

## Assembly should reject flawed plan

The University Assembly will meet today to hear new arguments concerning the recently revised race, gender and non-European studies requirement. Hopefully this time rational thought will prevail over the politically driven, emotional voices who clamored for the passing of the flawed revised curriculum.

Shortly after the requirement was passed, the *Emerald* wrote an editorial about the requirement's shortcomings and suggested the requirement be reconsidered. Hopefully the assembly will take our advice.

The flaw with the original plan is that it allowed students to take one class to meet the requirement. The purpose of a multicultural curriculum is to educate students about the broad world in which they live. That means not only learning about other cultures outside of the United States, but learning about other cultures inside of the United States.

Today's society requires knowledge of race and gender relations in this country. And as others have already pointed out, one class just doesn't cut it, particularly when that one class comes from an overbroad selection of classes.

Students demanded the requirement be refined and more narrowly focused to require study of race and gender in the United States. The ad hoc Multicultural Curriculum Committee was created solely for this purpose, and it failed. Rather than creating a revised requirement that is narrowly focused (and perhaps even educational), the committee simply doubled the number of pointless classes students must take from one to two.

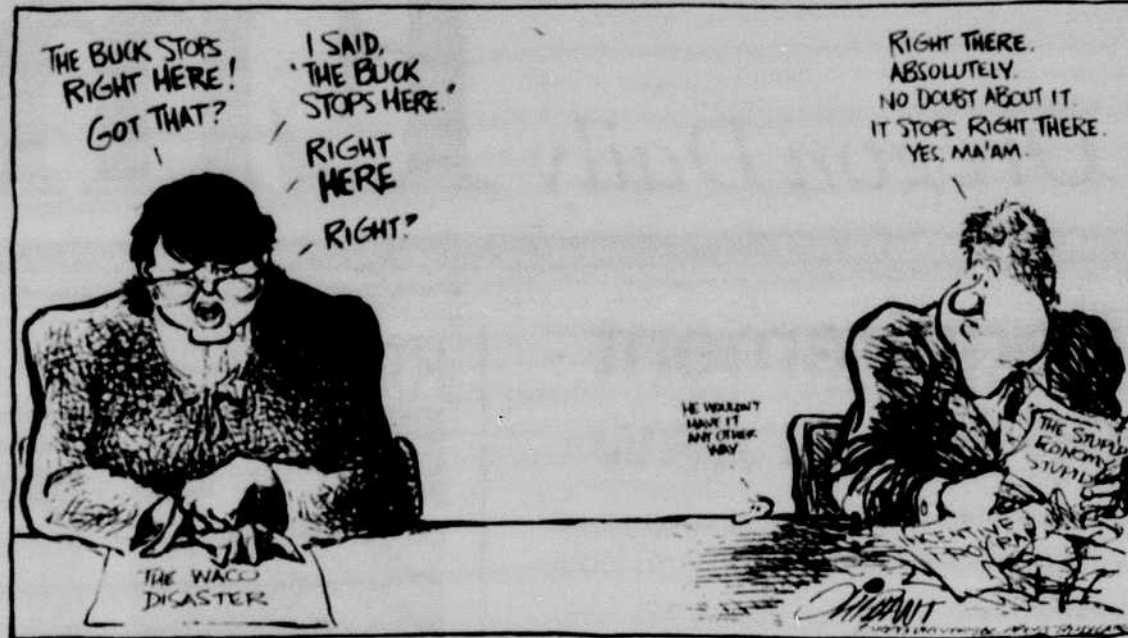
The committee should not have diluted the first of the proposed two requirements by allowing students to study ethnic art, music or writing to learn about race relations. That's what the second requirement is for.

The committee's ignorance of its purpose is obvious in its commentary that appears on this page today where it says, "(The revised requirement) simply calls for two courses ... rather than one course." That is not what students wanted. The commentary goes on to claim the first required course would address "contemporary race relations in the United States." No, it doesn't.

Like we said in our earlier editorial, changing the class title of "Problems in Chinese Art" to "Problems in Chinese Art in America" does absolutely nothing to educate students about Chinese race relations in the United States. Chinese pottery has never experienced, and thus cannot discuss, the problems faced by Chinese-Americans.

In today's commentary, the committee writes, "No one on our committee suggests that the revised requirement should not be modified." If that's so, then why is it being put before the assembly for a vote? The committee is making a mockery of the assembly and the democratic process by putting forward and advocating passage of a requirement that it knows to be defective.

The University Assembly should reject the revision and send the committee back with instruction to do its job this time.



### COMMENTARY

## Pass requirement a second time

By Sandra Morgen and Quintard Taylor

On April 7, the University Assembly voted 175-155 to amend the current race, gender and non-European requirement.

For supporters, there was no exhilaration over a "victory," but rather relief that after a three-month debate, which has been characterized as the most contentious since the Vietnam War era, the campus had finally resolved the issue. That debate, punctuated by accusations of faculty intimidation, anti-Semitism and "political correctness" poisoned the atmosphere of the campus.

Nonetheless, the assembly met, the vote was taken, and it appeared the faculty had spoken. Colleagues who indicated their opposition to the revised requirement informed us they still accepted the assembly vote and offered to work toward effective implementation of the new requirement.

We were wrong. Within days of the assembly vote, various objections in the form of open letters, memos and statements to the University faculty began to circulate. While some of them raised salient points, generally they called the decision of the assembly unacceptable and demanded that the new requirement be rescinded.

It is not surprising that a number of motions to "modify" the newly passed requirement are to be proposed at the next opportunity, either at the University Assembly today or at the next University Senate meeting. Such parliamentary maneuvers may continue well into next year.

We need to recall what the revision proposed and why it was put forward. It simply calls for two courses to meet the race, gender and non-European requirement rather than one course.

The first course addresses contemporary race relations in the United States; the theoretical conceptualization of race or the experiences and expressions of one or more of the following groups: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Native Americans or Chicano/Latinos.

The other course focuses specifically on how gender, race, class and ethnicity have an impact within or across soci-

eties. That is, within the United States and throughout the world.

The 188 classes suggested to date for the requirement are located in 27 departments in five of the eight schools at the University. Seventy-five percent of the courses we propose for the race requirement are outside women's studies and ethnic studies.

But we have always urged that more courses be developed and that existing courses be modified both to reduce the overall expense to the University because we feel numerous faculty, including biologists, linguists and economists should be involved in addressing these issues.

This is not, as some would have us believe, an attempt to indoctrinate students.

If the University is the marketplace of ideas in which views and values can be openly expressed and debated without fear of censure, then why is there such vehement opposition to the discussion of these issues? Why are those who claim to abhor censorship so adamantly committed to use all of their available resources to censor this discussion?

We also want to address the charge that discussions of anti-Semitism have been excluded from consideration. The requirement in no way excludes courses on anti-Semitism or on Jews as members of ethnic and religious minorities in the United States and in the world. Such courses fit squarely within our second course requirement.

Moreover, courses that explore the historical and political construction of race and racism might well include extensive discussion of anti-Semitism and examination of the relationship between racism and anti-Semitism. As we have said repeatedly, we did not include courses on anti-Semitism on our list of courses to fulfill the requirement because they do not exist in our current curriculum.

Unfortunately, some on this campus have explicitly or through innuendo charged our committee with anti-Semitism. The charge is particularly irresponsible because it has now assumed an alarming life of its own, generating a set of fears and apprehensions that do not

reflect the reality of our campus community.

The University ethnic studies program established the first course on this campus, and one of the few in the nation, that analyzes tensions between African-American and Jewish communities. It is jointly taught by a Jewish instructor and an African-American professor who is member of the Multicultural Curriculum Committee.

Finally, there is the charge that "the process was flawed." Some contend the debate within the University Senate was truncated even though the matter took two Senate sessions in February and March. Both bodies voted by an overwhelming majority (which included both opponents and proponents of the revised requirement) to end debate at 5 p.m.

The time allocated to actual debate was brief, stemming primarily from various parliamentary maneuvers, preventing both proponents and opponents from speaking to the motion. The fact that at least 330 faculty members cast their votes when assembly meetings typically generate one-fifth that number of participants attests to the democratic nature of the vote.

No one on our committee suggests that the revised requirement should not be modified. But we fear that much of what is occurring is not an attempt to seek clarity and find ways to listen to those who did not have the opportunity to speak at the University Assembly. What is taking place is a shrewdly manipulative campaign to declare the newly enacted requirement a failure and remove it long before the first student has enrolled in a class and before any instructor has generated a new course syllabus.

What we are witnessing is a cynical, calculated attempt to nullify the decisions of the University Senate and Assembly, and by extension, the ability of the University faculty to democratically decide curricular matters. If that maneuver succeeds, the University will have lost far more than a race, gender and non-European requirement.

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## Emerald

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