

Student Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED)

Expansion proposal

1) Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate.

To move beyond a check-box understanding of “others,” UW-Madison needs sustained opportunities to both reflect on and share of our own lived experiences and listen to and learn of the lived experiences of others. To do so requires moving beyond “diversity training” or “cultural competency” workshops where the time to reflect and build relationships is intrinsically limited.

Counseling Psychology 325 Seminar: Students Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) is a high-impact, transformative class designed to engage participants in dialogue within a diverse classroom community. Students explore and share their own individual experiences with race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability in order to learn about and understand the larger systems of privilege and oppression. The course, first modified for higher education here at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by Dr. Seema Kapani in 1999, was adapted from the national project of the same name created and coordinated by Peggy McIntosh, Brenda Flyeswithhawks, and Emily Style at Wellesley College in 1987. Fall 2016 marks the 26th semester of Student SEED at UW-Madison.

The aim in Student SEED is to create a place where students can share their lived experiences, learn from their peers’ lives and build an inclusive community while engaging in deep critical thinking around issues crucial to our world today. This course is a unique opportunity to meet in a challenging yet respectful environment for facilitated conversations on defining aspects of our identities. Students study the impact of each aspect of identity upon themselves and others with the communities in which they live, learn, and work.

In terms of pedagogy, there are aspects of SEED that clearly distinguishes the LCICE/CP Student SEED approach from the handful of academic courses already offered through several departments. These distinguishing aspects include:

- SEED starts with the assumption that we are each the authorities on our own experience, the ‘textbooks of our lives,’ and can learn to facilitate effective conversation among our peers and colleagues about issues of equity and inclusion.
- SEED asks participants to look inward at how we were schooled and socialized to deal with diversity and connection.
- SEED takes a systemic approach to looking at oppression and privilege, rather than seeing them only in terms of individuals making individual choices.
- SEED uses methods of intentionally structured group conversations to create safe environments and facilitate thinking in a way that includes input from all voices.
- SEED work is not about blame, shame, or guilt about one’s location in societal systems. It is about deepening awareness of the existences of societal systems and our place within them.
- SEED seminars put in place an ongoing constructive conversation about sometimes polarizing issues that makes students more competent to deal with crises when they do occur.

Course Goals:

- To develop an understanding of our own social conditioning
- To effectively communicate and build relationships across all human differences
- To co-create and actively participate in an inclusive teaching and learning environment
- To learn and practice ways of engaging effectively with conflict

1) How would this affect cultural change on campus?

As the current Diversity Framework Implementation Plan states, “There is research evidence that students who engage with peers in diversity-related interactional experiences make gains in problem solving, active and collaborative learning, and considerations of multiple perspectives,” increasing “students’ intergroup skills and understanding and in turn may positively affect campus climate.”

But perhaps the SEED students say it better themselves:

Spring 2011

“I am so glad that I took this course and I believe that out of all my college classes, this is the one that will provide me with the most useful and important information for me to use in everyday life. I have already noticed the impact this class has had on me and how I think of the world and interact with others.”

Spring 2014

“I will take away the fact that discussing and not arguing is essential in order to understand where another person is coming from. Discussing isn’t about convincing others that you are right but rather providing a different way of thinking that will give perspective to a situation that perhaps had been one-sided.”

“The ability to speak about myself and ask questions about others without judgment, the community building helped me understand how groups are formed. We bonded through mutual experience of SEED and the topics we discussed. Even through our differences, we connected through our curiosity and sharing ourselves with others.”

Fall 2015

“Self-awareness is a huge take away for me. Being conscious and constantly reflecting on my personal experiences, actions, and presence. Putting my experiences in perspective with others also changes the way I view my story. So glad I had the opportunity to take this class!”

Spring 2015

“Hearing about others’ personal stories and experiences had the greatest impact on my learning experience. Just being able to reflect on what situations others had to endure and go through made me really think about my own path growing up. I think a huge part of diversity is people’s individual histories.”

2) If the idea is already in place, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?

Currently, the LCICE/CP 325 is offered two times per year and draws sophomores to seniors from all majors (with enrollment capped at 25 due to the nature of the course). The overall aim of this proposal is to increase the number of sections of Student SEED offered each year to include one section of Student SEED in each of the eight colleges and schools enrolling undergraduates. (These include Agricultural and Life Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Human Ecology, Letters and Sciences, Nursing, and Pharmacy.) Sections offered within a school or college could be available to first- and second-year students who intend to apply for a major and the course could address topics of particular relevance to their field (eg. health or educational disparities). In addition, we propose maintaining the two current sections of Student SEED that would remain open to students from across the University and at any stage in their undergraduate careers.

To scale this initiative, we propose adding approximately three new sections of SEED each year, starting first in the schools and colleges that either have a history of offering SEED (e.g. Business, Education) or ones that currently have interest in developing a SEED course (e.g. Veterinary Medicine).**

3) What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

Currently, three members of the LCICE facilitation team have Student SEED as part of their portfolios and each year two students are hired to serve as student facilitators for the course. In order to expand as proposed, we would need to add 3 FTE staff and an additional 8 student facilitators.

- Three additional FTE to teach, coordinate, and evaluate 10 SEED sections offered each year
 - \$150,000 plus benefits @50,000 salary
- Eight student facilitators (each student is hired for the academic year)
 - \$40,000 (\$2500/semester)
- S&E
 - \$20,000 (\$2500/course)

4) If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.

The Learning Communities for Institutional Change and Excellence (LCICE) collaborates with the Department of Counseling Psychology to offer CP 325: Student SEED.

Letters of support are available from:

Madison Laning, current ASM Chair

Blindside, incoming ASM slate

The Schools of Veterinary Medicine

5) Additional Information

6) **To date, the course has been offered in the College of Engineering, School of Education, Chadbourne Residential College, Health Sciences (a collaboration among the Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, and Medicine), the College of Letters and Science, and the School of Business.