

**Email of person filling out this Initial Proposal \***

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**Title \***

Revitalizing the Curriculum for New Generations

**Problem / Opportunity Statement \***

The American university population is changing rapidly. Women students outnumber men, the U.S. is increasingly ethnically diverse, and students operate in a global economy. To recruit and teach the new college population, Washburn's faculty and curriculum must adjust to meet these shifting realities.

**Select one quality initiative sub-theme. \***

Faculty Transitions

**Sub-theme description. \***

In order to deliver quality education, Washburn faculty must be trained to teach a new generation of college students. Upon graduation, students will enter a workforce composed of people of many racial, ethnic, national, economic and geographic backgrounds, who claim diverse religious, gender, and generational identities. Students must see such diversities represented in the curriculum, and students must be exposed to subjects that prepare them for the complex world in which we live. A great deal of research points to the benefits that a rich and varied curriculum, which addresses and complicates subjects including (but not limited to) gender, race, and nationality, provides to students. The current state of academic knowledge is constantly evolving, and faculty need assistance in integrating this knowledge into the current curriculum. We need to know that our curriculum integrates material that will engage and enrich newer generations of college students. Faculty should also be able to benefit from new research on the best methods for retention of students more likely to leave the university, such as first-generation college students. At an institutional level, we should investigate and identify partners within the community who will assist in providing educational opportunities for students.

**Benefits \***

Diversifying Washburn's curriculum and giving it cultural depth will better prepare WU students for their jobs in a complex global economy, leading to greater student success and a stronger alumni base of support for the University. Studies have also shown that when students take courses that are attentive to cultural diversity, they become more engaged and invested in society, hopefully creating stronger ties to Topeka and the state of Kansas. A well-prepared workforce invested in the area is a strong draw for employers seeking to relocate. The investment in teaching faculty the skills to mentor a wide array of learners will increase retention, as studies show that a mentoring relationship can improve student retention rates. These goals and benefits are applicable not only to Washburn University, but Washburn Tech as well. If we ensure that our curriculum attends to gender, racial, ethnic, religious, regional, and economic diversity, then our university will reflect the present and future of the United States, upholding our responsibility as a public institution and enhancing prospective student interest. All of these will enhance the reputation of Washburn, which will bring increased student enrollment and endowment contributions, partner relationships in the community, employer interest, and student success.

**Scope \***

Revitalizing the curriculum in these ways will benefit many constituencies on campus and in the community. At Washburn University and Washburn Tech, it provides the opportunity for faculty to reevaluate and strengthen their teaching skills, and thus units such as the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Applied Studies are direct beneficiaries. Students benefit obviously and directly, as their education diversifies and improves. The Center for Student Success and Enrollment Management also benefit from this program as it influences student satisfaction and retention. Topeka and the state of Kansas will also be served by the revitalization of the curriculum as our graduates are better prepared to take jobs in Kansas and to think creatively about international collaboration and investment. In terms of sustainability, the original investment in diversifying the curriculum will provide the catalyst for self-study and continuous improvement, hopefully to be institutionalized in programs for future faculty.

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