

DPD/Anti-Racism Sub-Committee

Initial Report | January 27, 2022

Background

Oregon State University's (OSU) Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program (DPD) was approved by a faculty senate vote on May 7, 1992. The Program came into being as a result of student activism, where students demanded institutional changes to address a hostile climate for students of color. The DPD Program is charged with the development and delivery of faculty development as it relates to curriculum transformation at the undergraduate level. Specifically, the cornerstone of the DPD Program is a 60-hour Academy for faculty who seek to either create new DPD courses or revise existing courses to meet DPD criteria. Approved DPD courses are a part of OSU's Baccalaureate Core, and all undergraduate students are required to earn at least 3 DPD credits in order to graduate.

In ways not dissimilar from the student demands for change 30 years ago which brought the DPD Program into being, in the summer of 2020, OSU BIPOC students and faculty made formal demands that OSU take decisive action toward anti-racist institutional transformation in all ways possible, from institutional culture, to policies, and practices. As a result of these demands, a Racism and Antiracism Curriculum Taskforce was created and charged jointly by Provost Ed Feser and then Faculty Senate President Dwaine Plaza, to "review and recommend changes to current OSU curricular and co-curricular offerings to ensure that, as part of their OSU experience, ALL students learn critical thinking on race/ethnicity, multiple racisms—their historical origins and present-day manifestations—and antiracism."

In alignment with the charge and recommendations made by the Racism and Antiracism Curriculum Taskforce, we put forth the following recommendations for the future of the DPD Program, which we argue is uniquely positioned, given the necessary resources, to respond to the demands for an antiracism curriculum, as part of a larger effort to realize institutional transformation that centers antiracism. Moreover, DPD courses are well aligned with both what is described in the literature as needs of the 21st Century Learner, and OSU's Goals for General Education.

Implementing these recommendations are consistent with a vision of anti-racist institutional transformation and represent actions that effectively leverage existing resources toward the realization of substantive curricular transformation, and maybe of greatest import, these changes respond to the demands of BIPOC students, faculty, and their allies in ways that take these demands both seriously and urgently. Given the aforementioned, these recommendations have the potential to position OSU's commitment to anti-racism as a signature area of distinction.

Recommendations

The DPD/Anti-Racism Sub-Committee recommends the following actions as part of the revision of OSU's general education program:

1. **Course requirements.** Require students to take two DPD courses as part of their undergraduate degree requirements. One lower division general education course (3-4 credits), and one upper division course in the major (3-4 credits).

Breadth and Depth: These course requirements will provide students the opportunity to develop in-depth knowledge about how systems of power function, both broadly, and specifically within their disciplines, through active learning and engaged learning.

These courses will anchor students' experiences of receiving an anti-racist undergraduate education. At the same time, it is critical that the courses students take between these proposed DPD experiences, routinely engage with matters of difference, power, and oppression to assure continuous and deep engagement.

2. Enrollment Caps. Cap lower division DPD courses at 50 students and upper division DPD courses in the major at 25 students.

As courses that require students to engage in active learning activities and courses that are also heavily discussion based, it is critical that these courses/course sections are small in size, if they are to successfully achieve the learning outcomes set forth. These enrollment cap also seeks to attend to the ways in which DPD courses are disproportionately taught by BIPOC and other minoritized graduate assistants and faculty – and thus account for the invisible emotional labor that this endeavor entails. Furthermore, a small classroom allows for close attention to centering BIPOC and other minoritized voices and experiences.

3. Transfer. Honor Community College DPD (lower division) transfer, if the Community College has an on-going relationship with OSU, specific to DPD (i.e., training, review, etc.).
4. Learning Outcomes. Add language to the DPD learning outcomes to specifically require that these courses take up race, racism, and racialization, and grapple with anti-racism as it relates to course content.
5. Faculty Development and Support. Reward co-teaching and mentoring activities that function to effectively institutionalize the DPD Program. Build co-teaching and mentoring into the institutional structure, in order to allow faculty to work on effective course design and delivery as part of their position responsibilities, rather than functioning as optional “add-ons.”
6. Consistency in Course Delivery. Add DPD Course Coordinators at the Program level as a way to establish consistency in course offerings, delivery, content, etc. across modalities, sections, and OSU campuses.
7. Program Name Change. Change the name of the DPD Program to the Difference, Power, and Oppression Program to reflect the Program's focus more accurately on systemic issues and their consequences.

21st Century Learning and OSU's General Education Goals – DPD Alignment

Needs of the 21st Century Learner

Delivering 21st Century skills for college students focuses on three core categories: life and career skills, information, media, and technological skills, and learning and innovation skills (APLU, 2019). The DPD classroom offers the opportunity to help students develop skills in all three categories, and therefore contributes to graduates who possess the skills necessary for the 21st century workplace.

Life and Career Skills – DPD courses provide in-depth and nuanced examination of how systems of power manifest and operate in the United States, while providing active learning opportunities for students to engage with each other and course content. In doing so, these courses offer students the opportunity to develop vital social and cross-cultural skills, as well the opportunity to take initiative and self-direction in their learning through hands-on learning projects.

Information, Media, and Technological Skills – A unique strength of the DPD Program is that courses are offered across disciplines at the institution, and therefore specialized knowledge in disciplines is examined through the lens of systems of power. STEM DPD courses offer a particular strength in helping students develop information,

communication, and technology literacy that takes into consideration difference and power. This provides students with the opportunity to delve deeply into how these issues are enmeshed in the continual technological developments of our society.

Learning and Innovation Skills – DPD courses provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, and communication and collaboration. Due to the focus on active learning in DPD courses, students are provided multiple ways to practice creativity and work collaboratively with their peers. Additionally, the focus on examining systems of power develops critical thinking and problem solving for some of the most pressing issues in our society.

DPD Alignment with Goals for General Education at OSU

Develop Foundational Modes of Inquiry and Innovation – DPD courses are offered across a variety of disciplines, using multiple modes of inquiry that enable them to develop and employ creative problem solving and critical thinking skills.

Social and Environmental Justice – DPD courses are centrally concerned with engaging students in the examination of the complexity of the structures, systems, and ideologies that sustain the unequal distribution of power and resources in society. By engaging in DPD courses students have the capacity to grow knowledge and skills that will enable them to work towards social justice. Additionally, multiple DPD courses are focused specifically on environmental justice.

Navigation of a Complex Global World – DPD courses provide students with the opportunity to learn about complex social issues with people from different backgrounds and engage as a respectful, collaborative learning community. These courses offer an essential place to develop the skills necessary for navigating a world with multiple perspectives and global interconnectedness.

Launch Here to Career – DPD courses provide students with learning spaces that enable them to develop essential 21st century skills – including life and career skills, information, media, and technological skills, and learning and innovation skills – that will enable them to be successful in an ever-adapting global workforce.

Roadshow Questions

1. Have we done enough to integrate DPD into our general education curriculum?
2. Have we gone far enough to address the demands of BIPOC students, faculty, and allies?
3. Do these recommendations sufficiently move OSU toward becoming an anti-racist institution (in the sphere of curriculum)?
4. What roadblocks do OSU programs have to meeting this vision?
5. What supports would help programs meet these recommendations?