Motion

Beginning in Semester I, 1989-90, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee requires every undergraduate to complete three (3) credits pertaining to the study of the life experiences of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, and/or Asian Americans as a condition of graduation. Courses satisfying this requirement will be so designated on the divisional list of General Education Requirement courses.

Rationale

One purpose of the courses that satisfy the General Education Requirements is the [exploration] of the foundations of knowledge," thereby enabling students "to gain cultural and historical perspectives on the world, [as well as] develop consciousness of self in relation to tradition," which [together] clarify how "ideas relate to social structures," and "how values infuse both action and inquiry." (General Education Requirements: Policies and Procedures p. 2.) Grounded in this purpose, the proposed requirement is designed to expose students through rigorous, tough-minded, and sensitive classroom instruction to the form and substance of actions and events, things and objects, interests and purposes which have structured the life histories and life prospects of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, and Asian Americans in the United States.

Given the nominal exposure of students to critical and analytical discourse pertaining to the life experiences of the racial-ethnic groups just mentioned; given the centrality of the university in the design and preservation of American civilization; given the exponential increase in the racial-ethnic diversification of the society, and the related intractableness of a range of societal cleavages; and given the pedagogical and social responsibility of the university pertaining to order and change, it is farsighted, sound, and timely that this institution act to require its students to acquire objective knowledge of phenomena and behaviors that structure more and more the contours of social life in the United States.

Accordingly, it is the strong conviction of the Academic Program and Curriculum Committee that the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee expand conceptually and empirically the knowledge base of its undergraduates, by requiring them to be exposed to bits of information and conceptual/analytical frameworks that affect their conception and perception of the complexities and subtleties of the life experiences of African Americans, American Indians, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans in the structure of American society over historical time.

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