

To: Weinberg Faculty
FR: Curriculum Policy Committee (CPC)
DA: December 4, 2018
RE: Proposed modifications to the Weinberg College Degree Requirements

Overview:

After a series of meetings considering the issue, the WCAS Curriculum Policy Committee unanimously approved the proposal for changes to the Weinberg College Undergraduate Degree Requirements on December 4, 2018. The proposal now passes to the full WCAS faculty for discussion and vote.

In detail:

The Curriculum Policy Committee is an interdisciplinary, standing committee made up of continuing faculty and undergraduate students from WCAS (listed below). The CPC is charged with vetting and approving (or rejecting) significant curriculum changes.

A set of proposed modifications to the Weinberg College Degree Requirements was submitted to the Weinberg College Curriculum Policy Committee early in the fall quarter of 2018. This proposal is the culmination of some 2 years of work by the ad hoc Committee on Degree Requirements (chaired by Ann Bradlow, Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives & Professor of Linguistics), the faculty who participated in the Foundational Disciplines Convention, and Dean Adrian Randolph. A synthesis of these endeavors was presented to the Curriculum Policies Committee. After a series of meetings and discussions, **the CPC unanimously voted to endorse** the recommendations for consideration by the full faculty.

The CPC's usual practice is to vote and report, but CPC members want to convey their enthusiasm for the proposal and highlight noteworthy aspects for Weinberg Faculty. What follows are some of the aspects of the change that individual members of the committee particularly appreciated about the proposal.

Weinberg College Level Learning Goals:

CPC members appreciate that the revised statement of College-level learning goals is elegant and clear. In our deliberations, one committee member said, "The statement of overarching learning goals is simple and powerful - observe, critique, reflect, express. I'm already thinking about how I will incorporate discussion of these imperatives into all my classes at Northwestern" (Faculty Member).

First-Year Seminar:

All of the committee members agreed that, "The re-imagining of the fall quarter seminar . . . will open up new possibilities for the types of assessment and teaching and even topics that may be offered in these key introductory courses" (Student Member). Faculty agree that the new Freshman Seminar structure, "will help students adjust to college in a relatively stress free manner," and are pleased that these courses will continue to be taught by faculty members.

Writing Requirements:

CPC members are also enthusiastic about the proposed new structure of the writing requirement which includes an early writing requirement and a discipline-specific 300-level writing course. One committee member said, “I fully support the modifications to the WCAS writing proficiency requirement. A 300 level course that satisfies the *Advanced Expression* learning goals will give our students the opportunity to focus on effective communication in [their] field.” Another said, “students will have writing exposure early on in school, and then also in their later years after they have had some time in school. This seems like a nice way to grow as a writer at different stages in the academic journey.”

When Cultures Meet:

CPC members unanimously applaud the addition of “when cultures meet” overlays. A faculty member said, “I am most compelled by the overlay requirements that centers the politics of cultural interactions and cultural exchange. I am particularly excited that they offer all students the opportunity to grapple with questions of inequality, justice, inclusion, and diversity.” Students were similarly enthusiastic, saying this requirement is “a necessity, and key to the broad education and reflective student that WCAS endeavors to create.”

We look forward to discussing this exciting curriculum proposal.

With kind regards,
The Curriculum Policies Committee

Prof. Laura B Nielsen (chair), Sociology & Legal Studies
Prof. Kyla Ebels-Duggan, Philosophy
Prof. Steve Jacobsen, Earth and Planetary Sciences
Prof. Jennifer Nash, Gender & Sexuality Studies and African American Studies
Prof. Robin Nusslock, Psychology & Institute for Policy Research
Prof. Heather Pinkett, Molecular Biosciences
Thomas Ritz, SAB representative to CPC from Legal Studies (a senior)
Dillon Saks, SAB representative to CPC from Economics (a junior)
Prof. Mary Finn (*ex officio*), Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
& English
Prof. Laura Panko (*ex officio*), Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Assessment &
Biological Sciences