

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (CDR)

Preliminary vision and first draft of proposals

Winter 2017

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (CDR)

Purpose

The CDR is appointed by Dean Adrian Randolph to conduct a comprehensive review of the College's curriculum and degree requirements for the purpose of recommending revisions that best serve the needs and interests of our students.

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (CDR)

Charge

1. Engage with faculty, students, College leadership, and others to review the College's curriculum and degree requirements.
2. Develop a set of learning outcomes that capture the skill-set and mind-set that should characterize a Weinberg College graduate.
3. Closely examine the current Weinberg College curriculum and degree requirements, and recommend revisions that address curricular deficiencies or opportunities for strengthening that come to light as requirements are mapped to desired learning outcomes. Particularly close attention should be paid to the general education requirements and to the proposed social inequalities and diversity requirement.
4. Submit a report of the committee's findings and recommendations to the dean by the end of winter 2017.

WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (CDR)

Committee Structure

Chair:

Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives (Ann Bradlow)

Ex officio:

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs (Mary Finn)
Assistant Dean for Curriculum & Assessment (Laura Panko, replaced J. Linsenmeier, retired 2016)
William Haarlow (Dir, College-Admission Relations; Sen. Lecturer, American Stud.)

Members:

12 Weinberg faculty members, plus 2 Weinberg students

Members of the committee represent:

- all 3 college divisions (natural sciences, social sciences, humanities)
- both tenure-line and teaching-track faculty, including one college advisor
- a healthy distribution of diverse backgrounds and perspectives

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Procedures

- The committee will report directly to Dean Adrian Randolph.
- While the committee will work independently of the Weinberg College Curriculum Policy Committee (CPC), the committee's recommendations will ultimately be brought before the CPC for consideration and possible submission for a vote by the College faculty.

The structure of the current Weinberg curriculum drove our work:
(1) Writing/First Year Seminars, (2) Foreign Language, and (3) Distros.

- general agreement that these categories function well
- college-wide familiarity with these categories provided a good starting point for discussions with faculty and students

We formed three working groups based on these categories.

- met regularly over spring and summer of 2016
- consulted with key stake-holders

The full CDR convened at a day-long meeting at the Chicago Botanic Gardens in September 2016.

We found it useful to describe our curriculum in terms of three inter-connected "levels."

- CDR**
- **Level 1:** Broadly defined learning outcomes that characterize the "Weinberg Way."
 - **Level 2:** College-wide requirements that guide Weinberg students to design programs of study that encompass the learning outcomes specified in Level 1.
 - **Level 3:** Courses, majors, minors that challenge Weinberg students to develop and practice the skills that characterize the Weinberg Way.
- Departments, Programs**

Level 1 -- The Weinberg Way

We approached the task of developing a set of learning outcomes by articulating a key question:

What should a Weinberg graduate know and be able to do upon graduation?

We sought responses to this question in various places:

- The learning goals proposed by the [Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Experience](#)
- Peer institutions
- Responses to our key question from various sources including:
 - CDR members during winter 2016
 - CDR website publicized to Weinberg faculty (responses to the [share-your-thoughts](#) page)
 - Interviews with colleagues who play key roles in the current curriculum

We identified several recurring themes and categories which were then distilled into four proposed learning outcomes.

Level 1 -- The Weinberg Way

As a Weinberg student you will learn to:

Observe: Weinberg students cultivate curiosity and seek encounters with the world, both on and beyond the campus limits.

Critique: Weinberg students cultivate the ability to make reasoned decisions and develop hypotheses based on empirical evidence, the critical skills to become informed interpreters of information, an understanding of how to approach a moral problem, and the capacity to differentiate between data and information that you can trust, and that which you can't.

Reflect: Weinberg students cultivate a consciousness and understanding of one's place in the world that is both historical and global, and an understanding that one's subjectivity and perspective are products of interconnected webs of people, ideas, and events.

Express: Weinberg students improve their ability to articulate their ideas in oral, written, visual and other media, and to assemble narratives that navigate carefully ordered evidence.

Level 2 -- The Weinberg Degree Requirements

Current system (total of 45 credits)

14-20 college-wide requirements

- ❖ **First-year seminars (2):** Two seminars in first year
- ❖ **Writing proficiency:** Typically satisfied through the first-year seminars
- ❖ **Foreign language proficiency (0-6):** Demonstrated foreign language proficiency equivalent to two years of college-level language instruction
- ❖ **Distribution requirements (12):** Two approved courses in each of six areas:
 - I. Natural Sciences
 - II. Formal Studies
 - III. Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - IV. Historical Studies
 - V. Ethics & Values
 - VI. Literature and Fine Arts

• Current system generally works well.

• No need for radical overhaul.

• Some areas ready for updating:

- ❖ **Writing:** First year seminars don't/can't address the full range of advising, writing, presentation, and research experiences that 21st century students at institutions such as Northwestern expect and deserve.
- ❖ **Foreign language:** Current proficiency-based requirement falls short of the goal of developing "global citizenship."
- ❖ **Distros:** Current system tends towards insulated disciplinary silos with little opportunity for inter-disciplinary integration.

Level 2 -- The Weinberg Degree Requirements

Proposed system (total of 45 credits)

17-20 college-wide requirements and 3 overlays

- ❖ **Foundational Competencies (6-9 credits)**
 - First Year Fall Quarter Seminar (1)
 - Writing (2)
 - World Languages (3-6)
- ❖ **Foundational Disciplines (11 credits)**
 - I. Natural Sciences (2)
 - II. Quantitative Reasoning (2)
 - III. Social & Behavioral Sciences (2)
 - IV. Historical Studies (2)
 - V. Humanities and Arts (3)
- ❖ **Interdisciplinary overlays**
 - Ethics (1)
 - Social Inequalities & Diversities in the USA (1)
 - Social Inequalities & Diversities across the globe (1)

The proposed system introduces an updated and integrated framework for a flexible curriculum.

- Two categories of traditional requirements
 - ❖ **Foundational Competencies**
 - ❖ **Foundational Disciplines**
- No double-counting within each of these two categories, but these courses may be applied to requirements for a major or minor (similar to current system.)*
- Introduction of a novel requirement
 - ❖ **Interdisciplinary Overlays**
- Overlays do not add to the number of required credits; instead they infuse value-based themes across the curriculum.*

Level 2 -- The Weinberg Degree Requirements

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 - II. Formal Studies (2)
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 - IV. Historical Studies (2)
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 - VI. Literature and Fine Arts (2)

Proposed system (total of 45 credits)

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❖ Foundational Competencies (6-9 credits)

- First Year Fall Quarter Seminar (*1 credit*)
 - Topic-based with small enrollment (same as current fall First Year Seminar)
 - Include advising on general academic and transition-to-college skills

Rationale

- Remove pressure on faculty to balance so many elements of a first-year seminar (college experience + writing + topic)
- Preserve advising relationship between the fall quarter seminar instructor and first-year students
- Offer a course that addresses general well-being and work/life balance within the quarter system

Major development and resource implications

- Training for faculty in transition-to-college advising (some enhancement to current FYS faculty orientation)

❖ Foundational Competencies (6-9 credits)

- *Writing (2 credits)*
 - First Year Writing Seminar (*winter or spring quarter*)
 - topic-based with small enrollment (same as current fall First Year Seminar)
 - rigorous introduction to writing at the college level
 - Advanced writing seminar (*year 2 or beyond*)
 - small enrollment with focus on advanced writing and presentation in a discipline

Rationale

- to de-couple writing and advising in the first year seminars
- to offer upper-level writing experience for all students, not just those who pursue honors in their majors
- to provide an opportunity for inter- and multi-disciplinary curricular innovation

Major development and resource implications

- **First Year Writing Seminars:** Typically (but not exclusively) to be developed and offered by the *Cook Family Writing Program*.
- **Advanced Writing Seminars:** Typically to be developed and offered by departments or divisions with broad latitude to accommodate field-specific needs.

❖ Foundational Competencies (9 credits)

World Language (3-6 credits)

- demonstrated proficiency at a level equivalent to 2 years (6 quarters) of college-level instruction (same as current)
- minimum of 3 language courses taken at NU (current minimum is 0)

Rationale

- emphasis on language proficiency as a foundational component of (a wider) global cultural competence
- recognize that many language courses offered by university language departments are distinguished by a broad literary and cultural context
- in line with a committed university emphasis on a global Northwestern, as well as peer institutions

Major development and resource implications

- Incentives for development of new interdisciplinary courses with world language component

Flowchart through the proposed 2-part world language requirement

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graph LR
    A[Part 1: World Language Proficiency] -- Yes --> B[Have you passed the equivalent of 6 quarters (2 years) of a world language?]
    B -- No --> C[Take language courses at the appropriate level (Level 1-6 on the quarter system).]
    B -- Yes --> D[Part 2: Three-course minimum at NU]
    D -- No --> E[Proceed to an advanced course in the previously studied language.]
    D -- Or --> F[Proceed to a beginning level courses in a new language.]
    E --> G[World Language Competency Requirement]
    F --> G
  
```

Important note regarding impact of this proposed change

Number of language courses taken at Northwestern by Weinberg College graduates in 2016

0 = 6%	25% would have had to take additional language courses	3 = 13%	75% would have had to take no additional language courses
1 = 9%		>3 = 62%	
2 = 9%			

❖ Foundational Disciplines (11 credits)

- I. Natural Sciences (2)
 - II. Quantitative Reasoning (2)
 - III. Social & Behavioral Sciences (2)
 - IV. Historical Studies (2)
 - V. Humanities & Arts (3)

Rationale

- additional Humanities & Arts requirement since this foundational discipline is likely to be particularly amenable to the learning goals of the overlay requirements
 - Formal Studies → Quantitative Reasoning to bring our nomenclature in line with an updated vision for and understanding of our requirements. (NB: Current Formal Studies courses will satisfy this requirement.)

Major development and resource implications

- Quantitative Reasoning: new courses or significant modification of existing courses (but note that we do not envision elimination of current courses in this area, e.g. calculus, logic, semantics).
 - A review of current course listings for all areas is past due and should be undertaken in consultation with departments, programs, and the Curriculum Review Committee.

❖ Interdisciplinary overlays (no additional credits)

- Ethics (1)
 - Social Inequalities & Diversities in the USA (1)
 - Social Inequalities & Diversities across the globe (1)

Rationale

- interdisciplinary overlays introduce themes to be infused in courses across the curriculum
 - a series of values-based lenses through which the foundational competencies and disciplines are viewed
 - serve to direct focus to issues and values that are central to our time and place
 - a significant innovation in the curriculum that allows for curricular flexibility and responds directly to student demand

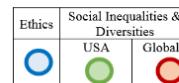
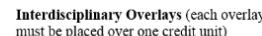
Major development and resource implications

- Following the model of the current Hewlett Fellows program, new courses will need to be developed and/or existing courses will need to be modified.

Level 2 -- The Weinberg Degree Requirements

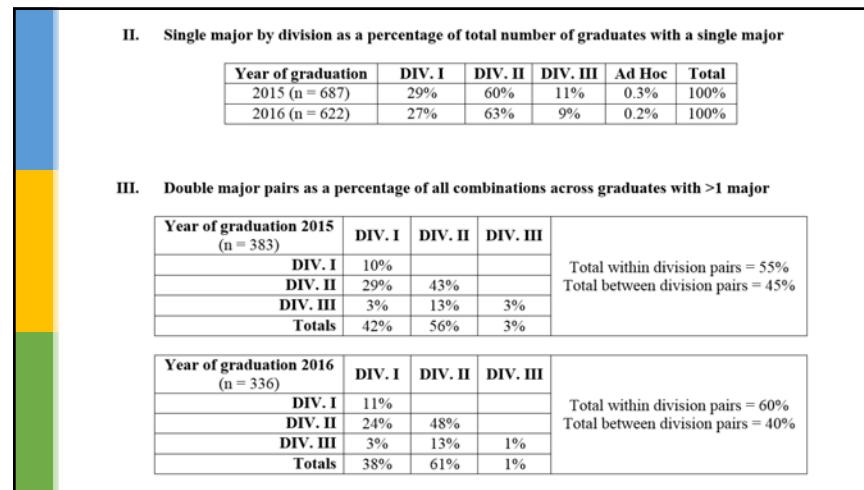
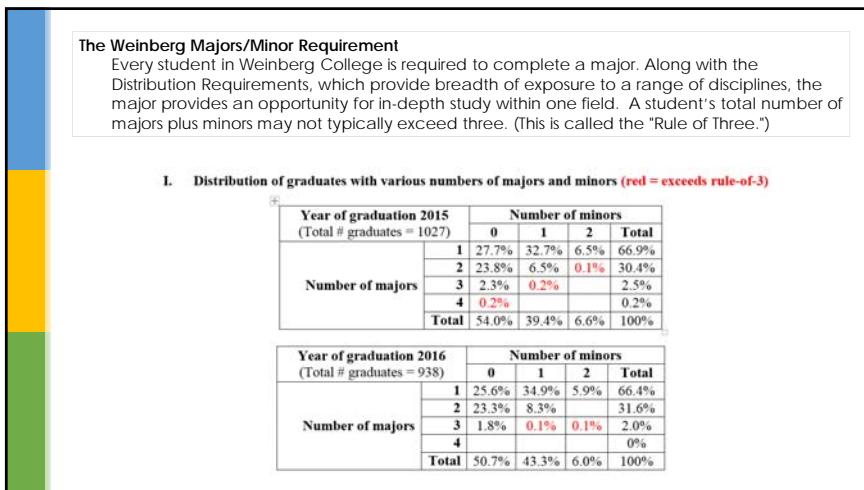
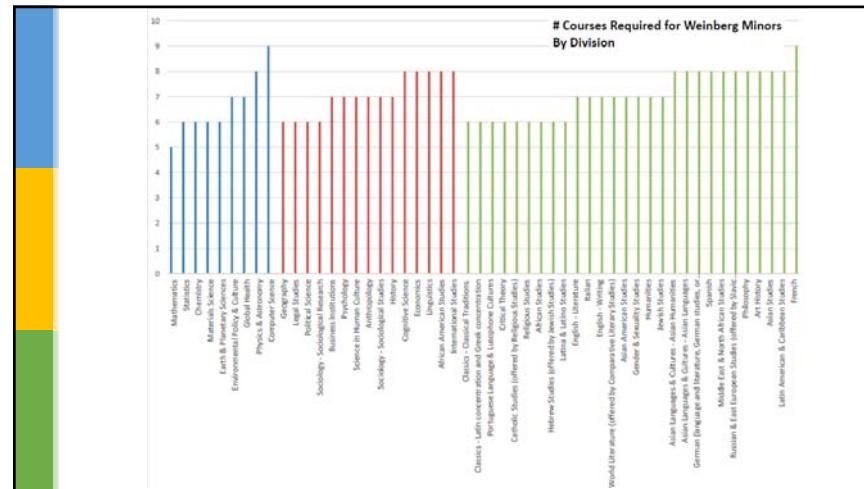
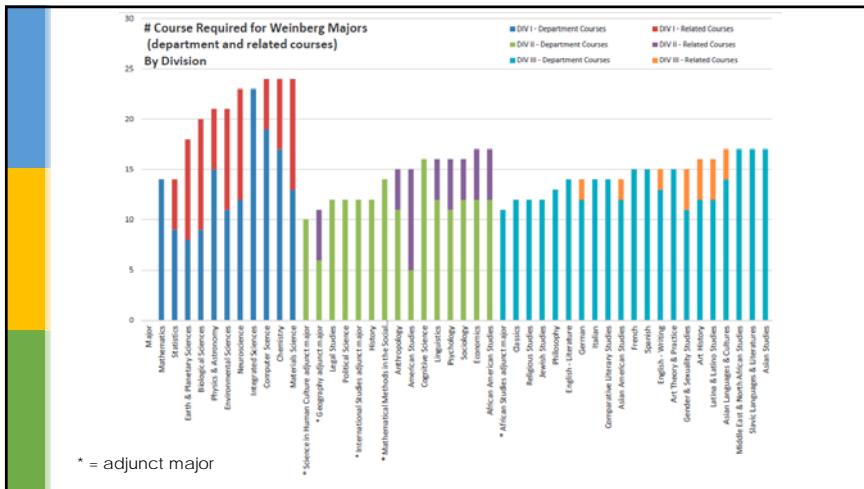
Schematic overview

Foundational Competencies (9 credits)	First Year Fall Seminar (1 credit)						
	First Year Writing Seminar (1 credit)						
	Advanced Writing Seminar (1 credit)						
	World Language (6 credits, min. 3 at NU)						
Foundational Disciplines (11 credits)	Natural Sciences (2 credits)						
	Quantitative Reasoning (2 credits)						
	Social & Behavioral Studies (2 credits)						
	Historical Studies (2 credits)						
	Humanities and Arts (3 credits)						
Major & Electives (25 credits)							



EXTRA SLIDES

1. Number of courses for various Weinberg College majors
 2. Number of courses for various Weinberg College minors
 3. Some counts of Weinberg majors, double majors, and major-minor combinations across and within divisions.



IV. Major + minor pairs as a percentage of all combinations across graduates with 1 or more minor(s)				
Year of graduation 2015 (n = 271)		Minor		Total within division pairs = 51% Total between division pairs = 49%
Major	DIV. I	8%	12%	
	DIV. II	10%	41%	
	DIV. III	1%	3%	
Year of graduation 2016 (n = 572)		Minor		Total within division pairs = 52% Total between division pairs = 48%
Major	DIV. I	8%	8%	
	DIV. II	10%	42%	
	DIV. III	1%	4%	

Note: Still need to track down exactly why the number of minors for 2015 is so much less than for 2016.