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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
DAILY BRUIN

UCLA Academic Senate approves diversity-related course requirement

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The UCLA Academic Senate's Legislative Assembly approved a diversity-related course requirement for the College of Letters and Science with a 85-18 vote Thursday afternoon.

In late October, College of Letters and Science faculty [approved](#) the requirement, which would have students take a course about inequalities based on factors, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and religion. They approved it by a more narrow vote of 332-303.

The approval came after two previous attempts to pass a diversity-related requirement for the College of Letters and Science failed in 2004 and 2012.

"I am delighted that the Academic Senate has approved the diversity-related course requirement," said Chancellor Gene Block, according to a university statement. "I want to thank the Diversity Initiative Committee for their outstanding work and acknowledge the many faculty members and students who for years have worked so hard to make the diversity requirement a reality."

Allyson Bach, the Undergraduate Students Association Council Academic Affairs commissioner who advocated for the requirement to pass, said she felt a momentous victory after the vote at the meeting Thursday.

She said six people for the requirement and six against were allowed to make public comments at the meeting, but the line to express support for the requirement was longer than the line for expressing opposition to it.

"It was amazing to see the entire room filled," Bach said. "The support surpassed all my expectations."

Bach said she thinks the passage of the requirement shows that the university is taking diversity seriously and that it will help improve campus climate in the long term.

“It’s been a long, hard struggle, but I was very impressed by the support of the faculty,” said M. Belinda Tucker, vice provost of the UCLA Institute of American Cultures who helped prepare the diversity requirement proposal.

She said public commenters in support of the requirement said they think there is a need to prepare students for a more diverse work environment after graduation. She added that they cited campus climate and the fact that UCLA is one of two UC campuses without a diversity-related requirement in place as reasons for passing the requirement.

Meanwhile, Tucker said that opponents to the requirement said they think it would restrict academic freedom.

Legislative Assembly member and classics professor Francesca Martelli, who did not want to disclose her vote, said she saw overwhelming support for the diversity-related requirement but has reservations about the motion.

“The overwhelming support was a very powerful symbolic gesture, but I have concerns about the implementation of the requirement and what that is going to mean for courses that already integrate strong awareness into their larger conceptual framework,” she said. “There’s a problem in that it becomes a box-ticking exercise, rather than something that’s integrated into the larger education for students.”

For the diversity-related requirement to officially be implemented, USAC will have to approve a resolution in support of the change. Bach said she will sponsor the resolution and bring it to the council table Tuesday.

Compiled by Yael Levin and Katie Shepherd, Bruin senior staff, and Alejandra Reyes-Velarde, Bruin contributor.