Proposal to Expand the Definition of Asian Americans within the UW-EC Cultural Diversity Requirement

REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of the Issue: With the publication of the Design for Diversity in 1988, the UW System Board of Regents mandated that all UW System institutions include a graduation requirement in which all students would take at least three credits of course work on historically underrepresented U.S. racial/ethnic populations, specifically African Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans including Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans. At UW-Eau Claire, the requirement was labeled the “Cultural Diversity” graduation requirement. The three credit graduation requirement was reiterated in Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, which was the successor to Design for Diversity.

In spring 2008, a team of faculty and administrators attended a symposium entitled, “Cultural Diversity in the Curriculum: Sharing Ideas and Best Practices Across the UW System” that was sponsored by the UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity (IRE). At this symposium, it was learned that while Southeast Asian Americans continue to be an important focus of cultural diversity course work, the racial/ethnic populations included in this curricular requirement have been expanded to include all Asian Americans. The expansion is reflected in the titles of courses used to satisfy the cultural diversity requirement at other UW System campuses and syllabi in the IRE syllabi bank.

Points Discussed by Committee:

- Represents a change in graduation requirements
- Reviewed and supported by all College Curriculum Committees

Pros:

- Course work on Asian American populations such as Asian Indian Americans, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Pakistani Americans and Thai Americans, in addition to Southeast Asian Americans, would become eligible for cultural diversity credit.
- Students will have more flexibility in meeting the cultural diversity requirement
- The UWEC requirement for cultural diversity becomes more like other U.W. System campuses

Cons:

- None

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Academic Policies Committee by a vote of 8 votes for and 0 votes against, recommends to the University Senate that the Cultural Diversity Requirement at UW-Eau Claire be modified to include course work on all Asian American populations.

Implementation Date: 2009 – 2010 catalog
Dr. Robert E. Hollon, chair, on behalf of the University Senate Academic Policies Committee