

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Matt Hudelson, Executive Secretary  
Faculty Senate

**FROM:** Becky Bitter, Registrar's Office

**FOR:** Academic Affairs Committee

**DATE:** September 12, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Proposal to Establish a New UCORE Designation, EQJS, *Pursuing Equity and Justice*

At its meeting on September 6, 2022, the Academic Affairs Committee approved the attached revised proposal from the UCORE Committee, to establish a new designation within the general education program – EQJS, *Pursuing Equity and Justice*.

Adding the EQJS designation will be a credit-neutral part of the general education program since students will choose 6 of 7 inquiry courses from the following designations: ARTS, BSCI, DIVR, EQJS, HUM, PSCI, and, SSCI.

While the choice of 6 of 7 inquiry courses will fulfill the UCORE requirements, AAC understands that some colleges will elect to require that all 7 designations be completed to meet college requirements.

The revised proposal is supported by the Associate Deans and Vice Chancellors as well as the College of Arts and Sciences dean, chairs, and directors.

AAC recommends that the Faculty Senate approve the proposal, to be effective fall 2023.



August 15, 2022

To: Academic Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate

To: Catalog Sub-Committee of Academic Affairs Committee of Faculty Senate

**Re: Equity and Justice proposal**

Appendices

p. 2: proposed DIVR and EQJS learning outcomes

p. 3-6: UCORE Letters\_Butler\_Carter\_032922.pdf

**Proposal**

On May 2, 2022, at its final meeting of AY 2021-22, the UCORE committee passed, with one abstention, a proposal to Academic Affairs Committee to...

- Create a “Pursuing Equity and Justice” [EQJS] UCORE course designation.
- Revise the student learning outcomes for UCORE’s DIVR designation.
- Broaden the scope of UCORE’s “Inquiry: Ways of Knowing” framework to include DIVR and EQJS, expanding to 7 Inquiry course designations, and subsequently...
  - Require students to complete 6 of 7 Inquiry courses.
  - Strongly encourage colleges to require all 7 for their programs, if possible.
- Understand that UCORE will monitor the impact of this change on enrollments and budgets over a period of three years, beginning Fall 2023, and re-evaluate the change at that time.

**Latest Context: relevant developments and communications since the last version of this proposal to reach Faculty Senate in December 2021**

In December 2021, the Faculty Senate remanded back to Academic Affairs a version of this proposal that would have had students choose between DIVR and EQJS to fulfill a three-credit Applied Social Engagement requirement. Academic Affairs then returned the proposal to UCORE for further work. Subsequently, at the February 14, 2022 meeting of the UCORE committee, the committee discussed, but did not approve, a proposal similar to the above, with a key difference: 7 inquiry designations would be divided in to two main categories: [BSCI, PSCI, SSCI] on the one hand, and [ARTS, DIVR, EQJS, HUM] on the other hand. In the [ARTS, DIVR, EQJS, HUM] category, students choose 3 of the 4 designations for graduation requirements. The UCORE director subsequently took this proposed framework to meetings of the Council of Associate Deans (February 22, 2022) and College of Arts and Sciences Chairs and Directors (March 8, 2022). For context, nearly 80% of all UCORE courses are offered by the College of Arts and Sciences.

At the Associate Dean’s meeting, several attendees expressed concerns about bifurcating the Inquiry requirements into science (read: objective knowledge) and non-science (read: constructed knowledge). CAS chairs and directors repeated these concerns, as evidenced by the attached letters from CAS Dean Todd Butler and SBS Director Pat Carter (undersigned by all other CAS chairs and directors). While CAS leaders preferred a 7 of 7 framework, they are supportive of 6 of 7, which Associate Deans also supported.



### Proposed Designation Descriptions & Learning Outcomes

#### (Revised) GLOBAL CULTURAL DIVERSITY [DIVR] (3 CREDITS)

Global Cultural Diversity courses introduce students to differences, similarities, and connections among cultures by exploring the multiplicity of individual and group experiences within and across historical periods, societies, and cultures *in global comparative context*. Courses help students engage and understand social and cultural contexts and interactions across the globe using critical thinking, information literacy, communication, self-awareness, and flexibility in perspective. Using multiple cultural or intellectual perspectives, courses prepare students to address questions about how factors such as history; politics; communication styles; economics; institutions; and/or cultural values, beliefs, and practices influence cultural variation. Courses are intended to help prepare students for lifelong constructive engagement with others in plural societies, promoting the abilities to suspend value judgment in interactions with culturally different others and/or the core beliefs of others; and to negotiate a shared understanding of what produces cultural variation and/or how culture changes across time and/or different geographic and environmental contexts.

Students, regardless of major, who successfully complete a DIVR course should be able to:

- *Understand* fundamental knowledge and concepts related to cultural diversity as appropriate to the discipline (WSU LG: breadth of learning).
- *Recognize* the complexity of elements important to members of a culture in relation to history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices (WSU LG: diversity)
- *Recognize* the sources and limits of one's own perspective and cultural rules and limitations in relation to the perspectives of others (WSU LG: critical thinking)
- *Identify* relevant sources of information that demonstrate ways that history, institutions, and/or ideologies shape cultural variation and/or different experiences (WSU LG: informational literacy).
- *Evaluate*, at an appropriate level, claims or information about cultural diversity based on the sources and the methods used to generate it (WSU LG: information literacy).
- *Communicate* about cultural diversity in written forms appropriate to the discipline (WSU LG: written communication).

#### (New) PURSUING EQUITY AND JUSTICE [EQJS] (3 CREDITS)

Pursuing Equity and Justice courses equip students with intellectual tools and social contexts necessary to critically examine power dynamics and to recognize, question, and understand structural inequities and privileges. Courses demonstrate how inequalities and/or stereotypes, discrimination, systemic inequities, and violence along lines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, national origin, sexuality, ability, or intersections thereof are produced, sustained, and adapted across time and/or geography. Students develop the ability to position themselves in relation to structural inequities and privileges using self-reflection and open dialogue. Courses provide vital intellectual foundations, tools, and literacies to assess and evaluate ideologies and narratives in order to ethically pursue inclusive and just societies.

Students, regardless of major, who successfully complete a EQJS course should be able to:

- *Understand* fundamental knowledge and concepts related to power, privilege, equity, and/or justice as appropriate to the discipline (WSU LG: breadth of learning)
- *Recognize* how structures of power and privilege shape unequal social positioning and/or sustain unethical worldviews or ideologies (WSU LG: diversity).
- *Recognize* the ways in which one's own social identities impact one's engagement with others (WSU LG: critical thinking).
- *Identify* relevant sources of information that demonstrate how individuals, communities, and movements resist and/or transform institutions that (re-)produce inequality and oppression (WSU LG: informational literacy).
- *Evaluate*, at an appropriate level, claims or information about how and why ideologies, constructions, scripts, and other broad generalizations about groups are produced, replicated, adapted over time, and/or persist or manifest in oppressive beliefs and behaviors (WSU LG: information literacy).
- *Communicate* about power, privilege, equity, and/or justice in written forms appropriate to the discipline (WSU LG: written communication).



March 29, 2022

To the University Common Core Requirements Committee:

On behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), I am writing both to endorse the adoption of a new EQJS requirement and to encourage any subsequent restructuring of UCORE to avoid any further subcategorization of the current requirements. This letter is accompanied by a similar endorsement from CAS chairs and directors (attached).

Like our chairs and directors, I and my leadership team are enthusiastic about this new requirement and appreciative of the extensive work that has gone into it. Curriculum change is never easy, especially when it affects the entire university, but this effort is indeed worth it. More than any other element of UCORE, the proposed EQJS requirement will challenge students to think deeply with each other about some of our country's most pressing concerns, including poverty and income inequality; racial, gender, and sexuality-based discrimination; and how the divisions of our society affect the much wider world. This is precisely the sort of education and debate we must offer to meet our historical and continuing obligations as a premier land-grant university.

It is in the context of our expectations for excellence, however, that I am concerned about the current design for implementing this proposed requirement. Ideally WSU would simply add EQJS to the graduation expectations for all WSU undergraduates. I recognize, however, that the current structure of some degrees makes it difficult for some units to imagine how they might ask students to think about questions of equality and inclusion in addition to their traditional program of study.

More troubling is the proposal to separate the areas of inquiry into "SCI" and "non-SCI" and relegate the EQJS requirement to the latter category with ARTS, HUM, and DIVR. Dividing UCORE's requirements in this fashion would divide disciplines at precisely the same time we are recognizing that many of our society's greatest challenges—environmental and climate change, improving public health and community resilience—fundamentally demand the *integration* of ways of knowing. In the absence of more robust data, I am also somewhat skeptical of worries that any particular types of courses will be impacted more than others. Given the diversity of interests and degrees among WSU's 16,000+ undergraduates, it seems more likely that the practical impact of this change will be diffused across colleges and curricula and therefore limited in its effect on any particular program.

Most problematic about the dual category proposal, however, is what it says about how our university understands equity and inclusion and what we expect of ourselves as an academic community. Questions of EQJS are not the singular property of the arts and humanities. Social, life, and physical scientists are all engaged regularly with such questions, and they do so at the highest levels of their scholarship and teaching. Formalizing the mistaken belief that these disciplines do not have a stake in EQJS does not give our colleagues and colleges the credit they deserve. I can readily imagine multiple courses in disciplines as diverse as sociology, political science, forestry, and biology (among others) that could be designed to meet this curriculum.

Those courses might not deliver “science as we know it,” but they would perhaps deliver science as it is and should be practiced. Splitting UCORE into two categories, by contrast, runs the real risk that such separation will disincentivize the current and future teaching these disciplines can do in these areas, thereby limiting the extent to which a change for our students can also drive wider institutional change.

To be sure, change is hard, especially when it can make us feel like we’ve been doing something wrong. Yet I prefer instead to see this new requirement as a chance for us—all of us—to become better, and to take teaching into the questions, places, and communities that a twenty-first century land-grant institution simply must serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Todd Butler, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences

Enclosure: CAS Chairs and Directors UCORE Letter



March 29, 2022

Dear University Common Requirements Committee:

On Tuesday March 8, 2022, Dr. Clif Stratton visited the College of Arts and Sciences Department Chairs and School Directors meeting to explain proposed changes to the UCORE system by the University Common Requirements Committee. As Director of the School of Biological Sciences, I requested, and was encouraged by my fellow Chairs and Directors, to take the lead developing a response that is being submitted by all the signatories below.

First, we want to compliment the committee for proposing a new UCORE Inquiry category, Equity and Justice (EQJS). We think this a timely and important addition to the foundational education of WSU students, and we applaud the committee for developing it.

Second, we understand that logistical constraints exist which prevent some units from being able to require all seven UCORE Inquiry categories for their students. This is unfortunate as we think all seven are extremely valuable, but we all understand the nature of curricular constraints.

Third, we strongly oppose the proposed system of how students will choose which six of seven UCORE Inquiry categories they will study. The current proposal is that all students must take the PSCI, BSCI, and SSCI Inquiry categories, and that students will then choose three among the four remaining categories: ARTS, HUM, DIV, and EQJS.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the categories that have "SCI" as part of their name; there is no practical, intellectual, ethical or moral imperatives that make these three ways of knowing more important or superior to the other four. Furthermore, we find this approach to be antithetical to the core intellectual values and land-grant mission of WSU.

Therefore, if all seven UCORE areas cannot be required of all students, we urge the committee to adopt the policy that individual students be allowed to choose six of the seven areas without any prejudice imposed on these ways of knowing by the University.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick A. Carter".

Patrick A. Carter, Director  
School of Biological Sciences

Kim Christen, Director, Digital Technology and Culture Program  
Jan Dasgupta, Director, Data Analytics Program  
Andrew Duff, Chair, Department of Anthropology  
Kent Keller, Director, School of Environmental Science  
Julie Kmec, Chair, Department of Sociology  
Dean Luethi, Director, School of Music  
Carmen Lugo-Lugo, Director, School of Languages, Cultures, and Race  
David Marcus, Chair, Department of Psychology  
Squeak Meisel, Chair, Department of Fine Arts  
Chuck Moore, Chair, Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
Melanie-Angela Neuilly, Chair, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology  
Kirk Peterson, Chair, Department of Chemistry  
Donna Potts, Chair, Department of English  
Travis Ridout, Director, School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs  
Brian Saam, Chair, Department of Physics and Astronomy  
Matthew Sutton, Chair, Department of History  
Nishant Shahani, Interim Director, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program