Arch Scholars Program: There are two exciting things to report about our Arch Scholars Programs, a set of pre-matriculation programs and programs for rising sophomores. First, this is the second year that we have offered a humanities track, and the number of students has doubled. Second, to further our next goal in supporting our first-year Arch scholars beyond their summer program, we are piloting a peer mentoring program. All students in any program this summer is part of a group led by a former Arch Scholar. Coordinating this program is a fifth-year doctoral student in history. Providing such opportunities for our graduate students is something the dean’s office would like to explore further, so this set up is actually also a pilot to see how we might provide administrative and programmatic experience to interested graduate students.

New assistant dean for academic integrity: Mark Sheldon retired in August, and Ricardo Court became the new assistant dean for academic integrity. Ricardo came from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he was the faculty associate and director of undergraduate studies in the department of political science. In his role at Wisconsin he served as the point person for academic integrity cases in the department, which has 900 undergraduate students. Ricardo was also involved in campus-wide academic misconducts procedures. He will have a co-terminous appointment in the Department of Political Science, where he will teach and advise students in the major. In the spring quarter, he will begin teaching in Weinberg College with a 300-level seminar on Machiavelli.

Weinberg College Advising Office: Two new Weinberg College Advisers joined the office this year. Rosemary Bush, who had already served as a temporary substitute adviser, joined the office with a faculty appointment in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. Marcelo Vinces came to us from Oberlin, and has a faculty appointment in the Program of Biological Sciences. This extra advising strength in Division I is extremely beneficial as more and more of our students come to Northwestern and Weinberg planning to major in a STEM field.

Accessible NU and accommodations: Last year we talked with many departments, programs and individual faculty members about the increased number of students needing two kinds of accommodations: time and half for exams; and what is called the “flexible accommodation.” We have been working with the Dean of Students on solutions for how to accommodate students who need time and a half for exams. There will soon be additional space in Accessible NU for testing, which should relieve a great deal of the pressure on large introductory courses. Accessible NU has revamped the flexible accommodation so that it is far more targeted at when a student is actually having an episode of whatever the health issue is that warrants the accommodation, vs. a more general accommodation in anticipation of such an episode, as had previously been the case. We are eager to hear how faculty are experiencing this change to the protocol.

Academic Resource Center: The College is collaborating with the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning and the Library to create an Academic Resource Center in 2 North of the library. Planning is underway as well as broad consultation with academic and student support units across the campus.

Course Costs projects: Books for Cats is in its second year, providing rented books to first-year students identified as having a certain level of financial need. This initiative currently includes
introductory Chemistry, Math, Statistics, Economics, and Engineering courses. The College is part of conversations about how this program should expand if it were to receive more funding – beyond the first year? Or beyond STEM courses? Or, of course, both? Meanwhile, faculty members will continue to be encouraged by the dean to include detailed information about course materials (including ISBN) in their CEASER description in time for registration, and to submit their book order as early as possible, optimally by registration as well. The goal: reduce the cost of taking your class!

**Course Enhancement grants and Undergraduate Research Grants:** Like other units, OUSA has a reduced budget. We continue to offer Course Enhancement Grants, but we have lowered the ceiling from $500 to $300. We still have a robust undergraduate research grants program, though we will award fewer grants this year. Undergraduate research is of great interest to many donors, and so we are optimistic that this reduction may be very temporary. Bill Haarlow, our director of the grants program, works very closely with the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Grants program; together the two offices try to maximize funding to support as many undergraduates doing research as possible.

**Career Readiness and Weinberg College:** We have teamed up with the Northwestern Career Advancement (NCA) office and a handful of Weinberg College departments to explore how to encourage faculty to help their students translate the knowledge and skills acquired in their class when they are working with the NCA on their options and goals for after graduation.

**Student Persistence and Success:** For the past year the College has collaborated and continues to collaborate with the Office of Institutional Research on a project that collects and analyzes data about student success and persistence, especially in STEM fields. This project should help us be more strategic in our academic advising, creation of new transition programs, and revision of curriculum to assure success for all students.

**Midterm accreditation coming up in July:** Northwestern was reaccredited in 2015. In July Northwestern will submit a midterm report for review. The major focus will again be on assessment of student learning outcomes. Weinberg College has made a great deal of progress in creating meaningful assessment processes across its curriculum, from individual classes to majors, to the new College-level learning goals articulated by the Committee on Degree Requirements in their proposal to the faculty.

**New online catalog:** The Registrar has launched an online Undergraduate Catalog. This format has a great deal of potential for presenting the College’s curriculum in a more dynamic way.