Dear Professors Hamilton, Peterson and Vice-Provost Barr,

I am writing as the Chair of the Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences to express my reservations regarding the implementation of the new Diversity requirement. In its currently suggested version, this requirement is troublesome for our students. I see two possible ways in which this change will negatively impact our students. 

First, *the required completion by the end of the freshman year* requirement. This is important because a great percentage of our students arrive to Campus interested in attending veterinary school. Veterinary school seats are highly competitive, generally more competitive than Medical School seats, and more importantly, require more academic pre-requisites to be completed before submitting the application. Applications to veterinary schools are due by the middle of September every year, and the majority of our students submit their applications in the fall of their senior year. Therefore, nearly all required courses must be completed by the junior year. To achieve this, most of our freshman enroll in the following sequence of courses: an Animal Science course with laboratory each semester, a year of Intro Biology with laboratory in the spring semester, and a year of Inorganic Chemistry with laboratories in both semesters. In addition, these students must fulfill the College Writing requirement and the Math and/or Calculus requirement. On average, our students are committed for 16 credits per semester in their freshmen year. Please note that veterinary schools impose most of these requirements and courses such as Introductory Biology and Inorganic Chemistry must be completed as soon as possible, as they are needed for subsequent courses in the sophomore and junior years. 

Therefore, in light of this tight schedule, an option to complete the Diversity requirement during the second or third year of residence on campus would be beneficial to avoid negatively impacting the completion of required courses by our freshmen students.

Second, to fulfill the current Gen. Ed. requirements, our students take the Gen. Ed. Animal Science 260, Animal Welfare, which has a SI designation. This course therefore fulfills the Social World Gen. Ed. Requirement, as well as being a required course for the major. Thus, our students are able to double dip and use a required course to fulfill one Gen Ed requirement. Given that under the proposed changes courses with SI designations will no longer fulfill a Gen. Ed. requirement, this means in practical terms that our students will need to take an additional Gen. Ed course. As described above, our Pre-Veterinary students are in a race to complete University and veterinary school requirements from the very moment they set foot on campus. To impose another Gen. Ed. course makes no sense. Nevertheless, this unnecessary burden could be easily bypassed if courses with SI and I denominations are allowed to become part of the SB requirement.

It is not clear to me what the rationale is for imposing this additional Diversity requirement on our students. Our students are already exposed to a variety of Diversity issues in the courses with U or G denominations. I welcome the expansion of offerings in this subject to include topics that the General Education Council feels are missing, and to present them as options our students can choose from. Nevertheless, changing the requirements and imposing a particular topic on all students seems to be an overreach.

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