



## Diverse Perspectives

### End-of-Year Report, 2019-2020

Committee: Diverse Perspectives  
Chair: Veronica Koehn  
Committee Membership: Barry Canaday, Dibyajyoti Deb, Kristy Weidman, Kyle Chapman, Wakaya Wells

#### What were the committee charges this year?

As will be explained later, GEAC kind of deflated at the end of AY2018-2019. I was part of GEAC, and we saw our efforts to fully integrate the ESLOs into General Education stall.

This left the Diverse Perspectives committee (and possibly others, but I know for sure it affected Diverse Perspectives) lacking clear charges for AY2019-2020. I believe we were tasked with two informal ad hoc charges:

1. Consider what, if anything, to pair with Diverse Perspectives so that we can get our six-year assessment cycle condensed down to a three-year cycle;
2. Consider how to integrate the new Northwest-mandated Cultural Sensitivity and Global Awareness outcomes into the existing Oregon Tech Diverse Perspectives outcome.

#### What did the committee accomplish this year?

1. We met as a group (virtually) in Winter 2020 to discuss options for pairing the Diverse Perspective outcome with one of the other five existing ESLOs. We ended up continuing our conversation over email in the following week or two after our meeting. We decided to recommend pairing ethics and diverse perspectives as ethics need to ground any action with the Other.<sup>1</sup> Due to the new outcome mandates handed down from Northwest (explained in point 2 of this subsection), we ended up not pairing Ethical Reasoning with Diverse Perspectives.<sup>2</sup>
2. During Spring 2020, I had two meetings with Janette Isaacson, Chair of Assessment. Northwest decided that all Northwest-accredited schools needed to address two additional outcomes, Cultural Sensitivity and Global Awareness. We have decided to merge these two outcomes into our existing Diverse Perspectives outcome. In a way, the Northwest mandate brought our outcome full circle. Oregon Tech originally had a Cultural Awareness outcome (an ISLO at that time). When the school decided to revise the general education and put together the General Education Review Task Force (a.k.a., "GERT Force"), GERT-Force created multiple subcommittees. In my second year at Oregon Tech, I was asked to chair one such subcommittee, the Outcomes and Assessment subcommittee. Through my work on this subcommittee, I realized that Oregon Tech had never assessed the Cultural Awareness outcome.

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<sup>1</sup> For evidence of how and why this claim is true, one only need to look at any news story that is referencing the killing of George Floyd.

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, before I talked with Janette during week 9 and found out we would not be pairing Diverse Perspectives and Ethical Reasoning, I had seen the links between ethics and diverse perspectives reinforced in my Communication Ethics class. I have the students do six smaller papers and one large final paper. Their last smaller paper was about ethical codes, and it was due on May 29<sup>th</sup>. They have to find the ethical code for the profession that they are going in to, find a clear case of a decision being made that was either justified as ethical or believed to be unethical, and fully analyze the case in terms of the code of ethics. In the Communication program, several of our students are entering the law enforcement field. A few students in my Communication Ethics class who are planning on entering law enforcement pulled up the law enforcement code of ethics and analyzed the George Floyd case; another looked at the delayed arrest of the men who killed Ahmaud Arbery and how that delay relates to the code of ethics for law enforcement officers. The papers were great and, to me, reinforced that, if we were to pair up Ethical Reasoning and Diverse Perspectives, it could work—just in case assessing Communication, Teamwork, and Ethical Reasoning in a single year winds up being a bit too much of an ask . . .

How can something be an institutional-wide outcome if it has never been assessed? Looking through some assessment reports, we found out that programs would just opt out of assessing Cultural Awareness in their programs. The reason? Based on the way that the outcome was worded, only one course, COM205: Intercultural Communication, aligned with the outcome. While COM205 is a general education option, there are not a lot of programs that require their students to take it. The lack of buy-in to the original Cultural Awareness outcome led to the creation of the Diverse Perspectives outcome, which came with a much broader definition of diversity than just culture. I was nervous when Janette told me that we were almost going back to the outcome that we worked pretty hard to change several years ago, but when Janette told me we could use any rubric, I realized we might be okay as departments seemed to be able to see how they could use the Diverse Perspectives rubric to assess work in programmatic classes, and I am anxious to see where we go with our new Diverse Perspectives/Cultural Sensitivity/Global Awareness outcome in the future.

**What issues and/or additional responsibilities arose this year that influenced the work of the committee?**

1. As noted above, as a member of GEAC in AY2018-2019, I left our end-of-the-year meeting in Spring 2019 feeling kind of down. I got the impression that GEAC had basically decided to take a year-long (or more) time-out; given that Andie Fultz in my department serves on GEAC and told me that the group has not yet met this year, I believe that my reading of the situation last spring was correct. Not having GEAC meant that we did not have any general-education focused charges, nor did we have one of the committees who was supposed to oversee courses tagged as Diverse Perspectives. While I would have liked to have continued tagging courses for Diverse Perspectives, I opted to not put out a call for course submissions as I was not sure what would happen to any courses tagged this year. My hope is that our new Director of Academic Excellence and/or our new Provost can breathe new life into GEAC, a group left deflated after the previous provost basically killed six years of their work.
2. COVID-19 kind of put a halt on everything. I found out during week 9 of spring term that next year is the engage year for Diverse Perspectives under our new three-year cycle. I would have liked to have met with the Diverse Perspectives committee to come up with some ideas for engaging faculty at Convocation, but I fear that there is not enough time, given that it is nearly week 10 of Spring term, and I am not sure how an engage activity would look at a virtual Convocation anyway.

**Given what you have learned this year, what goals/charges do you recommend this ESLO committee focus on in the upcoming year?**

1. Under the new three-year ESLO cycle, Diverse Perspectives will be in their "Plan" year, which involves coming up with plans to act and engaging the campus. A few years ago, Diverse Perspectives was the first group ever to have an "engage" year, and I believe that we can use some of the same engagement techniques that we did then. For one, we had Campus Life note any Diverse Perspectives event on their calendars (which appear on bulletin boards and in the bathrooms) with "DP" so that students could start to see the connections between events on campus and the Diverse Perspectives outcome. We also worked to engage the faculty, holding a couple of workshops for faculty. We had one workshop where we taught faculty about the Diverse Perspectives rubric and worked to assess student work and one where we worked on assignment design for professors to use in their own classes. I would love to have a third workshop (in the following year) where we have an "Assessment Day," as I find the "Assessment Day" to be a great way to work on norming and to ensure that multiple people are assessing student work.
2. We also need to plan to assess Diverse Perspectives in AY2021-2022. While the lack of buy-in decreased after we moved from Cultural Awareness to Diverse Perspectives, there were still some programs that had a hard time seeing how diversity applied to their programs (seriously—and one of these programs is about 80% male and still does not see any way to analyze diversity in their program). I know that we are really going to have to come up with a clear plan to ensure that as many programs as possible actually assess this outcome, and I am open to suggestions on how to do that.