**Rationale behind Revisions to the Current Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes for the International and Diversity Subject Areas**

General Education International/Diversity Subcommittee – 2016-2017

**Background:** UF conducted an institutional conversation about Internationalization as part of the development of the QEP/accreditation process. Our focus was in aligning the International Objectives/SLOs with the Student Learning Framework for Internationalization. There has not been a similar extensive discussion with regard to diversity within the United States, therefore we looked to peer and aspirational institutions to identify best practice.

**Changes Proposed for Both Sets of Objectives/SLOs:**

1. Focus more on active learning rather than passive reception of knowledge.
   * *“International courses promote the development of students’ global awareness…”* versus the current *“International courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms…”*
2. There was unanimity in the subcommittee that reflection was an important part of both objectives and should be stated explicitly. The current objectives employ the phrase “*own cultural norms and values*”, but we feel reflection should extend beyond the individual self.
3. Changes to Student Learning Outcomes derive directly from the text of the objectives.

**Changes Proposed for International:**

* Reviewed UF’s Internationalization Student Learning Framework and aligned the GE-N Objective with it – see slide 3 in the “Proposed Changes to N-D Objectives-SLOs-Syllabus Requirements.pptx” or go to page 18 in the QEP: <http://sacs.aa.ufl.edu/media/sacsaaufledu/files/UF-QEP-2014.pdf>
* The current Objective lacks reference to history and politics as they affect the current context, both of which can play an important part in understanding other cultures and promoting global awareness.
* The current Objective’s emphasis limits understanding to “*geographic location and socioeconomic factors.”*
* QEP Competency 1: *Students comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect our communities and communities worldwide.*
  + Current Objective: *These courses lead students to understand how geographic location and socioeconomic factors affect these cultures and the lives of citizens in other countries.*
  + Proposed Objective: *Students examine the historical, cultural, economic, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges and opportunities that affect communities around the world.*
* However, the current Objective is also extremely ambitious to be achieved in one 3-credit course:
  + *“Through analysis and evaluation of the students’ own cultural norms and values in relation to those held by the citizens of other countries,* ***they will develop a cross-cultural understanding of the rest of the contemporary world.”*** (bold - our emphasis)
  + Instead, recommend General Education aim for something more realistic. Therefore propose: “*Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people’s understanding of an increasingly connected world*.”

**Changes Proposed for Diversity:**

* The subcommittee reviewed the definitions/objectives/learning outcomes for 24 peer and aspirational institutions to ground our consideration of our current Objective and Student Learning Outcomes. See four examples on slide 6 in “Proposed Changes to N-D Objectives-SLOs-Syllabus Requirements.pptx”. The full spreadsheet, “Diversity requirements – other universities.xlsx” is also posted in the agenda.
  + Themes found at other institutions:
    - Some emphasize issues of marginalization, outside of mainstream, power, inequalities.
    - Some emphasize social movements, activism, etc.
  + Their objectives/definitions often have grown out of explicit institutional commitments to accessibility, equality, social justice (e.g., Georgetown).
* We also reviewed UF’s Definition of Diversity (<http://president.ufl.edu/initiatives/inclusion-engagement/council-on-diversity/>. See slide 7 in “Proposed Changes to N-D Objectives-SLOs-Syllabus Requirements.pptx”),
  + A broad definition for all activities of the University. It is more expansive than the current Gen Ed Diversity Objective, which covers “values, attitudes and norms” and “social roles and status”, encompassing identity and positionality.
* Beyond this broad definition, UF doesn’t have clearly articulated University goals or vision regarding Diversity in undergraduate education. Therefore the subcommittee wanted to be careful not to commit UF to specific goals (e.g., social justice, marginalization, inequities, etc.)
* Our goal has been to craft an Objective and SLOs that makes sense across many disciplines right now but will also stand the test of time. Those subcommittee members who work and teach in fields relevant to that category recognized that our definition was well behind UF’s broad definition, behind that of many of our peer or aspirational institutions, but also behind where much of the literature and pedagogical emphases of the relevant fields currently stand.
* We wanted to eliminate use of the word “groups”, which emphasizes boundaries and separation (in ways that are static or innate) instead of diversity as a dynamic process across a population.
* The meaning of being in a community/identity is relational (how they engage with others). If one community/identity is focused on, the course must include how different identities are placed and understood in American society.
  + For example, courses about Deaf Culture or Islam in the US – is it diversity because they are a non-mainstream group or does it need discuss particular experiences within the larger context of social, structural and cultural processes?
* In the second sentence of the proposed Objective, we decided to list multiple examples (can be expanded) to illustrate dimensions of difference and included intersectionality. Intersectionality needs to be addressed in a meaningful way in Diversity courses. This is in line with the University definition of Diversity.

**Changes Proposed for Student Learning Outcomes**

* The current Student Learning Outcomes derive directly from the Objectives. Therefore, for the proposed Students Learning Outcomes, they are derived directly from the proposed Objectives.

**Changes Proposed for Syllabus Policy**

* International/Diversity courses should have significant touchstones to relate to current world (should be comparative to current world) in order to be contemporary.
* More than half the content should address the International or Diversity Objective – as the only course students may take in these areas, *the experience should be substantial*.
* Courses may be approved as both International and Diversity, but if so, should have 50% content addressing International and 50% content addressing Diversity.
* Many syllabi we reviewed did not make any connection between content and assignments and Student Learning Outcomes and assessment of those outcomes – students should know and understand that they are taking an N or D course.