

Portland State University Faculty Senate Motion, 3 May 2021

Adding Race/Ethnic Studies Requirement to the Undergraduate University Requirement

Background, rationale, and implementation

Background: Portland State University does not currently require students to take Race and Ethnic Studies courses to complete their undergraduate degree. After a thorough review of PSU's undergraduate graduation requirements and in line with curricular changes implemented at other universities such as Oregon State University and the California State University System, this resolution proposes to add a two course, campus-wide **Race and Ethnic Studies Requirement** (RESR) for Portland State University undergraduates. The proposed RESR is supported by the university administration.

Rationale: The proposed RESR aligns with the requirements of similar institutions. This policy shift will demonstrate PSU's commitment to addressing race and ethnicity substantively in its course offerings. This proposal is constructed on the premise that the School of Gender, Race and Nations is the only unit on campus that addresses race and ethnicity at every level of its curriculum. At the same time, the resolution recognizes that expertise in race and ethnic studies exists in other units across the university and welcomes faculty and units outside of SGRN to join this initiative. In fact, this resolution encourages units to develop course offerings in the area of race and ethnicity studies where they previously were lacking or have not offered such courses.

Passing this resolution will locate Portland State University as a leader and a model for other institutions who seek to implement a race and ethnic studies requirement in Oregon and the nation. As one of the largest public institutions of higher education in the state of Oregon, PSU should lead as a voice of authority and expertise in questions of race and ethnicity.

Implementation:

- 1) In principle, the RESR will not require additional credits for students to meet the university degree requirements. Students can satisfy the RESR with courses that apply to their major or minor requirements, elective courses, and University Studies requirements. At least one of the RESR courses must be taken within the School of Race, Gender and Nations or be cross-listed within one of the SGRN units.
- 2) Reviewing and designating courses for RESR: A Faculty Senate committee will be formed to review and evaluate the designation of courses that satisfy the RESR. As included in the motion, the RESR involves two RES courses: one course must focus primarily and throughout its content and pedagogy on the the study of race and ethnicity in the United States of America; the second course must focus primarily and throughout its content and pedagogy on the experiences of groups living within European and US colonialism and imperialism beyond the United States. Designation of RESR courses (US and

Global) for inclusion in the requirement will be reviewed and determined by the committee. A motion to form such a committee will be presented separately.

- 3) As for transfer courses, the committee to be formed will work with the Office of the Registrar, advisors, the Academic Requirements Committee, and other relevant academic and/or administrative units to determine applicability of transfer credits to fulfill the requirement.
- 4) Expanding RESR course capacity: A RESR Summer Workshop for faculty to develop or revise courses to fulfill the RESR will be held for three successive summer terms, and the workshop will be led by qualified faculty with expertise in the scholarship and teaching of race and ethnic studies. Faculty from all units on campus will be welcome to apply for these workshops. A budget for participating faculty and workshop presenters, stipend for participating faculty, and the salary for the workshop presenters have been planned and supported by the University administration (see Appendix B Dec. 26, 2020 memo).

Motion presented jointly by the Academic Requirements Committee and Faculty Senate Steering Committee

The Faculty Senate adds the Race and Ethnic Studies requirement to the undergraduate degree requirements to be effective in fall term 2022 in the following ways:

Portland State University undergraduate students will satisfy the Race and Ethnic Studies Requirement (RESR) by completing two RESR designated courses (a minimum of 3 credits each) with a central focus on race, ethnicity, and systemic oppression. One course must focus on the US experience; the second course must center the experiences of groups under European and US colonialism and imperialism beyond the United States. The courses taken toward the RES requirement may also fulfill major, minor, UNST, and/or elective requirements. One of the courses taken to fulfill the requirement must be taken within SGRN or be cross-listed with one of the SGRN units.