

# Committee Recognizing Our Diverse History

## Case Study

November 13, 2019

On January 31, 2018, the UO Senate passed the “Resolution Denouncing White Supremacy and Hate Speech on Campus”. In January 2019, the Committee on Recognizing our Diverse History (CRDH), a short term ad hoc presidential advisory body, was developed out of this resolution and charged to create recommendations for the President around the following:

1. The additions of plaques to be placed on campus buildings, statues, or artwork that explain the historical context of the state, nation, and institution at the time it was created or named;
2. The creation of new statues or other artwork recognizing people of diverse backgrounds who have contributed to the University of Oregon or the land it occupies;
3. The development of a walking tour guide that allows an individual to see how the campus has evolved over time to reflect the changing political and cultural landscape of the community, state, and nation; and
4. How items 1-3 can be incorporated into classroom discussions, projects, research, or other academic work.

The CRDH, comprising UO faculty, staff and students, was tasked with these four goals in order to consider how our campus landscapes, buildings, artwork, plaques and markers serve to welcome visitors and develop a sense of belonging and agency among students, faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. The committee, in meetings beginning in March 2019 and through spring term, divided into 3 working groups:

- I. Inventory existing art, markers, signs, plaques to understand what already exists on campus and how we can obtain additional information for a “CRDH inventory;”
- II. Inventory existing walking tours on campus and understand what expertise and existing tours already exist and generate ideas for how we can build upon that (e.g. virtual maps, campus apps); and
- III. Benchmark exemplar art, projects or initiatives at other peer institutions

A general conclusion of this work is that there exists no single repository of this information, limiting the visibility of existing efforts. Additionally, CRDH notes that the UO campus has challenges to address to ensure a welcoming environment for members of underrepresented groups, in part because artwork, plaques and markers point overwhelmingly to the contributions and historical perspectives of a white culture. As an example of how the UO campus can feel unwelcoming, and prior to the conclusion of the 2018-2019 academic year, the Native American Student Union protested “for the removal of the Pioneer statue, echoing a national movement around the removal of statues and monuments that symbolize racism, genocide and hate. Contrasting positions and concerns have also been raised around campus’ use of the term Pioneer, notably on its most prestigious alumni award. The University of Oregon has an opportunity to advance its shared understanding of history, culture and race and provide a broader spectrum of information and

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viewpoints on key historical events through its campus landscape and infrastructure.

Committee subgroups, however, did note some exemplary practices—for example the ‘Hidden Histories’ web page (URL), developed with support from UO Libraries, that tells stories of historical contributions to the UO’s development, and experiences of African-Americans during the past century. Other exemplars include the ‘Indigenous UO’ app that highlights key points of interests related to Native American and Indigenous history on campus via an overlay to the campus map (URL).

A subgroup of the CRDH, Melanie Muenzer of the Office of the Provost, Lesley-Anne Pittard of the Division of Equity and Inclusion, and Dean Livelybrooks of Physics (current chair of the Campus Planning Committee), met over the summer to formulate a series of ‘emerging recommendations’ that address the four charges set out by President Schill.

For the President, CRDH’s recommendations are intended to “counteract historical racisms and the vestiges of that ugly past in our physical landscape and architecture in order to build a stronger, more inclusive campus community.” Because the President believes it is critical to learn from our history and not hide it now or for future generations, CRDH’s recommendations will not “move or remove any of the existing structures on campus (e.g., artwork, statues, building names).” As recommendations will have associated costs, and key partners to advance its recommendations, CRDH has identified key resources and partnerships. Fundraising will be a primary source of funding for any proposed projects. The Office of the Provost and the Division of Equity and Inclusion have committed to help provide support.

Ideally, implementation of these ‘emerging recommendations’ would engage, collaboratively, students, faculty and staff from across units, schools and campus as to further embolden our academic mission. To give an example, emerging recommendation (c) might entail students and faculty in CAS classes, seminars or workshops undertaking historical research for stories that would be highlighted on a singularly-themed banner set. Another class situated in, for example, the School of Journalism and Communications, might take each story and condense it into a few key sentences and images that fit on a banner. Another group, say from the College of Design, might undertake a project to determine the layout of that particular banner set so that it would attract significant attention when deployed episodically (for a few weeks annually) on campus. Campus Planning and Facilities Management (CPFM) personnel would ultimately be charged with deploying this banner set, on a schedule that coincides with national celebrations of contributions from underrepresented groups.

CRDH requested an extension at the end of Spring 2019 to submit recommendations by the conclusion of Fall 2019. To this end, below reflects a list of current action items required to finalize and submit recommendations by the end of the term:

- A. Determine how best to meet charge #4 (see Appendix A)
- B. Integrate CRDH and campus’ DAPs created for IDEAL Framework, under the “I” pillar (to ensure the UO is welcoming, supportive, and respectful)

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- C. Engage with campus partners around the emerging recommendations (see Appendix B). This includes key student groups (e.g. MCC Board); key faculty (e.g. ALT, CAS Diversity Committee Chairs, UO Senate); campus strategy and working groups (e.g. Native, LatinX, Black, ADPI, LGBTQIA/SOAGIE, CAE); key shareholders (e.g. PDACC); and guest experts on campus (e.g. Zena Howard). Additionally, there is an opportunity to engage with the City of Eugene, also interested in advancing a similar effort in our community.
- D. Provide cost estimates of all proposed projects
- E. Help shape a campus-wide message or update regarding this work
- F. Finalize and submit recommendations

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### Appendix A: Additional Senate-Related Curriculum Changes

#### **1.Revision of the Multicultural Requirement:**

In May 2018, the University Senate voted to approve changes to our multicultural requirement. Part of the new requirement is on Difference, Inequality and Agency:

#### **US: Difference, Inequality, Agency [all students take one US: DIA class]**

Courses that fulfill the US: Difference, Inequality, Agency requirement bring students into critical analysis, reflection, and ethical dialogue. Students critically analyze power imbalances – economic, political, social, and cultural – that have shaped and continue to shape the United States. These courses offer language and tools for positioning oneself within structures of power, thereby developing students’ capacities to inquire deeply and ethically into lived experiences and social realities. Emphasizing respectful listening and dialogue across multiple perspectives, these courses expands students’ abilities to participate in civil conversation on campus and in diverse national and global contexts.

- a. Consider intersecting aspects of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, indigeneity, national origin, religion, and ability.
- b. Analyze the uses of power to classify, rank, and marginalize on the basis of these aspects of identity, as well as acts of agency on the part of marginalized groups.
- c. Discern historical structures, contemporary structures, forms of knowledge, cultural practices, or ideologies that perpetuate or change the distribution of power in society.
- d. Engage scholarship, cultural production, perspectives, and voices from members of historically marginalized communities.
- e. [All courses do 1-4, then faculty opt for and #5 or #6]
- f. Connect their own identifications to contemporary and historical systems of power, relating lived experiences to larger economic, political, and social structures and events.
- g. Practice ethical dialogue across perspectives on deeply felt or controversial issues. In addition, the Core Ed also includes an Ethical Reflection requirement:

#### **2.Revision of Core Education:**

The University Senate passed legislation during AY 2017-18 that makes changes to the core (previously “general”) education group (now called “Areas of Inquiry”). Incorporated into this change were four new “Methods of Inquiry”, which included ethical reflection, critical and creative thinking, and written communication.

#### **Ethical Reflection [All courses that fulfill area requirements in arts and letters, natural, and social sciences are meant to teach two of the four methods]**

Students will develop the capacity to identify, examine, and critically revise ethical positions, map them onto larger ethical ideas (theoretical traditions, moral frameworks, prevailing social frameworks), and reflect on how decisions and actions (including, sometimes, inaction) shape our

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relations to others and self. Students will develop the capacity to articulate the ends sought in a range of endeavors in personal, social and professional contexts. Students also will develop concepts, practices, and other tools appropriate to valuing those ends in relation to their means of attainment and their impacts on self and others.

1. Apply skills of ethical inquiry to subject-specific issues.
2. Articulate the impacts of decisions and actions (both personally and as members of groups).
3. Develop awareness of their values and a capacity for self-questioning.
4. Use language and tools to examine ethical issues, including discipline-specific frameworks.
5. Recognize the presence of ethical issues, especially where typically neglected.

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### Appendix B. Additional Key Engagement Take-Aways

Members of the CRDH have held recent meetings with a few key stakeholders to receive input on the work done to-date, such as the Academic Leadership Team, President's Diversity Advisory Community Council, and the CAS Diversity Committee Chairs (with representatives from all other schools/colleges invited). Below is a brief summary of some of the discussions:

#### 1. Campus Tours

- Add markers, new content along the routes of existing tours
- Mention community centers, cultural groups for underrepresented groups
- Themed tours for underrepresented groups (Latinx, Black, LGBTQ etc.)
- Language Tours: Spanish, Russian, etc.
- Virtual Tours: Update them to include more diverse representation
- Virtual language tours
- Use headphones for other languages or to connect to apps/QR codes for self-guided tours
- Contextualize existing monuments
- Address spots on campus that speak to our history (segregated dorm in the basement of Friendly Hall)
- Centralize the markers within tour walking distance
- Gather feedback from 'tourers' so as to adjust the mix and types of tours offered
- Convene a broadly representative group to work on implementation and determine how to connect this to student-/faculty-led work

#### 2. Curriculum

- Recertification is currently required for existing DIA courses, which is an opportunity to incorporate specific content.
  - Could DIA approval mean something more meaningful for courses that would show inclusivity?
  - Could coursework for DIA approval/review be asked to incorporate some historical perspectives?
  - How to incorporate negative history for instance Pioneer Mother/Father, Homestead Act, Deady Hall?
  - How to incorporate positive history, for instance who made contributions to each field and how do we celebrate them (e.g., Black Cultural Center named after Lylle Parker, Opal Whitely is in special collections)?
- Curriculum could be based on local historical trends, rather than national
- Department Heads could converse with faculty regarding curriculum for DIA approval including CDRH incorporation
- Stipends, grants or course releases should be provided to faculty working on curriculum development

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- TEP Summer Institute could be focused on creating pre-determined CRDH curriculum and work with the Open Education Resource Library
  - Library coordinator can work with unit diversity committees to do a presentation series and check that DIA courses have an appointment/review for CDRH inclusion
  - There could be a partnership with Sustainable Cities, which is working with LTD this year. As part of the SC framework, class projects could be focused on a primary city—or, in this case, organization—as a case study. As part of a Flag or Banner set project, banners could focus on LTD and address specific issues. To effectively study this, and bring together various disciplines, we could use a FIG-like structure that connects students across various interdisciplinary courses. For example, a History course could provide context, a Design course could develop the look, etc. Even Deady Hall could incorporate a banner set that contextualizes the issue. There may be limitations to this, however, as the banner may not effectively counter the concerns of the building, etc.
3. Episodic Flag and Banner Sets
- Banners should create an environment for reflection that disrupts a daily commute across campus to produce an important historical intervention
  - Utilize chalking on walkways that can bring awareness in a way that is both impactful and temporary
  - Ensure communities the banners are reflecting are at the center of the project
4. Markers/Plaques
- Install contextualizing plaques for both contentious and non-contentious legacies
  - Provide more visible tree information for the arboretum placing them in ecological context (could also do a similar approach for rocks involved in building construction). What are they, where do they came from?
  - Treat the campus like a museum in the sense of labeling/explaining/educating
  - Try to attach a mural initiative to city's mural initiative
  - Sample plaques and markers could come from class work as long as there was a process for vetting, installing, maintaining
  - Create virtual markers that allow you to look at something through your phone
5. IDEAL Framework / Diversity Action Plans (DAPs)
- Campus has been engaged in the IDEAL Framework / DAP implementation since 2016; DEI is helping campus embed key DAP priorities – how might this relate to CRDH?
  - How can DAP implementation funding best support CRDH? As an example, can there be project grants to support coordination across multiple units for interdisciplinarity (e.g. team teaching).