10. Special Consideration

College of Geosciences

Request for a Diversity Certificate Program

between the College of Geosciences and the Department of Multicultural Services
October 22, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Robert Knight, Chair
    University Curriculum Committee

FROM: Dr. Sarah Witham Bednarz
      Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

CC: Ms. Jennifer Ford
    Interim Director, Office of Multicultural Services

SUBJECT: Proposed Certificate in Diversity, College of Geosciences

The College of Geosciences, in collaboration with the Department of
Multicultural Services, proposes to offer a Diversity Certificate program for
Geosciences majors. The attached document details the program and suggests a
list of existing courses for the 12 hours of credits required to earn the certificate.

The goal of the program is two-fold: 1) to offer Geosciences students an
opportunity to synthesize and integrate academic course work with co-curricular
and service learning experiences to demonstrate their preparedness to participate
successfully in contemporary, highly diverse global societies; and 2) to promote
diversity, multiculturalism, and internationalism in the College of Geosciences.

We request approval of this program and to allow the certificate be posted to
student transcripts. The office of the dean of Geosciences will provide
information to the Registrar once students complete the certificate.

If you have additional questions, please contact me.

Thank you for your consideration.
Diversity Certificate Program
For Texas A&M University College of Geosciences

Summary

The College of Geosciences and Department of Multicultural Services proposes the creation of a Diversity Certificate Program for Texas A&M University. Drawing from existing courses, programs and associations within the university, the Diversity Certificate Program will enable its students to create, synthesize and integrate academic coursework, co-curricular experience, and service learning engagement in order to demonstrate their preparedness for participation in the modern global economy.

Justification

There are numerous threads of evidence that support the notion that Texas A&M students would be well served to have more ways in which to demonstrate multicultural competence. The university mission statement and the Vision 2020 imperatives recognize the importance of understanding and respecting other cultures, while acknowledging that this is an area which needs improvement.

While this university is perceived as creating competent professionals in a technical sense, our graduates are also perceived as lacking in diversity awareness and multicultural sophistication (Murdock Report, 1998). The existence, and completion, of a certificate program as proposed in this concept paper would both continue to exemplify our university’s willingness to tackle this issue, and also be a sign to future employers that the holder of such a certificate is coming to them with the skills and willingness to function in a pluralistic society.

There are multiple efforts across campus to promote diversity and multiculturalism. The purpose of this certificate program is to bring together these efforts into a cohesive whole. The various components we include in this proposal recognize, and utilize, these efforts, and will hopefully consolidate them into a meaningful and enriched undergraduate experience.

Components

The Diversity Certificate Program will have the following components:

1) **An orientation session** run jointly by the College of Geosciences and Multicultural Services during which the purpose, structure and requirements of the certificate will be explained. Included in this orientation will be an introduction to the terminology of diversity education, the principles of social justice and inclusion, and a guiding philosophy for the certificate. An advisor from Multicultural Services will be assigned to each student, and they will meet regularly (bi-monthly) to assess progress and involvement in the program. There will be an overall coordinator for the College of Geosciences.

2) **The academic component**, which will consist of the completion of a minimum of twelve hours to include nine hours of diversity related courses, at least one from the College of Geosciences. In addition, students must complete a special section of GEOS 484 to fulfill the co-curricular, service learning, and capstone component of the program. Students will be provided with a sample list of courses, and advice about the most appropriate choices for their long term goals. Certificate advisers may approve additional courses not on the sample list to count towards the completion of this requirement. The core courses required for this certificate may also count towards other degree requirements. Students should maintain a GPA of 3.0 in certificate courses.
3) **A co-curricular component**, which will consist of a minimum of 10 hours of participation in diversity related co-curricular activities such as the ones provided by diversity education in the Department of Multicultural Services, or in multicultural/social justice organizations on or off campus. Attendance at national or local diversity conferences could also count towards this requirement. Certificate advisers will supply a preapproved list of activities to participants at the beginning of each semester. Additional activities will need to be approved by certificate advisers.

4) **A service learning component**, which will consist of at least 20 hours of involvement in an approved project. This component will draw upon existing programs, such as the International Service Project sponsored by the L. T. Jordan Institute, the various opportunities offered by the Study Abroad Programs Office, or many of the local service opportunities provided by many departments at Texas A&M and in the local community.

5) **A capstone retreat** will be offered at the end of the fall and spring semesters. During this retreat, participants will demonstrate how they have integrated and made sense of their experiences by sharing their portfolios containing academic work and reflections on co-curricular and service learning opportunities. They will also be guided to reflect on how the process will allow them to participate more fully in a global society.

**Learning Outcomes**

1) Students will be able to articulate the complexity and multiplicity of issues that surround global diversity.

2) Students will be able to explain how the behavior of individuals, groups, and nations affects others, in terms of human rights and environmental, social, and economic well-being.

3) Students will be able to perceive and articulate any given event from more than one cultural viewpoint.

4) Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of appropriate discourse when addressing issues of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and socio-economic status.

**Assessment**

In addition to the GPA requirement of 3.0 for certificate courses, progress towards the certificate will be assessed by program advisors using the following methods:

1) portfolios, consisting of materials produced in courses, journal entries, and reflection papers about their service learning and co-curricular activities. Portfolio materials will be evaluated using criteria derived from certificate learning outcomes.

2) attendance records, sign in sheets for conferences and/or co-curricular participation, and participation in a service learning program through GEOS 484.

3) participation in the orientation and capstone experiences.

4) attendance at bi-monthly meetings with certificate adviser.

**Eligibility**

To apply for the certificate, a student must be in the College of Geosciences, have a 2.0 grade point average and must apply prior to completing 90 hours. Exceptions may be made to students who have completed more than 90 hours, but will be determined on a case by case basis by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee from the College of Geosciences and the Department of Multicultural Services.
Application Process

Students interested in the certificate should complete an application, available online at the College of Geosciences and the Department of Multicultural Services website, including a statement of why they are interested in this certificate. A committee made up of individuals from the College of Geosciences and the Department of Multicultural Services will evaluate applications based on demonstrated interest in issues of multiculturalism and diversity as well as ability to comprehensively answer all application questions. The committee reserves the right to conduct interviews with applicants to make final selections. Students who are admitted will be assigned an advisor in the Department of Multicultural Services to coordinate the requirements of the certificate including completion of GEOS 484.

Award of Certificate

Students completing all requirements will receive the certificate. The certificate will appear on a student’s official transcript.

Administration

The Department of Multicultural Services will conduct the orientation and capstone retreat, and retain and manage student records for those participating in the certificate. Staff from the department will serve as advisors to students participating in the program and will approve the co-curricular and experiential activities. A coordinator and contact from the College of Geosciences will coordinate the program with the Department of Multicultural Services.

The College of Geosciences will create sections of GEOS 484 for certificate students, ensure compliance of the registration process, and communicate with the registrar’s office when a student has successfully completed the certificate requirements.

Contact
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s-bednarz@tamu.edu

Service Learning & Co-Curricular Components of Program

The service learning and co-curricular components of this program will be fulfilled by completion of GEOS 484, an internship experience supervised by the Department of Multicultural Services in coordination with the College of Geosciences.

Definition

Service-learning is an educational approach that combines service to the community with classroom curricula. It is a hands-on approach to mastering subject material while fostering civic responsibility.

Goals

The goals of service learning include, but are not limited to, the following:

1) To enhance student learning by joining theory with experience and thought with action.
2) To assist students to see the relevance of the academic subject to the real world.
3) To expose students to societal inadequacies and injustices and empower students to remedy them. To enable students to help others, give of themselves, and enter into caring relationships with others.
4) To develop a richer context for student learning.
Examples

- Environmental Programs students help a non-profit organization write manuals/brochures and/or organize a contest on civic responsibility and recycling for high school students.
- Atmospheric Science students tutor elementary school students in mathematics in a four-week timeframe. Some of the objectives that are met through their service-learning include: enhancing and expanding their math confidence; improvement in fluency in math reasoning; practice in problem solving, and enhanced critical thinking skills. Students write a reflective essay which details their first impressions of the project, their expectations, the benefits/drawbacks of the project, what they learned, how they applied the skills learned in their math career, how the experience related to the course objectives, their recommendations about the experience, and how/if the experience affected their life goals.
- Geography students work with a community program to provide mapping and other technological services to assist in achieving their goals. They become locational experts and practice developing databases to manage large amounts of spatial data.

Resources for service learning at Texas A&M University are found at: http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/leadandserve/resources/servicelearning

Co-curricular Component

Definition

The co-curricular component of the Diversity certificate consists of attendance to 10 hours of educational and experiential diversity education opportunities offered outside of the classroom by various constituents on or off campus.

Requirements

To fulfill the co-curricular requirements of the certificate, the students must document their participation in the event, receive the approval of their advisor (prior or after the event), and write a reflection piece in their portfolio. Students are expected to cover an array of events and not simply concentrate on a specific area.

Examples of Co-Curricular Activities

- Presentations, workshops and lectures by Department of Multicultural Series (CommUnity Conversation, Film Series, Book Club)
- Evans Library Diversity Series
- Women’s Studies Lecture Series
- NCORE National Conference on Race and Ethnicity
- NCBI National Coalition Building Institute
- Social Justice Week at Texas A&M
- Distinguished Lecture Series
- Residence Life Diversity Programs (Tunnel of Oppression)
- U-ACT Programs
- Women’s Resource Center Programs
- Gender Issues Equity Center Programs
- Race and Ethnic Studies Programs
- Student Government Association Diversity Symposium
- Cultural Day Trips through DMS
- Attendance at museums, different religious services, etc
- Geography Awareness Week, Earth Science Week, and related activities
- WorldFest in Bryan/College Station
- Study Abroad Trips (unless service component attached and then can count for service learning component)
- Participation in International Week (I-Week) or other cultural festivals
- Participation in Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Heritage Month, or Black History Month
- SACNAS
- Undergraduate Recruiting Team (URT) in Geosciences
Orientation Session

Every student wanting to enroll in the certificate program needs to participate in an orientation and a capstone session. The orientation session will be offered a few times during and prior to the semester as needed.

Duration: 2 to 3 hours

Objectives

1) To introduce students to the requirements and logistics of the program
2) To introduce students to the diversity certificate staff and other students
3) To familiarize students with resources and co-curricular offerings
4) To explain how to build a portfolio
5) To introduce concepts of multicultural competence, social justice, privilege, diversity education and the connection to their academic and professional careers.
6) To develop a common terminology.

Orientation Outline

I. Introductions and Ice Breakers

II. Logistics
   a. Learning outcomes
   b. Explanation of requirements
   c. Logistics of the program
   d. Expectations of students

III. Diversity Education
   a. Philosophy of Social Justice and Diversity Education
   b. Definition of terms related to diversity

IV. Test over basic definitions and concepts

V. Questions and closing

Capstone for Diversity Certificate

Upon completing all other requirements of the certificate program, students will register for a capstone workshop. The workshop will be capped at 20 participants and will be offered 2-3 times a semester.

Duration: 3 - 4 hours

Objectives

1) To make connections between classroom and co-curricular activities
2) To provide the opportunity to publically present the work done towards the certificate
3) To reflect on the implications of this work, both personally and globally

Capstone Outline

I. Introductions & warm up activity
II. Presentation of portfolios
III. Small group discussions of particular topics, including but not limited to how have the things learned in the classroom been reflected in the experience of the world outside the classroom.
IV. Implication for future practice
V. Assessment

Sample of Course Options
Certificate advisers may approve additional courses not on the sample list to count towards the completion of this requirement.

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<th>Geosciences</th>
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<td>• GEOS 484 (mandatory)</td>
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<td>• ANTH 301. Indians of North America</td>
<td>• GEOG 202 Global Village</td>
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<td>• ANTH 314. Agrarian Peasant Societies</td>
<td>• GEOG 305 Geography of Texas</td>
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<td>• ANTH 315. Peoples and Cultures of Africa</td>
<td>• GEOG 306 Urban Geography</td>
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<td>• ANTH 319. Indians of Mexico and Central America</td>
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<td>• ANTH 404. Women and Culture.</td>
<td>• GEOG 320 The Middle East</td>
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<td>• HIST 258. American Indian History</td>
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<td>• HIST 301/AFST 301. Blacks in the United States Since 1877</td>
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<td>• HIST 455. History of the American City</td>
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<td>• HIST 461. History of American Women</td>
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<td>• HIST 473. History of Modern American Women</td>
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<td>• AFST 317 Race &amp; Ethnic Relations</td>
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<td>• AFST 323 Sociology of African Americans</td>
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<td>• AFST 357 The Black Diaspora and the Modern World</td>
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<td>• HLTH 236. Race, Ethnicity and Health</td>
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<td>• MODL 352. Hispanic Literature and Film</td>
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<td>• MODL 363. Borderlands: U.S. and Mexico</td>
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- SOCI 317. Minority Groups
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- SOCI 423. Globalization and Social Change
- SOCI 424. Women and Work in Society
- WGST 316. Sociology of Gender
- WGST 333. Gay and Lesbian Literature
- WGST 407. Women, Minorities and the Mass Media