This document contains the portion of the minutes for the 762nd meeting that recorded the discussion in Committee of the Whole. It is posted here for the convenience of those following the discussion of the proposed changes to the Diversity Requirement. MJ Peterson, Secretary of the Faculty Senate

A. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

SENATE DISCUSSION OF CHANGES TO THE DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT

Professor Claire Hamilton, Chair of the General Education Council (GEC): My task is to summarize the general recommendations included in the handout that you received. I want to say first is thank you to the Rules Committee, that came up with this process of allowing the recommendations to go from GEC to councils and now to a Committee of the Whole discussion. This has been a really useful process for us in the GEC to get feedback and comments and we have, in fact, made some changes as it has gone along. Thank you for showing up today to give comments and feedback.

The recommendations can be summarized in three points: a change in the language guiding the academic expectations for our diversity courses, a change by the addition of a third course, a DIV course, and a structural change in the General Education program to accommodate this DIV course. We’re just going to go through and discuss briefly what that means. The first thing is the change in the language guiding diversity. Our diversity requirements go back to 1985 and we have updated and revised the language from 1985 trying to keep the intent for the academic expectations but also trying to revise the learning outcomes in terms of a more contemporary focus with the scholarly issues related to diversity. For example, we retained concepts like marginalization and power systems, which are in the 1985 language, but we also included concepts such as implicit bias and identity formation in terms of how we would look at diversity. There’s also some addition in terms of specifying what our US and Global Diversity courses would have.

The second change is adding what we’ve been calling a DIV course. Currently, our students meet their diversity requirement by taking two courses in a joint designation system. They have to take two courses in Social World that hold a primary designation in Arts, Literature, Social and Behavioral Sciences, or Historical Studies, and a secondary designation in U.S. or Global Diversity. That joint designation structure has been challenging for faculty almost since its very inception. Going back to 1989, we can see from looking at the Gen. Ed. Council’s notes and reports to Faculty...
Senate that faculty had a difficult and challenging time trying to address the learning outcomes associated with diversity in addition to the learning outcomes within their primary discipline. So, while the GEC feels that this is a good way to tackle diversity, that is, within the context of a specific discipline and within content related to U.S. and global diversity, it’s a challenge that we’ve not been able to help faculty do in terms of balancing the various learning outcomes. We’ve tried to do it through the quinquennial review process by providing support, discussion, and feedback for faculty. We’ve tried to do it by providing guidance language, and it just didn’t seem like a system that was working. We worked on this and decided that the best approach would be to provide a diversity course that all entering students would take that would focus on the learning outcomes associated with diversity at the forefront. Of course, there would be content, as there is content in any academic course on campus, but then the faculty would be expected to focus on the learning outcomes associated with diversity and that through that focus, students would be more readily able to engage in the scholarly discussions in the joint designation courses they would later take.

So, we’re proposing that there be a first-year Diversity course, followed by the retention of the U and G courses. To accomplish that, we looked at the structure of our current General Education program. We did not want to burden students or increase time to degree by adding an additional course for credit, so we looked at ways that this Diversity course might fit into our current structure. Currently, our students take four courses in Social World: one course in Arts or Literature, one course in Historical Studies, one course in Social and Behavioral Studies, and one course in either Arts or Literature or Social and Behavioral Sciences or Interdisciplinary or Science Interdisciplinary. The DIV course would take that fourth place so that there would be no increased credits associated with the General Education curriculum. The Social and Cultural diversity requirement of two courses would remain and would remain as a joint designation system. The Council is aware of an unintended consequence – and I say this using this term that may sound dismissive, but the intent is not to be dismissive – that, in trying to accomplish what seemed to be the best approach for our students as a whole in the General Education curriculum which is using the fourth Social World as the place for DIV, it does mean that the Interdisciplinary and Science Interdisciplinary courses would no longer be able to substitute into the General Education curriculum. They were never required of General Education, but they would no longer even serve that substitution role. We do not want to take away that attribute from courses, and we suggest that the attribute of Interdisciplinary remain, but not counting it for General Education requirements would be an unintended consequence of this action. That is the summary of the points.

**Senator Ernest Washington, Co-Chair of the Status of Diversity Council:** I’m here on behalf of the Faculty Senate Status of Diversity Council. We reviewed the proposal last Monday and reached the consensus that the proposal does not go far enough, that we need to move beyond incremental change in thinking about issues of diversity. We want to begin with the faculty. One of our concerns is that very often young faculty and graduate students get thrown into the diversity courses without preparation or training and without any ongoing support. We believe that needs to change and so we recommend, in fact, training for our faculty and our graduate students so that they can be more proficient at teaching about diversity. We worry that the proposal does not go far enough in terms of issues of race in our country, issues of decolonization on the international stage; we worry about these things deeply. Now, we met last Monday to consider these issues, but history has overtaken us, because on Tuesday, Donald Trump won the presidential election and, in the process, he has now unleashed upon our country racism, Islamophobia, sexism, anti-Semitism, and a whole range of other ugly ways of living. We need to recognize that in the coming years the challenge will be larger. Our students are very sensitive to it, so I took the liberty of asking our students to give us some feedback about what their perceptions are of the change following the election of President-elect Trump. The students seem to agree that, by and large, UMass tries but not hard enough, not hard enough to move the needle, to make a difference. We have to think about that and not simply settle for incremental change. We worry more deeply about the ratios of white and minority and international students on
campus because students learn best from each other, and when we have so few minority students, we’ve actually diminished the education of the majority, and so we must think more deeply about that and how we might do it. Of course, one of the things we worry about on the Status of Diversity Council is admissions, but one primary concern that I want to bring to your attention is safety; our minority students and international students worry about their safety, about their physical safety, their intellectual safety, their emotional safety, safety in all its manifestations. This is our largest challenge because we are not a great University if we can’t have an environment where students and faculty feel safe.

**Senator Monika Schmitter, History of Art and Architecture:** Another unintended consequence which wasn’t mentioned and is also not mentioned in the frequently asked questions is that this change also means that fewer people will be required to have Humanities and Social Science, not just the I or SI. That is of concern because there is so much pressure with the new budgeting model – however that will be implemented – to increase enrollments. We’ve invested a lot of time and energy in those courses and tried to get the enrollments up, and so this new proposal, in cutting back one of those requirements and substituting it with another, has a profound effect. I just want that to be out there and stated because it’s not otherwise stated in anything else that I have seen.

**Professor Andrew Donson, History and German and Scandinavian Studies:** Under this recommendation, a current course that I teach would lose its Gen. Ed. designation of Interdisciplinary. The course is Nineteenth-Century German Thought, and, in the course, we read original texts by Kant, Hegel, Marx, Weber, Nietzsche, and Freud. Immanuel Kant is considered the greatest modern philosopher. Karl Marx was arguably the single person who most influenced the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Max Weber was a founder of the discipline of Sociology, if not the most important founder of that discipline. Nietzsche was the first post-modernist. Sigmund Freud was the founder of the discipline of Psychology. Now, I support diversity and I think that students should read things besides the dead white men. I am also sad that a course that has had a Gen. Ed. designation as Interdisciplinary for thirty years will now lose it. I do not understand why a course about a set of the most influential people in the modern world is no longer worthy of providing our students general education. So, I recommend that the Council reconsider these recommendations; otherwise, they’re doing our students a disservice. Thank you.

**Senator Bruce Baird, Asian Languages and Literatures:** It strikes me that the notion of diversity should be slightly different in U.S. courses versus non-Western courses. It makes sense that a focus on race, class, and gender should be at the core of U.S. Diversity. There’s this proverb about the past as a foreign country, and the past of a foreign country is an even more foreign country. What I don’t see here is the possibility that you can just study eighth-century Japan and that’s a Diversity course. It says that “demonstrate an understanding of impacting current power relationships.” Maybe we could get from eighth-century Japan to the current power relationships in current Japan, but I think it should be Diversity just to study what it looked like in eighth-century Japan without having to force yourself to also include in that class what has an impact on current power relationships. So, I think that what should happen is that U.S. Diversity and its requirements should be subtly uncoupled from Global Diversity and its requirements, and they should not be thought of as having to do the exact same things. Thank you.

**Lucas Patenaude, Secretary of University Policy, Student Government Association:** I’m here to speak in support of the implementation of this course. I want to start by reminding the Faculty Senate of a few words from this University’s mission statement. This University’s mission is to support and actively engage a diverse student body and challenge them to become leaders in their community and their world, and working from that, we value a student-centered community where diversity and inclusion are embedded in our academic work. In keeping with this University’s long-standing tradition of embracing diversity, promoting inclusion, and preparing students to flourish and lead in
an ever-changing world, the adoption of this course is desperately necessary. The Faculty Senate’s implantation of this course will send a strong message not only to the Commonwealth but to this nation that we are truly committed to diversity and inclusion here at the University of Massachusetts. After last week’s Student Government Association endorsement of this course, it should be very clear to this Faculty Senate that this course is not only welcomed by the student body but deemed as an immediate priority. A vote not to approve this course is a vote against the education of issues like diversity and inclusion here at UMass. A failure to adopt this course is a failure to the student body. It would be a shame if the Faculty Senate cannot come together and will not stand up and speak up for those who cannot. I implore then, on behalf of the Student Government Association, and on behalf of the larger student body as a whole, the acceptance of this course, and its immediate implantation this fall. I trust all of you will make the right decision on behalf of the students of this University.

Professor Daniel Gordon, History: There are several distinct issues that I’d like to raise. The first has to do with there being three courses. I’d encourage the faculty to bear down seriously on the possibility that three courses are really too many. After all, there must be a powerful and compact way to deliver diversity education. The issue here is not merely whether we should have this particular first-year course, but whether we should have this constellation of three courses. I’m inclined to agree with the first speaker that, in a sense, the proposal is not far-reaching enough as it relies too much on a kind of incremental or diffuse spread of the courses, as we retain the old two diversity requirements, which are allegedly unsatisfactory, we tweak them, and then we add a third. I think it would really be more impressive and meaningful to have one or two diversity courses that achieve the most important goals. Another point with respect to the idea that three are too many: consider all the possible first-year requirements we could have for students. Imagine something like the following: suppose we ask the Isenberg School of Management to devise a course on leadership that all our students would take. That would actually be an absolute addition to what we currently have; it wouldn’t just be an incremental addition to what we already have. It’s not clear to me that discussion has really taken place of what we most need to add to Gen. Ed. in terms of what’s not already there.

For the sake of time, I’ll move on to another reservation, having to do with the interdisciplinary opportunities. I think there’s been a tendency to understate how important interdisciplinarity was in the original vision of Gen. Ed. and this has been expressed by saying that no one was required to take an I course, but if one reads the original Gen. Ed. proposal from the 1980’s, it expresses grave concern about the fact that the actual required areas are substantive academic areas and it permitted students to take up to three interdisciplinary courses so that our Gen. Ed. program wouldn’t have the look of the following type of checklist: you have to take a Biological Science course, you have to take a History course, you have to take a course in the Arts. The feeling then was that we were subdividing the world of knowledge too much and that superimposing ample interdisciplinary opportunities was necessary to actually give intellectual integrity to the whole thing. So, we’ve reached a point where we’ve kind of forgotten about that by dwindling the interdisciplinary options first to two courses and then to one course and now eliminating it completely. The result is that we really are making a structural change in General Education and I think we need to constitute a committee of very experienced scholars to reexamine the system as a whole and to make a proposal not merely with respect to how to improve diversity but how to shape the curriculum as a whole and make the whole thing better.

Josh Odam, Student Trustee: Good afternoon. I have a few comments I would like to make with regards to this proposal. At the last undergraduate Senate meeting, I was one of those standing in affirmation of this proposal, but upon reflection, and after going to the Status of Diversity Council meeting, I have a few concerns that I need to raise. Just because courses are available does not mean that every instructor is qualified to teach them. Most colleagues of color can attest to the fact that
many of the traumas they experience come from uneducated and unprepared professors who either don’t know what they’re talking about or say the wrong thing in class and don’t know how to interrupt micro-aggressions and blatant aggressions when they do happen, so that is something that this council needs to look into, investigate, and figure out what are the methods in which faculty are going to be trained on how to handle conversations around race, gender, orientation, identity formation, and other very heavy topics. The second one is this idea of decolonization over diversity. This is a conversation that I personally find infuriating because diversity is a buzzword for which half of us have fifteen different meanings. This conversation needs to move into a direction where we are talking about decolonization, about interrupting and redistributing the balance of power toward marginalized communities; about actually speaking to white students about legacies of marginalization such as this University being situated on occupied Indigenous land. If these conversations are not being had, we’re wasting our time. The third comment that I would like to raise is something that was brought to me by one of my constituents talking about the placement, or which body or section of the institution that this endeavor should go forth through. Folks have been expressing to me that many faculty feel that this should not go through the faculty but should go through Student Affairs or Residential Life or any other institution that deals with students outside of faculty. I just want to reiterate that idea is because it is adding insult to injury to students who are already impacted, to think that there is another way around this besides putting this institutionally into our agenda as a land-grant institution. So, I encourage this body to think about the things we are speaking of, think about how to train faculty, think about how to properly educate faculty, think about how to move away from just flowery, very kumbaya conversations, and speak to them about actual institutionalized racism, institutionalized sexism, institutionalized oppression, and how we dismantle these things as a whole.

**Senator Frank Hugus, German and Scandinavian Studies:** I have a couple of questions here. It wasn’t clear to me, and I’m not sure whether I’ve been able to read everything about this, what was determined to be the academic necessity of this course; I don’t really see much indication here of academics. So, how was it determined that this course was academically needed? Second question is do we have a sufficient number of courses ready or in the wings, and do we have a sufficient number of faculty who are, in fact, qualified to teach them? The third question is one which was given to me by one of my colleagues: “The new proposal reduces the need again for the courses between Humanities and Fine Arts and Social and Behavioral Sciences already offered with the DIV status, suggesting that what we do is not enough. What is the content of the new required course that is supposed to do a better job and what is that better job? Why undercut us in one more way?”

**Senator James Rinderle, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering:** I support the recommendations for this new DIV course, and the recommendation that all the students take it in the first year. I do, however, think that, if we adopt this recommendation without any other changes in Gen. Ed. requirements, we will too severely restrict the curricular choices of many of our students. Because the DIV course essentially captures the “wild-card” slot in the Social World requirement, it renders, as Dan mentioned, all of the interdisciplinary courses useless for satisfying Social World requirements. This undercut interdisciplinary inquiry that we value. Furthermore, it renders obsolete a number of very valuable courses, for example, the Commonwealth Honors College course “Ideas That Change the World,” which exposes students to a broad range of interdisciplinary topics. Adding the DIV course in the way proposed crowds out other courses. Since it’s recommended that the U and G requirements be retained, this leaves only a single one of the Social World Gen. Ed. courses to be fulfilled by anything beyond a course that has a Diversity designation. Many students in certain majors who believe that foundational courses in Psychology, or Economics, or Political Science, or some other field will best prepare them as citizens with a global perspective will often have to choose just one of the courses from these areas or choose to extend their degree program beyond the normal four years. They will then choose from among diversity courses to fill out their program, perhaps taking great courses that teach them about samurai warriors or Chinese architecture or horror films,
but these courses might not be the courses that the students believe are central to them becoming scholars and practicing professionals in a diverse world culture. The crowding out is really not very surprising: just a few years ago, students chose six Social World courses, two of which had to have a diversity designation: 33%. Now, if this is adopted, students will choose four Social World courses, three of which have to have a diversity designation, so we’re up to 75%. It’s a lot, and it’s not surprising that we have this sense of crowding out. So, as such, though I support the recommendation for a DIV course, I do not recommend accepting this proposal as written. Rather, I think it would be better to accept an amendment to this proposal that would allow this new DIV course to substitute for the U or the G course rather than to be added as a requirement in addition to those requirements. Thank you.

**Senator Maria Tymoczko, Comparative Literature:** The last time we revised Gen. Ed., we actually diminished the number of courses being offered in Arts and Literature and it seems to me that we shouldn’t do this a second time. If we want to make these changes, we should really think about increasing the number of credits required for General Education.

**Professor Amilcar Shabazz, Afro-American Studies:** For identification purposes only, I am Chair of the Undergraduate Education Council, where this matter did come up at our last meeting, but we have taken no position on it as a Council. I simply rise to note, to affirm, a readiness to answer one item mentioned in the FAQ regarding the faculty across various departments being committed to diversity as part of their scholarly interests and in their teaching, and being prepared to look at seeking approval to convert some of their existing U or G courses into a DIV course. My faculty meets this upcoming Monday. We will have this matter on our agenda so, pending what the view is coming out of this meeting, we will certainly be poised to take action accordingly. I would furthermore state I would hope that the TEFD (Center for Teaching and Faculty Development) assistance is an assistance that those who would seek DIV courses may or may not avail themselves of as they choose, I will see, when we meet Monday, and we’ll certainly emphasize trying to take part in that, but I hope that isn’t necessarily a requirement for those that would seek to convert a course to this requirement, and would ask that it not be a requirement. Finally, I would just say that some of the additional amendments or concerns mentioned here – taking the U or G course for this DIV course – will be further considered but, on the face of it, I do appreciate the hard work that the Gen. Ed. Council and its subcommittee did over the summer on working on this and I do think that it’s a good effort, moving us in the right direction. We’ve got a lot to do. We ought to stay focused as a faculty on improving undergrad education, improving it in coordination with the work we did as part of our strategic planning process over the last few years and constantly staying on top of where our students are coming from and where we need to go in this part of their curriculum. I don’t think this burden should have been all on the Gen. Ed. Council, but it really is for all of us concerned about the quality of the undergraduate educational experience to be engaged with this, from here and moving forward. Thank you.

**Professor Janice Telfer, Veterinary and Animal Sciences:** I’m here to speak on behalf of my students. My students come in to a very packed curriculum. I posted my detailed objections to this plan on the website but, briefly, my primary objection is that this would knock off our SI class which fulfills our students’ Gen. Ed. requirement for the Social World, so they would have to take another four-credit Gen. Ed. on top of everything else. The other big concern I have with getting my students though their very challenging curriculum in four years is that this would negatively impact the students coming to us from poorly-resourced high schools. So, a big priority of our department and my personal priority is to serve the students in a science-heavy major who are not prepared, and those are students who are coming from poorly-resourced high schools. What does that mean? It means that they do not have the pre-calculus background that they need to enroll in the first semester of General Chemistry. If they can’t enroll in the first semester of General Chemistry in their first semester here, they have to delay or defer it, either for a semester while they take MATH 104, which
is developmental pre-calculus, or they delay it for a whole year, and that would be MATH 101 and 102, and that’s based on how they do on the math placement exam. So, if they do that, if they defer for a whole year, they’re behind on everything because science curriculums are very hierarchical: you have to take this before you take that; you have to take this, and you have to get a minimum grade in it so that you have a chance of succeeding as you go along. So, what I’m concerned about, by requiring yet another four-credit class in the first year, that we’re setting up our students, especially those from poorly-resourced high schools, for failure in a science major. What will happen to them? They’ll be told, “No, you’re not good enough, you have to transfer out and go to another major that doesn’t require science or math.” That’s what I’m concerned about. Thank you for your attention.

Junjie Seah, Senator, Student Government Association: Good afternoon, everyone. I’m a senator for the SGA, Class of 2017, as well as an international student from Singapore, so they are part of my constituents, international students. Here are a couple of concerns that I do have. When international students come here, they’ve been here for a month, maybe two, and they’re essentially being asked to take a course within their first year that’s about diversity. I’ll remind you that despite what I sound like, I am not the vast majority of international students. Some of them do not have the same grasp of English that I do. It requires a grasp of the language to be able to understand such nuanced concepts. I am not at this point sure that they will be able to understand such things in such a short span of time, having come to the States from countries all over this world. At the same time, I also have concerns about whether or not an environment can be provided in which a fair and balanced viewpoint can be taught, especially to internationals who have not possibly ever grappled with such concepts before. I understand that with the election of President-elect Trump, some international students might have additional concerns. So, my request is that you look through all these things, you look through the criteria, you look through the courses and make sure they have a space to voice their different opinions. I’ll remind everyone that, once again, not all international students come from Western-style liberal democracies. Finally, this goes for what I’ve read about the transfer concerns. I came in as an international student; I also came in as a junior. I was able to transfer my credits. I was able to complete some of the courses that would have otherwise required me to start as a freshman or sophomore. Now, my concern is that – I’ve seen that you’re in discussions about it, but discussions are one thing; actual concrete ability to say alright you’ve done these courses in your land, in your country: we’ll accept them – if we don’t have these policies out when the course requirement actually rolls out, are we going to take these on a case-by-case basis, and, in doing so, are we going to take more time out of the students lives? Thank you very much.

Senator Susan K. Whitbourne, Psychological and Brain Sciences: I want to echo a point that Student Trustee Odam had made about the implementation of the DIV course. This has been a concern of mine, as well. In our field and in Social Psychology, there is obviously a great deal of sensitivity around the teaching of these courses and a great deal of expertise required to pull them off. The possibility that topics will be insensitively handled, whether through micro-aggressions or overt aggressions, to me seems very frightening. Lack of support for teaching, with TEFD, with all due respect to TEFD, this is a kind of enterprise that requires a great deal of conversation and teaching and monitoring as it’s going on. I’m reminded of the diversity requirements that were instituted some years ago when I first taught my own “Psychology of Aging” course. I had an undergrad T.A. for twenty hours a week provided as part of the deal. Well, that T.A. position disappeared. Also, we need a community for talking about how we teach it, and there were diversity fellows, which I was one of, and just ways to support this enterprise. So, I worry not so much about the pragmatics, as other people have stated very well, but of the unintended consequences of it not accomplishing what it’s supposed to unless it can be properly implemented. Thank you very much.

Professor Scott Auerbach, Chemistry: Hi, everybody, good afternoon. I strongly support the notion, the principle of this course, but I think that there is a key learning goal that is missing. That
prompts me to ask the question that I will ask and then I will give you the background. The question: in principle, can any unit on campus submit a DIV course and have a chance of getting it accepted? For example, the Chemistry Department. The reason why I ask that is the importance of bringing a really educated perspective to both the problems and opportunities associated with diversity really permeates every corner of campus. We know the problem of diversity is associated with social justice, but what about the opportunities? Here I’m thinking of the skill of utilizing diversity as an important problem-solving tool. Obviously, the human race is facing problems: racism, terrorism, extremism, in addition to things like generating energy, water, medicines. Unfortunately, the list goes on. I would ask you to imagine, if you will, what if we had a world where our students could come together, think and talk about what makes them different, what could potentially divide, but then learn to see those differences actually as a really powerful benefit, and then wield that benefit in service of solving problems? I think that we can agree that that’s a really important learning goal, that our students need to have that learning goal, and that the sort of spectrum of different problem solving skills could come from any corner of campus. So, I think we need to honor that diversity, as well. I thank you.

**Senator Marta Calas, Management:** This may sound presumptuous, and I don’t want to sound like that, but I’m just giving you an example of something that I think may in some ways address some of the issues that have been raised in relationship to content, and diversity as content within a course, rather than diversity as an intention in a course, or an orientation of a course. I teach undergraduates international management in the upper division and one of my two courses is actually called “Behavior in a Global Economy.” We created it many years ago as part of a grant that I had at some point for internationalizing Isenberg. One of the issues that the course created for me was what was the content of something that was not a traditional international management course? In fact, from the beginning, I didn’t intend for it to be a conventional management course but something that would expose the students in Management to a much broader understanding of what is happening in the world without necessarily having to be also a tool for management. I am a scholar of diversity in organizations, therefore, I am very associated with that discipline, as such, and also with the international dimensions of it because, if there is one thing that has happened to the topic of diversity, that was invented in the U.S. – the literature originally is from the U.S. and from the late 1980’s, oriented toward organizations, toward management; it was created with that type of orientation – is that it has travelled through consultants all over the world, and it has created its own local literature on diversity. The issue of diversity is absolutely diverse, as many people have said already, internationally it manifests itself in so many ways: the word diversity, as a label, has travelled. One of the things that I have tried to do is to actually use literature from the countries in which this has been written, so my students might understand this much more broadly: on the many different kinds of institutions to which this would apply, to the ways in which each country has adopted it because of history, including their colonial past, and so on and so forth. I’m giving you a very broad idea of ways of teaching diversity as, in fact, I’m teaching it this semester. This comes to the issue of content, national or international, and how it relates to a particular orientation. It also has to address what is it that diversity has become for us. I keep on talking about diversity as a process. What has it become as it travels, and in each of our disciplines, how does it manifest itself? Thank you.

*End of the Committee of the Whole discussion*