

TCU Core Curriculum Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Essential Competency Proposal January 2019

I. Context

Universities throughout the US are recognizing the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion as central features of academic excellence within higher education. Universities are finding creative ways to promote opportunities for students to learn about, encounter, and explore identities and communities that are new to them and to engage critically with the dynamics of difference and power that shape their lives. At an institutional level, schools with a stated commitment to diversity often manifest this commitment by requiring undergraduates to complete a course that has DEI-related content. When compared with a set of eighteen peer and aspirant institutions, TCU is behind when it comes to making genuine encounters with diverse individuals and groups central to students' University experience.¹ Assessments from outside the university have identified this as well: The Chronicle of Higher Education's 2018 list of "Great Colleges to Work for" tellingly indicates that "diversity" is one of only two measured categories for which TCU did not receive recognition.² Our state's demographics provide another useful context: Texas is already a "minority-majority" state, and projections indicate that next year, Latino/as will surpass non-Hispanic whites as the demographic plurality of Texas. We believe that TCU is ready to make its commitment to DEI concrete through its core curriculum. **The aim of this proposal is to enrich the existing Core Curriculum through the addition of a DEI Essential Competency (EC). As an overlay, the DEI EC will encourage faculty to create new courses and, more importantly, to emphasize, enhance, or add Learning Objectives related to DEI to existing courses that serve the core as well as specific majors and minors.**

II. Rationale

TCU students have yet to see significant changes in their lives with regards to DEI since the creation of the Chancellor's DEI Committee two years ago. Though it may be true that *some* current TCU core classes meet or partially meet some of the same goals as a course vetted for DEI, these other core requirements were simply not designed for the specific goal of educating students about the increasingly important ability to successfully "lead as a global citizen" within diverse contexts in the United States and within their own communities. The Senate-appointed, campus-wide DEI committee's working group on the curriculum found that the current Cultural Awareness (CA) requirement (in the TCU Core's Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values [HMOV] Curriculum) is not fulfilling this need, nor is it practical to refashion it to do so.

The Cultural Awareness requirement in TCU's core curriculum does a good job of introducing students to geographically and ideologically distinct cultures. But it does not cultivate in students an understanding of the diversity within their own University, local community, or chosen discipline. Adding DEI as a new Essential Competency in the core builds competencies relevant to the overall TCU climate, but also to the overall workforce and surrounding communities (both are strategic priorities for TCU). Adding this DEI overlay also has the following advantages:

¹ The DEI Committee Working Group on Curriculum assessed the place of diversity in University missions and curricula at Baylor, Emory, Iowa State, Kansas State University, Lehigh, Oklahoma State University, Rice, SMU, Texas Tech University, Tulane, University of Kansas, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, University of New Mexico, University of Texas-Austin, Vanderbilt, Wake Forest, and West Virginia University.

² <https://www-chronicle-com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/interactives/greatcolleges18/honorroll>

- Making DEI fundamental to the undergraduate experience at the level of an essential competency;
- Changing the core without necessarily requiring any new credit hours to the core;
- Cultivating courses that address DEI in a discipline-specific or college-specific manner, thereby sharing the responsibility for addressing DEI with all individual units and departments;
- Avoiding the logistical challenges of changing an already entrenched requirement (such as CA within HMVV).

III. Staffing and Resources

The success of the DEI EC will depend upon substantial support from TCU's administration. As a University-wide requirement, all departments, colleges, schools, and programs should have access to new faculty lines for teacher/scholars who demonstrate expertise in DEI within a specific field, as well as development funds to support current faculty in revising their syllabi and teaching methods.

Staffing the DEI EC must not become the sole responsibility of faculty already contributing their time and energy to DEI efforts, many of whom are people of color or people who identify with other marginalized groups, nor to those academic departments or programs who already teach in these areas but are still growing. Similarly, staffing of the DEI EC must not become the sole responsibility of minority faculty in any field. Without adequate funding, support, and a shared sense of responsibility, the proposed DEI EC could have the unintended consequence of further marginalizing and taxing minority faculty. In light of this significant risk, however, it is the view of the DEI Curriculum working group that it is unquestionably in the best interests of our students and our students' demands for greater faculty and curricular diversity to add DEI to the core. **It is therefore incumbent upon TCU, in promoting academic excellence, to provide substantial support to faculty and academic programs and departments teaching DEI classes in the short and long term. To this end, the VIA: Lead On Steering Committee for strategic planning has as a priority the necessary support and funding for training faculty and staff, as well as hiring new faculty so that TCU can achieve its DEI goals (including curricular goals).** It is important to note that while adding a DEI EC to the Core Curriculum will not solve all of the university's diversity-related challenges, it will help move us in the right direction and help to create a strong departmental incentive for increasing faculty and curricular diversity.

As an essential competency, DEI is meant to promote a wide variety of discipline-specific as well as interdisciplinary courses across the university. To that end, TCU resources should fully support two equally important areas of curricular development:

- Stipends, course releases, and other incentives to support faculty from all units in developing new or reframing existing courses for vetting as DEI. In addition to incentivizing this work, TCU must provide group or individual training programs to assist faculty in creating DEI coursework. Trainers may come from outside the university (i.e., consultants whose expertise is in curricular development for DEI) or current faculty and staff (provided they are generously compensated, through stipends and/or course releases). In the short term, we are in favor of a summer "faculty boot camp" model of training, which provides support in the form of time, space, lunch, and a stipend for participants in a week-long workshop aimed at revising existing syllabi to be vetted for DEI. This cohort would then receive support for monthly lunches over the course of the next semester or two as they launch their new courses. Faculty mentors for the boot camp/ continued cohort support should be compensated with both stipends and course releases to recognize the significance of this training to enhance our core curriculum and strategic priorities.

- A substantial increase in Tenure-Track lines that support DEI on campus. In particular, these lines might be concentrated in the two interdisciplinary programs whose affiliated faculty are already well represented in DEI efforts: CRES and WGST. In addition, the implementation of a DEI EC would be an ideal time to develop hiring strategies across campus that work within and across academic units to hire new Tenure-Track faculty to support DEI. These strategies could result bringing in a fresh cohort of teacher-scholars from different disciplines with the shared goal of supporting DEI in the curriculum. **It is against the spirit and aims of this proposal to meet staffing needs for the DEI EC with additional Non-Tenure Track lines. Given the sensitive nature of this material in the classroom, and the premise that DEI is part of TCU's core values, it is absolutely necessary that faculty hired to support the DEI EC have the support of Tenure-Track lines.**

IV. Student Perspectives

(Prepared by undergraduate working group members Hope Bentley, Michelle Nguyen, Bailey Mooney, J.R. Hardy, Tamara Gilbert, and Lydia Galvan)

The students of this sub-committee are so excited that this proposal is finally being brought up. The issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion mean a lot to us, and we are very passionate about making TCU the best it can be. The DEI Essential Competency Component is essential because the mission of TCU is to educate ethical leaders and responsible citizens for the global community. We are not creating leaders or citizens for our diverse world if TCU students are graduating college without having hard discussions about race, difference, privilege, and power. The courses that will be counted in this competency will allow students to have a better understanding of how their own areas of study have a connection to the inequalities people face in the world. TCU students will benefit from learning how to analyze and talk about diversity, especially applying that skill to real-world, current, global issues. But not only are these courses important in order for students to be culturally competent so that we can all learn to communicate across difference, they are also a space for students in marginalized populations to talk about their experiences and develop the knowledge related to their identity so that they can be authentic leaders in the global community. Learning about issues of oppression related to marginalized identities is very important to TCU students, not only the ones that experience it, but to students who want to be allies for their friends as well. TCU will be a welcoming and comfortable place for all once we make an effort to honestly educate students about all of the issues that exist in our world.

V. Advising

Advising is already a critical part of students' successful progress toward complete TCU Core Curriculum requirements and the requirements of their major, minor, emphasis, etc. It will be imperative that faculty advise students well with regard to the fulfilling the DEI EC, encouraging students to select courses that have other TCU CC credits in addition to the DEI EC. Just as students currently look for courses that fulfill both the RT and HUM requirements, for example, students will be able to make similar choices to fulfill the DEI EC requirement. Students in high credit hour programs will likely fulfill this requirement through their completion of the TCU Core, i.e., through their completion of CA, CSV, LT, HUM, RT, or HT requirements.

With effective advising, and in terms of number of courses in the core curriculum, **the addition of a DEI EC may not change students' degree plan at all.** Because of the importance of advising, the *VIA*: Lead On Steering Committee for strategic planning has improving academic advising, including hiring more professional advisors, as one of its priorities.

Departments, programs and colleges can facilitate their majors' completion of the DEI EC by revising one, or more, courses already required for the majors or minors in their academic unit to garner DEI designation.

VI. The Approval Process

According to the TCU Core Curriculum Emendation Policy, the Heritage, Mission, Vision and Values (HMOV) committee must approve any substantive change proposed for the HMOV portion of the TCU CC before forwarding the proposed change to the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly for approval. Similarly, the dean of the appropriate college, or their representative must approve any substantive change proposed for the Human Experience and Endeavors (HEE) portion of the Core Curriculum before forwarding it to the Director of the TCU Core Curriculum, the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly for approval. For the Essential Competencies (EC), an appropriate designated body must approve the change before forwarding it to the Director of the TCU Core Curriculum, the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Assembly for approval.

In the Fall 2016 semester the Faculty Senate created the University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, and its subcommittees. The DEI Curriculum Subcommittee is one of those committees, and convened for the first time in the Spring 2017 semester. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the DEI Curriculum Subcommittee began working collaboratively with the Faculty Senate Academic Excellence Committee (AEC), and in the Fall 2018 semester the Faculty Senate specifically charged the AEC with crafting a proposal to amend the TCU Core Curriculum to include a DEI requirement. The DEI Curriculum Subcommittee and the AEC presented that proposal to the Faculty Senate in the December 6, 2018 meeting for conversation, and to the entire TCU community on January 29, 2019 for further conversation.

On January 31, 2019, the AEC approved the following motion:

The Academic Excellence Committee, in conjunction with the DEI Subcommittee for Curriculum, propose adding a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) requirement as an Essential Competency to the TCU Core Curriculum.

This motion will go to the Faculty Senate on Thursday, February 7, 2019. That meeting begins at 3:30pm in the BLUU Chambers. Pending Faculty Senate approval of the motion, the final decision to add this requirement to the Core will be by a vote of the Faculty Assembly. The TCU Faculty will have an opportunity for further discussion, and to vote on the motion, in a Faculty Assembly tentatively scheduled for March 7, 2019.

Only once the TCU faculty have approved the DEI EC can the Faculty Senate focus solely on implementing the DEI EC requirement. To facilitate this part of the process, it would be efficacious to create two committees, a DEI EC Implementation Committee and DEI EC Committee to vet courses. The DEI EC Implementation Committee, composed of members of the Faculty Senate and the faculty at large, should have two charges:

1. To work with Dr. Ed McNertney, Director of the TCU Core Curriculum and Ms. Mary Kincannon, Registrar to determine administrative necessities for implementation, including, but not limited to, how many courses per semester the DEI EC will require;
2. To work with Provost's Office, Dr. Karen Steele and Ms. Aisha Torrey-Sawyer, Co-Chairs of the DEI Committee, the Koehler Center, and other appropriate units on campus to create

effective faculty training for faculty who wish to embed the DEI EC in one, or more, of their courses. The faculty training should include a plan for on-going faculty training. This Committee could also work with associate deans in colleges where students have a high number of hours for their majors to determine the most effective ways for students to complete the DEI EC requirement.

Because members of the Faculty Senate Academic Excellence Committee and the DEI Curriculum Subcommittee have already begun conversations regarding the ways in which students might fulfill the DEI EC requirement, it would be beneficial to have at least one of the members of those two committees on the DEI EC Implementation Committee. Please see III. Staffing and Resources, above.

The DEI EC Committee should be constituted similarly to the HMOVV Committee with members of the Faculty Senate, the faculty at large, and especially faculty from CRES and Women and Gender Studies. The DEI EC Committee would be responsible for vetting courses that faculty submit for the DEI EC requirement.

VII. Frequently Asked Questions

1. How is an Essential Competency different from other core requirements?

Essential Competencies are relatively more focused on development of skills as compared to acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, within the structure of the TCU Core, they are designed to be overlays – competencies that are acquired while simultaneously achieving mastery of a separate core learning outcome. This competency is important because we want students to not just learn about difference, but to be able to engage, live, and work across multiple vectors of social identity.

2. Will this new requirement add an additional course to degree requirements?

No, not necessarily. Because the DEI EC is an overlay, courses vetted for the DEI EC can double count with other courses in the TCU Core Curriculum, as well as required and elective courses in students' major/minor.

3. Our majors already have so many requirements—how can we add another 3 hours without delaying their graduation?

The aim of teaching students to work within and among diverse groups is embedded in TCU's mission: "to educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community." There is no major, minor, or program on campus that is "exempt" from issues of equity or diversity. In practice, students often must choose between a major they want and coursework that attends to DEI, even if their career will regularly bring them into contact with diverse populations. By creating a DEI core requirement at the level of the Essential Competency, all units will have the opportunity to examine their existing courses and attend to matters of DEI in discipline- or field-specific ways. The more support TCU offers to departments and faculty doing this work, the more likely it will be that students will have no need to add more hours to their degree, but will instead earn their DEI EC credit through a class that already pertains to their major or Core class relevant to their interests.

4. What courses will meet this requirement?

We cannot know the answer to this question until the TCU Faculty approves the DEI EC for the TCU CC, and the vetting committee vets courses. What we can know is that there are some already existing courses that are good candidates for the DEI EC. For example,

BUSI 30153	Ethical Decision Making (CSV)
CRES 10103	Engaging Difference and Diversity in America (CSV)
CRJU 20413	Introduction to Criminal Justice (SSC, CSV)
CRJU 20423	Critical Issues in Crime in Justice (SSC, CSV)
CRJU 30903	Law and Society (CSV)
ENGL 20203	Girls' Studies (LT)
ENGL 20313	Power & Protest (CSV)
ENGL 20533	The American Dream (LT)
ENGL 20573	Native American Literatures (LT, CA)
ENGL 20593	Introduction to Literatures of the Global African Diaspora (LT)
ENGL 20663	Why Read Literature? (CSV)
ENGL 30163	Urban Experiences and American Literature (LT, CA)
ENGL 30683	Post-colonial Anglophone Literature (LT)
ENGL 30713	Mexican American Literature and Culture in the Borderlands (LT, CA)
ENGR 30903	Issues in Engineering Design (CSV)
FTDM 40653	Popular Music and the Recording Industry (CA)
HIST 10713	Multicultural America (CA)
HIST 30803	Recent U.S. Urban History: Race, Space, & Community Activism (CA)
MANA 40223	Cross-Cultural Management (CA)
POSC 35023	Comparative Social Movements (CA)
POSC 31513	Women and Politics (CSV)
POSC 33103	Feminist IR Theory (CA)
POSC 34043	Equality Under the Law (CSV)
NTDT 21163	Food and Culture (CA)
RELI 30493	Latinos/as, Religion, Law, and Identity (CA, CSV)
SCIE 20303	Whiskey- Science and History (HT)
SOCI 20223	Social Problems (CA)
WGST 20003	Introduction to Women and Gender (CA, CSV)

5. Is the Core Curriculum really the best place to do this? Won't students resent being forced to take a class in "Diversity?"

The liberal arts tradition is predicated on the value of exposing students to different perspectives. By working as an overlay, the proposed change will give students the option of taking a DEI-vetted class from a variety of disciplines (represented in the core), interdisciplinary perspectives (CRES or

WGST), or within their chosen field. By placing DEI in the core curriculum, TCU is affirming DEI as core value at the heart of the TCU experience.

6. What is the threshold of DEI content that would be required within a course to allow it to count as meeting the overlay requirement?

Courses for the DEI EC will be vetted in accordance with other Core Curriculum standards (i.e., Learning Outcomes/Student Action Steps). The vetting process requires that faculty articulate how their class will demonstrate ONE Learning Outcome (through ONE Student Action Step). Surely, many classes vetted for DEI will meet more than one DEI Learning Outcome and/or employ more than one Student Action step. But classes are not required to fulfill all DEI Learning Outcomes to receive approval. If, through a single or multiple assignments/activities (student action steps), students can demonstrate competency in one of the three DEI learning outcomes, the course will count for DEI.

7. What is the composition of the vetting committee for DEI courses?

Ideally, the first 3-year term of the DEI Vetting Committee will consist of at least one person from each college and one person from the core faculty of **both** CRES and WGST. For the second term, representatives from CRES and WGST may be core or affiliated faculty. For the third term (and thereafter), the DEI Vetting Committee will consist of one person from each college, including SIS.

The Faculty Senate will work with Dr. Ed McNertney, Director of the TCU Core Curriculum, to determine the appropriate size and composition of the DEI EC vetting committee.