Adopted: February 10 2009

**ACADEMIC SENATE**
**of**
**CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY**
**San Luis Obispo, CA**

**AS-676-09**

# RESOLUTION ON UNITED STATES CULTURAL PLURALISM REQUIREMENT

**Background:** The success of our country hinges on the productive interaction among the different people who make up our American society. Our educational system should be a catalyst for this interaction. Our state universities should create an environment in which every student is educated with respect to the pluralism of our society. Cal Poly's academic programs should reflect this goal. The broadening of our U.S. Cultural Pluralism (USCP) requirement will promote this objective.

The intent of this requirement is to expose all Cal Poly students to people different from themselves; and to social ideas and cultural norms that differ from their own. This requirement should not be onerous. Courses meeting this requirement should also count toward a student's General Education, Support, or Major requirements. The ability to "double count" is encouraged. Concurrently we encourage all programs to incorporate attention to diversity in their courses where appropriate, and not rely solely on the USCP requirement to meet both their students' needs and the University Diversity Learning Objectives.

How different does the content of these courses have to be? We know what we intend, but it is difficult to put our intention into words. This requirement is an improvement over the existing USCP requirement in that it allows more differences to qualify, but we intend them to be significant differences. We do not intend for the requirement to be so broad as to be meaningless, and we hope that the material learned by students is different from what they have learned in their previous formal and informal education.

WHEREAS, The United States Cultural Pluralism requirement was approved in concept by Academic Senate resolution AS-361-91 in 1991 and established in 1992 by Academic Senate resolution AS-395-92; and

WHEREAS, The courses proposed to meet this requirement had to emphasize one of four "U.S. Cultures: Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, American Indian;" and

**Resolution AS-676-09**
Adopted: February 10 2009

WHEREAS, Since 1992 the USCP Subcommittee, the Academic Senate Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate leadership, and others on campus interested in diversity have recognized that this list is limiting; and

WHEREAS, It is now recognized that diversity in America is much broader than is currently represented by the USCP requirement; and

WHEREAS, Over the past year the Senate Curriculum Committee has taken input from a large number of individuals and groups interested in educating our students about diversity; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Curriculum Committee has written a new set of criteria for the USCP requirement with the agreement and enthusiastic support of these individuals and groups that reflects the Diversity Learning Objectives approved in Senate resolution AS-663-08; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Cal Poly adopt the attached "Criteria for United States Cultural Pluralism (USCP) Courses" as a replacement for the current criteria, effective immediately.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Curriculum Committee
Date: December 21 2008
Revised: January 20 2009

**Resolution AS-676-09**
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## CRITERIA FOR UNITED STATES CULTURAL PLURALISM (USCP) COURSES

USCP courses must focus on all of the following:

- One or more diverse groups, as defined in the Cal Poly Statement on Diversity, whose contributions to contemporary American society have been impeded by cultural conflict or restricted opportunities, as stated in the Diversity Learning Objectives;

- Contemporary social issues resulting from cultural conflict or restricted opportunities, including, but not limited to, problems associated with discrimination based on age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, abilities, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or race;

- Critical thinking skills used by students to approach these contemporary social issues in a sensitive, responsible manner; examine their own attitudes; and consider the diverse perspectives of others;

- The contributions of people from diverse groups to contemporary American society.

# Background Material

## CURRENT USCP CRITERIA

1. Emphasis on one or more of these four U.S. cultures: Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, American Indian.

   *(The USCP Committee has chosen to interpret "emphasis" as meaning 50% or more of the course content. This means that at a minimum one-half of the course content should focus on one or more of the four identified U.S. Cultures; up to one-half of the course can focus on other issues, topics, cultures and population groups.)*

2. Attention to general issues of gender, diversity, equity, ethnocentricity, and ethnicity; and the relationships to problems facing contemporary society, especially those resulting from racism, discrimination and cultural conflict.

3. Application of rigorous pedagogical, scholarly methods and standards as evidenced in substantive exams, reports, papers, and projects.

4. Attention to critical thinking skills which will allow students to address cultural, racial, and gender issues in a sensitive and responsible manner and to evaluate their own attitudes and those of others.

# Background Material

## THE CAL POLY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY*

At the heart of a university is the responsibility to provide its students with a well-rounded education, an education that fosters their intellectual, personal and social growth. For students preparing to embark upon work and life in the 21st century, a critical element of a well-rounded education is the ability to understand and to function effectively in a diverse and increasingly interdependent global society. As noted in a statement from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), "the argument for the necessity of diversity is perhaps stronger in higher education than in any other context . . .The ultimate product of universities is education in the broadest sense, including preparation for life in the working world." In this regard, it is in the compelling interest of Cal Poly, the State and the nation to provide our students with an education that is rich with a diversity of people, ideas, perspectives and experiences.

Thus, diversity serves as a fundamental means to enhance both the quality and value of education. It cannot be a mere adjunct to such an education, but must be an integral element of the educational experience, infused throughout the community (faculty, students, and staff), the curriculum and the co-curricular programs of the University. We must be dedicated to the principle of ensuring that all of our students routinely encounter diverse people, ideas, and experiences.

As a University whose motto is "to learn by doing," Cal Poly explicitly understands the importance that experience brings to education. When students are exposed personally and directly to faculty, staff and other students from diverse backgrounds, their stereotypes about "the others" are challenged. Such personal interactions give students an understanding of the range of similarities and differences within and among groups that no textbook or computer can provide. For this reason, both the formal and informal classroom (i.e., the rich learning experiences that occur for our students during their co-curricular activities) must be constituted in a way that reinforces the value of encountering and considering diversity.
Moreover, diversity in the curriculum is a fundamental component of a well-rounded and beneficial education. The perspectives provided by the University are contingent upon the content and purpose of its courses. Since the curriculum is the principal expression of our educational goals and values, it should signal the importance of diversity to the Cal Poly mission, to the institutional culture and to our teaching and learning environment in clear and unambiguous terms.

Only through intellectual and first-hand personal exposure to diversity in its myriad forms--racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, geographic, socio-economic, etc.--will students gain the understanding, empathy and social skills that they will require to be effective, engaged citizens in an increasingly crowded and interrelated global community. The benefit of diversity is universal. Cal Poly's commitment to diversity signals an affirmation of the highest educational goals of this University, including mutual respect, civility, and engaged learning.

*The definition of diversity is specifically inclusive of, but not limited to, an individual's race/ethnicity, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, disability and sexual orientation.

February 11, 2003

# Background Material

**Academic Senate Curriculum Committee:**

| Name | Department | College/Unit |
|---|---|---|
| Brown, Johanna | Library | Library |
| Conn, David | AcadAff | Admin |
| Dong, Kevin | ArchEngr | CAED |
| Fryer, Stuart | AcadRec | Admin |
| Griffin, Lanny | BioMed/GE | CENG |
| Hannings, David (CH) | Horti/CS | CAFES |
| Herter, Roberta | GrdSt/Ed | COE |
| Jensen, Kay | AcadProg | --- |
| Machamer, Josh | Theatr/Dn | CLA |
| Mueller, James | Math | CSM |
| Opava, Susan | R&GP Dean | Admin |
| Spradlin, Wendy | CLA Advr | PCS |
| Thoma, Jennifer | AcadRec | --- |
| Villegas, Dan | Econ | CBUS |
| Whiteford, Mary | AcadRec | --- |
| Spak, Kaitlin | Student | ASI |
| VACANT | | CAFES |

**USCP Criteria Distribution List:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Armstrong | Chair, Women's and Gender Studies |
| Terry Jones + | Chair, Social Sciences |
| John Snetsinger + | Former Chair, History |
| Don Ryujin* + | Acting Chair, Ethnic Studies |
| Andrew Morris* + | Chair, History |
| John Soares + | Chair, Academic Senate |
| Linda Halisky + | Dean, CLA |
| Debra Valencia-Laver + | Associate Dean, CLA |
| Angela Kramer + | President, ASI |
| Doug Keesey + | Director, GE |
| Camille O'Bryant + | Head, Kinesiology |
| Kathryn Rummell* + | Chair, English |
| Bruno Giberti + | Past Chair, Senate |

* These people solicited input from individuals in their departments with USCP expertise.
+ These people responded

**The document was also circulated to**:
John Battenburg, Director for International Education and Programs
The Diversity Learning Objectives Assessment Committee+
ASI Board of Directors (25 members)+

# Background Material

## DIVERSITY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

All Students who complete an undergraduate or graduate program at Cal Poly should be able to make reasoned decisions based on a respect and appreciation for diversity as defined in the Cal Poly Statement on Diversity, which is included in the catalog. They should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of relationships between diversity, inequality, and social, economic, and political power both in the United States and globally
2. Demonstrate knowledge of contributions made by individuals from diverse and/or underrepresented groups to our local, national, and global communities
3. Consider perspectives of diverse groups when making decisions
4. Function as members of society and as professionals with people who have ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are different from their own

*Academic Senate Resolution AS-663-08, approved by President Baker March 24, 2008*

CAL POLY

SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93407

**State of California**

# Memorandum

To: John Soares
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: February 23, 2009

From: Warren J. Baker
President

Copies: R. Koob, D. Conn, P. Bailey, D. Christy, L. Halisky, T. Jones, B. Konopak, M. Noori, D. Wehner, K. Ikeda

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-676-09
Resolution on United States Cultural Pluralism Requirement

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I am pleased to approve the above-entitled resolution endorsing a change in the campus criteria for United States Cultural Pluralism Courses. The new criteria provide more curricular flexibility and incorporate the campus Diversity Learning Objectives.

Please extend my appreciation to members of the Curriculum Committee for their efforts in this regard.