To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to our attention that the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is in the process of reforming the general education curriculum. Specifically, we have an issue with the proposed Responsibility Outcome 1: Use critical and analytical skills to evaluate assumptions and challenge existing structures in ways that respect diversity and foster equity and inclusivity. If there should be any type of reform, we request that the liberal education at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) to require incoming students to take credit-based courses—not just "learning experiences"—in their first year that helps students reach an understanding "how historical and current systems of privilege and oppression impact interpersonal experiences, opportunities, and outcome". Students must be equipped with the ability to recognize institutional and systemic oppression, not just writing a research paper on a minority population. Lack of awareness leads students to unintentionally participate in and perpetuate oppression, whereas awareness aids students in counteracting oppression.

"Learning experiences" are valuable and potentially effective ways of exposing students to heterogeneous and complex contexts outside their own prior experiences. However, learning experiences would not be able to address responsibly, with depth and scope, critical concepts, theories, content knowledge and essential skills necessary for effective participation in a pluralistic world. Required courses would provide students with the ability to more effectively apply conceptual understanding and experience in their future academic lives and, over time, would also contribute to a more inclusive and respectful campus climate. Requiring students to take a credit-based course in their first year prevents students from reinforcing the existing hostile environment at UWEC.

Countless students such as Ari Te(y)ez have been promised by administrators more courses that involve integrative learning of multiple aspects of diversity, which have ultimately had poor results. She explains in the following statement:

I am part of a student advisory group to represent the LAS department and one day we met with Dean Baker to go over the upcoming changes to our academics. I had asked him about the topic of diversity and if there would be more classes like the one I had taken with Dr. Shih. This class was my mandatory English 110 class and it was all about race and racism and some other forms of oppression. To my understanding, this was a new type of class that included serious issues of oppression. I was assured by Dean Baker that there would be more classes structured like this that critically thought about privilege and oppression and understanding our own privileges. With this new R1 reform, I am concerned that Dean Baker will not be able to keep his promise and that these vital classes will be forgotten.

The time has come for our voices to be heard and these issues to not be swept under the rug. Blanketing these issues of inequality with a watered down diversity curriculum is ultimately a disservice to this entire student population.

With these arguments presented we encourage the administration to take into high consideration the views of the student body. Ultimately, this change in curriculum affects us all; therefore our opinion matters just as much as those in a position of power on this campus. We as a student body have made the decision to speak out against these wrong doings within the curriculum at this institution, and have chosen to hold the administration publicly accountable for the lack of interest in the experiences of minority students on this campus, as well as denying the majority to develop a more critical understanding of what it is that marginalized groups experience in and outside of this university.

Ultimately you as an administration provide a service to the students at this university. Let it be known that student senate has refused to speak on our behalf; therefore we come as our own representatives. As we have clearly presented to you, we find this proposed curriculum to be extremely flawed and we demand a change. We demand that our voices be heard and that you do something constructive about this issue. This is our call for change, and we as a student body hold you accountable for the future of this university.