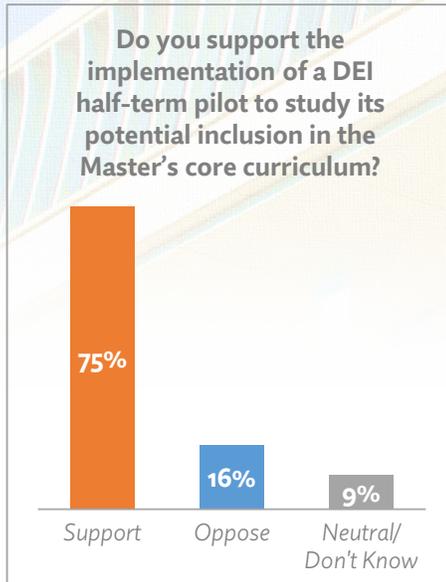


Student Perspectives on the DEI Core Curriculum Pilot

Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School is currently considering a two- to three-year pilot program requiring all Master's students to complete a half-term elective focused on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) in public policy. For more information on this initiative proposed by students, administrators, and faculty members, visit: wwac.princeton.edu/DEI.



The Woodrow Wilson Action Committee conducted an online survey of current Master's students to gauge their opinions:

- **Overall, 75% of students surveyed support the DEI pilot**, including 80% of MPA1s, 69% of MPA2s, and 80% of MPPs. 56% of all students surveyed strongly support the pilot.

- **Support is shared widely across identities**, including:



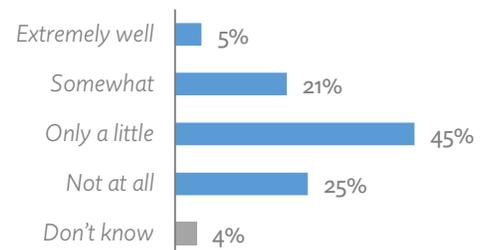
Among the 21 students who oppose the DEI pilot, one is a woman and three are people of color (all categories are self-identified).

- **129 Master's students participated in the survey**, comprising 87% of MPA1s, 81% of MPA2s, and 48% of MPPs.

Curriculum Preferences

- Although students applaud recent efforts to better incorporate DEI into required courses and expand elective offerings, only 5% of students believe the current **core** curriculum prepares students to address DEI issues "extremely well."
- Many students, especially in Field IV and those pursuing certificates, urge WWS to restructure core requirements should the DEI pilot be implemented. (E.g., shortening WWS 502 to a half-term course.)
- Prior to attending WWS, only 25% of Master's students had taken a university-level course on DEI issues with a strong focus on policy.
- **Regardless of their stance on the pilot, nearly all students (97%) recognize the value of DEI-focused course content for their future careers.** Students desire courses and tools that can increase their ability to evaluate policy proposals through an equity-focused lens, including:
 - Applied frameworks to create equitable policy outcomes (81%)
 - Leadership and management of diverse teams (80%)
 - Historical context for current socioeconomic disparities (72%)

In your opinion, how much does the current Master's core curriculum prepare policy students to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their professional careers?



"The most valuable and directly applicable courses I've taken at this school have centered and/or deeply considered DEI issues ... I hope that WWS continues to challenge all its students to think critically about power, privilege, and oppression, and this DEI pilot is one way to achieve that."

"21st-century policy problems demand analytical awareness of and sensitivity towards distributional impacts. Failure to educate future policymakers on these analytical approaches will perpetuate these problems for years to come."

Field I - International Relations

- **Nearly three in four Field I students support the DEI pilot.** However, students point to a current lack of internationally-focused DEI course offerings and a dearth of DEI-related discussions in existing IR classes.
- **Given its relevance to the IR profession, proponents believe that DEI-centric courses should be required for all students, not just those who opt-in.** Students opposed to the pilot express concern about additional requirements, with some worrying that it may signal an ideological bias at WWS that could deter prospective students.

“The IR field is woefully behind on DEI issues, particularly when it comes to inclusion but equally importantly when it comes to analyzing regional issues outside a Western-framework.”

“Friends from conservative / more centrist backgrounds ([including] military officers considering policy school vs. law or business school) [have] expressed strong concerns with the reputation of policy schools as ‘homogeneously progressive’ in a way that silences centrist and conservative voices.”

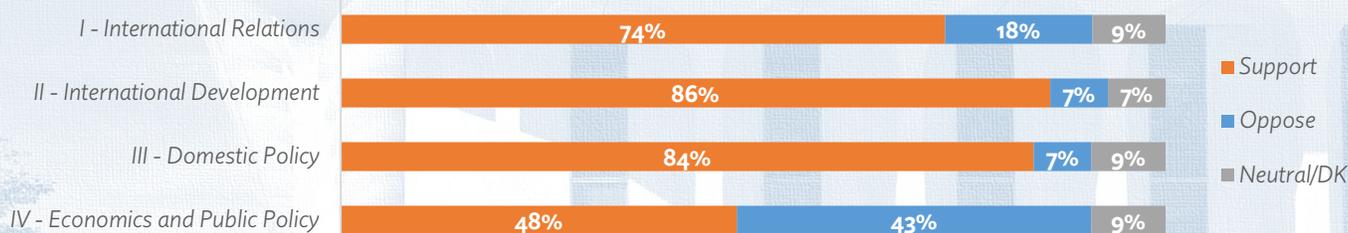
Field II - International Development

- **Students desire greater DEI integration into Field II curriculum.** These include frameworks addressing the legacy of colonialism, ethnic politics, participatory development, and classes with comparative approaches between the “core” and the “periphery” – focusing on equity in an international context.
- **Students want to better understand the objectives of a DEI requirement, especially on how to measure its success.** They want to learn how faculty and administrators will incorporate methodological approaches, evaluate DEI competencies, and provide robust DEI frameworks that apply specifically to development.

“Many international development organizations are led and managed by people who do not represent diverse interests, nor by people who understand any of these dynamics. We need practitioner-led courses focused on building inclusive and equitable programs worldwide.”

Summary of Student Perspectives Across WWS Policy Fields

Do you support the implementation of a DEI half-term pilot to study its potential inclusion in the Master’s core curriculum?



Field III - Domestic Policy

- **An overwhelming majority of Field III students support an overhaul of the current curriculum to more deeply infuse a DEI lens.** Students believe the pilot requirement is a first step in the right direction.
- **Domestic policy students affirm the value of DEI-centric skills and frameworks, including differential impact analyses, equity lenses, and inclusive policy making.** This sentiment is shared even among the few students who express concerns about the pilot’s current list of elective choices, potential partisan bias, and students self-selecting into courses relevant only to their personal identities.

“If WWS were known for its DEI core curriculum as much as its quantitative core curriculum, we’d be unbeatable as a well-rounded policy school. My internship supervisor actually pulled me aside this summer and asked where I developed my equity-based analysis and group consensus-building skills, as he did not think of these as strengths of a WWS policy student. This is a question I hope employers and internship supervisors never have to ask of me or my peers, which is one of the many reasons I support [this] pilot.”

Field IV – Economics and Public Policy

- **Hesitation to support the pilot largely stems from a limited supply of currently proposed courses, not the relevance and necessity of DEI to the field.** The proposed list of courses is far from what is needed for the pilot to achieve its intended effect. Successful implementation necessitates an expansion of intersectional economic course offerings.
- **An added half-term requirement should recognize the existing constraints Field IV students already face.** Students emphasized the necessity of DEI in the field of economics, but urged the administration to pursue structural reforms, including greater flexibility regarding Field IV requirements as well as prioritized enrollment to accommodate Field IV students.

“A functional DEI lens is as essential a component of an economic policymaker’s toolkit as regression analysis, and the curriculum here should reflect that. In recognition of the importance and centrality of the subject matter, and in light of the existing requirements that mean Field IV students (especially those pursuing a certificate) have fewer degrees of freedom and greater uncertainty about availability of required courses, this pilot should be accompanied by a reduction of field-specific requirements...”

“Cultural competence and an ability to critically analyze disparities in outcomes and why they exist are not just good-to-have skills for 21st century policy makers, they are necessary prerequisites for anyone who wants to design policies ‘in service of humanity,’ as our school mantra reminds us. Institutionalizing this requirement will go a long way toward recognizing that this is an essential set of skills a policy maker needs, and I would be proud to be part of an institution that signaled that not just in a pro forma DEI statement on a website, but codified in its curriculum.” - Current MPA student

A Message from WWS Student Representatives

February 24, 2020

This report was created by elected student leaders from the Woodrow Wilson Action Committee (WWAC) student government, representing more than 160 currently enrolled Master’s students.

Like virtually all universities and institutions, the Woodrow Wilson School—itsself bearing the name of an openly racist and contentious public leader—continues to grapple with diversity, equity, and inclusion issues both past and present. As our program navigates difficult conversations and significant decisions regarding DEI, we believe that **students must be part of this important process.**

In addition to this survey, our team personally conducted more than **114 one-on-one conversations** with classmates to solicit feedback and answer questions about the DEI pilot. On February 4, we hosted a **two-hour interactive WWS Town Hall** attended by more than 75 students, including the opportunity to ask questions about the initiative to Vice Dean Miguel Centeno, Associate Dean Karen McGuinness, and Associate Director of Graduate Student Life & Diversity Initiatives Laura De Olden.

As future policymakers and recipients of the immense privilege this institution confers, we are inspired by WWS’s [stated commitment](#) to “strengthen the capacity of our students to promote equity and foster inclusion while here and in the broader world.”

In this spirit, we echo the sentiment of our fellow classmates and strongly urge WWS faculty to vote to implement the DEI core curriculum pilot.

Signed,

WWAC DEI Student Representatives:

Danielle Beavers MPA 2021 (she/her/they/them)

Mark Lee MPA 2021 (he/him) - LGBTQ Inclusion Rep

Harshita Rallabhandi MPA 2021 (she/her)

Yvette Ramirez MPA 2021 (she/her)

Sagatom Saha MPA 2020 (he/him)

Rocio Rodarte MPA 2020 (she/her)

Anh Ton MPA 2020 (she/her)

WWAC Co-Chairs:

Nathan Babb MPA 2021 (he/him)

Iona Main MPA 2021 (she/her)

Artin Haghshenas MPA 2020 (she/her)

Fionnuala Seiferth MPA 2020 (she/her)

WWAC Curriculum Representatives:

Wendy Gomez MPA 2021 (she/her)

Kaitlin Roh MPA 2021 (she/her)

Emily Apple MPA 2020 (she/her)

Natalie Kotkin MPA 2020 (she/her)