

## MUIR CURRICULUM REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

### PROPOSAL TO MUIR FACULTY

During academic year 1990-91, the Muir Curriculum Review and Development Board, which consists of five faculty and four students, grappled with the notion of adding an "American cultures" requirement to the Muir General Education requirements. The discussion began in response both to external stimuli (see the attached material from the Academic Council) and to the conviction of the members of the Board that diversity is an issue that needs to be addressed. Among the colleges here at UCSD, Revelle and Warren have recently added such a requirement and Third College has always included such courses in its general education program.

On behalf of the Curriculum Board, I would like to convey to you their recommendation concerning an "American cultures" requirement and a summary of the discussions which the Board had leading up to the recommendation. The proposed requirement will be discussed at a Muir faculty meeting on October 14, 1991.

The impulse behind an American cultures requirement is clear: our society -- nation and state -- is becoming progressively more diverse. Asking each student to take at least one course devoted to some aspect of that diversity is a responsible gesture toward preparing them for lives and careers in that society.

Once having decided that some kind of diversity requirement was appropriate, the Curriculum Board spent much time and thought trying to understand how extensive such a requirement should be (both in terms of how many courses and what span of material would be appropriate) and how that requirement would fit into the existing Muir general education format. For your reference, Muir has the most flexible set of G.E. requirements among the colleges here at UCSD (although it is about in the middle among all the sets of distribution requirements in the entire University of California). Currently Muir requires each student take a one-year sequence in a social science, a one-year sequence in mathematics or physical science, two one-year sequences from among the humanities, fine arts, and foreign language, and a two-quarter writing sequence. Among the colleges, Muir regularly attracts the largest number of freshman and transfer applicants and this fall its freshman class will likely have the highest SAT scores and high school GPA's among the five colleges here at UCSD.

Early in its deliberations the Curriculum Board agreed that it would seek a way to install a diversity requirement

that would do the minimum dislocation of the existing curriculum. Finally, the discussion devolved to: should one or two courses be required; in either case could at least one be fitted into the existing pattern. The arguments for two courses are strong: two courses would allow for a comparative view: the treatment of different groups or issues; if two courses were required, one could be used to accommodate the perceived need for greater understanding of gender issues as well as ethnic diversity. After much discussion, however, and with only a modest sense of unanimity, the Board decided to recommend the following as an additional graduation requirement for Muir College. If approved by the Muir faculty and the Academic Senate, the requirement would be effective Fall, 1992.

"Each student must complete one course that treats some aspect of the diversity of the culture of the United States. This course may, as appropriate, be substituted for one course in the humanities, fine arts, or social science sequence taken to complete the Muir breadth requirements."

That is to say, a "diversity course" in social science may substitute for one course in the year long social science sequence, etc. The MCRDB will regularly review the list of course offerings that will satisfy this requirement.

The MCRDB believes that this proposed requirement will at least address the importance of diversity and it will help Muir students to organize their thoughts on the issue. For many students it will open whole new areas of interest; for others it will be an isolated but, we hope, a productive experience. In the judgement of the board, the proposed requirement best fits the context of the Muir general education configuration: it keeps the total number of required courses at 14, it preserves the notion of wide choice, and it matches the resources of the campus.

The issue of including gender studies within the diversity requirement or of instituting a separate gender studies requirement has come up often in the Board's deliberations and it will place further discussion of a gender studies requirement at the top of its agenda for 1991-1992.