

Northwestern’s Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
Ad Hoc Committee on Degree Requirements (CDR)

Meeting 1 – Official Launch

- Welcome and introductions
- Some initial comments on systems of general education (from *The Marketplace of Ideas*, by Louis Menand)
- Undergraduate experience reflections
- Review of timeline and some other administrative matters
- Next meeting preparation
- Comments and official committee launch by Dean Adrian Randolph

Next meeting: Friday, March 11th, 3:30-5:00 pm, Harris 108

General education systems as portrayed by Louis Menand, in *The Marketplace of Ideas*, Chapter 1

The general education curriculum of a college... --

- ...is a reflection of its overall educational philosophy.
- ...is at the heart of what the faculty thinks education is all about.
- ...has many stakeholders.

	Distribution Model	Core Model
Key element	Courses used to meet the requirements are departmental courses	All, or almost all, the general education courses are extra-departmental, designed for non-specialists.
Core idea	<p><i>“Liberal education is not reducible to a specific body of knowledge. It’s a background mentality, a way of thinking, a kind of intellectual DNA that informs work in every specialized area of inquiry. This DNA is what colleges try to transmit.”</i></p> <p><i>“However it is defined...this mental disposition is the takeaway of the college experience. This is why, in a distribution system, it doesn’t matter very much which courses student end up taking.”</i></p>	<p><i>“...it does matter which courses students take, because there are certain things that they need to know.” These could be books that they need to have read, or methods of inquiry that they must have mastered.</i></p> <p><i>“...there is a discrete body of knowledge that constitutes a liberal education”</i></p>

Other approaches

- Hybrid of distribution and core models that combine department-based with common course requirements
- Deweyan progressive model, which rests on a non-prescriptivist, entirely elective approach to general education (outside of the major, course selection is left entirely to the student).