should be. They shouldn't be class which describe other European races or ethnicities but should educate us about those we are not familiar with. These DCG course could be a very usefull tool in decreasing racism in our socity and should be taken more seriously when evaluating which courses fullfil this requirement.

This is one of the most enlightening courses that I have ever taken at HSU and I have been enrolled in this university since 1990. Not only did this course look at racism and marginalization of minorities in the U.S. but also across the globe. We discussed some very sensitive topics racism, sexism to name a few. This should be a year long course. I've learned so much about the mentioned issues in 5 months I can just imagine what I would learn in 10 month. Thanks for this course!

I think this course should remain a requirement. I have learned a lot and my eyes have been open to issues that I did not know even existed. Its a positive course for students.

I think this class tackles issues of diversity head on. It requires you to not only examine your own views but those held by society.

This is the quintessential DCG course....The content of the past 14 weeks has given me a better understanding of the life process and the way we see the world. Unlike any course at HSU.

This course definitely did satisfy the DCG requirement. It was in depth and really helped students to think about things that they may not have thought of before. Every course which is a DCG course should try to satisfy all of the things listed about what a DCG course is listed as. I hope that these course will really be examined so that every student on this campus will take a course that expands his/her mind about the issues discussed in this class.

This class (my second DCG course) changed my mind about the DCG requirement. I had thought that it (the requirement) was a waste of my precious class time... After this class, however, I am glad that the requirement exists. I think that more DCG classes should strive to express the messiness, complexity, and duality of race relations in America. Instead of offering sugar coated pills of the great American melting pot.

Just as clearly, there are a number of courses which do not appear to students to have very much at all to do with DCG, regardless of their numerical responses.

I had no prior idea that this was a DCG course until now – it doesn't really seem to fit...

This course is very different from my major, but it has nothing to do with diversity.

Did not know this was a DCG course. Bit I don't feel the class was a DCG course. It showed a romanticized view of history and immigrants. It was mainly about white middle class founder of our country.

DCG sucks at this institution! We need better diversity in courses. It is ridiculous that we can go through college without having to take a race and ethnic relations or cultural diversity course. Fix it!

If culture is your main concern this shouldn't be a DCG class.

There are any number of courses where students seem to be dissatisfied with the integration of DCG into the course material or with their "DCG experience" in the course.

A lot of courses... have been really screwed up because they've been restructured to try to meet this requirement. It's good to have some kind of DCG requirement, but many courses have suffered from it. Stop axeing our education in the name of political correctness.

If you want to teach people about diversity, make courses that really, truly approach diversity. Don't take a XXX course and treat it as such. I only learn in here about XXX. Students should meet the DCG requirement by taking other classes that are about diversity. For instance, make a class where the cirriculum teaches you what diversity is and go about it in a way that students can't help but make it an integrated part of their other classes.

I don't think this course should count as DCG. We learned about YYY, ZZZ; it didn't include any diversity. It didn't force us to compare our lives to those of others.

While I don't feel it really addressed the cultural diversity aspect so much, it did expose us to many different types of writ'g and provoked us to think.

I would love to see more info on DCG, but as it was, we were pushing to learn what we did learn of the language.

The majority of work done in this class dealt with [topic XXX] upper to middle class views. We spent 2 days discussing "other" views which was supposed to encompass [the remaining approaches]. There was only one article refering to a poor/Third World point of view.

What are the DCG requirement?

The only diversity I was exposed to in this course was a debate about whether minorities are represented in XXX. I'd love to see more diversity in courses at HSU.

The (amount) of diversity and common ground was basically attached at the end of the course. I would like to see more of this activity in the daily lectures...

...your DCG requirements sound like Fluff (that's marshmallow Fluff). I realize there are many rad people working on critiquing, expanding, reworking the DCG requirements. Which ever DCG reader person reads this please, please [tell] the people that are looking to make the DCG requirements less fluffy. By this I mean taking the requirement out of diversity and common ground and making sure that these issues are talked about in every class.

Question 6 asked about the degree to which the course met a student's general expectations for a DCG course. The 77% positive response rate provides a potentially misleading interpretation, since a number of students commented that they had no expectations, so the

course met them quite well. The committee had not expected this level of student innocence or cynicism with respect to this graduation requirement, but since it has been elicited, the written comments should be understood as all the more revealing.

Conclusions and Recommendation

- a) The numerical data suggest student satisfaction with the status quo.
- b) The subjective data, both from students and from faculty, suggest there are many courses which are inappropriately marked as DCG.
- c) The subjective data from faculty suggest that inappropriately few course syllabi communicate/advertise DCG content and coverage. ***We recommend that all DCG courses communicate that they satisfy this requirement and indicate exactly how they do so*** - that is, what discussions, activities, readings, etc. are intended to elicit DCG issues and assist students in their exploration of these issues.
- d) The wide variety of courses with DCG certification suggests that the DCG guidelines are being too broadly interpreted to be consistent with the spirit of the original recommendation. Courses whose analysis of 'diversity' is not focussed upon some aspect of human culture strike us as manifestly inappropriate, as do courses whose practical goal is competence in a foreign language. Courses in which issues of human diversity are not the main area of intellectual or pedagogical analysis – which incorporate only one or two lectures, discussions or reading assignments touching upon the experience of women or ethnic minorities with respect to the subject-matter or discipline of the course, for example – address the DCG requirement only tangentially, at best. Whether this deviation occurred at course approval time or sometime afterward as the course developed is not knowable without acquiring original DCG course proposals from college archives, probably a useless exercise. ***In an effort to provide a more consistent student experience, we recommend that approval authority be vested at the UCC level.***
- e) There are a sufficient number of faculty responses which indicate no mentorship/guidance in the preparation and delivery of the DCG component of the approved courses to be a matter of concern. ***We recommend that each department having any course with DCG approval develop a process for acclimating/orienting faculty to the intricacies/nuances/subtleties of interweaving DCG content and student outcomes into the course material.***

Questionnaire for Faculty
Teaching Diversity and Common Ground Courses
Mail Response by: Friday, September 25

This questionnaire is to be completed by faculty members who teach courses **Fall 1998** that meet DCG requirements.

1. Course # and Title: _____
2. Name of Faculty Completing Survey: _____
3. Number of times (including this semester) that you have taught this course for DCG: _____
4. Indicate your faculty status:
 a. probationary or tenure track faculty
 b. FERP faculty
 c. part-time faculty
 d. graduate student
 e. other (specify) _____
5. Indicate the number of sections of this course you are teaching this semester: _____
6. Circle the enrollment figure for the course this semester (give average if you teach more than one section):
 a. 01 - 20
 b. 21 - 30
 c. 31 - 40
 d. 41 - 50
 e. 51 - up
7. The DCG course also meets which of the following:
 a. lower division GE requirements
 b. upper division GE requirements
 c. Institutions requirements
 d. major requirements (specify): _____
 e. other (specify): _____
8. Check all those activities employed to orient faculty who are assigned to teach the course:
 a. department provides hard copy of campus DCG criteria
 b. department provides hard copy of college DCG criteria
 c. department representative orally explains criteria for DCG (campus and/or college)
 d. department provides a copy of the original DCG course proposal and syllabus
 e. department conducts meetings to discuss DCG requirements
 f. other (specify): _____
9. For course with multiple instructors, check all activities used to insure that the various sections of the course are taught in a comparable manner:
 a. instructors use the same syllabus
 b. instructors meet to discuss DCG content, activities and assessment before the semester begins
 c. instructors meet periodically throughout the semester to discuss the DCG components of the course
 d. other (specify): _____
10. Indicate all methods used to inform students that the course meets DCG requirements:
 a. mentioned in course syllabus
 b. indicated orally during class meeting
 c. indicated in writing on formats for class assignments
 d. indicated orally prior to engaging in in-class activities, discussions, etc.
 e. other (specify): _____

11. Indicate what diversity aspects are emphasized in the DCG course

Domestic/United States

- a. ethnicity and race
- b. gender
- c. social class
- d. ability/disability
- e. sexual orientation
- f. religion
- g. age
- h. nationality

International

- a. ethnicity and race
- b. gender
- c. social class
- d. ability/disability
- e. sexual orientation
- f. religion
- g. age
- h. nationality

12. Check those methods used to teach the DCG course:

- a. lectures with questions and answers
- b. guided discussions
- c. small group activities
- d. in-class activities
- e. case study/vignettes
- f. computer simulations
- g. audio-visual presentations
- h. other (specify): _____

13. Check those methods used in the DCG course to assess student learning.

- a. objective tests
- b. essay tests
- c. journals (self-reflection)
- d. written papers
- e. oral presentations
- f. group assignments
- g. homework assignments
- h. other (specify) _____

14. Check those methods of course evaluation that you expect will take place during this semester:

- a. student evaluation of the course using departmental evaluation form
- b. student evaluation of the course as it relates to DCG
- c. collegial observation and report
- d. review by department curriculum committee
- e. review by college curriculum committee
- f. other (specify): _____

15. Check activities you would like to see occur in regard to DCG:

- a. clarify expectations for DCG
- b. evaluate course regularly as to its appropriateness for meeting DCG
- c. provide training for faculty teaching DCG.
- d. put emphasis on attitude/behavior change of student
- e. other (specify): _____

16. Feel free to make any additional comments which you think will be helpful to the review of DCG courses and requirements?

**Please attach a course syllabus and mail by Friday, September 25 to UCC Subcommittee on DCG,
C/O Undergraduate Studies**

Diversity and Common Ground Course Evaluation

This course has been approved to meet the HSU Diversity and Common Ground (DCG) requirement. The following survey is meant to help the University Curriculum Committee get a sense of how well approved courses meet current DCG guidelines. It is not intended as a general evaluation of this course or of your instructor.

Please circle the response that best describes your opinion:

- | | Agree | | | | Disagree |
|---|-------|---|---|---|----------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. This course offered me substantive information about the experience and perspectives of culturally diverse people. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |
| 2. This course helped me to explore and evaluate my own cultural experiences and assumptions in relation to those of culturally diverse people. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |
| 3. This course helped me to understand and evaluate the history and perspectives of its particular subject area in relation to those of culturally diverse people. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |
| 4. This course offered me a means of finding common ground among culturally diverse people and of promoting cross-cultural understanding, appreciation and respect. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |
| 5. I will be able to apply what I learned in this course to the conduct of my own life and career in a culturally diverse society. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |
| 6. This course met my general expectations for a Diversity and Common Ground Course. <i>Comments:</i> | | | | | |

(over)

7. I am taking this course (check all that apply):

- To satisfy the DCG requirement
- To satisfy a lower division GE requirement
- To satisfy an upper division GE requirement
- To satisfy a major or minor requirement
- As an elective

8. I first learned about the guidelines for DCG courses:

- From the instructor of this course
- From this course syllabus
- As part of an activity or assignment for this course
- From another DCG course
- From the HSU course catalog
- In some other way (please specify) _____
- I have never been informed of the guidelines for DCG courses

9. Please add any further comments regarding this course's relation to the DCG requirement or regarding the nature and scope of the DCG requirement in general.

Appendix C – Student Questionnaire Results Summarized

Humboldt State University
Diversity and Common Ground Student Evaluation

Fall 1998

1/31/00

Courses: 52

Responses: 1460

Total University: Raw Data

| Response > | Tally of responses | | | | | Total |
|------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Question 1 | 807 | 336 | 170 | 93 | 43 | 1449 |
| 2 | 680 | 395 | 228 | 101 | 48 | 1452 |
| 3 | 657 | 447 | 218 | 95 | 38 | 1455 |
| 4 | 683 | 398 | 227 | 86 | 51 | 1445 |
| 5 | 737 | 357 | 215 | 77 | 56 | 1442 |
| 6 | 802 | 276 | 179 | 84 | 60 | 1401 |

Total University: Percents of those responding to question

| Response > | Percentage of responses | | | | | Total |
|------------|-------------------------|------|------|-----|-----|-------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Question 1 | 55.7 | 23.2 | 11.7 | 6.4 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| 2 | 46.8 | 27.2 | 15.7 | 7.0 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| 3 | 45.2 | 30.7 | 15.0 | 6.5 | 2.6 | 100.0 |
| 4 | 47.3 | 27.5 | 15.7 | 6.0 | 3.5 | 100.0 |
| 5 | 51.1 | 24.8 | 14.9 | 5.3 | 3.9 | 100.0 |
| 6 | 57.2 | 19.7 | 12.8 | 6.0 | 4.3 | 100.0 |

Total University: Raw Data

| Response > | Tally of responses | | | | | | g |
|------------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | a | b | c | d | e | f | |
| Question 7 | 559 | 309 | 325 | 487 | 152 | | |
| 8 | 110 | 99 | 6 | 70 | 737 | 162 | 209 |

Graphical interpretation of summary data.

HSU DCG Student Questionnaire

