For the second time this academic year, I write in strongest support of the passage of the Proposed Diversity Requirement in the College of Letters and Sciences. I also voice my disagreement with colleagues who anonymously attempted to overturn the fair and democratic process that vetted and ultimately passed the diversity requirement. While it would be easy to fall victim to anger or frustration at this turn of events, particularly in the wake of the Moreno Report and recent attacks against women, students of color, and religious minorities on UCLA’s campus, we, as educators, must take this opportunity to teach others about why the College Diversity requirement is so important, and why threats to self governance should be of such concern. To that end, I reprise some of the data included in my first pro statement.

As is obvious from news reports from Ferguson, Missouri and elsewhere, we are at a turning point in how we think about the diversity of our nation, our university, and the world. Passage of this new diversity course requirement will help prepare our students to become thoughtful, global citizens able to challenge bias and inequality as they envision a more just and inclusive world.

Our undergraduates themselves are strongly in support of this course requirement, as manifested by the actions of the Student Advisory Board and other groups, and by the viral video produced by UCLA undergraduate Sy Stokes, “Black Bruins [Spoken Word]” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEO3H5BOIFk Their support of diversity is in tune with similar student movements across the country, such as “I, too, am Harvard.” (Ahsante Bean, et al. http://itooamharvard.tumblr.com/)

These movements reflect changing demographics:

Non-Hispanic White Population in the US (2013 Census): 62.6%
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html

Non-Hispanic White Population in California (2013): 39%
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html

Non-Hispanic White Faculty at UCLA: 72%

Non-Hispanic White Undergraduates at UCLA: 27.8%
https://www.admissions.ucla.edu/campusprofile.htm

I am impressed by the current course proposal, and by the data that shows that diversity courses positively affect student learning, critical thinking abilities, and quality of life. I’m voting “yes” on this again and urge my colleagues to do so, too.