

Annual Report
MU Faculty Council Committee on Diversity Enhancement
2012-2013

Members: Clyde Bentley (chair), Tim Evans, Lisa Flores, Candace Galen, Bina Gupta, Rebecca Johnson, Karen Piper

The Committee on Diversity Enhancement had a single charge for the 2012-2013 school year. The committee was asked to revisit the 2011 initiative to require a cultural competency course for all undergraduates. That initiative was rejected by a vote of the general faculty.

The committee reviewed the earlier process and determined that a number of factors led to its rejection:

- The definition of a “cultural competency course” was too vague.
- The proposal gave no credit to diversity enhancement programs that differed from traditional coursework.
- The proposal was seen as intruding on the ability of individual academic units to determine their own cultural competency needs.
- There was no measure of success for the cultural competency program.

The committee started the new process by defining “diversity” broadly as an expression of the differences between humans, such as race, culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation.

It then set two campus-wide goals:

1. Every MU graduate should leave this university with an appreciation and respect for the diversity in our society.
2. MU should have some way to publicly state and explain what it is doing to enhance diversity.

With the above in mind, the committee developed a two-stage discipline-based cultural competency requirement:

Stage 1:

- Each college or school describes in writing what efforts it makes to ensure cultural competency for its students.
- The descriptions are posted on the publicly-available Faculty Council website.

This stage was accomplished in March 2013.

Stage 2:

- The committee will work with the administration to give incoming freshmen and outgoing seniors an academically-validated cultural competency assessment.
- The results of both surveys will be posted and made available to the schools and colleges.
- The committee will review the results, paying special attention to the differences between the freshmen and senior surveys. The working assumption of the committee is that well-conceived programs will see a gain in cultural competency while less-well conceived programs will not.

This stage of the program is in progress and will be a major focus for the 2013-2014 Diversity Enhancement Committee.

The new program addresses the problems of the earlier by defining the requirements, giving the responsibility to each school or college, and measuring success with an academically-rigorous research method. Rather than forcing a requirement on academic units, it relies on peer and public pressure backed by statistical research.

The 2012-2013 committee recommends that the next committee continue this effort by working with the administration to implement the survey program for freshmen and seniors.

The committee also recommends that schools and colleges be recontacted in Spring 2013 and given the opportunity to revise or update their statements.

The committee should also meet with representatives of the MU Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, the Missouri Student Association and other relevant bodies to discuss the perceived effectiveness of the cultural competency efforts outlined by the schools and colleges. Resulting comments should be forwarded to the schools and colleges.

Clyde Bentley, chair