



August 26, 2021

Dear GE Design Committee,

I am writing as the coordinator of the Africana Studies Program in BYU's Kennedy Center for International Studies to support the Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (DEB) and Languages and Cultures (LC) requirements in the recently proposed new General Education model. As a program we seek to improve the way the university, faculty, and students interact with Africa and Africans to be more sophisticated and equitable, to support students of African descent, and to move BYU and people within its community to become more antiracist. These are all goals that fall within the broader university goals of creating an environment and community of belonging at BYU and helping all students reach their full divine potential (see new [statement on belonging](#) and the [Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging \(COREB\) report](#)). Africana Studies affiliated faculty, along with current students of African descent and members of the Black Alumni Society, see DEB and LC requirements in General Education as crucial for accomplishing these goals across campus and are ready to support and contribute to these initiatives in any way we can.

Many of us have long been engaged in scholarship and teaching that fall under the DEB and possibly the LC categories. We have met both challenges and encouraging results. We know that implementing a widespread DEB requirement will be challenging; however, we feel it is imperative that a sensitivity to, training in, and awareness of these issues permeate a general education that aims to educate the whole person. In order to make this more successful, we offer the following suggestions:

- 1) Training - Continuous, compensated or supported training is crucial to the success of the DEB requirement. It will support those on the front lines who will teach these classes and equip others to support them and the broader mission. This can and should take the form of:
 - a) generic DEB training for all professors on working with a diverse student body (as recommended by the COREB report); this training could be completed and certified online, with a required renewal every three years
 - b) pedagogical training for all professors who will teach classes with a DEB designation; anyone teaching DEB courses should be certified with this training
 - c) administrative training for department or unit chairs who will need to support professors teaching DEB classes
- 2) Resources and appropriate departmental credit for developing and teaching DEB and LC courses - Professors, especially Pre-CFS and BIPOC faculty, who will be involved in teaching these classes should be given the appropriate course loads and course credits to enable them to develop and successfully teach these courses. Departments should also ensure that

faculty who teach DEB and LC courses receive adequate acknowledgement for this service in their evaluations and promotions. (We agree here with the BYU Faculty Advisory Council Diversity & Inclusion Committee Letter of Recommendations and Suggestions.)

- 3) Languages and Cultures - We affirm the importance of learning both foreign languages and learning about foreign cultures in non-language classes and support suggestions to widen the courses that may count for credit in this category, such as including classes on culture (e.g. in history, geography, or anthropology) or Language Across the Curriculum courses (or CLAC) where certain classes offer sections in foreign languages. Foreign language courses offer skills and humbling educational experiences that reinforce DEB educational experiences, but should indeed be separate from a DEB requirement because of their unique benefits.

We recognize and express gratitude for the vision and courage of those who have contributed to the entire GE redesign process, but specifically the Task Force on Diversity —Lori Spruance, David-James Gonzales, and Rex Nielson and the University Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging. We offer our support and expertise in carrying out their recommendations. We are ready to offer courses, training, and knowledge to ensure the success of these initiatives. Do not hesitate to call upon us.

Sincerely,



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