Pro Statement for the Undergraduate Diversity Requirement

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The con argument does not address the importance or rationale for the need for the Diversity Requirement. As much as we would like to believe that UCLA uniformly provides an intellectual and social environment that embraces differences and prepares students for an increasing diverse nation, there is evidence that this is not the case. Some looked at the results of the UC Campus Climate survey and were buoyed by the finding that "75% of all respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with the climate for diversity in their department/work unit/academic unit/college/school/clinical setting, while 10% were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable." But this means that 1 in 10 people are uncomfortable with the climate for diversity. And guess who those people are? “Underrepresented minority respondents and multi-minority respondents were less comfortable with the overall climate and the workplace climate than were white respondents and other people of color. White respondents were more comfortable with the climate in their classes than were other racial groups.” This means two things – (1) we are not meeting the needs of students from underrepresented groups in creating an inclusive environment, and (2) members of the majority are not recognizing this problem.

Efforts such as the Diversity Requirement are supported by research showing that these pedagogical efforts to promote a scholarly understanding of issues of diversity can improve campus climate and intergroup relations (Chang, 2002; Laird, Engberg & Hurtado, 2005) as well as student well-being (Denson & Chang, 2009) and learning outcomes (Laird, 2005). Thus, not only do we have a moral obligation to students from underrepresented backgrounds to improve campus climate, we also have access to solutions and tools for doing so.

Amended 03/05/15

The petition filed by 59 senate faculty (mostly from well-represented groups) to overturn the previous decisions (of the Legislative Assembly, the Undergraduate Council, and the senate faculty in the College of Letters and Science) is another callous attempt to silence the voices of students from underrepresented groups and the faculty who support them.

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