

## Faculty Survey on Curricular Renewal Written Comments

### 11. If you have other suggestions regarding First Year Courses, please describe them:

Special sections of regular introductory (inter-)disciplinary courses (e.g. Principles of Economics)" should definitely not continue to be offered as First Year Courses if additional goals are added to the FYCs. Writing is obviously an importance competency for all students, but it is not the principal way students learn introductory material in the physical sciences.

A common first-year course theme will enhance the level of community/interaction among all first-year students. A common theme emphasizes that we are "Liberal Arts" faculty while simultaneously experts in our fields of expertise. This is a good value for our students to absorb.

First Year course should be "special," not just a smaller class size of a regular introductory class. They should be demanding, but ungraded.

First year courses that offer a broader view of the liberal arts would be an interesting way to draw students into college study. One means of doing so would be to offer a smaller number of "team" courses in which students had 4-week modules with a professor. (Each team could consist of three professors all teaching on a similar topic. The professor with whom one starts could be the advisor.)

Have you considered a two-semester sequence for the First Year Course (thus, truly a first "year" and not just a first "semester" for first-year students)? I think this would help to more realistically achieve the goals of the course.

I don't think it's a good idea to add extra, time consuming requirements to the first-year courses. A few lectures might be good, but beyond that, students, who are already coping with time and organizational demands beyond their previous experience, will suffer.

I like the idea of a common syllabus (at least, in part) and clearly this cannot happen with #9 simultaneously. BUT, if no common syllabus works as a college, then I DO think 'regular introductory' courses should continue to be offered as FY courses.

I like the idea of adding the extra hour per week for first year courses, so that library instruction, etc. does not eat into the content of the first year courses.

I think the need to teach writing is not as important as it has been made out to be. I base this observation upon the continuous feedback from music major graduates who have continued in graduate school. As we in music know, these students do need some specialized music theory/ear-training/counterpoint classes that we are not able to provide at Mac, but they consistently report that they are easily the best prepared graduate students in the areas of writing and research. Even without an organized writing program at Mac I believe our students consistently become excellent writers. regarding first-year courses that are not discipline-based: I believe they would serve student experience-needs best- but the

administration must be willing to believe smaller departments when they plead a shortage of faculty teaching slots to dedicate to what will become a requirement of each department. I believe the capstone experience must be a real capstone, and not a small paper delivered to a seminar. Each senior capstone should be the equivalent of an honors project. I don't believe we need any 2nd or 3rd year special requirements.

I think we have to recognize that the primary purpose of the first year course is to associate each first-semester student with an advisor, who sees them several times a week. Anything that tends to undercut this, including anything that discourages faculty from participating in the first-year seminar system, is to be avoided. Asking all faculty to teach writing makes no more sense than asking all faculty to teach engraving. We should have writing taught by people who are good at teaching it, not people who were hired for other purposes. A "shared experience" has a different problem. It will quickly become irrelevant to the courses, and the first-year teachers will become enforcers, something that will discourage them from participating. The only thing that needs to be fixed with the first-year course is that we have to create incentives for more faculty to teach them. This can only be done by letting faculty teach what they want. If you want to teach writing, if you want a shared experience, then create these things. The first-year course was created for another purpose and it ought to be left to serve that purpose.

I would like to see more opportunities for interdisciplinary topics and team-teaching within the first year courses.

I would recommend "detaching" the First Year course from departmental major requirements or courses. My concern about the possibility of an extra hour taught by others who aren't the faculty (library staff, MAX staff) is that students are likely to "blow off" such periods as ancillary to the "real" point of the class. And I'm not at all convinced that the writing center staff helps students that much. Especially student tutors. Good writing is damned hard work. The faculty should do it and not act as if good writing can be handled by "lessers" at the college while we faculty handle the "higher order thinking."

If first year courses are to be part of the "common experience" strategy, they should not become college writing courses. Critical thinking through writing seems an appropriate goal, in which case, more shared material might bring greater cohesion. Introducing students to the broad critical thinking that is the hallmark of the liberal arts tradition seems of greatest value.

If you change the rules so that regular introductory courses may not be offered as First Year Courses, in order to get the departments on board, you will need to compensate departments for losing those critical sections.

I'm less interested in having the course focus on skills (writing, competencies) than having the faculty work conjointly to articulate (and disagree civilly) what the intellectual venture is/should be at Mac. In other words, what are we doing -- what does mac mean by liberal arts and how do we as a faculty embody it?

Make better use of Orientation and January. Design self-instruction activities built on our location.

My answer to 6 above: FY course absolutely should have emphasis on writing, and I don't care how much assistance I get from writing staff, although certainly more assistance would be helpful. Most support is needed from library staff on available research tools and how to use them effectively.

Overall it is a good program.

Retain option for residential component encourage team teaching or cluster sections

Shared curriculum, one semester humanities, one semester social sciences, great books, get students AND faculty talking to each other. Hey, it's good enough for Columbia, Stanford, and Chicago! The thirst for cultural capital among ethnically diverse students at community colleges suggests that its time to rethink our now traditional aversion to dead white males. It is one thing to have critical approaches, which date. It is another to have actual primary texts under your belt.

Some regular introductory courses work well as first-year courses, others don't. The key to moving away from regular introductory courses will be whether we have the resources so that regular sections are not lost to the department that offers first-year courses.

Staffing implications need to be considered whatever is done. These only increase each layer of "reform" that is put in place. If we want to work on first year courses, a worthy goal, get rid of the rest of the package.

Students at Mac have apparently endless distractions to keep them from becoming seriously intellectual and focused. The less fussiness of structure for First-Year Seminar the better. (FYS's are a great idea in themselves, but of only limited applicability; i.e. they don't suit all disciplines.) They don't need even more complexifying with the added congeries of 'information literacy' which may or may not be relevant to any individual's studies.

Students need to know the scientific method and how to write by the end of their first year.

The First-year seminar should strengthen verbal communication skills in regard both to individual oral presentation and to class participation Please note, I already emphasize both writing and speaking very heavily in the seminar. Having students present written work orally and grading them on it and working on how to have good discussions require skill on our part, but this is not rocket science.

The FY courses should NOT be organized around an "exploration of ways on knowing" (as articulated in the most recent EPAG set of proposals). As practical experience and the relevant literatures strongly suggest, first-year students are simply not ready for this sort of experience. In my judgement, a far better approach would be to introduce them to the nature of liberal arts/liberal studies (in the first 1/3 or so of the course -- this would be taught to a common syllabus and supplemented by a set of common lectures), and then get them excited about this form of scholarship by structuring the remaining 2/3 around an exploration of 'big issues' (the University of Chicago has a great program that might be treated as a model). This remaining 2/3 could also be organized around 'active' or 'problem-based learning' and structured so as to encourage both writing proficiency and information fluency. There would be costs, of course -- these courses probably wouldn't be counted toward majors -- but the payoff could be substantial.

The primary aim of the First Year Course is to have a major intellectual impact on the student. The secondary aim is to give the student the skills to express that intellectual impact.

There should be a "first-year faculty" that regularly teaches the courses, works with MAX center and library and Ellen Guyer, and works together on the course goals, with some released time considering the extra work and revising. Only faculty who have passed their third-year review would be invited to join.

**27. If you have other suggestions regarding the sophomore experience, urban engagement, and/or ways to better reflect the College's mission in our curriculum, please describe them:**

"Into the city" is, at this point, a meaningless phrase. You are asking the faculty to judge something that has not been defined. You need to give some examples of what you would like it to be, and some proof that this sort of thing actually enhances a student's experience. If we don't have several examples of courses that currently do what you want "Into the city" to do, it is premature to propose it as a college-wide requirement.

1. The proposed "into the city" course (if by this is meant a purposefully designed, stand alone course similar to the FY seminars) is unsustainable and fraught with all sorts of problems (including the necessity of vetting every such offering from an informed consent/professional ethics perspective). A more organic/sustainable approach would be to encourage faculty to develop "discipline-appropriate" courses (or units/modules within courses) that would include a significant community-based learning/research element. This would build on some very successful programs that have been underway over the last few years. Given our location, most of these civic engagement courses would also take advantage of the opportunities offered by our urban location (BTW: 'urban engagement' does not mean studying urban phenomena; it means taking advantage of the opportunities associated with living in a rich urban setting -- a very important distinction). Such an approach (students! would be required to complete one course bearing a carefully defined 'civic engagement' designation) would be sustainable, meaningful, and subject to discipline specific ethical norms/standards. It could also be structured so as to fit within and support specific majors.
2. Domestic diversity is different from urban or civic engagement (although there is some overlap). Having an urban or civic engagement requirement does not obviate the need for students to study non-majority US cultures and the processes of building an inclusive democracy and working across cultural differences. A more thoughtfully defined domestic diversity requirement remains vitally important to a liberal arts education in the early 21st century.
3. International diversity (properly defined as an understanding of of at least non-US culture beyond the US and an understanding of the history/structures/dynamics of the contemporary world order) is also key to a liberal arts education in the early 21st century. I would also note that this requirement cannot be fulfilled by studying diasporas in the Twin Cities (for example) -- American students must have some cosmopolitan experience with the world beyond American shores. (BTW: the language requirement is not simply an element of internationalism -- it is also key to accessing non-majority cultures within the US).
3. Rather than tinkering with the language requirement (the logic of which is simply beyond me), we should be thinking of ways of enhancing the ability of our students to acquire languages beyond English (without either increasing or decreasing the formal language requirement). Encouraging the development of 'foreign languages across the curriculum', for example, has proven to be quite useful elsewhere. This is one aspect of the curriculum where we really should be focusing on strengthening programs that will promote language acquisition rather than counter-productively tinkering with the number of required courses.

26 [three semester language requirement] should be combined with a genuine proficiency certificate. The sophomore Into the City experience should be clustered, to allow those with greatest expertise in multicultural and urban issues to teach those and have the rest of us have supporting sections, student project supervision, etc.

A big concern with me in getting sophomores off-campus is the time commitment (travel, etc.), but also the potential friction between this and the competing goal of achieving a stronger 'campus unity.'

Allow for courses that fit as a course for majors in all divisions of the college. Please don't conflate 'into the city' with 'multiculturalism'... there are opportunities that would address both, but other opportunities that address only one or the other

combine diversity requirements into a single diversity requirement that could focus on local/domestic communities and/or transnational communities (e.g. Somalis in Twin Cities and connection/comparison with Somalia); possible separate requirement for "globalization" course; OR allow students to choose TWO courses from among a set of courses focused on diversity/multiculturalism, civic engagement, globalization, and/or some combination of these three aspects of our mission.

encourage team teaching and cluster courses

I agree that Macalester's urban location is a distinctive characteristic of the College compared to our peer institutions and, but I am not convinced that it should only be reflected in the curriculum if there is a good curricular reason to do so. It seems more appropriate that if we are to "require" a city experience, that it be through extra-curricular means. I have great concerns about groups of students and faculty going out "into the city" and possibly doing more damage than good for some segments of the population. I think that we as faculty are not trained to undertake such initiatives.

I am skeptical regarding the "Into the City" segment as currently proposed. Within this "off-campus" construct, I believe that it would be nearly impossible for us to guarantee high quality experiences for all of our students. The factors that lend quality to community-based experiences will feature variables that are beyond our control. I would rather funnel our time and energy primarily towards on-campus activities/courses that are developed and directly implemented by the first-rate faculty of this College.

I believe that the Domestic Diversity requirement is vaguely outlined in the catalogue and does not really achieve what it sets out to achieve. Ultimately, I do not find it meaningful or useful.

I believe that the language requirement could possibly be reduced to three semesters, only if the requirement were expanded for students with some language competency (i.e. a student would need to get to a fifth semester level OR three semesters, whichever came first). This would allow more students to actually become proficient in a language, as fifth semester courses tend to be radically different from fourth. (But would also allow student with no language proficiency to do only three semesters, rather than four.)

I don't think that the "Into the City" will add substantially to the student academic experience, and I don't think it is well thought out with regard to its implementation.

I feel that we should retain a domestic diversity requirement but better define what we mean by that. I would like to see the focus of these courses be on issues related to social justice.

I strongly support EITHER a civic engagement requirement OR a domestic diversity requirement. I am opposed to having both.

I think it would be a mistake to lose a requirement focused on domestic/multicultural issues all together (that is, to implement an "Into the City" course that does not address those issues and then to have no other requirement that does address them). Our mission focused on multiculturalism needs to be as

strongly reflected in the curriculum as the other parts of our mission are, though if all of them could be reflected in some more synergistic way that doesn't appear to pit them against one another, that would be exciting. The idea of doing multiculturalism via the city starts to realize that potential, but I think it also seems like it makes multiculturalism the step child of civic engagement and leaves internationalism a more prominent place, all by itself.

I think that better utilizing our metropolitan location is a good idea. I'm not sanguine about ALL students being forced to do an "Into the City" course, especially if it has to be about multicultural issues. Come on, recognize that there are many ways to think about cities and urban issues and engaging students in the metropolitan areas without demanding that they ALSO adhere to our political agenda of multi-culti.

I would very much discourage EPAG from conflating the domestic diversity requirement and an 'into the city program.' For one, this would equate multicultural with the inner city with elsewhere, rather than recognizing the diversity everywhere, including on campus. In addition, such a conflation would fail to draw on the special knowledges and competencies of some faculty who teach critically important issues about the American experience, but who do not have experience with nor a desire to do field work, service learning or the like with students. On the other hand, some faculty may be interested in engaging with the city, but not necessarily on the issues relevant to the domestic diversity requirement. I could imagine, for example, a course on museum curating which visited a number of different museum environments across the Cities. Some courses might meet both requirements, but I think it would be practically and intellectually problematic to demand that all courses meet the needs of both requirements. The challenge of learning to function in a multicultural environment and the historical context of that environment in the United States, which I believe is invoked in the mission of the College, deserves unique attention in our curriculum, and should not be eliminated by being folded into another project.

If we have worthwhile courses that involve the city, why should these be limited to sophomores? New courses created for this program might have broad appeal and academic legitimacy, but if they are aimed specifically at sophomores, other interested students will be excluded. The courses should not be required to meet "domestic diversity" requirements, because that stipulation will not work well in many departments. It implies that "service learning" and anthropological approaches are more legitimate than scholarly, scientific or western-cultural experiences.

If we replace our international focus with a local one, we risk becoming too parochial.

My 25 years' experience of teaching at other schools suggests that this kind of course would be a disaster, could easily become a joke among students, would become conceptually dated within years, and -- yet again -- distracts students. It's as if we're devising some curricular equivalent of what primary-school educators are lamenting as 'the flickering mind' of children taught with too much computer hardware and too little occasion to sit and think.

My concern with the "Into the City" sophomore-year course idea is that I do not think the Science Division (of which I am a member) will participate, further isolating us from the center of our liberal arts mission. I think it is a large leap for the college to take, and I am not at all convinced it is an improvement on our present curriculum. At the very least, I would like to see a dozen or so working examples of such a course, and a strong commitment from a large number of faculty to teach a SYC. This suggests a long phase-in period to be successful. I plan to vote no on the SYC proposal.

No option was available for an urban location core course being required, but not to replace the domestic diversity requirement. It is very problematic that the current EPAG document conflates urban location

with domestic diversity. \*They are not the same thing; they are not mutually replaceable; they must both be retained; AND we must deliberate how to retain both, separately.\* I say this as a strong proponent for a strong college commitment to multiculturalism. That commitment is weakened, and available to misinterpretation, when conflated with the urban location. Once the two are separated, we can begin to have a serious discussion about the ways in which, conversely, internationalism traditionally (and, also in the EPAG proposal) has been unduly \*separated\* from considerations of multiculturalism and domestic diversity, with which it is, and should be argued to be, completely \*interlinked.\* I am seeking a proposal that enhances our understanding of the interlinkages between the domestic and international, local and global, diversity here and diversity elsewhere. My major point of constructive modification of the EPAG proposal as written is that it does not yet provide a mechanism for those connections to be made. I want our faculty discussions to address this.

Perhaps we should discuss beefing up the foreign language requirement, requiring more, not less

QM4PP should be taught/reconfigured to students in their sophomore year. This could be part 2 of an information/quantitative literacy requirement.

Question 15 is two questions in one, and hence shapes its response. I strongly agree that "Into the Streets" should have a multicultural component. I strongly disagree that this could or should substitute for a strong multicultural requirement. By putting both parts in one question, you left me no choice but to strongly disagree with the whole statement. Similarly, "but only" in question 18 changes my response. I'd love to co-develop a course, or just develop it.

Second (or third) language skills are essential. Three semester proficiency is not sufficient.

Some control should be in effect on enrollments in Spanish. Its enormous enrollments make the Spanish Dept. into a production "language mill," while the other languages languish for no reason but that they are a bigger challenge/ tougher than Spanish.

The main problem that I have with the urban engagement proposal is that it leaves many of us in the sciences out of the discussion. Why not add an "Into the World" experience that would allow all disciplines to develop a civic engagement experience that would be most appropriate for that discipline? For some departments, it might be the city, for others rural towns or even wilderness regions.

The proposed sophomore year class would place a great burden on small science departments, since none of the classes currently offered by these departments would come close to meeting the goals of the proposal. Implementation of this program would require either a significant expansion of (for example) science faculty, or the relegation of more courses that count towards a major to visiting instructors.

The resource implications are driving my responses here. I think a course requirement is unrealistic given the current number of faculty who teach such courses, the implications for increased staff to support such a measure and the potential harm that an uninformed program would do to the community. However, as is the case with all my responses, I really don't know what I think because I haven't had a chance to hear faculty debate on these issues. My opinions on this survey are largely uninformed, and I might easily change my mind if I could hear debate and have someone talk about resource implications.

The total number of requirements should not be increased. If the "into the city" courses become a requirement (which I do not favor), then they should replace one of our existing college-wide requirements.

The wording of the international diversity requirement currently emphasizes particular locations/regions, rather than international / global processes and/or comparisons. The international diversity requirement would be enhanced if courses that used a comparative method to explore the international diversity of some particular aspect of the world were included.

urban engagement is important, but a one-size-fits-all course likely will be superficial and a drain on resources away from departmental curricula. My dept will offer substantial urban engagement, but in ways that depend and integrate with student majors.

Urban engagement, knowledge of foreign languages, and diversity starts with the faculty. Foreign language is not part of identity and mission, but of competency, along with writing in English. Global citizenship proposal dispenses with knowledge of a foreign language entirely -- I hope because it assumes this is a basic competency, along with writing in English. Civic engagement via internships and an internship office that stresses the superiority of experience over mere book learning, for my money, does not deliver academically.

<p><b>33. If you have other suggestions regarding distribution requirements, please describe them:</b></p>
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1. The very nature of the liberal arts requires that students should have a meaningful experience with a 'mode of inquiry' beyond their major. Minimally, this means that all students should have a course-based engagement with the humanistic, aesthetic, scientific and social scientific modes of inquiry. Chairs within the Divisions should be charged with developing courses/lists-of-courses that fulfill this.
2. I am absolutely opposed to the 'advisor model'. In my judgement it is based on at least three faulty assumptions: first, that students only do well in courses that they want to be in. There is absolutely no evidence to support this -- and I can provide plenty of anecdotal evidence to the effect that any well-designed and enthusiastically delivered course has the potential to excite any student; second, that students know what courses they will like (or what courses are best for them) -- 18-22 year olds do not all have the judgement to make these weighty decisions (and let's not forget: all beyond the major and gen ed requirements there is plenty of scope for student choice); and finally, it is not clear that an advising model would produce any different distribution in courses taken (as I understand the evidence presented in connection with Grinnell, even absent formal requirements, faculty advise students to take courses across the divisions -- in which case, why not! simply codify this and ensure that ALL students get similarly good advice.

I am not at all convinced that students "know" exactly what are their "interests" or even that we should cater to student interests. Surely, the faculty, in its joint wisdom, can plan a curriculum that serves students in ways beyond meeting the limited and immediate interests of 18 year-olds.

I can't rank the options because I haven't heard the arguments for and against each model. We just started to tease out some of the complexities of these options at our last faculty meeting, but we really haven't had a chance to talk about the pros and cons of each model. I don't know what our goals might be, and which options might best meet our goals.

I strongly believe that there should continue to be domestic and international diversity requirements.

I think any model decided upon is less important than the depth and richness of curricular offerings available to students, and the college culture that encourages visibility of these. Right now our education is badly skewed against the arts and even against the humanities; this is not a matter for curricular

reform first, but for staffing and raising our own intellectual expectations of a college life.

I think majors should be looked at with the liberal arts in mind- there should not be 17-course majors (ie- majors with required courses in related fields) unless those related fields cross divisional lines.

I think Model E should be radically simplified: students choose one of 4-5 8-course blocks (internationalism, arts, math and sci, etc)

I would add a speaking component to writing and QR.

I would like to see each division modify their distribution requirements to incorporate the writing and QR components.

I'd to see us retain a form of the distribution requirements but more clearly define the goals of these requirements.

If the college moves toward fewer requirements, I hope there will still be a cap on the number of courses one can take in one's major and in a division. That would help to ensure a certain kind of breadth in a student's curricular choices.

If we maintain divisional distribution requirements, I think it would be important for divisions to develop a more limited list of courses that meet these requirements.

Interdisciplinary departments should be included somehow in divisional requirements.

It's hard to assess the idea of an undefined "writing" requirement. Many students seem to write fairly well when they arrive, and having a specific course might be unnecessary for them. I'd prefer to see dedicated writing courses for those who show deficiency. Of these proposals, model A creates problems for departments/fields that students might not choose initially or be aware of. Model B elevates the unknown courses to a dominant status, and has the same problems as model A. Model C has the advantage of working fairly well now, and seems to have the potential to introduce students into areas of inquiry that they might not otherwise enter. Model D has the advantages of C, but, with all the stuff on the first page makes too many requirements. I might buy model D if there were no writing extra requirement, and the "two additional courses" requirement that is in the actual proposal were struck. Model E seems unduly complex and vague. We already have interdisciplinary majors and could add more specifics if we wished.

Let's have multiple models for different student goals.

Model C plus real writing and quantitative reasoning requirements.

'modes of inquiry' distribution requirements might be considered rather than maintaining the divisional model regardless, if some form of distribution requirements are maintained, these should be more carefully defined (diversity requirements also) through some form of sustained full faculty conversation

Present administrative focus on enrollments in academic decisions complicates the search for a common academic experience or distribution requirement.

Proposal Five, option B: the second major could be within a division and still provide a significant stretch of breadth for a student. As an example I am familiar with, Math or Computer Science coupled

with Biology is a set of majors that would be sought after by graduate programs and industry, and is a new interdisciplinary approach that is needed for our students. These disciplines are different and require different competencies by the students. So I'd like to see the 'outside the division' provision removed.

Quantitative courses in the natural sciences should count towards the QR requirement.

The information about the tendency of Mac students to avoid what they don't know or like indicates that distribution requirements are necessary for a well-rounded education. Tutorials work wonderfully to promote critical thinking and writing, and capitalize on the advantages of a small liberal arts college.

The models conflate the issue of Q and W requirements with other changes... I support Q and W requirements integrated into whatever approach we choose...

The responses presented in question 32 do not exhaust the range of preferences that faculty might express. Example, I favor keeping the distribution requirements as they are, plus adding writing and quantitative requirements. Why not allow that as an option to discussion?

We should have meaningful distribution requirements. The number of required courses is secondary. The primary thing is to establish goals for each distribution requirement and then evaluate our offerings to make sure those goals are satisfied. LETS SHIFT THE DISCUSSION TO WHAT THE GOAL OF EACH REQUIREMENT SHOULD BE.

<b>42. If you have other suggestions regarding competencies, please describe them:</b>
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"Writing across the curriculum" is a way to avoid anyone having responsibility for teaching writing to students. I strongly agree that the college should require competence in writing. However, this cannot be done in the model that works for foreign languages. In foreign languages, you are not going to pass Spanish II if you haven't done reasonably in Spanish I. But the W writing courses can be passed even if the student's writing is poor; writing won't be the only thing that determines passing. EPAG needs to do some background work here. We need to establish what is the size of the problem. If only 10% of students have poor writing skills, then the way to address the problem is to identify these students and help them out. If 60% of students are poor writers, then a more general approach can be taken. But an excellent writer, and there are many students who enter Macalester with strong writing skills, should not be required to take several courses where the professor is spending lots of time helping poor writers to improve. (If the professor is not spending lots of time helping poor writers to improve, then what is the point of the course?)

Again, I for the QR requirement, without hearing more about what is actually taught in Principles of Econ or Elementary Stats and how that might or might not fulfill our goals for QR, it is hard to say whether such courses might fulfill such a requirement. Configured correctly, this would probably work fine.

all the suggestions for improving writing are meaningless without investing more resources. we can't expect faculty to subtract from their already limited time to teach writing. we need proper expository writing instructors -- the max center is notorious among students for not being especially helpful in this regard.

Although I firmly believe in the importance of critical competencies, I am generally against requiring the way in which students satisfy these requirements. In other words, I think it would be best to have a set of agreed upon competencies, some general rubric templates to assessing those competencies, and then let the faculty teach and assess these competencies.

College Writing only makes sense as a requirement for students who need it if it is carefully supervised and does its job.

From students, I get the impression that the only writing work they get, if any, is in the FYS. Why are foreign languages not considered a competency, like good English?

Given the structures/culture of Macalester, the best way to develop writing and quantitative skills is to build these into course offerings within departments (ie. adopt an organic approach). The PS department has had tremendous success in promoting serious writing across the curriculum (and with a minimum of fuss, bother or even faculty development). We are now working on building more quantitative reasoning into introductory, FY and other courses where this was not emphasized before. This requires nothing more than a commitment and some faculty development. Departmentally based approaches have the advantage of being (inter)discipline-appropriate and being sustainable over time. Another approach would be to require students to fulfill the Social Science requirement by taking one of a menu of courses that provided meaningful exposure to quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as engagement with some of the meta issues related to epistemology and the philosophy of (social) science. Many people in the Social Science Division have expressed an interest in at least exploring this possibility.

I don't think it's a good idea to label some courses as writing intensive. There will be bickering over which courses count, and courses will be shaped to meet the designation, rather than for the best academic outcomes within the field. Other schools that use this system have this problem. The QR requirement should be approached with these cautions: (1) students who attend Macalester have had high school math, and for some, that's enough. (2) Some excellent students have difficulties with math; if the course requires a general understanding of statistics and other useful math-based data, maybe it would help some. But if it must be truly a math course, I would not favor it.

I strongly feel that quantitative reasoning courses can include disciplinary courses from math and the natural sciences. Interdisciplinary courses like Quantitative Methods for Public Policy (QM4PP) are great, and may be very suitable for a large number of students, but they should not be made into the only way to satisfy a quantitative reasoning requirement.

Macalester doesn't really have a "writing across the curriculum" approach. It has benign neglect and trusts that faculty will incorporate writing in courses. "Writing across the curriculum" approaches that I have seen at other institutions involve one or more of the following: a writing program with a director, faculty workshops, reduced class size for writing designated courses, and writing assistants for all levels of writing courses (not just the FY course).

Our alumni are demonstrably weak in quantitative methods. They are not demonstrably deficient in other skill sets. The curricular renewal process needs to address our weaknesses if it is to be regarded as successful.

Our students desperately need sustained writing instruction. This is a central, essential requirement of an excellent education to my mind. It is FAR more important than our emphasis on a "common" experience, multi-culturalism, Into-The City, or even Civic Engagement. These other emphases are

nice, even important. But writing is epistemic. It should be at the CORE of what we do. We should put the kinds of resources into it that we currently put into our POLITICAL agenda (civic engagement, multi-culti, into-the city) We should stop acting like "someone" else (high schools, employers, the MAXX center) should do this work. WE should do this work.

RE: the writing - portfolios or the like create much more work for faculty on an on-going basis. If I need to read a large number of things that a student has written over her academic career, I will be taking on a substantial responsibility. If this were a requirement, I doubt that we would receive the compensation / release time to do so. RE: Quant Reasoning - there are a number of ways that we could build this into courses. Having some sort of minimal content is important.

We should not treat writing as a skill outside of an intellectual context. Too often writing courses are writing about nothing. Writing can best be taught when the student is interested in a topic or course; then the writing skills can be developed in a more effective way.

Why are quantitative methods highlighted for special "protection?" If we really want well-rounded students, they should have to take all sorts of methods.

With respect to question 37, I like Carleton's approach of writing portfolios. Or another option would be to have writing carefully analyzed in the FYC semester, and those students who do not meet a certain standard are then required to take a College Writing course. I would be happy to do this assessment in my FYC. In fact, I think it would be a big favor to those 3 or 4 students in a typical FYC who do not demonstrate sufficient writing skills. Right now, it's not always clear where to "send them" besides encouraging them to get writing help at the MAX center. A "College Writing" course would be great for meeting this need.

**46. If you have other suggestions regarding curricular renewal, please describe them:**

Any new curriculum needs to be: 1. sustainable (in terms of faculty commitment, resources, etc); 2. credit-neutral (no more onerous for students than the current requirements). 3. meaningfully but incrementally better than what we have (reform of what we have now rather than revolutionary transformation. Given the generally positive results of the alumni survey, We should be building on the existing curriculum in ways that enhance the educational experience we promise our students in the mission statement, statement of purpose and belief, etc). 4. largely rooted in the departmental structure/culture of the college (although with some significant trans-departmental elements such as the FY seminar);

Consider moving from a MWF/TR schedule to a MW/TR schedule whereby each 4 credit course would meet 3 hours per week but only 2 times per week. In short, everyone has a 3 day weekend if they wish.

Dare I say it? Can we bring back a modified version of J-term as an OPTION for students and faculty? It's a great time for immersion experiences.

Does variable credit mean only 2 versus 4 credit courses--we might discuss venues such as mini-courses (1 credit, 2 credit)

Field activities are incredibly difficult to run under the current system.

I am deeply concerned about the workload here across all ranks. We just add and add and add, never subtracting. This is absurd.

I think that discipline-specific knowledge enhances critical thinking and provides a basis for further growth. Therefore I think that courses within majors are best both for students specializing in specific fields and for those trying to understand how other disciplines work. Team-teaching and cluster courses can be interesting, of course, but they ought not to replace the curricular offerings within departments. I don't think they should be prioritized or institutionally encouraged (nor discouraged). The 2-credit course proposal seems worrisome: students are already spread thin through their varieties of interests and activities. If a student is taking 2-credit courses, he/she will be taking more individual courses. I'm not sure this helps give students the structure they need to go deeply and reflectively into their studies. While I have no strong attachment to the weekly schedule, I don't think that people are likely to attend non-required lectures. As it stands now, there are evening slots available for lectures. I wouldn't like to see instructional time squeezed or marginalized.

I think we should seriously re-think the discipline-department structure. We could consider gen ed courses that are interdisciplinary and develop critical thinking, writing, information literacy abilities while exploring a complex question or problem (e.g., race, gender, environment, political power, economic class, nature-nurture in human development, the construction of knowledge). Such questions could be framed around philosophical differences in epistemology and ontology that shape many of the different approaches of our current disciplines. Faculty from different disciplines could teach separate units of the course, with a faculty panel periodically meeting to discuss differences in their approaches during the semester. Truly move away from the way higher education has been organized since the 19th century toward a more inquiry-based approach that treats knowledge as complex, academic inquiry as multi-perspectival, and understanding as a process rather than a destination. This would radically transform the curriculum in interesting and exciting ways, rather than massage it into something like what we have but maybe better.

My sense so far is that curricular renewal is more about what is convenient for faculty than what is best for students, who should be more involved. The report is academically slim in principle and substance. I'd like to hear more about what counts as academic quality. There are real academic reasons Mac can't attract the most gifted students, no matter how good our price.

Strong (!) support for idea in #45!! [open slots in the weekly class schedule] We should have done this ages ago.

The whole point of a SMALL liberal arts college is to provide a personalized education -- not to create a one-set-of-lectures-and-experiences-fits-all curriculum.

We have many graduation requirements currently on the books, each of which could be successful and effective if it were properly managed. The problem with the current general education requirements is that no one knows what they are intended to accomplish (with the exception of the language requirement). This is what we should be discussing, not whether the distribution requirement should be changed from two courses per division to only one course. Putting new requirements on the books, simply replacing old ones with new ones, will not solve the problem. The goals that those new requirements are intended to meet still have not been described adequately. "Into the City" is the worst in this regard. The only thing that it seems to be designed for is to mark Macalester as unique due to its urban location. We haven't even examined what other schools --- after all, Mac isn't really unique --- have done with their urban environments. Locally, Augsburg already has something that sounds very much like "Into the City." Trinity has had such a program. And, of course, there are those other schools

that are also in an urban environment: Harvard, Yale, Columbia, UPenn. All of these have colleges of arts and sciences that are very much like a liberal arts college. Let's see how they exploit their urban environments. If they have been doing it, there will be some examples for us to follow (or avoid). If they haven't been doing it, we should step carefully and make sure that the benefits of investing in this direction exceed the costs. I haven't seen any indication that EPAG has conducted this important background work.

You all are doing very important, and quite frustrating work. Thank you.