

Stunning Perspectives on the Diversity Proficiency Core

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Have you ever wondered why students are required to take a diversity proficiency core course? Have you ever thought of what students are supposed to know and be able to do at the end of a diversity proficiency core course? Have you reflected on when it is best for students to take a course that fulfills the diversity proficiency core requirements? Do you think students should take more than one course to fulfill the diversity proficiency core? Voices of faculty members in diverse departments and programs who teach the diversity core and students who have taken the core will amaze you on the complexity of the core. A study on the PC diversity proficiency core that started in 2018 engaged 20 faculty members in a 45-90minutes interview and 112 students in a Monkey Survey to share their perspectives about the core. Both faculty and students overwhelmingly agreed that the diversity proficiency core is an important component in students' program of study captured in the following excerpts from interview and survey transcripts:

Samples of students' responses on the essence of the core:

- We should all be familiar with different groups of people and how our identities change the way we view the world.
- Because it is extremely eye-opening and important that students are aware of other cultures.
- It is important to take a course on diversity because this campus is made up of people who are very different from one another and we should learn how to appreciate and respect one another.
- Throughout life, you're going to encounter different people of different ethnicities, and in order to have successful encounters, you need to be culturally competent.
- It is important so that come the day they graduate and enter the real world, they are able to interact in the widely diverse society we have without bias against cultural groups.
- It is important for students to take a course on diversity because it helps them gain cultural competence and appreciation for different cultures other than their own. Courses on diversity can change students' perspectives.
- It helps students know how to navigate and interact with different cultures.
- It exposes us to the struggles possessed by cultures different than us.
- To be more well-rounded on cultural competency and they can be responsible citizens in our world.

Sample of faculty response on the essence of the core:

- Oh my God, I think that we live in a world that's larger than PC, and it's important for our students to learn how to not only get along with people who are like themselves, but to learn how to be a part of society that may not reflect their current views. I think students have to leave college different than how they entered it. And part of that is exploring ways in which they fit into a world with lots of different people, and how their views are influenced by people who came before them, people who come after them, and people who are around them. And I often tell my students there's a reason that they chose to come to PC, and for a lot of them, it's because when they walk on campus, they feel

very comfortable because everybody looks like them. And while that can be very comfortable, that's not a reason to ... That's not necessarily broadening, and that if you wanna be educated, you need to think about perspectives that aren't like the ones you came in with. And so I think the only way that we can help our students become people who are able to interact and become citizens of the world is to teach them how to encounter other people in the world in a positive way, and to shed some of the ideas they may have walked in here with.

- I think it's nice. I really think it's good because I think some of these kids could be very narrow, but I don't know that, excuse me, what they're getting in each class. I don't know, I wish they would get some understanding of 'You don't know what it's like to be a black woman' or 'You don't know what it's like to be a single woman.' Or 'you don't know what it's like to be...' I mean, what's going on in this world is awful when you hear these people being gunned down. And then they say, 'Oh, avert your eyes from the TV,' or something and you just think...
- I think it's important for students to realize that the world is bigger than that tradition and that they can only really have perspective on what the world is by studying outside of it. So this is me thinking about sort of the cross-cultural understanding piece, and I think it's really important for students to - So this is why I think the diversity proficiency is important because it gives students a little bit more perspective on their world in a couple of different ways. If it's the cross-cultural understanding track, it's by studying things that are outside American history or Western civ. And if it's diversity, it's about sort of studying the wrinkles within like Western civ, or within American society. So I think it's absolutely necessary to figure out a way to give students a broader perspective on the world. So I think that something like the diversity proficiency is entirely necessary. It's just a question of- I mean, it's good that we have it. I would like to see it be bigger, and I would like to see it be fine-tuned a little bit.
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What do the above perspectives tell you about the diversity proficiency core? Do they align or differ with your perspectives on the essence of the core? Stay tuned for the final and detailed report on students' and faculty members' perspectives that will enhance your knowledge about the diversity proficiency core.