

FACULTY SENATE
The University of Oklahoma
Norman Campus

RESOLUTION ON ACTIONS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Approved by the Senate on May 4, 2015

WHEREAS (1) many major universities already require course work on race, gender identity, and sexual identity as part of their degree programs, and requiring such coursework at the University of Oklahoma would be a concrete step towards addressing problems in these areas on campus. After developing a set of criteria that such courses should satisfy, it may be possible to incorporate this course work into degree programs without adding additional hours or time to completion, by a redefinition of the course requirements in Western and Non-Western Civilization. A wide range of departments and programs at OU already offer relevant courses, including African and Afro-American Studies, Anthropology, English, History, History of Science, Human Relations, Native American Studies, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, and Women's and Gender Studies, as well as the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Most of these courses are 3 credit hour courses lasting one semester. In addition, the Women's and Gender Studies Program has developed four, 1 credit hour courses on inclusion and diversity that could be made available to students across campus. All this coursework should build on the foundation provided by training in race, gender, and sexual identity, which students receive on entering the university. See item 2 below. We ask that these curricular changes be implemented at the earliest possible date, and preferably during the 2015-2016 academic year.

AND WHEREAS (2) incoming students currently receive some training in race, gender identity, and sexual identity, this is limited in time and content and current student training has failed to prevent the situation we now face. Representative subjects that might be included in this training include the concepts of majority privilege, stereotype threat and microaggression, issues of religious diversity and disability, as well as issues crucial to our large Native American population such as sovereignty and multiculturalism. It should also contain clear and detailed information on where to find help and support in dealing with these issues, including reporting inappropriate behavior. This training should be face-to-face, and model the skills and behaviors the University expects from students. Transfer students should receive the same training as other students, when

they enter the university. We recommend the university provide support to start such a program no later than Fall 2015, for students entering the university that semester.

AND WHEREAS (3) Sooner Ally, created by the Women's Outreach Center, is an exemplary program in support of LGBTQ students. The Women's Outreach Center facilitates a number of Ally trainings, including Greek Ally, Sooner Ally, Faculty Ally, Medical Ally, Resident Advisor Ally, K-12 Ally, and Helping Professionals Ally. Through these programs, faculty and students are offered training in LGBTQ issues and techniques of personal support, and qualify to be listed as resource people who display the Ally flag on syllabi, email, and office doors. We suggest founding a parallel Ally program to support students of color and other minority students. In addition to training on the pattern of Sooner Ally, we also suggest that the program connect individual students with trained faculty mentors. A complete plan for such a program already exists, prepared by the OU Center for Social Justice. Attempts to gain external funding have been unsuccessful so far. We need this program, and we need it now. We are asking for university support to launch a program no later than Fall 2015, for all students at the university.

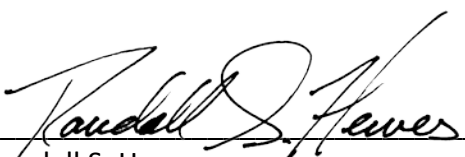
AND WHEREAS (4) the Women's Outreach Center developed the Sooner Ally program and is the primary source of Student Affairs support on campus for LGBTQ community members. The Center is also the home of bystander education, and houses the OU Advocates program that supports survivors of sexual assault, stalking, and domestic violence. The Women's Outreach Center is housed within Student Life, which also supports African American Student Life, American Indian Student Life, Asian American Student Life, and Latino Student Life. These programs are doing valuable work to support students of color; however, the University needs a resource center that brings them all together in one powerful and less fragmented entity. We ask for university support to start such a center no later than Fall 2015, for all students at the university.

AND WHEREAS (5) we applaud the action of the University President and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in seeking to appoint diversity officers at the university and college level. The College of Engineering already appointed a Director of Diversity and Multicultural Engineering Programs in 2010. These initiatives need to be carried throughout all OU colleges. At the same time, each college should assemble advisory committees of students and faculty to work with these officers, to create a university-wide network of two-way communication. We need these officers, and we need them now. We ask for university support to make these appointments and create the corresponding advisory committees no later than Fall 2015.

AND WHEREAS (6) faculty members and staff have recently received hostile and threatening communications, with the consequence that some have been left feeling quite unsafe and have even stayed away from campus or changed their daily activities. We request that the university develop an action plan to provide support for faculty and staff members who receive hostile or threatening communications or have other experiences, including classroom experiences, that leave them feeling unsafe. Such a plan should include, at least, clear instructions for notifying a senior administrator, who will then work with OUPD and (if applicable) Norman PD to assess threat level and take appropriate protective measures, and coordinate a response through IT in the case of electronic communications originating on campus or using campus resources.

THEREFORE, the Faculty Senate recommends that the Administration should consider:

- 1) At least one semester of course work on topics such as race, gender identity, sexual identity, disability, and religious diversity, to all undergraduate degree programs at OU regardless of college, the details of which to be determined in consultation with individual units. This should also apply to transfer students.
- 2) At least one day of face-to-face training on topics such as race, gender identity, sexual identity, disability, and religious diversity, for all incoming undergraduate and graduate students at OU. This should also apply to transfer students.
- 3) University support for founding an Ally program for students of color and other minority students, which would offer training to faculty and students, and connect students to specific faculty mentors.
- 4) University support and adequate space for an outreach center for students of color and other minority students.
- 5) University support for appointing diversity officers in every college, as needed, by the modification of an existing position or the creation of a new one, with the simultaneous creation of advisory committees consisting of faculty and students.
- 6) A university action plan to provide support for faculty and staff members who receive hostile or threatening communications or have other experiences, including classroom experiences that leave them feeling unsafe.



Randall S. Hewes

OU-NC Faculty Senate Chair, 2014-15