March 7, 2015

To whom this may concern:

This is a statement in support of the diversity course requirement now being considered for UCLA undergraduates.

I fully support this requirement, and although I wish we didn’t need it, we do. I am impressed by the overwhelming support from the students and the strong support from the faculty. I am glad to see that all the UCs, except Merced, have such a course on their undergraduate curricula. Other comparable universities have such courses and it is clear that some consider diversity issues quite seriously.

I can’t help but feel that diversity and equity issues are important world-wide and world leaders have only begun to assess, understand and address nascent social instabilities.

We still have enormous problems of “difference” in the United States. From the injustices and racism we have seen, and still see, in Missouri and other states to the attacks on science, evolution, climate change, and a national “core curriculum” the distrust of change and difference is increasing. For example, some of these animosities possibly stem from fear that the number of “white Christians” is becoming a smaller part of our population. Some conservatives seriously wonder whether science denies “moral facts” since supposedly the new standards teach children that “facts” are supported by evidence and anything else is opinion. Clearly there is a lack of understanding of science and scholarship. In general the inability of our electorate to understand the concerns of “others” is concerning and alarming.

I believe that all students can benefit from a course that analyzes and explains difference, furthers the cause of tolerance, and helps forge a new synthesis of co-existence and mutual respect.

Respectfully,

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