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During the last five semesters, the Committee on Majors has reviewed twelve interdisciplinary majors and one interdisciplinary freshman program, Directed Studies. We submitted reports to the Dean of Yale College based on meetings with, and documentation from, students and faculty officials representing the thirteen enterprises as well as from officials of Yale administrative offices. The thirteen entities are as follows:

1. African Studies
2. Classical Civilization
3. Directed Studies
4. East Asian Studies
5. Environmental Studies
6. Ethics, Politics, and Economics (henceforth EPE; the commas can be confusing)
7. German Studies
8. International Studies
9. Judaic Studies
10. Latin American Studies
11. Literature
12. Russian and East European Studies
13. Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (henceforth WGSS)

(Note that the above list of interdisciplinary majors is not exhaustive. A few others have not been reviewed quite as recently.)

It is hard to generalize about this diverse group of enterprises. (For convenience, we will often refer to them collectively here as majors even though Directed Studies isn't one.) For one thing, there are differences in size. Directed Studies attracts 125 freshmen each year. International Studies and EPE, with respectively some 65 and 40 senior concentrators a year, rank among Yale's dozen most popular majors. The Literature major draws some 30 senior majors, East Asian Studies in the teens, Latin American Studies and Environmental Studies around 10, and the rest in smaller numbers. In the language instruction surrounding certain of these smaller majors, however, the numbers of students actually taught in the classroom can be high.

There are other differences. Uniquely on the list, International Studies is a secondary major—that is, students need to major also in something else in order to major in it. EPE has its own

financial resources, although that advantage needs continuing attention. The Classical Civilization, Literature, and German Studies majors are so closely associated with parent departments (Classics, Comparative Literature, and German Languages and Literatures) that their administrative and provisioning needs seem to be thus attended to. The good luck of being serviced by the MacMillan Center and its associated councils is enjoyed by five of the majors—International Studies and the four area studies majors, African Studies, East Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, and Russian and East European Studies—but not the rest. It is well to keep in mind that language facility beyond English is central to the life and justification of eight of these majors—Classical Civilization, Literature, Judaic Studies, German Studies, and the four area studies majors—although not the rest. In general, the thirteen interdisciplinary entities straddle the social sciences and the humanities, although the Classical Civilization and Literature majors are purely humanities concerns and Environmental Studies reaches into the natural sciences.

In the face of this diversity, our report offers generalizations across the majors we reviewed where that seems warranted yet we also point up particularities.

First, the bright side, and unquestionably it is a bright side. We found that these endeavors are flourishing intellectually. In our view, all the majors currently meet one key standard posed by the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Majors of 1999-2000: “An undergraduate major should be created or sustained only if it can be centered in a ‘community of discourse’ among scholars at Yale that promises...a distinctive advancement of knowledge.” Directed Studies and all the twelve majors are animated by a core, sometimes small to be sure, of committed faculty members joined in suitable discourse with enthusiastic students. These are majors that the students choose eyes-open rather than just fall into. Evident in each case, at the least, is a junction of various disciplinary treatments and ideas at an important subject area site that might not otherwise be frequented. In addition, the interdisciplinary majors complement the established departments by offering small comfortable venues, sometimes big questions, and intellectual breadth—although yes, the basic training afforded by the specialized departmental disciplines can be skimmed on. In the cases of several of these majors, students undertaking heavy basic language training are offered a suitable way to spread their wings beyond that. Directed Studies enriches the Yale environment in general with its colloquia. Directed Studies, International Studies, and EPE are said to be admissions magnets for some students deciding whether to come to Yale. Certain of the majors have been in motion. For example, WGSS has accordingly evolved as the parameters of its field have changed. International Studies, German Studies, and the Literature major have done thoughtful overhauls of their courses of study.

On the practical side, however, there are problems. This is notwithstanding the devotion and resourcefulness we saw in the faculty leaders of these various enterprises. Some of these problems will be further discussed in connection with our recommendations below, but we begin by enumerating them here, under three headings: faculty; management; and relations with the departments. Given that the interdisciplinary majors ordinarily operate at the mercy of the regular departments for faculty personnel and other resources, the specification of many of these problems will not cause great surprise.

1) Faculty:

- Notably in the large units Directed Studies and International Studies, although not just there, junior faculty positions shared with the regular departments raise questions about processes and standards for hiring, review, and promotion. More on this matter below, under recommendations.
- The sizes of the committed faculty cores of these interdisciplinary majors are often quite small, as can be indexed by gaps in course coverage, shortages of senior essay advisers, and taxing hunts for directors and DUSes. Pleas for additional faculty staffing came up in nine of our thirteen reviews. Concerns about limited course offerings came up in seven reviews.
- Especially in the small majors, crises can occur when key faculty members leave and the regular departments don't rush to replace them.
- By department standards, the interdisciplinary majors tend toward an unusual dependence on part-time or visiting instructors, which can make for volatility and unpredictability in the curriculum. Concern about such volatility surfaced in many of our reviews.
- Real commitment to these majors by faculty members in the regular departments, beyond appearing on lists, can be lean. This problem was noted in five of our reviews.
- Majors like these of a non-department-based sort may sag once their initial enthusiastic faculty founders disappear from the scene. These majors need to be watched.

2) Management:

- By department standards, the job description for DUSes is unusually demanding and duty-laden in many of these interdisciplinary contexts. Courses offered by a variety of departments need to be corralled into crosslists, farflung faculty members need to be stirred to do things, and advising of students can require complicated information about the larger Yale environment. In some cases, an admissions system needs to be attended to.
- Recruitment of DUSes is accordingly often difficult, not least for the added reason that good performance at an interdisciplinary post by a junior faculty member may go unnoticed or even be frowned upon by a home department. More on DUS matters below.
- Advising of students is often deficient. Not that this is an unknown state of affairs in Yale College generally. But it seems to reach an extreme in certain interdisciplinary contexts where underpowered junior faculty members are overworked and, faced by needs for scattered information, overwhelmed. Student complaints about advising, sometimes expressed in the strongest terms, arose in seven of our reviews. Discontinuity of advisers and inconstancy of advice stand out as concerns.
- Haphazard in some cases, at least in the testimony of students, is the crosslisting of relevant departmental courses thus rendering them countable toward an interdisciplinary major.

- Deficient in some cases, again in the testimony of students, is timely information flow about which courses are countable toward the interdisciplinary majors. Also said to be raggedly available are online syllabuses as a semester draws near.
- In the face of the above imprecisions, chronic ad hoc decision-making by DUSes regarding which courses count toward a major tends to burden the DUSes and confuse the students.
- Scheduling of courses can be a problem. Students cannot be expected to sit in two classrooms simultaneously, a difficulty that can arise and in one instance did, we were told, where the requirements of both an interdisciplinary major and a department needed to be satisfied.
- Website management associated with the majors ranges from excellent to poor. Given the reliance that today's undergraduates place on web-based information, many students raised a red flag here.
- For a wide variety of tasks, M&P administrators play a central role in the operations of the regular departments, not least in the training of chairs and DUSes. Certain of the interdisciplinary majors do not have access to adequate M&P assistance, and it shows.

3) Relations with the departments:

- Crosslisting or double-titling of courses requires the permission of departments elsewhere or their instructors. Sometimes those units or instructors say no, we were told, even if the courses are relevant or even needed in the interdisciplinary curriculum.
- In five of our reviews, students reported trouble getting into upper-level seminars run by the departments—even though by the criterion of subject area, they said, the seminars were needed as much by them as by the department's majors given priority by instructors understandably aiming to accommodate their own units' students. Complaints came from students in Latin American Studies, African Studies, East Asian Studies, International Studies, and EPE. A particular difficulty seems to arise where departments have pre-registration systems. We came to see a general problem of process here, even though, yes, students majoring in the regular departments often can't get into their own departments' seminars either.
- Agreements between the departments and the interdisciplinary majors regarding provision of faculty seem to attenuate as memories cloud and officials come and go.
- In our view, some of the large Yale departments do not play as much of a role in the interdisciplinary majors as they might. More on this matter below.

We intend this list of problems as a documentation of soft spots, not a catalogue of horrors. A list could be composed about the departments, too. We see the interdisciplinary majors as a benefit worth having and therefore a cost worth paying. In certain respects, they can be tuned up. Certain economies of scale might help. Certain renovations of rules might help. We see certain increments in costs as justifiable. We would be cautious, however, about adding new

interdisciplinary majors. Currently numbering some 75 units, Yale's overall system of undergraduate majors keeps a great many of us busy as planners, instructors, advisers, administrators, provisioners, and overseers. Even the very small majors can involve such costs as DUS duties, a tailored curriculum, and deflection of faculty personnel from the departments.

We offer the following recommendations:

Joint appointments:

Currently, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Tenure and Appointments Policy Committee is at work trying to reconfigure the Yale promotion and tenure system. We do not know how that will come out, but we sense an opportunity to fortify certain of the interdisciplinary entities. One possible recommendation from that committee is the creation of junior faculty positions that are defined upfront by subject area and tied to eventual tenure reviews employing those definitions. If so, a few of those positions might be crafted as genuinely joint between the departments and certain of the interdisciplinary enterprises. By genuinely joint, we mean equal participation and authority enjoyed by a relevant department and interdisciplinary unit in the devising of positions, in advertisements for faculty personnel, in lists of external referees and exemplars in promotion reviews, in committee processes addressing personnel, in planning the sequencing of decisions in hiring and reviewing, in the power to approve and veto decisions, and in reporting to the divisional appointments committees. A precise blueprint for such equal participation should not be beyond imagination. Joint hiring already exists in certain interdisciplinary venues, notably Directed Studies and International Studies, but we believe that the decision processes need to be firmed up. The recently announced initiative in the Humanities addresses the issue of hiring in Directed Studies and the Humanities major. The obvious locations for joint appointments are the exceptionally large interdisciplinary enterprises—EPE may be another candidate for joint hiring—but their reach need not stop there. As we see it, a few junior positions surely defined by subject area, attuned to the possibility of promotion, and anchored in procedural equality across units might help the interdisciplinary enterprises a good deal. It is a matter of incentives. Interdisciplinary research efforts as well as service to the interdisciplinary units might be better rewarded. We hasten to apply a warning label to this jointness scenario. All senior faculty members at Yale need to satisfy the criterion of premium research performance.

DUSes in the large majors:

In 2000, the Yale College faculty approved a requirement that a DUS in any major serving 5% or more of a Yale class as majors, in the second sense of that term, be tenured. That norm has largely been complied with. Since 2000, the International Studies major has flourished in reputation, expanded structurally, and graduated into this 5% territory. Given the decision of 2000 and the logic behind it, International Studies needs to have a tenured DUS. But that is not the end of the story. In our review work, we came to the firm conclusion that the DUS job in the large interdisciplinary majors is both more onerous (see our earlier comments) and less well incentivized—at least in cases of junior faculty members who may become orphaned from their home departments—than is the DUS job in regular departments of comparable size. We found EPE as well as International Studies to be a lay-down case for a tenured DUS. EPE is also large, attractive, and successful. In administrative terms, it is also busy and exacting. EPE does not cross the 5% threshold, but it serves some 40 students per class, and sophomores nudge into its

advising system making for as many as 120 constituents at a time. The 5% threshold needs to be lower for these two behemoths of the realm of interdisciplinary majors. Some of the smaller interdisciplinary majors would profit from having tenured DUSes also, but the case for the two largest ones is decisive.

M&P administration:

How about appointing a skilled M&P administrator to serve all the area studies majors? All four of them. (We wouldn't tamper with the administration of International Studies, which should be kept separate.) Tasks such as course scheduling, the mechanics of crosslisting and double-titling, routine advising, cluing in new DUSes, assisting study abroad, and timely posting on websites might be centralized. We do not mean to put the DUSes out of business. Plenty of scope would be left for DUSes in advising students, representing the major on hiring committees, teaching in a senior seminar, overseeing a senior essay program, interdepartmental diplomacy, choosing courses to crosslist, etc. As a package, the four area studies majors seem to invite such an economy of scale. A division of labor between an M&P and the DUSes would need to be perfected. The area studies majors are not the only ones where M&P assistance might be in order. We have supplied details in individual reports.

Websites:

Centralized help, possibly a common webmaster, seems to be warranted here, too. East Asian Studies has a gem of a website, but we found the websites of many other interdisciplinary majors, in and out of the MacMillan Center, to be wanting. Can something be done to bring the right expertise to bear in these various sectors?

Agreements with departments:

We recommend that the Yale College Dean's office and the Provost's office take steps to broker, formalize, and enforce agreements between the interdisciplinary majors and neighboring departments regarding the supply of resources and prerogatives, including access to departmental seminars. Environmental Studies offers a good model for such agreements.

Postdoctoral appointees:

We ask the Provost's office to consider whether certain of the interdisciplinary enterprises should come to rely more, or at all, on two-to-four-year postdoctoral fellows for instructors. Some of this is being done. Such positions can be valuable for young scholars getting their footing as they edge into teaching and writing.

Pedagogical support:

On the model of the Center for Language Study, might improved pedagogical support be supplied for faculty teaching in the interdisciplinary majors? On offer might be methodologies and technologies appropriate to interdisciplinary instruction, including team-teaching.

Listing of faculty associates:

It is our impression that the listing of faculty associates of interdisciplinary programs in the *Yale College Programs of Study* has gotten to be too casual. Pruning seems to be needed. We recommend that anyone thus listed meet at least one of the following criteria: a) X regularly teaches a course for the major or officially double-titles a course with it; b) X serves as DUS or director of the major; c) X regularly advises senior essays for the major; or d) X provides some other substantial and documentable service to the leadership of the major or to its students.

Departments be solicitous:

In general, we recommend that the departments take care to be solicitous toward the interdisciplinary majors. Rowboats washed over by liners is all too possible a relation. Noninvolvement can be a problem, too. We regret that the Economics department does not play more of a role in, for example, East Asian Studies and WGSS, and that the History department does not play more of a role in Directed Studies. We note that the MacMillan Center is being suitably solicitous.

New majors:

Anyone contemplating a new major should take care to consult the procedure laid out in the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Majors of 1999-2000. For one thing, a “feasibility study” is defined there and called for.

Monitoring of existent interdisciplinary majors:

More than is the case with the regular departments, at least on average, the interdisciplinary majors need to be monitored. This is at least because their resources can be lean, faculty commitment to them can be lean, the founding enthusiasms behind them can attenuate, and they can be rocked by exogenous events and actors. A dean or provost seeing any of various warning signs should be ready to trigger a review of a major by the Committee on Majors. Such signs might include a very low number of student majors for a few years, chronic difficulty in naming a DUS or director, chronic difficulty staffing required courses, or chronic difficulty in supplying needed information to students—as in website updating.

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