FINAL REPORT:
2015 FACULTY TASK FORCE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Submitted by
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The Faculty Task Force on the
Undergraduate Academic Experience

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Northwestern

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Executive Summary

OVERVIEW OF THE TASK FORCE: GENESIS, CHARGE, AND PROCESS

In February 2015, Provost Daniel Linzer appointed a Faculty Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Experience, with the charge to assess the undergraduate academic experience at Northwestern and develop recommendations for clarifying and advancing priorities for undergraduate education. The context for such a task force builds on the legacy of a similar committee convened in 1988 but recognizes new perspectives that have emerged as Northwestern has become one of the most selective universities in the nation, greatly expanded its academic and research profile, and become a more global institution. The Task Force, comprising faculty from Northwestern's seven undergraduate schools, student representatives, and ex officio representation from related administrative offices, was charged with engaging colleagues across the University in developing its recommendations, to be presented in a report to the provost by December 2015.

Members of the Task Force began their work by reviewing the 1988 *Report: Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience* (Heyck Report) and assessing its relevance to the current state of the undergraduate experience, the University, and higher education. Members reviewed student surveys and institutional and comparative data related to the group's charge, identifying subcommittees to address key areas of interest. The Task Force and its subcommittees engaged with faculty, students, University leadership, and staff—as individuals and in formal and informal groups—to seek a better understanding of critical issues and to identify additional topics for investigation. In addition to these meetings, the Task Force held open forums with students and faculty and created online mechanisms through which members of the University community could share questions and insights. Throughout this process, the Task Force met regularly to share and synthesize findings, identify topics of concern, and develop the ideas and recommendations presented in its report.

CRITICAL THEMES OF THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

One of Northwestern's most salient and attractive features is its extraordinary variety of academic programs—providing education in the liberal and fine arts, the social and natural sciences, engineering and applied science, the arts and science of communication, the performance and academic study of music, journalism and marketing, and education and social policy. While the kaleidoscopic nature of Northwestern's structure offers many benefits, it can also create conflicts for students seeking to take advantage of the many opportunities afforded them. As the Task Force considered how best to cultivate and support the environment for undergraduate education, critical themes emerged with regard to both the content of learning and the context for learning.

While decisions regarding curricular content reside with the faculty of each school, the Task Force perceives that it is also important for a Northwestern education to include certain broadly shared attributes and values, outlined in the following core learning outcomes:

- Disciplinary knowledge
- Facility with language, numbers, and technology
- Critical thinking
- A global sensibility
- Resilience and socioemotional development
- Ethics

In assessing the content and format in which learning takes place, the following issues emerged as critical factors to consider in any recommendations:

- Time: Many students and faculty members reported feeling overextended and desirous of greater time for synthesis and reflection.
- Efficacy of communication and ease of navigability: There is a need to increase awareness of and access to services, structures, and opportunities for students and faculty across the University.
- Consistency of priorities and values: Policies and structures should reflect a more consistent articulation of institutional priorities and values.
- Interpersonal connections: The undergraduate academic experience should cultivate interactions between and among students and faculty and create an environment of inclusion.

ISSUES AND PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force's recommendations can be grouped in three categories of recommended changes:

STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO BE MADE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

- Implement a Modified Quarter System—a "10-5-5-10" calendar—shifting the academic year approximately five weeks earlier than the current calendar.
- Align the graduation requirements that are common to all undergraduate schools through an Undergraduate Education faculty working group.
- Manage Workload Requirements:
    - Normalize AP credits accepted in all schools to unify the student experience.
    - Normalize the foreign language requirement across schools to enable all students to benefit as much as possible from their education in a foreign language.
    - Update and normalize distribution requirements across schools as a key step toward a unified and cohesive Northwestern experience.
- Manage the Workload Experience:
    - Maintain a reasonable academic workload for each course by limiting each one-credit course to an average of up to 10 committed hours per week.
    - Decrease the total required academic workload through school-specific reductions of required credits (where possible) or committed hours (elsewhere).
    - Make the workload more flexible by allowing courses to be dropped as needed, without unrelated long-term negative consequences related to financial aid.
- Enhance Advising
    - Provide resources to decrease the number of students seen by a single academic adviser.

        - Coordinate interactions among advisers, possibly through a personalized advising site for each student and/or a leadership position for facilitating, coordinating, and managing complications or ambiguities that arise from advising across academic structures.
    - Develop a set of "Common Experience" courses that would bring together students from multiple schools in one classroom.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED ISSUES

- Provide additional resources to increase the availability of counseling and psychological services, in terms of both the number of providers and session numbers.
- Support for teaching
    - Initiate a Continuing Higher Education Credits Program to foster and reward faculty for commitment to high-quality teaching, both within and outside the classroom.
    - Grant teaching credit for cross-departmental teaching and teaching in residential colleges and service learning courses (or the equivalent) to help address administrative barriers to experimental or creative teaching.
    - Make course evaluations (CTECs) compulsory.
    - Initiate a Teaching Fellows Program in which postdoctoral fellows would be trained and partly compensated to provide high-level teaching assistance in large courses.
- Expand and support undergraduate research opportunities.
- Space issues: to ensure that classroom space is ideally structured to support learning and teaching,
    - Build and/or renovate more classrooms, especially for class sizes of 30–50.
    - Create a Classroom Space Workgroup responsible for addressing changes in the *types* of spaces that are available at the University.
    - Evaluate the effectiveness of different uses and designs of learning spaces through the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning.

- Use Canvas for an online summer orientation course for newly arriving international students.
- Support assessment
    - Continue to support data collection and analysis to ensure the appropriate placement of students.
    - Provide clearly articulated grading policies in each class so that assessments are clearly linked to grades.
    - Continue to help faculty members clearly articulate learning goals or outcomes for each course and communicate these to students.
    - Encourage faculty to give specific thought to the forms of assessments and how these translate into grades.
- Assume financial responsibility for over-the-cap course materials cost above a reasonable cap for costs that students are expected to pay.
- Extend financial aid packages to a fifth year for Pell grant awardees who qualify for a BA/MA or BS/MS program.

CULTURAL SHIFTS TO ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC AND BROADER UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT

- Actively ensure that Northwestern's messages guide students toward balancing and benefiting from both individually focused and community-based elements of education.
- Continue to respond to technological developments and their effects on teaching and learning.

Appendix 1: "Recommendations Summary Table" summarizes the key issues identified by the Task Force and the proposals for addressing these concerns. (More detail on each proposal and other relevant considerations, including potential costs and benefits, can be found in the Recommendations section on pages 19–80 of the full report.)

Conclusions and Next Steps

This report represents the Task Force's efforts to meet the provost's charge. Having engaged colleagues across the University, identified issues, and discussed them deeply, we now offer a set of proposals that we believe have the potential to greatly enhance the Northwestern undergraduate academic experience. While making our recommendations with an eye toward implementation, we intentionally did not refrain from developing proposals that may be challenging to implement. It is our hope that the report will stimulate significant discussions among faculty, students, staff, and administrators regarding the value of the proposals as well as the specifics of how they may best be realized. We further hope that such discussions will result in the prioritization and implementation of the report's recommendations in a manner that has lasting, positive outcomes for the quality of the undergraduate academic experience at Northwestern.

Introduction

CHARGE, TIMELINE, AND OPERATION

A University-wide Faculty Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Experience (the UAE Task Force) was convened by Provost Daniel Linzer in February 2015. The most recent comprehensive examination of the undergraduate experience was carried out by a comparable group chaired by Professor T. William Heyck 27 years ago, from May 1987 to November 1988. That study, which culminated in an extensive report on the undergraduate experience, encompassed all aspects of a Northwestern undergraduate education, covering academics as well as student affairs.

Since 1988, the academic landscape at Northwestern has changed. The University has grown enormously along many dimensions, taking advantage of extraordinary advances in technology, unprecedented global connectedness, and the information revolution, all of which have shaped the institution's transition into the 21st century. Along with becoming more selective and more demographically diverse, Northwestern has greatly expanded its academic programs, its research endeavors, its cocurricular and extracurricular programs, its interdisciplinary and cross-institutional undertakings, its global scope, and its infrastructure for supporting these activities.

In light of these developments, Northwestern's senior administration determined that the University would benefit from a new examination of the undergraduate academic experience—an effort intended to produce changes that would maximize our ability to draw the best from all available opportunities, contend with arising challenges, and provide the most intellectually fulfilling, personally enriching, highest quality education possible for our students. The 2015 UAE Task Force was therefore given the more focused charge of assessing the academic component of the undergraduate experience (Appendix 2: "UAETF Charge"). The Task Force was nevertheless to consider, and to be informed by, ongoing initiatives and projects relating to student affairs that are currently being undertaken by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs as well as by specific schools. Along with its more defined scope, the 2015 UAE Task Force was designed to operate over a briefer time frame, of about 10 months, to permit a rapid initiation of projects and changes designed to make the undergraduate academic experience as engaging and stimulating as possible (Appendix 3: "High-Level Timeline").

The 13 faculty members on the 2015 UAE Task Force include representatives from each of Northwestern's undergraduate colleges in Evanston and Doha: Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS); McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science (McCormick); School of Communication (SoC); Bienen School of Music (Bienen); Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications (Medill); School of Education and Social Policy (SESP); and Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q); these

included representation from the Faculty Senate. Joining these faculty members were the associate vice president and dean of students, the associate provost for undergraduate education, and the associate provost of enrollment, as well as four student members: the academics vice president and, later, president and executive vice president of the Associated Student Government (ASG), and a graduate student representing the Graduate School (Appendix 4: "UAETF Membership").

The Task Force began by reading the 1988 report on the undergraduate experience and discussing attributes of that era's Northwestern experience that were still relevant as well as those that had clearly changed over the past quarter-century. Most members agreed that certain descriptions of culture, character, and aspiration that were pertinent in 1988 still hold true nearly three decades later; in other respects, such as technology, the world within and beyond Northwestern has unquestionably shifted. Nevertheless, we chose to use the categories identified by the 1988 report's chapter titles to form subcommittees that would examine certain subjects in detail: General Description of Curriculum, Curriculum Competencies, Undergraduate Research, Calendar and Workload, Pedagogy, and Faculty Resources. To these categories, we added Wellness as it relates to academics, because the provost and several faculty, student, and administrative Task Force members had identified this subject as one meriting examination.

Over the spring quarter and early summer, the Task Force read student surveys and summary data (provided through the associate provost of enrollment, the associate provost for undergraduate education, the Office of Institutional Research, the Division of Student Affairs, and specific schools), met as subgroups to discuss specific issues pertinent to topics of interest, and held group interviews with selected representatives from several groups, such as the Undergraduate Council, the vice president of student affairs, and representative professors, students, and staff who had particular expertise of interest to the Task Force. In addition, a request was made through the Faculty Senate for input from the larger faculty community. Over the next months, detachments of the Task Force met with the deans of each of the seven undergraduate schools as well as the registrar, the directors of CAPS, the director of Global Marketing, and representatives from the Women's Center, among others. Meanwhile, the subgroup meetings continued throughout the late spring and summer. In the fall quarter, the Task Force organized an open forum for students as well as two open forums for faculty members. Each forum was designed to allow attendees to communicate their specific interests, concerns, and suggestions directly to the Task Force, and each was followed by a period when written comments and suggestions could be submitted by those who could not attend in person or who wished to expand on previous comments; some of these communications are included in the report. Through the late fall quarter, the reports from subgroups were combined, and proposals were examined in detail, discussed, evaluated, expanded, edited, and finalized. This document presents the results.

Given that our charge was to address the undergraduate academic experience as it pertains to all members of the University community, we Task Force members committed ourselves not only to representing our respective school, disciplinary approach, academic level, or position but also—taking the idea of "representation" seriously—to functioning as a microcosm of our ideal of the Northwestern community. To do this, we made a conscious and collective effort to be open and aware enough to fairly and thoughtfully represent even perspectives and experiences that are not our own. Throughout the process, various members sought opportunities to talk individually with others in the University community and to bring a consciousness of the Task Force's charge to our other activities, such as teaching, gathering with students, and attending faculty meetings and faculty Senate meetings. We then presented what we had learned from listening to others, even anecdotally, to the rest of the group, as an antidote to excessive generalization and in an effort to expand our views of the University, thereby improving our ability to fulfill the responsibilities with which we were charged.

This report therefore expresses the Task Force's collective ideas. As would be expected in a discussion of complex subjects, Task Force members often expressed differing yet valid perspectives. Together, we strove to be responsive to disparate viewpoints while still achieving a meaningful synthesis and offering concrete proposals. Where consensus was reached, proposals are stated explicitly; where goals were agreed upon but the ideal means of achieving them remained under debate, multiple options are listed, noting benefits and considerations for each. We hope both classes of recommendations will be further examined, shaped, and refined by members of the University community. With an awareness of the range of legitimate needs and concerns within the University, we have tried wherever possible not to be prescriptive but to propose structures and contexts in which University constituents can exercise their own creativity to achieve the desired ends.

As an acknowledgment of the intertwined and overlapping nature of many issues considered by the subgroups, the report is organized according to broad topic areas rather than by the subjects each subgroup examined. Before proceeding to the proposals, we begin by summarizing the background ideas that fueled much of our thinking and provided the basis for our analysis.

BACKGROUND, ASPIRATIONS, AND COMMON THEMES

The Task Force's meetings with students, faculty, administrators, and staff, as well as our readings of surveys of enrolled students and graduating seniors, made it evident that there is no "average" Northwesterner among students, faculty members, administrators, nor staff, and therefore that no generalization can be accurately applied to everyone. That some students are satisfied with one aspect of the University does not mean that all are; and that some processes work for certain individuals does not mean they serve everyone. Nevertheless, even taking into account the variability of perception, certain common themes have emerged as worthy of consideration. Our summary of these themes extracts from them the areas that can and ought to be addressed. The recommendations in the subsequent sections are an effort to address these points and define ways to make the best of Northwestern more widely experienced and translated into something appealing and meaningful for everyone in the University community.

Even a cursory examination of Northwestern University reveals one of its most salient and attractive features: its extraordinary variety of academic programs. The seven undergraduate schools, which comprise approximately 8,000 undergraduate students and 1,500 faculty in Evanston and Doha, provide education in the liberal and fine arts, the social and natural sciences; engineering and applied science; the arts and science of communication; the performance and academic study of music; journalism and marketing; and education and social policy. Many students apply to Northwestern because of the diverse options offered by the University as a whole, but many others apply because of their interest in a particular school—demonstrating that each school, as a discrete entity, has an outstanding national and international reputation. In the words of the 1988 undergraduate experience report, "Northwestern is like a federation of autonomous colleges, each with its own academic ethos—its own sense of what is a good educational idea." This dispersion of mission is still evident today, yet from the separate schools a broadly distributed Northwestern emerges, whose ranking, funding, stature, and attraction are considerably higher today than 27 years ago.

The high standards for admission to Northwestern, as well as the increased competitiveness of applications to top research universities in general, make it almost inevitable that any given Northwestern student excels in multiple areas, creating an environment of highly talented students with unusual and exciting combinations of strengths. Students vary, however, in their approach to Northwestern: some plan to expand specific talents that have already been cultivated by years of directed training (e.g., performance in music or theater), some have focused goals involving one or more disciplines (e.g., medical school, engineering, journalism), and still others arrive ready to sample and explore the wealth of possibilities available, with the intention of selecting one or more paths to pursue. Regardless of their long-term plans' degree of definition, the vast majority of Northwestern students are motivated, ambitious, and eager to make a difference in the

world. The Northwestern faculty parallels the student body: as members of a university known for both teaching and scholarship, many faculty members, too, are striving for and achieving success in multiple arenas, with many of these successes translating into expanded offerings for students.

Because the possible combinations across disciplines are so great and so enticing, the potential scope of any one student's education is extremely broad (Appendix 5: "Number of Majors and Minors Available in Undergraduate Schools"). In addition to pursuing multiple majors and minors, students can engage in dozens of courses and activities, in-class and out-of-class learning, pragmatic training for professions and pursuits for personal enrichment, intellectual growth and social interactions, goal-oriented labor and restorative leisure, productivity and time for deep reflection. These all are desirables that can and do coexist: while some pairs can be viewed as opposites, they are opposites that complement each another, the one providing the power to renew focus on the other. Nevertheless, the components of these pairs also have the capacity to move in and out of conflict with one another. When these conflicts arise, active effort is required to prevent the very features that attract students (and faculty) to Northwestern from becoming either too demanding or excessively constraining. To maximize the benefits that can be extracted from the wealth of options available, Northwestern's responsibility—while celebrating its inherent complexity and honoring the kaleidoscopic nature of the multischool system—is to acknowledge, examine, understand, and thereby transcend these apparent conflicts.

The consensus of the Task Force is that we must create a place where education encompasses both teaching—meaningful communication, learning, interaction, and inquiry in the classroom—and research—scholarship, creativity, discovery, exploration, and design. Both teaching and research in turn extend into active service to or enrichment of communities, both locally and globally. Northwesterners must be a set of people—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—who work together across stages of life and academic positions, each acknowledging the others' role in creating a flourishing university. Together, we must willingly and confidently manage, and help each other manage, the linked nature of teaching and research, of the curricular and the cocurricular. This goal can be achieved by recognizing the role, time, and context for each. Together, they can produce an undergraduate educational experience that cultivates the mind and provides a foundation for lifelong growth yet can be translated into practical skills for securing a livelihood and coping mechanisms for the uncertainties of postgraduate life.

All undergraduates coming through Northwestern should receive, and generate, a personalized education that permits them to realize their distinct potential. At the same time, these individual experiences will, ideally, be contextualized and made more meaningful through shared experiences. We can achieve this end by providing a structured, stable, united framework upon which students can build their innumerable paths and create a community of understanding and mutual respect that enhances achievement with humanity.

COMPONENTS OF THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Generally speaking, the academic experience has two elements: (1) the content of learning, including the material and skills that are taught and studied, both inside and outside the classroom, and (2) the context for learning, including the environment in which learning takes place, which extends to issues of wellness and accessibility.

Regarding the content of learning, Northwestern's academic aspiration, as commonly understood, is to provide the strongest possible education—one that emphasizes depth and breadth of knowledge; that incorporates a historical awareness leading into an appreciation of current issues within and beyond a discipline; and that fosters meaningful reflection, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and professional and intellectual preparedness in postgraduate life. While the Task Force recognized that decisions regarding the specifics of curricular content reside with the faculty of each school, its members nevertheless agreed that it would be desirable for a Northwestern education to include some features that are broadly shared and that therefore serve to unify all people at the University. At the same time, many thought that an extreme of uniformity would be neither feasible nor beneficial. We therefore made an effort to identify areas and forms of mastery that would likely be valued across schools and disciplines, with the idea that an articulation of such principles might spur a reexamination of curriculum in all the colleges. With this motivation, we agreed on a set of general learning outcomes: disciplinary knowledge; facility with language, numbers, and technology; critical thinking; a global sensibility; resilience and other elements of socioemotional development; and ethics. These topics, which are further discussed below, may serve as a broad guide for what an undergraduate education at Northwestern might reasonably be expected to provide.

Regarding the context for learning, over the course of our discussion and study of all aspects of the academic experience, repeated themes included the following:

1. **Time.** Even as most students and faculty members take pleasure or derive satisfaction from much of what they do, they are often overextended and sometimes overwhelmed. For students, the overextension comes from juggling courses and activities and is often intensified by the addition of domestic or family responsibilities, specific preparations for their next professional stage, or paid work that is often necessary for their continued education. It is worth noting that, given the significant financial burden of tuition and other costs, few students can alleviate these pressures simply by prolonging time they spend at Northwestern. Consequently, students may have a limited opportunity to integrate, retain, and absorb the full value of all that they learn. For faculty members, a parallel sense of overextension comes from simultaneously fulfilling classroom teaching and research responsibilities in conjunction with domestic or family duties, mentoring roles, and

administrative or other service obligations at the departmental, university, national, and global level. In fact, faculty members note that if they had more time, they could offer students more to help them reinforce, develop, and make use of what they have been taught. Members of both groups indicate that the most desirable outcomes of the Task Force's recommendations would be proposals for mitigating this extreme busy-ness and for generating mechanisms by which students and faculty alike can reserve time for meaningful synthesis and shared reflection.

2. **Efficacy of communication and ease of navigability.** Many services, structures, and opportunities desired by students and faculty already exist at Northwestern, but two problems are consistently revealed: first, not all the constituents for whom any service was developed are aware of its existence, and second, gaining access to the service is frequently hampered by inadequate communication or complexities of accessibility and/or administration. Many people, from students to deans, commented on their uncertainty about who is in charge of a particular effort and the difficulty of identifying such persons; conversely, administrators and especially faculty members are often unsure as to when they are or are not authorized to take an action or finalize a decision. Continued improvements in communication and navigability, as well as development of more formal structures, may allow a wider range of Northwesterners to take advantage of the myriad opportunities available.

3. **Consistency of priorities and values.** Students and faculty alike express difficulty in interpreting the signals that ideally would let them determine when and to what extent their efforts are aligned with the University's priorities and values, particularly if several desirable goals or actions temporarily conflict or interfere with one another. A more consistent articulation of priorities and values—not only by assertion but also through action, reinforcement, and support—would be welcomed in many arenas. These include, but are not limited to, interactions among schools, including student transfers, cross-registrations, and faculty joint-teaching endeavors; how much breadth versus depth of study students should be encouraged to pursue; what constitutes necessary or ideal preparation for students' achievement of postgraduate goals; whether a course's mission has been fulfilled as judged by grades for students and assessments for, by, and of faculty; the extent to which faculty effort can and should go toward teaching and/or research; and how credit and rewards for all faculty are determined.

4. **Interpersonal connections.** The desire for being understood, listened to, appreciated, and supported, at both a personal and professional level, makes itself felt in many ways. Beyond being a basic human need, this sense of connection and the resulting openness of communication can provide an excellent and meaningful context for the consolidation of knowledge and for discovery in all its forms and thus should be cultivated and supported throughout the University.

    a. Multiple lines of evidence support the idea that students derive great value from developing sustained relationships with faculty members, who may either guide them through a specific component of their training (e.g., supervising a research project, coaching them in musical performance) or who as teachers or advisers may simply talk informally but repeatedly with them one-on-one and know something of their experiences. These one-on-one interactions over time provide the backdrop for students to work in an open-ended fashion with subject matter, skills, ideas, and points of view in an individualized yet mentored way, mimicking the best elements of apprenticeship. Such interactions thus form the gateway to creativity. Additionally, the awareness that even a single postgraduate person is aware of and cares about their aspirations, efforts, and setbacks appears to be an effective antidote to students' intermittent but inevitable human experiences of discouragement or isolation.

    b. Many faculty members engage in innovative forms of education and regularly communicate with students. They nevertheless indicate that their morale, and consequently their motivation for such efforts, would be increased by opportunities to exchange ideas about education with faculty colleagues. A further incentive would be overt expressions demonstrating that their daily efforts to serve students and achieve broader University goals—even those that do not garner outside recognition—are acknowledged and valued.

    c. Many students, faculty, and staff express a wish for acknowledgment, appreciation, and understanding of the perceptions and experiences associated with their various backgrounds and identities. An atmosphere of inclusion for members of all social groups and identities represented on campus is central to the academic experience of all members of the University community. Importantly, the needs of students from historically underrepresented and disadvantaged minority groups must be recognized and addressed, no less than the needs of the overarching University community.

The creation of an academic experience that is cohesive yet elastic, deeply rigorous yet broadly enriching—one that is meaningfully guided yet allows growth—depends not only on structures but also on attitudes. Thus, for example, in considerations of workload, the absolute amount of the workload is pertinent, but so is its delivery, its reception, its perception, and the extent to which its content is prescribed or constrained. These matters are inextricable from one another. For convenience, certain sections below focus mostly on quantity and form while other sections address the less tangible matters, but both categories are considered throughout.

With these ideas in mind, the Task Force has developed a series of recommendations designed to permit Northwestern undergraduate students—along with the faculty and postgraduate trainees who help educate them—to have a more unified, navigable, mentored, shared, and supported experience, while retaining students' freedom to choose and develop individualized courses of study. These include (1) making structural changes at the University level to modify certain aspects of the calendar, curricular requirements, and advising structures that affect all students; (2) initiating projects and programs that will facilitate development of intellectual abilities, support faculty members in their interactions with students, ensure the availability of Northwestern's offerings to all students, and help define and generate an overarching and connected Northwestern experience; and (3) addressing the intangibles of Northwestern's culture to make it a vibrant and welcoming environment for students, faculty, administrators, and staff alike, characterized by intellectual excitement, a sense of belonging, and mutual goodwill.

Recommendations

A. MODIFYING THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic experience at Northwestern University is shaped significantly by its academic calendar. The schools in Evanston currently operate on a quarter system, with classes running for 10 weeks—some schools using a portion of the 10th week for a reading period—and final exams in the 11th week. Most full-time students are in attendance during the fall, winter, and spring quarters. The most common course load for a full-time student is four standard courses, i.e., each course counting for one credit and meeting for three hours per week; it is on this standard schedule, with minor variations, that the various Evanston schools base their graduation requirements. The campus in Doha, which operates on a semester system, is a significant exception to this pattern.

Comments from and surveys of Evanston students indicate that, despite some acknowledged drawbacks, they strongly favor the quarter system over the prospect of a semester system. As one student wrote to the forum website:

> *Academically, I love the quarter system… However, it is a bit short in terms of being able to develop relationships with faculty and peers. Since the quarter goes by so quickly…I found myself not feeling very close to many of the people I interacted with over my time here… The faculty I've had the opportunity to meet have all been wonderful and seem to really care about sharing their knowledge with their students…. I just wish I had more chances outside of course-related things to interact with them, because they're amazing individuals.*

Moreover, of 1,645 students who responded to ASG's 2014–15 Annual Survey, 62.5 percent indicated a preference for the quarter system, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement "I would prefer having two semesters to three quarters." Only 20 percent agreed or strongly agreed with that statement, and 17 percent were neutral (Appendix 6: "Student Survey on the University Calendar System"). The most frequently cited advantage of the quarter system is, perhaps not surprisingly, the variety it affords; when students enroll in three quarters per academic year rather than two semesters, they may sample up to 50 percent more subjects than their peers at semester schools. A less positive expression of enthusiasm for the quarter system comes from students and faculty who point out that if a course turns out to be unappealing, either because of subject matter or its presentation, the experience is briefer than on a semester schedule.

The quarter system is not without its complications, though. The first relates to the timing of the school year. The Northwestern academic calendar starts and ends later than that of most universities on the semester system, many of which begin in the third week of August and complete their graduations by mid-May (Appendix 7: "Semester Academic Calendars 2015-2016"). Northwestern's fall quarter usually begins more than a month later, in late September, and ends in the second week of December. After a break of about three weeks, winter quarter begins a few days after New Year and runs until mid-March. After a one-week break, the spring quarter runs from late March until mid-June. The spring final exam period is followed by Senior Week, with Commencement and school convocations on the third or fourth weekend in June. Owing in part to Senior Week, the Northwestern academic year ends even later than most comparable schools on the quarter system (e.g., the University of Chicago, Stanford, Dartmouth, the University of California system), which hold their graduations no later than early June (Appendix 8: "Quarter Academic Calendars 2015-2016").

The late-shifted school year introduces four differences from most peer institutions, and these can pose significant problems to individual students. First, the time from the beginning of winter quarter to the end of spring quarter is nearly six full months, with only a one-week break. In an already dense schedule, this long stretch can impede the consolidation and retention of the knowledge and skills that students came here to seek; morale during this period is not helped by the late Chicago spring. Second, the late end date puts students out of synchrony with peers with regard to summer internships and other programs; consequently they are sometimes unable to compete successfully for these opportunities. The Dean of Students Office further reports that many students feel compelled to graduate a quarter early in order to accommodate employment that begins in May or early June; for those who do not, Northwestern Career Advancement sometimes arranges for final exams to be taken in other cities to align with job start dates.

Third, the late fall-quarter start date results in a shorter period for recruiting events on campus; according to Northwestern Career Advancement, most employers wish to complete their fall recruiting by November 1, and Northwestern must condense these visits into two to three weeks to accommodate recruiters' schedules; moreover, time is limited for Career Advancement to help students prepare for interviews before this period. In addition, in ASG's 2014–15 Annual Survey, fully 73 percent of the 1,645 responding students agreed with the statement that they would "prefer to start school early to have breaks during the fall quarter," with 11 percent neutral and 16 percent disagreeing (Appendix 6: "Student Survey on the Undergraduate Calendar System").

Fourth, as mentioned, although the main attraction of the quarter system is that students can take a larger number of courses than at semester schools, the shorter duration of these courses mandates a rapid pace and can lead to an associated sense of being rushed. In many cases, the swift progress of the quarter can be invigorating and galvanizing; in many other cases, it can not only increase the risk of falling behind but also limit time and opportunities for synthesis and in-depth exploration. The inevitable coincidence of mid-quarter assessments in multiple classes, especially midterms, can detract from students' ability to engage fully with each assessment.

In fact, independent of direct considerations of the calendar, both students and faculty members expressed interest in devising ways to find time for consolidation and/or implementation of the knowledge, ideas, and skills introduced in the classroom. Both groups also indicated that they would value more chances for students in different schools to interact within a class, perhaps with multiple instructors representing distinct areas of expertise, exploring a multidisciplinary topic in detail from different perspectives. As one student commented at the forum:

> *I think we should have some sort of dedicated time for students to pursue… a specific narrowed-down interest together. Professors [could] hold small lectures on their research topics or their topics of particular interest to them and the students could sign up to go to different lectures…things that pique their interest. We sort of just try to get through the quarter here sometimes. I think having that [space] to try something new, try something very focused and specific—I think it could be very valuable to the entire community, even if it is just one day. I think that could open up a lot of doors in terms of research and other things for students too.*

Likewise, enthusiasm was expressed for creating opportunities to take on the world as a classroom—not in the form of events distinct from or competing with coursework, but by fostering professor-led training in relevant contexts: for example, international experiences, field studies of any kind, extended or open-ended laboratory research that goes beyond an exercise or a demonstration, or a brief performance circuit. The Task Force's challenge was to envision a means to improve opportunities for access to these academic experiences, yet by a mechanism that does not detract from the rest of the curriculum nor add to the already intense schedule. Some schools, such as Johns Hopkins and MIT, achieve some of these goals through an "intersession" between fall and spring semesters, when students can engage deeply with a single topic, at least for a short time—perhaps, in some cases, with alternative forms of assessment (discussed in a separate section). That such an idea was cited favorably by both faculty members and students at Northwestern suggests that, when well planned, such experiences can be meaningful, even if relatively brief.

PROPOSAL A1: ADOPT A "10-5-5-10" CALENDAR.

The potential benefit to the Northwestern community of a change in the academic calendar was probably the most widely agreed-upon point the Task Force encountered. Nevertheless, although many criticized its rapid pace and its late end date, few students, faculty members, or administrators wished to do away with the quarter system altogether. Therefore, in considering alternatives that would provide the best of both worlds, the Task Force came up with an outline for an innovative calendar system, dubbed "10-5-5-10."

Dates. In the proposed calendar, the academic year would be shifted approximately five weeks earlier than the current calendar, to start in late August and end in late May, so that there would be 15 weeks before the New Year's break and 15 weeks thereafter. *This would align the timing of the school year with that of most semester schools.* The year would be composed of a 10-week fall session, a 5-week early-winter session, a 5-week late-winter session, and a 10-week spring session, with 1 credit earned per 10 weeks, as in current practice. Because credit awarded per time in class would not change, this system would not be expected to affect teaching loads.

Fall and spring quarter courses would be unchanged, except for the dates. Specific dates would be determined by the registrar, in consultation with faculty. Special considerations might include an appropriate gap for Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, whose dates are currently a factor in scheduling the start of fall quarter, and the duration of reading periods, which might be shortened to less than a full week.

The general outline might proceed as follows. Classes would begin in late August. A one-week break (approximately the first week of November) would separate the fall and early-winter sessions. The early-winter session would end with a one-week examination period, followed by a 10- to 14-day break—with no assignments—that includes Christmas and New Year's. The late-winter and spring sessions would be separated by a 7- to 14-day break, beginning near the last week of February (two weeks would be preferable, pending time in the schedule). Spring session would begin in early March, with finals in the third week of May. Graduation would take place near Memorial Day weekend. Ideally, classes would also be suspended on Labor Day Monday, Thanksgiving Wednesday through Friday, and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Monday (Appendix 9: "Sample 10-5-5-10 Calendar").

Structure of the Winter Quarter. The winter quarter would be most significantly changed, as it would be split into two 5-week sessions, separated by a midwinter break that would encompass Christmas and New Year's, much as spring break interrupts the spring semester at many other institutions. The early- and late-winter sessions, however, have the special feature of offering possibilities for either a traditional or a progressive approach. In the traditional approach, current 10-week winter-quarter courses could be taught exactly as they are at present, except that midterms or midquarter project due dates could be scheduled for a dedicated examination period just before the midwinter break, providing the advantage of more time for preparation.

Alternatively, the early- and late-winter sessions could be used to teach 5-week .5-credit sessions. The Task Force emphasizes that these 5-week sessions would *not* be accelerated quarter-long courses, as this approach would introduce still more of a sense of rush, defeating the purpose of a new calendar structure. Instead, these short courses would be designed to provide an in-depth or exploratory study of a specific topic, more limited in scope than a usual quarter course. One possible type of course, relating to the Task Force's discussion of curricular content, might be "Common Experience" courses, which would bring students from different schools together to study a yearly "theme" from different perspectives (discussed below in *Section B, "Achieving a cohesive, consolidated academic experience across schools").* These courses might provide a context for faculty members from different disciplines to come together and coteach, offering unusual and rich experiences to students from a variety of backgrounds, while requiring a relatively short time commitment from each faculty member.

Among the many other ideas for 5-week sessions that have been suggested by faculty members, including those not on the Task Force, are a focused study of a single book or artist, a 5-week preview of basic evolutionary and organismal biology prior to more concentrated specialty biology courses, or a 5-week preparatory course, followed by a 5-week experience away from Northwestern for global or other field experiences that are long enough to be substantive but brief enough to be accommodated into dense schedules. That last option, however, is predicated on the assumption that for-credit work sufficient to round out a schedule could be done at a remote site or forgone, which may not always be the case. One advantage of the 5-week sessions is that a pair of 5-week courses, taken along with a set of standard 10-week courses, may provide a welcome breakup of students' winter-quarter schedules. Perhaps more importantly, introducing 5-week sessions into the academic calendar may inspire a wide range of creative and exploratory courses and provide an exciting and progressive structure that might ultimately be seen as unique to Northwestern.

A final possibility that is compatible with the 10-5-5-10 calendar would be that some courses might run as 15-week sessions (1.5 credits each), combining the fall and early-winter sessions (a "long-fall session") or the late-winter and spring sessions (a "long-spring session"). This approach might be particularly—or exclusively, at least in the early phases of transition—suitable for those courses that currently run as yearlong sequences of three 10-week sessions (one credit each, for a total of three credits). Such a structure would have the advantage of allowing the material to be spread out over a period not constrained by the 10-week midterm and final period, possibly shifting exams from the usual pile-up at the 5-week mark, and possibly also allowing more continuity. Once the administrative aspects of such a system were in place, a student's year might ultimately include any combination of 10-week, 5-week, and 15-week courses that fill the 30-week year. It is important to emphasize, however, that a change in calendar would offer the option for 5- or 15-week sessions but would not mandate changes in any specific courses.

Costs and benefits. Making such a transition would be a major change with significant hurdles. Meetings with the registrar and related staff indicate that it would require careful consideration of factors such as start times of student health insurance (currently September 1), times and extents of registration and withdrawal dates (especially for 5- and 15-week courses), special cases such as credit assignment for students dropping 5- or 15-week classes, and the specific timing of the calendar to accommodate summer programs. In addition, the alignment of an undergraduate 10-5-5-10 with the Graduate School, Kellogg School of Management, Feinberg School of Medicine, and other schools that link to the Evanston undergraduate calendar would have to be taken into consideration. Finally, Bienen School of Music administrators raised a specific concern about a shift in timing of required student performances and the possibility of added practice requirements for performance students over breaks. These concerns must be considered, with input from Bienen School constituencies, if discussion of this proposal proceeds.

Other administrators, faculty members, deans, and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff members who were informally polled have greeted this possibility with responses ranging from interest to strong enthusiasm. Excluding administrative hurdles, the break in the middle of 10-week winter courses is seen as the biggest academic drawback; but in discussions to date, the benefits have largely been perceived as outweighing this disadvantage, and the spring breaks at semester schools offer a somewhat reassuring analogy.

The 10-5-5-10 calendar would solve several of the problems raised above:

1. Ending the year in late June either makes our students ineligible for summer internships or jobs with early summer start dates, compels them to graduate a quarter early, or obliges them to arrange to complete spring-quarter classes early, which places an extra demand on faculty members, administrators, and students alike. The 10-5-5-10 calendar would solve this problem by aligning the timing of Northwestern's academic year with other schools so that our students would no longer be at a competitive disadvantage.
2. The stretch from the beginning of the winter quarter immediately after New Year to the end of the spring quarter in mid-June, combined with the accelerated pace of the quarter system and with a single one-week break, can have a negative impact on the wellness of students, faculty, and others subject to the academic schedule. The 10-5-5-10 calendar would shorten this stretch and break it up (ideally with a 2-week break between the late-winter and spring sessions). In addition, it has the potential to introduce potentially stimulating variety to the winter sessions.
3. The short window for fall recruiting and interview preparation that results from the academic year's late start would be lengthened. The longer time period for both these activities could increase opportunities to help students feel less rushed.
4. As mentioned, in the current quarter system, the coincidence of midquarter assessments in multiple classes, especially midterms, can reduce students' ability to maximize learning in their courses. For 10-week winter-quarter courses, the 5-5 quarter would introduce a formal midterm or finals period, allowing students to focus on mastery of five weeks of work without juggling classes. It would also provide a midquarter breather. For 15-week courses, the timing of fall and winter exams could shift, allowing for a more leisurely pace. For 5-week courses, the schedule would offer the possibility of a different approach to learning, one directed toward depth instead of breadth, limited only by the imagination of instructors and students.
5. Finally, at Northwestern's international campus in Qatar, 15-week-long semesters stretch from late August to early December and from mid-January to early May, to align with academic calendars at other institutions in Doha's Education City. The proposed calendar shift for Evanston would put Northwestern's main-campus schedule more or less in synchrony with the calendar at NU-Q. This shift would ease one of the significant logistical barriers—misaligned schedules—to the interchange of students and faculty between campuses. In addition, it would introduce the possibility of implementing a 10-5-5-10 calendar at NU-Q.

Thus, the 10-5-5-10 calendar would maintain the variety and options that are attractive about 10-week courses and should alleviate the negative aspects of the late start and end dates, the long winter-spring stretch, the inevitable overlap of assessments, and the overlap of the onset of the fall quarter with the Jewish high holidays. It may also offer an alternative that is unique to Northwestern, creating options for developing new course structures that acknowledge and provide a structure for progressive teaching, experimental courses, and the changing landscape of teaching, including cross-school integrated learning opportunities and global studies.

B. ACHIEVING A COHESIVE, CONSOLIDATED ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE ACROSS SCHOOLS

Interviews, open forums, and surveys all revealed that students and faculty alike would value more opportunities to interact and learn across schools and disciplines. Many would also appreciate a larger number of organized contexts for developing their identity as Northwesterners. The two fundamental underlying components to be addressed in this context are people's sense of time and sense of place.

Regarding time, as mentioned in the introduction, students and faculty alike comment repeatedly on their sense of rush, which emerges not only from the quantity of responsibilities they fulfill but also the required proportions of these responsibilities.

Regarding place, the separation of schools is frequently cited as detracting from students' identity as Northwesterners and loyalty to the institution as a whole. Indeed, students and faculty alike do not experience a single Northwestern but several distinct Northwesterns, depending on which school admits or hires them. In general, students, faculty, and staff voiced the wish for reducing administrative barriers between schools (including transfers, taking courses in other schools, and cross-school teaching) and, more generally, expressed enthusiasm for making the experience across schools more shared and less divisive.

One idea raised externally for combatting this division of the University is *single-point admissions,* in which students would apply to the University as a unit and join specific colleges only after arrival. The strongest justification for this approach is to create a more unified college experience. It was not altogether clear to the Task Force, however, that this simple structural change would achieve the desired end. Additionally, the Task Force identified three broad complications presented by single-point admissions. The first issue is that one of Northwestern's strengths is the diversity of its curriculum, including such nationally recognized schools and programs as the Bienen School of Music, the Medill School, and the theatre program in the School of Communication, among others. The current admissions process, albeit complicated, it is currently structured so that each school enrolls a targeted number of students. A single-point admissions procedure would necessitate a common set of admission criteria, regardless of the intended field of study, and would run the risk of making the student population more homogeneous. While this approach might make the University more selective from the perspective of incoming students' grades and credentials, it might also reduce the admission of students of distinction, i.e., those with a particular talent or skill in one specific area. As a consequence, some schools and majors would likely undergo significant attrition, decreasing academic diversity. This outcome would be undesirable.

The second issue is that students are currently more or less assured of admission to their major of choice, owing to careful admissions processes (in the most extreme case, the music school requires a precise number of students yearly who play particular instruments). Because of some majors' limited enrollment capacities, students might be forced to compete for access to majors, which would (1) add yet another layer of competition and uncertainty to an already competitive environment and (2) deter some applicants from choosing Northwestern, especially if they have a guaranteed entry into their desired major elsewhere. Some of these problems could be mitigated within the admissions process by continuing to parse students into their likely final schools. Since applicants would not be providing explicit information about their school of choice, however, the admissions office would be required to replicate the current process but with lower- quality data, an outcome that would likely cause complications later.

The third issue is the question of what the first-year curriculum would be for students not yet incorporated into specific schools. On the one hand, the curriculum might be relatively unspecified, maximizing options for students to choose their own courses, but this approach is unlikely to generate a cohesive experience for students with varying interests. On the other hand, a more specific set of first-year requirements could be developed, to which all incoming students would adhere. Indeed, some Task Force members felt that Northwestern should institute a core curriculum, to be taken by all students regardless of the admissions process. Such an approach would definitely generate a strong common experience, as well as define a specific set of Northwestern values. Other Task Force members, however, thought that a core curriculum would not be in keeping with the variety and choice that are among Northwestern's primary strengths and attractions. Moreover, these members pointed out that achieving agreement on a core curriculum across schools without interfering with major requirements may be impractical; even if agreement on content could be reached, adding the new core-curriculum requirements might not be possible without substantially increasing workload. Student voices also strongly advocated for "student agency" in defining their courses of study, within a reasonable framework of requirements.

The Task Force therefore focused on other ways of achieving the desired end of unifying the Northwestern experience while maintaining admission by school and conserving academic diversity. We aimed to define practical, nonburdensome coursework requirements to create connections among members of different schools and add unity to the Northwestern experience. In addition, we focused on normalizing aspects of curriculum areas that have already been adopted across Northwestern but with slightly different versions in each school. Proposals to increase the cohesiveness of academic advising are addressed in a separate section (Section D. Counseling and Psychological Services [CAPS] and Academic Advising).

PROPOSAL B1. DEVELOP A SET OF "COMMON EXPERIENCE" COURSES THAT WOULD BRING TOGETHER STUDENTS FROM MULTIPLE SCHOOLS IN ONE CLASSROOM.

The most widely agreed-upon proposal was to develop "Common Experience" courses, which would be united by one or more themes, changing at intervals of one or more years, such that multiple but distinct courses with the same theme would run simultaneously. Each theme would be broad enough to be approached from a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives (e.g., "Sustainability," "Justice," "Media," "Climate," "Health," "Entertainment"). Each course would include students from multiple schools but would be relatively small, with no more than 30 students, to permit within-class interaction. The purpose of the courses would be to explore a multifaceted topic from a range of scholarly approaches, drawing on the different perspectives brought by students from different disciplines. Some might be cotaught by more than one faculty member from different disciplines, adding further variety to the classroom experience. Many such courses running simultaneously, with distinct emphases on a common topic, would extend the network of students engaging in a common academic endeavor and, ideally, would spark discussions among students even in different courses, possibly permitting interactions across classes.

The academic stage of students in the courses could vary, but the Task Force agreed that it might be preferable, at least in the program's initial years, to try to target the courses to sophomores, on the assumption that the second year might be a good time for renewing an active effort to create community. In addition, this would allow freshmen to engage with faculty in choosing topics for their sophomore year. Should a 10-5-5-10 calendar be adopted, these courses might be offered during the five-week sessions in the winter. In initial years, one course could be offered twice consecutively, by a single instructor or co-instructors. In early years of adoption, students might just take one such five-week course. As the number of courses grows, students could take two different classes in a sequence, each with a different set of classmates and instructors.

Regarding course content and structure, possible models to consider for adaptation as a five-week exploratory course include McCormick's Design Thinking and Communication (DTC) courses, in terms of the design and communication components; Weinberg's Kaplan Humanities Institute courses, in terms of coteaching by faculty from different fields; SESP's Philanthropy course, in terms of bringing together students from different schools and incorporating a project; and NUvention courses, in terms of interdisciplinarity and collaboration (Appendix 10: "Sample Models for Common Experience Courses"). In particular, at least some of the offered courses might have a design or other problem-solving component that would give students the opportunity to work collaboratively and/or contribute to a common project. The final format(s), however, would have to be settled upon by interested faculty.

Developing such "Common Experience" courses would offer a number of advantages and address several problems. Most importantly, students would have the benefit of taking at least one cross-school course, an opportunity to interact meaningfully in the classroom with students and faculty with distinct areas of specialization and experiences of Northwestern. Given the well-roundedness that typifies the Northwestern student, these opportunities might be welcomed. As stated at a faculty forum:

> *What I hear again and again from these students is that they're pressed for time and they want… a different kind of academic experience with its own environment. They're telling me things like "…I'm so thrilled I'm studying engineering, but when I was younger I used to go to the art museum with my parents and I'm missing that." There's a longing, a palpable longing for a broad experience that is very much about a liberal arts education together. They're craving it; I'm hearing it all the time.*

Designed well, therefore, these courses could lower the barriers for communication across schools and increase a sense of common enterprise. Additionally, offering many different courses on a common theme, yet conducting them in small groups, would promote unity while cultivating diversity. Such a structure could also encourage extracurricular discussions and activities. If these courses are primarily targeted to sophomores, at least initially, they would also boost a sense of unity at a time when many students start separating into their specific majors. In the ideal case, these five-week courses could become a known and valued hallmark of a Northwestern education.

The main drawback to this proposal is its admittedly demanding structural requirements: if Common Experience courses were to be available to all sophomores, about 80 courses would have to be developed to serve approximately 2,000 students per year. If each were a five-week course that were offered twice, the number of necessary courses would be cut in half, but the quantity still presents challenges. The feasible scale for such a program therefore remains to be addressed and would likely be better discussed by a large group of faculty members who would be potential instructors. Moreover, the rotating subject matter runs the risk of burdening faculty members who must assemble preparation for a single offering of a course. This issue might be resolved if the same theme were maintained for a few consecutive years. Additionally, these courses could be structured differently from standard didactic courses, with minimal assessments, and focus rather on discussion, projects, and within-class exploration. If such a model is developed, the courses could afford students valuable opportunities for faculty-guided exploration while reducing their workload burden. Although requiring such courses seems unnecessary and impractical at present, one possibility is to start with a pilot program offering optional but well-advertised courses and gradually expand to a larger program. It is worth emphasizing, however, that in our discussions, we considered the One-Book-One-Northwestern program, in which participation is encouraged but is not obligatory. While this program

is enriching to those who participate, its optional nature limits its potential to create a widely shared experience. Therefore, if Common Experience courses are indeed to play a meaningful role in unifying Northwestern students, ultimately they will probably have to expand in a manner that is welcomed and valued as part of all schools' curriculum. In particular, for these courses to fulfill the envisaged role, administrators in the different schools would all have to subscribe to the mission and encourage and support their faculty in contributing teaching effort to them.

Given the already demanding curriculum in all majors, it may be hard to attract both students and instructors to such an endeavor. If the Common Experience courses are well planned, however, they could be designed to fulfill a variety of distribution requirements. A topic like "sustainability" for example, could likely give rise to courses that satisfy all six of the current WCAS-defined distribution areas (Natural Sciences, Formal Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Historical Studies, Ethics and Values, and Literature and Fine Arts).

PROPOSAL B2. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, ALIGN THE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS THAT ARE COMMON TO ALL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS THROUGH AN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION FACULTY WORKING GROUP.

The sense of disparate Northwesterns is exacerbated by differences in discipline-nonspecific requirements across schools. Different schools require different numbers of units (informally called "credits," the term used here) for graduation, in part owing to accreditation issues (discussed below in B2a). Schools also differ in their allocation of graduation credits for high school advanced placement (AP) courses, the number and nature of distribution requirements or their equivalents, and their foreign language requirements (Appendix 11: "Comparative Data on School Course Graduation Requirements"). Not only can these differences cause problems for students transferring between schools, they also set up disparities that can be perceived negatively. A straightforward means of creating a more harmonious environment is to define appropriate criteria for AP credit, distribution courses, and language skills for all students who ultimately receive a Northwestern diploma, align these requirements across schools wherever possible, and clearly articulate reasons for disparities where differences must persist.

Devising and implementing a plan for updated, shared requirements that takes advantage of a modified calendar would require serious cross-school discussion by faculty and other relevant constituencies. The best format may be through an intersection of existing committees that address elements of these questions or through the formation of a new group. The Task Force recommends that a working group of faculty be appointed, through whichever structure is ultimately determined to be best, first to undertake a comprehensive discussion of curriculum requirements, and second to examine how curricular policies overlap and connect for students across all schools. Among this working group's charges would be overseeing and orchestrating Common Experience Courses and possible diversity requirements; reexamining the topic areas of distribution requirements;

aligning distribution requirements, AP credit assignment, and foreign language requirements in light of the discussion and proposals below; and finding ways to support elective courses. In particular, its goal would be to seek a balance between setting requirements—which guide our students toward developing specific abilities and skills that will prepare them for postgraduate life—and ensuring room for electives and open spaces in schedules—which promote students' agency and flexibility to choose unusual combinations of courses and thereby forge novel academic paths of their own. This working group may also consider the desirability of guidelines for grading or assessment as well as the possibility of a pass/fail term (discussed in *Section H. Assessment*). Whatever form this working group takes, the group should continue until a cohesive and justified set of curricular requirements can be developed. Members of such a group must have a grasp of and a respect for the different educational needs in different disciplines, coupled with a strong commitment to creating a shared, positive experience for Northwestern students. A thoughtful implementation of the suggestions detailed below could address the goals that a single-point admissions process was intended to meet by creating more common experience across schools.

The ramifications of these requirements and their possible alignment extend well beyond the simple issue of consistency or even fairness. The combination of credits necessary to graduate, AP credits allocated, and the nature and quantity of distribution/language requirements define not only the weight of the workload but the character of that workload, and hence they heavily dictate the undergraduate academic experience, regardless of discipline. An analysis of these factors, their interactions, and the differences among schools is therefore necessary to provide a rationale for recommending alignment, to the extent possible, across schools. To clarify these points, we first consider workload requirements, followed by one set of subproposals, and then consider workload experience, followed by another set of subproposals.

Workload requirements

B2a. Total credits required for graduation and AP credit. WCAS, SESP, SoC, Medill, and the Bienen BAMus/BSMus all require 45 credits for graduation. Because of accreditation requirements, McCormick requires 48 credits, and a Bienen bachelor of music requires 50–54 credits. (Credits at NU-Q are determined differently, since the school operates on a semester system, but requirements are aligned to SoC for the degree in communication and to Medill for the degree in journalism; Appendix 11: "Comparative Data on School Course Graduation Requirements"). In all schools, AP credit can count toward the degree. Different schools have distinct rules on the use of AP credit, with some schools having no cap on the number of AP credits that can be applied toward the degree (Bienen, McCormick, Medill, WCAS), others with a cap (SESP, SoC), and others that specify the types of courses for which AP credit can substitute (SESP, SoC, WCAS). Regarding the latter, these range from accepting AP test scores to fulfill 7 of 10 distribution requirements

(in SESP) to 2 of 12 (in WCAS) (Appendix 11: "Comparative Data on School Course Graduation Requirements"). Regardless of the amount of AP credit they are permitted to apply toward their degrees, some students overload on courses, while others use their AP credits to graduate without earning all their required credits through Northwestern courses. Students can use the latter approach to lighten their course loads. Alternatively, they may graduate early, having carried an average or heavier-than-average load for a shorter amount of time.

The undergraduate registration requirements (9 quarters, 32 credits for a student matriculating as a freshman in a single-degree program) limit the possibilities for graduating early, and, in most schools, make it impossible for any student to use more than 13 AP credits toward the degree (Appendix 12: "Undergraduate Registration Requirement"). For the entering class of 2014, the mean number of AP credits granted per student was 7; across schools, this number ranged from 5 (Bienen) to 8 (McCormick) (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Average AP Credits by School. Data for the freshman class of fall 2014.
Source: Office of Undergraduate Admission

School	Average Number of AP Credits
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences	6.9
McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science	8.1
School of Communication	5.2
Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications	6.1
Bienen School of Music	4.8
School of Education and Social Policy	6.4
Average Across all Schools:	**6.9**

Regardless of the average, at an individual level, 87 of 2,043 students (4 percent) entered with 15 or more credits, whereas 367 (18 percent) had none. This range reflects a natural consequence of the variety of student backgrounds, but it gives rise to a concern that AP credit may lead to significant disparities in the workload or experience across the student population.

In most schools, however, the number of credits that students earn at Northwestern deviates only slightly from the number of credits required, and the difference is smaller than might be predicted from the number of available AP credits students can apply toward their degrees (Table 2).

TABLE 2: Average Number of Northwestern Credit Units for Graduation.
Source: Office of Undergraduate Admission and Bienen School of Music.

Average Number of Northwestern Units for Graduation							
Year	Weinberg	SESP	McCormick	SoC	Medill	Bienen	
						Dual Degree	Single Degree
2010	42.9	43.7	49	44.4	42.8	76.2	57.9
2011	42.4	43.9	48.8	44.7	42.2	78.4	57.3
2012	42.2	44	49.1	44.3	42.9	78	60.3
2013	43.3	44	49.8	44.5	42.8	77.9	59.9
2014	43.1	44.6	48.5	43.9	42.4	76.1	59.8
Average	42.8	44	49	44.4	42.6	77.3	59
Graduation Units Required	45	45	48	45	45	Varies	45 for BA/BS; 50–54 for Bachelor of Music*

** For the graduating class of 2014, 93 percent of Bienen students received a bachelor of music.*

For example, since 2010, in the schools that require 45 credits (WCAS, SESP, SoC, and Medill), students have graduated with an average of 42.5 to 44 credits taken at Northwestern. Thus, in these schools, AP or other non-Northwestern credit is used to decrease students' credit burden by an average of 1–2.5 credits. Over the same period, in McCormick, where the requirement is 48, students graduated with an average of 49 Northwestern credits. Calculation of credits in Bienen is not directly analogous to that in the other schools because of how credit is allotted for performance study and is further complicated by the high proportion of dual-degree students (26% of students, 2010-2015), who tend to take more credits. Non-dual-degree students, for whom the requirement is 50–54, graduated with an average of 59 credits, while dual-degree students' average was 77 credits. Thus, in McCormick and Bienen, AP or other non-Northwestern credit does not seem to be used to decrease the average credit burden significantly.

AP credit does, however, make it easier for some students to graduate early. Some do so to save an average of a quarter's worth of tuition, and others do so because their postgraduate jobs require an early summer start date, according to the Dean of Students' Office. Note that a shifted academic calendar with an earlier graduation date would relieve this burden for all students.

AP credit is also likely to increase students' options for including electives in their course schedules or to adjust their course load in a quarter when personal circumstances make it necessary or helpful to do so. Decisions about awarding AP credit, discussed below, therefore must take into account multiple needs: permitting students with AP credit to use it to alleviate an economic burden by slightly accelerating their pace through college, and ensuring that students with little or no AP credit have an appropriate degree of flexibility and financial support. As one student wrote to the forum website:

> *Northwestern should standardize the number of credits students in different schools are allowed to contribute towards their degree…When I hear the number of AP credits my friends in [other schools] are allowed to count towards their degree, I am frustrated that I could not count as many. I would have taken the opportunity to graduate early to save my family money if I could have counted more AP credits. While I understand that each school has different requirements for academic reasons, there does not appear to be any logical reason why these credits are valued in some schools but not in others.*

B2b. Distribution and foreign language requirements. All schools require students to take courses in areas that extend beyond their major fields of study, called distribution (Bienen, Medill, SESP, SoC, WCAS) or non-engineering (McCormick) requirements; generally, such courses are intended to promote breadth of education. The number of such courses varies, ranging from 10 to 18 depending on school, and the majority of the course options are offered by WCAS, with some given by SoC. Currently, most schools require distribution courses in the six areas designated by WCAS: Natural Sciences, Formal Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Historical Studies, Ethics and Values, and Literature and Fine Arts (Appendix 11: "Comparative Data on School Course Graduation Requirements").

Multiple faculty members at the forums commented generally on these requirements. One said:

> *I wonder if we want to think broadly about the kinds of skills we want our students to have when they graduate. What we think a university degree should include…moving forward as a way of rethinking the requirements within individual schools and possibly across the University as a whole. One of the great things about being at Northwestern is that we are a university with professional schools as well as colleges devoted to discovery and knowledge. Students are allowed to work back and forth across those boundaries, across those schools… I wonder if we need to rethink our requirements so that they, too, cross these bounds. We could create competencies rather than a particular set of courses as requirements.*

Another said:

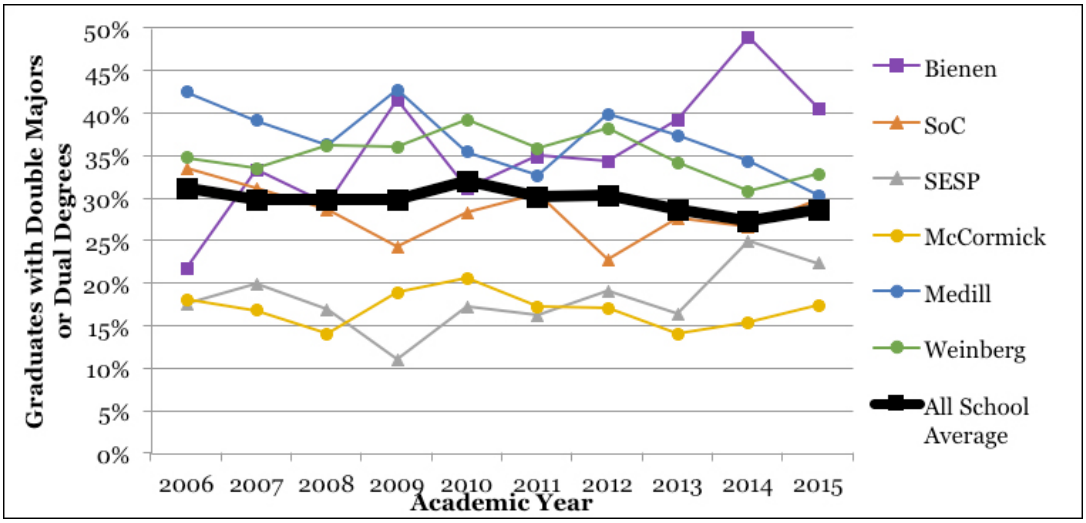
> *One of the issues that I have generally with curriculum at Northwestern is that it's still very much in the 20th century. They're basically just one size fits all… everybody has to fulfill the same rigid sets of requirements, instead of us coming together and thinking about, okay, these students may be facing some of the biggest societal challenges 20 years from now and they need to be prepared as leaders, so let's think hard about [what] it is that they may be doing?*

The foreign language requirement also varies across schools: from none (SESP, McCormick, BM in Bienen, BS in SoC, communication at NU-Q) to the equivalent of one year or 3 credits (Medill, journalism at NU-Q) or the equivalent of two years or 6 credits (everywhere else) (Appendix 11: "Comparative Data on School Course Graduation Requirements"). Faculty members from a variety of disciplines agree that competency in a foreign language is invaluable; importantly, foreign language courses also include a significant cultural component. With the establishment of the new Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Studies as illustrative of Northwestern's commitment to an international perspective, foreign language training and the associated cultural awareness is paramount. Foreign language classes also tend to be small, providing a welcome context for one-on-one student-teacher interactions, especially for students in majors whose classes tend to be large in the initial years. The courses also often serve to connect students with the Chicago community. As pointed out by a language instructor, "Many language courses [also] make use of the cultural resources offered by the city of Chicago to provide immersion-type experiences for students." A collateral contribution of foreign language study is an increased sensitivity to the structure and form of one's native language, which can improve written and spoken communication skills.

Despite these benefits, some students in schools requiring 6 courses have pointed out that the foreign language requirement is more than one-eighth of their total course requirements, and anecdotal mention has been made of students choosing schools and majors to avoid or minimize a language requirement. In a world of globalization, however, sensitivity to other languages and facility in interacting with other cultures is an imperative.

B2c. Double majoring and associated requirements. A significant number of Northwestern students pursue more than one major or a major with one or more minors. Over the last 10 years (2005–14), an average of 30 percent of students have graduated with more than one major (Appendix 13: "Graduates with Double Majors or Dual Degrees" and Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Percentage of School Graduates with Double Majors or Dual Degrees by Year.
Source: Office of the Registrar



Many nonexclusive motivations can underlie the decision to carry multiple majors and minors, including, but probably not limited to, (a) a deep interest in multiple disciplines, (b) a sense that a desired future career requires multiple subjects that are not encompassed in a single major, (c) a wish to keep options open, (d) a choice of a profession-directed major and a "passion"-directed major, (e) a fulfillment of a long-standing plan, (e) a suggestion from family members or friends, (f) a perception that double majoring is normal or expected at Northwestern, (g) a pressure to keep up with peers, (h) a hope that the double credential will add to one's competitiveness in securing a job, (i) an observation that a straightforward way to get into classes of interest is to declare a second major in that field, and (j) a realization that if the courses fit fairly smoothly into a schedule, there is no reason not to add another major.

No matter what the reason(s) for the decision, pursuing multiple majors and minors is a way for students to take advantage of Northwestern's academic diversity. Conversely, students' choice to engage in multiple majors and minors is, indeed, a way to maintain academic diversity at Northwestern: enrollment in some majors with fewer direct or well-trodden routes to postgraduate employment benefits from students' double majoring.

A complicating factor regarding the choice of more than one field, however, is that when students take on multiple majors, especially in distinct fields, the number of required courses can increase substantially, eliminating room for electives, even those within a major of choice, or minimizing options to lighten the course load occasionally to make time for either intellectual pursuits or personal needs. Through advising and related venues, students should be encouraged to consider carefully their motivations to pursue multiple majors, to ensure that the choice is a sensible one from which the student is likely to derive benefit.

PROPOSAL B2A. NORMALIZE AP CREDITS ACCEPTED IN ALL SCHOOLS.

Making the number of AP credits that may count toward graduation requirements the same—and officially the same—across Northwestern would serve to unify the student experience, eliminating negative distinctions that can arise from some schools granting more AP credit than others. Since AP credit seems to be used more to gain flexibility in course choices than to decrease workload substantially, granting AP credit seems unlikely to detract from the richness of the classroom experiences sought by students. One approach, therefore, would be to place no cap on the number of credits that can be applied toward the degree (as in Bienen, McCormick, Medill, and WCAS), although different schools might still place school- or degree-specific limitations on what types of requirements AP credits are allowed to fulfill (as in SESP, SoC, and WCAS). Because the undergraduate registration requirements would also have to be fulfilled, in practical terms few students could use more than 12 AP credits, which is currently the cap in SoC. Note that the Office of Undergraduate Admission suggests that significant cuts in the number of AP credits accepted toward graduation requirements could negatively affect admitted students' decision to enroll.

PROPOSAL B2B. NORMALIZE FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS.

The Task Force proposes that the Undergraduate Education working group consider normalizing the foreign language requirement across schools. As noted above, foreign language instructors are already incorporating immersion-type, cross-cultural, cross-linguistic experiences for students; support and expansion of these programs is necessary to enable all students to benefit as much as possible from education in a foreign language. These might include a true international experience of studying abroad (for any period) or a five-week session in another linguistic environment, locally or abroad. It is relevant to note, however, that financial aid issues are pertinent here as well: global and cross-cultural experiences must be made available to all students regardless of economic status. As one WCAS faculty member wrote to the faculty open forum website:

> *[H]aving interacted with numerous low-income students on campus, I believe that the challenges for many of them to finance study abroad opportunities have been insurmountable, thus curtailing their access to these global experiences. I have seen students having to cancel study abroad after months of preparation….*

According to the Undergraduate Financial Aid Office, the amount of a student's financial aid is increased to cover the cost of a more expensive program abroad, usually through a mix of loans and Northwestern scholarship assistance; if program costs are less, students receive a proportional reduction of aid. Students on summer study abroad programs can apply for funds outside the financial aid office. Efforts should be increased to ensure that the available aid is sufficient, well advertised, and easily obtained, so that students are not deterred from study abroad for financial reasons.

Explicit consideration should also be given to whether international students from non-English-speaking backgrounds coming to study in the United States would be exempt from such a requirement since their full college experience would fulfill this requirement. Conversely, it will be necessary to consider whether fluency in another language would be sufficient to satisfy, for example, a global awareness requirement. The best possibilities should be explored in consultation with language instructors and those faculty whose disciplines have a significant global, transnational, or cross-cultural component.

PROPOSAL B2C. UPDATE AND NORMALIZE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS ACROSS SCHOOLS.

Normalizing the number of these course requirements across schools would also be a key step toward a unified and cohesive Northwestern experience. Taking into account the balance between desired learning objectives and the discussion above about maintaining a reasonable workload, a target range might be 10–12. It would be best, however, if the precise number were agreed upon by faculty representatives from all schools.

As mentioned above, distribution requirements contribute breadth to a student's education, counterbalancing depth and focus with perspective and awareness. The current WCAS categories—Natural Sciences, Formal Studies, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Historical Studies, Ethics and Values, and Literature and Fine Arts—provide a structure for ensuring this breadth, but one designed along classical distinctions among disciplines. Faculty members, students, and administrators have proposed a variety of topics that might be incorporated into distribution requirements, such as Diversities and Social Inequalities, Global Awareness, and Emotional Intelligence and Empathy. With these in mind, another way to consider defining "distribution" might be to let different classes count for different essential needs. Some might be subject-matter related (as in the current format), while others might relate to key skills and abilities (e.g., close reading, writing, other communication skills, global awareness, and/or computer and modern technological literacy). A certain number of courses in each category could be required. If the 10-5-5-10 academic calendar is adopted, possibilities for five-week distribution-type courses could expand greatly.

Whatever the format, the Task Force recommends that the requirements be examined to verify that they fulfill a key set of learning outcomes:

1. **Disciplinary knowledge:** both mastery of subjects and understanding of fields beyond a college environment;
2. **Literacies and capacities:** the ability to understand, interpret, and generate information and ideas in written, spoken, numerical, and graphical form; basic financial/economic understanding; technological facility;
3. **Critical thinking:** the ability to grasp different sides of an issue, evaluate evidence and "information," and state on what basis one or more perspectives are embraced;
4. **Global sensibility,** including an awareness of and a capacity for thoughtful reflection about cultures, values, and life experiences other than one's own; a recognition of variation and difference; and a consciousness of one's local actions in relation to the larger world;
5. **Socioemotional development:** mindsets that encourage motivation, resilience, and growth in the face of challenges and setbacks;
6. Understanding **ethics** and developing a responsibility toward the societies in which one moves.

Diversities and Social Inequalities Requirement. It is relevant here to mention the University's ongoing discussions of a Diversities and Social Inequalities requirement. A central question is whether all students should be required to take a course in Diversities and Social Inequalities, and whether such a course, if required, should focus on diversities and social inequalities in the United States.

Although the Task Force recognizes that its purview does not extend to defining curricular content, a number of points were acknowledged. First, issues of diversity and inequality are timely matters in this country and our world. Second, Northwestern has selected "Connect" as one pillar of its Strategic Plan, stating, "We will close the gap between intentions and outcomes to connect individuals from widely diverse backgrounds and life experiences to a truly inclusive community." Third, the Task Force's interviews, exchanges, and discussions with students, faculty, staff, and administrators repeatedly reveal that the academic experience of subsets of the Northwestern community can be degraded by the sense that others class them negatively as "different"—ranging from overlooking them to making them the target of overt racism or other aggressive prejudice.

With this information in hand, that Task Force agreed that Northwestern has assumed through the Strategic Plan the responsibility to educate our students to be aware of and conversant in issues pertaining to diversities and inequalities as they relate to the

immediate environment and local cultures, and now must act upon that responsibility. The open question is what form this aspect of students' education should take. At present, three schools have a school-wide or department-based requirement that addresses these matters. SESP requires students to take one class in diversity and inequality, regularly offering four possible courses in these areas, which relate to cognition, development, and education (www.sesp.northwestern.edu/ugrad/files/pdfs/2013-2014-SESP-Student-handbook.pdf, pg. 16). The Department of Performance Studies in SoC also has a diversity requirement, though not necessarily with a United States focus, and regularly offers eight courses, all of which relate to performance (www.communication.northwestern.edu/advising/pst/major_requirements). Notably, in both these cases, the courses fit thematically into students' chosen areas of study. As of this academic year (2015–16), Medill has instituted a new two-unit diverse cultures requirement; students select from a pre-approved list of courses.

If a conscious study of diversity, as noted in the Strategic Plan, is to become a shared, meaningful, and constructive experience for *all* Northwestern undergraduates, the goal(s) of that study must be considered. Where the aim is to cultivate discernment and mutual understanding and to guide students into patterns of thought and behavior that would be especially conducive to the development of local community, a nongraded, noncredit cocurricular format might be preferable. Existing projects such as ChangeMakers and/or Sustained Dialogue are possible models; Task Force members agreed, however, that faculty participation in and facilitation of such discussions would be of value to students, staff, and faculty members alike. Where a dissemination of information with associated discussion is desired, a graded course format would be suitable and could be incorporated specifically into distribution requirements, as suggested above. The benefits of this approach would include the opportunity for serious discussion of issues under the guidance of one or more faculty members with disciplinary expertise. Concerns were raised, however, that a single course might be insufficient or might trivialize or "tokenize" the larger goal. Moreover, instructors of such courses would bear the burden of accepting even student perspectives distinct from those emphasized in the course, since it would not be appropriate to grade students negatively for divergent viewpoints. A nonexclusive approach discussed by the Task Force was to incorporate discussion of diversity and inequality into for-credit courses wherever appropriate, regardless of the primary subject matter. Benefits might include the broad reach of such an approach; shortcomings lie in its feasibility. Ideas for both for-credit courses and noncredit discussion opportunities are included in a draft document by the Academics/Education Working Group of the Faculty Senate (www.northwestern.edu/faculty-senate/documents/2012-2013/Social_Inequalities_and_Diversities_requirement.pdf). Additionally, topics relating to diversity and social inequality would lend themselves well to the Common Experience courses suggested above and could serve to expand students' awareness, create connections, and connect with local communities.

Electives. In proposing new requirements for common experience, distribution area, and foreign language requirements, a key consideration is that even those requirements that promote breadth must not overshadow electives. Many students and faculty, as well as Task Force members, brought up the value of electives as a means of engaging in intellectual exploration even when it does not serve a preset purpose or fulfill a requirement. Through their ASG representatives, students relay the sense that they desire more of a sense of "agency" in setting their schedules and would value the opportunity to choose more electives—provided they can get into the desired classes. Task Force members agreed that faculty, staff, and peers should actively inform students of the value of electives as unexpected yet positive contributions to their education and should encourage them to incorporate such courses into their college careers. The elective is somewhat threatened by several factors, however: (1) increasing requirements, (2) students' decisions to double major and/or minor and earn certificates, increasing their number of requirements (Appendix 14: "Sample Academic Schedule Requirements for Pre-Med Psychology Student"), and (3) registration priority, coupled with necessary course-enrollment caps, that may exclude students from courses in fields outside their majors or minors. With these ideas in mind, we should acknowledge the value of large elective course formats that are open to many students and find ways to support teaching in these cases, for instance through providing high-quality teaching support (discussed in *Section F. Supporting teaching in large classes*).

Workload experience

Beyond the quantitative or objective aspect of the workload, i.e., the number and content of requirements, there is the qualitative or subjective perception and experience of those requirements. As mentioned above, the brevity of quarters and the standard load of four courses per quarter require rapidly shifting attention and juggling of responsibilities, which can correlate with students feeling rushed and at times overwhelmed. The situation is rendered more complicated by out-of-class matters, which can range from personal-enrichment activities to substantial responsibilities, e.g., family obligations, professional training and preparation, or work for pay. In fact, 45 percent of respondents on the Student Affairs 2014 Post-Graduation Survey reported having held a significant on-campus work-related position as undergraduates. Surveys by CAPS, by Associated Student Government, and by the University indicate a high degree of perceived academic stress among students, at a level that counters a sense of wellness. In discussions with CAPS personnel, students, faculty members, administrators, advisers, and other staff with a high degree of interaction with students, the most common request to Task Force members was to "do something about student stress." Task Force members themselves expressed widely ranging opinions about the amount and even the concept of stress. Some pointed out that stress has been an inescapable and indeed a necessary component of education (and life) throughout the ages and that considerations of perceived

stress should not figure in the definition of a world-class education. Others maintained that dealing with the issue of stress was of primary importance and saw the Task Force's charge to improve the academic experience as inextricably linked to enhancing wellness.

Independent of the question of stress is the simpler question of how the workload affects depth of intellectual engagement and consolidation of knowledge. At the very least, it can be convincingly argued that the Northwestern schedule demands intense concentration and application. A reduction in scheduled requirements would provide opportunities for more extensive exploration, e.g., through commitment to an independent research or creative project, as well as increased opportunities for electives. Such a change would produce a corresponding alleviation of demands on faculty, possibly freeing them for more one-on-one interactions with students, e.g., supervising independent projects more actively. A collateral benefit of fewer specified requirements might be to reduce the difficulty students encounter in seeking enrollment in required or desired classes, which has been cited as occasionally problematic (Appendix 15: "Sample Academic Schedule Calendar for a Pre-Med Psychology Student").

Despite differing perspectives on the justifications for reexamining workload, the Task Force members reached consensus on a number of proposals. Those listed below achieve multiple aims: to make the Northwestern experience more consistent among schools and across students within schools, to improve the content and consolidation of knowledge, and to alleviate perceived stress.

Discussions of workload revealed that the issue naturally splits into two nonexclusive parts: "How do we maintain the workload at a reasonable level?" and "How do we ensure that students who need to decrease their workload in a given quarter can do so without undesired long-term repercussions?" These are considered separately, although they have overlapping components.

PROPOSAL B3A. MAINTAIN A REASONABLE ACADEMIC WORKLOAD FOR EACH COURSE BY LIMITING EACH ONE-CREDIT COURSE TO AN AVERAGE OF UP TO 10 COMMITTED HOURS PER WEEK.

The Task Force recognized that, owing to accreditation requirements, it may not be possible for all schools to require the same number of credits for graduation. Nevertheless, given the multiple benefits of providing some degree of flexibility for in-depth pursuits, the Task Force agreed on the value of carefully considering what level of workload is actually appropriate; indeed the registrar is currently articulating policy relating credit units to time spent outside of class. According to the draft policy, for a one-credit course that meets for three hours per week, each hour of class time would require two hours out of class, therefore resulting in *at least* nine committed hours per week (Appendix 16: "Draft Policy on Awarding Credit"). Historically, however, to our knowledge faculty

members have rarely been directly asked to match their courses' out-of-class demands to approximate a desired value. The Task Force acknowledged that few courses can maintain a consistent workload through the quarter, and that not all students work and study at the same rate. Students and faculty members alike could be calibrated, however, if they agree that students should not be required to commit to more than a 40-hour academic week. With a four-credit load, therefore, each one-credit course could be allotted an average of *no more than* 10 committed hours per week, including time spent in class; a class that meets three hours per week would therefore require no more than seven hours of outside-class time. Publicizing and formalizing the idea that each one-credit course should aim for no more than 10 committed hours of work, including time spent in class, would provide a starting point for a variety of reconsiderations. First, courses that necessarily exceed this level of commitment could have their credit value increased. Second, if a professor or department finds that the majority of students are spending many more than 10 hours on a course that is limited to one credit, it could be a signal to decrease or lighten assignments. Third, if students find that they are spending significantly more than 10 hours per week on a course, it might be a signal to seek help from professors, TAs, and advisers.

PROPOSAL B3B. DECREASE THE TOTAL REQUIRED ACADEMIC WORKLOAD THROUGH SCHOOL-SPECIFIC REDUCTIONS OF REQUIRED CREDITS (WHERE POSSIBLE) OR COMMITTED HOURS (ELSEWHERE).

Reducing the formal workload would acknowledge the value of unstructured but in-depth exploration, as well as provide flexibility for schedule adjustments should unforeseen circumstances arise. Regarding the latter, students report that their schedules can be dictated, through necessity, by requirements that restrict their choice of courses and make it difficult to respond to unexpected obstacles to their academic plan (Appendices 14 and 15: "Sample Academic Schedule for Pre Med Student with Psychology Major" and "Sample Academic Requirements for Pre Med Student with Psychology Major"). The Task Force therefore encourages all schools to explore ways to reduce the total workload to 30 hours per week in at least three quarters that currently require an estimated 40 hours per week. In schools with a 45-credit graduation requirement, this goal could be most directly achieved by reducing requirements by three credits, to 42. In schools that cannot accommodate a credit reduction, a comparable outcome might be achieved by reducing workload associated with required courses. In the best case, the same or equivalent reduction will be applied in all schools.

Importantly, however, if a credit reduction is enacted in some schools, its value for increasing depth of intellectual engagement can only be realized by normalizing a three-course (or otherwise reduced) load in multiple quarters through active advising by faculty and staff and encouragement by student peers. Notably, at Dartmouth, Stanford, and the University of Chicago, among other peer schools on the quarter system, three courses per quarter is the standard load.

In addition, a reduction of credits necessary to graduate must not eliminate the available space in students' schedules for electives. Achieving this aim centers on the idea that the workload must be manageable not only in *quantity,* i.e., number of credits required, but also in *quality*. The content of courses must be meaningful and appropriate. This goal would best be met by encouraging all majors and programs to engage in a fresh, cross-disciplinary look at their requirements, possibly informed by newly set cross-school general educational requirements. Not all courses or course content will or must generate satisfaction or pleasure in real time—the value of certain courses reveals itself slowly over months or years—but departments and programs and their instructors must be able to articulate the coherence and value of the requirements and must work to provide context for reflecting on and absorbing the material. Faculty should be supported in this effort (discussed below in *Section E. Facilitating, supporting, and rewarding effective teaching*).

PROPOSAL B3C. MAKE THE WORKLOAD MORE FLEXIBLE BY ALLOWING COURSES TO BE DROPPED AS NEEDED, WITHOUT UNRELATED LONG-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO FINANCIAL AID.

Since the data suggest that even those students with an option to take three credits per quarter often take four, even a decrease in degree requirements may merely increase flexibility of scheduling without substantially decreasing the average workload. In fact, a crucial issue in terms of reducing workload is not the average but the special case: During the course of a college career, it is not unlikely that in at least one quarter a student would need to drop a course, either to deal with illness or other incident or simply to increase commitment to a particularly demanding or valued course or to a research or creative project. To consider dropping a course may be impossible, however, for students who are obliged to carry a four-course load, e.g., owing to a lack of AP credit, because doing so would increase the number of quarters of enrollment necessary or require an overload of courses in a single quarter, thereby imposing a significant financial burden. Although a decrease in credit requirements might mitigate the problem, a more direct and immediate solution for such students is to facilitate dropping a course without negative financial or administrative repercussions. One McCormick faculty member summed up several of the Task Force's discussions in a written comment to the faculty forum website:

> *[R]educing the total number of classes required for graduation… would make it difficult to provide the range and depth of educational experiences that students now have. Especially in McCormick, which requires 48 courses… students would lose breadth and depth from reducing the number of credits for graduation. However…the main problem is the stress of having to take four courses per quarter in order to finish on time. Taking three courses is a difficult decision, because students only get four years of financial aid…. And, if a student fails a course, there is really no room to make it up.*

The goal of making it easier to drop a course without long-term ramifications can be achieved by ensuring that financial aid can be extended to a 13th quarter, including but not limited to a summer quarter. The Financial Aid Office reports that it has a small allocation to support summer course work outside students' 12 quarters of financial aid (Appendix 17: "Current Summer Course Financial Aid Support Policy"). According to University and federal financial aid policy, students must be enrolled at least half-time (2 credits) to qualify for most sources of financial aid. Students who are unable to complete their degree in 12 quarters (or 15 for a recognized dual-degree program) can petition for an additional summer quarter of aid. While the option for such aid is valuable, it is not ideal for students under all circumstances, e.g., those who might wish to take a single summer course while engaging in paid work necessary to support the upcoming school year. The Task Force therefore recommends using institutional aid to support students even in a one-credit quarter, e.g. summer, and making this aid readily available, i.e., without the need for petition.

A parallel suggestion is to increase course offerings in the summer, which might make it easier in some cases for students to make up work lost from the academic year and rejoin their classmates in the fall. An additional consideration in this case is ensuring that paid work opportunities, analogous to work-study, are available to students who choose such an option. Despite the possible complications, facilitating students' use of the summer quarter seems worth pursuing. Faculty members who participate in the introductory chemistry sequence, for example, note that students who have struggled with it in the academic year often do better in the summer. Ensuring support for students to make use of this key course's availability (and that of similar courses) in the summer has the potential to address many related issues.

One such issue, as reported by students, faculty, and staff, is that students who take medical leave for a quarter often find that administrative hurdles make reentry difficult or even impossible (Appendix 18: "Medical Leave of Absence and Reinstatement Steps"). It will be necessary to examine and acknowledge the current difficulties of reentry after medical leave and to ensure that administrative hurdles and scheduling barriers are no longer a hindrance.

The essence of the last three points is simply this: The appropriate resources should be allocated so that students admitted with financial aid are never obliged to let financial considerations dictate choices affecting their academic trajectory. Restrictions on the use of financial aid from the University should be minimized to the extent possible.

Broadly stated, *the advantage of developing a flexible workload is that it acknowledges the multiple facets of student lives while recognizing that, in an otherwise functional system, specific events or situations may arise that require modifications to be possible*. Such actions on behalf of the University, along with efforts to ensure a reasonable workload, will also serve the purpose of communicating clearly to students that Northwesterners are aware that realities can deviate from plans and that we are ready to rise to the occasion and solve problems that appear.

C. COLLECTIVELY SHAPING PERCEPTIONS THAT INFLUENCE THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE.

Many students comment on the value of their education, the richness of their academic experience, and their pleasure in being at the University. When asked to describe the least desirable aspects of a Northwestern education, however, many students expressed the sense that the Northwestern climate can be highly competitive, exclusive, or oriented toward building a personal curriculum vitae in ways that fuel a sense of isolation and other negative experiences. Evidence for this perception came from the recent survey by the Global Marketing office, in which the primary words selected by current students to describe themselves and their peers included "stressed out," "competitive," "driven," "hardworking," and "privileged," while nonselected words included "friendly," "collaborative," and "welcoming" (Appendix 19: "Global Marketing Word Cloud").

It is impossible for Task Force members to unearth all the factors contributing to the current perception, and we were not in the position to test or rigorously explore the validity of a variety of proposed etiologies. Nevertheless, a few observations could be made. Many students, faculty, staff, and administrators drew attention to students' perception that acquiring a large number of qualifications is a valuable or necessary prelude to a successful postgraduate life. Even when the pursuit of multiple majors and minors, dual degrees, and multiple activities is a straightforward reflection of students' genuine interests, the simultaneous participation in many undertakings can be highly demanding and minimizes flexibility, thereby reducing time for electives, depth, and reflection. Moreover, entry into certificate or other programs is often competitive. In fact, even extra- or cocurricular activities, though plentiful and attractive, are competitive; students and student affairs administrators report that students are often denied admission to clubs and other groups. As one WCAS faculty member wrote to the forum website:

> *I've observed that the application-only student organizations on campus often seem to define themselves by the students they exclude. We may want to think about how these student organizations may be something more than simply a manifestation of "the culture of busy" (itself a problem). We may want to use funding offers to incentivize more inclusive groups as well as groups that focus on competency building in areas other than leadership.*

Coupled with the pressures of requirements and access to desired programs is the sense of competition within a given area of study. The admissions process largely emphasizes all-around performance rather than distinction in one or a subset of subjects, and as a result most admitted students are accustomed to success in all arenas. In an environment of similar peers, students find it harder to achieve the same degree of relative excellence they may have experienced before attending college, which can lead to mounting competition.

Meanwhile, CAPS reports an increase among students with mental health problems, a high degree of self-reported academic stress, and decreasing levels of resilience. Some Northwestern students have talked about the experience of "imposter syndrome," a sense of relationship-degrading competition with peers, stress that exceeds manageable levels, and a lack of community. Discussions with a variety of groups and individuals repeatedly revealed a doubt that others at Northwestern had the willingness or capacity to understand or accept that individual's or group's experiences. Note that "group" here is not limited to demographic groups but extends to job description, discipline, area of interest, and religion-independent belief system; a complete discussion of diversity will incorporate an appreciation for all these components of people's experiences.

The negative stressors from these aspects of the undergraduate experience go beyond those created by the amount of workload *per se,* as mentioned in the introduction. Collective actions and intentional, accurate communication by all in the Northwestern community will likely be the most effective means of shaping the Northwestern culture to be maximally supportive.

PROPOSAL C1. ACTIVELY ENSURE THAT NORTHWESTERN'S MESSAGES GUIDE STUDENTS TOWARD BALANCING AND BENEFITING FROM BOTH INDIVIDUALLY FOCUSED AND COMMUNITY-BASED ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION.

Northwestern as a whole should increase efforts to develop an awareness of the value of both individual achievement and community participation, while acknowledging the legitimate tension between them. Individual achievement can develop the attributes of leadership, creativity, and independence that allow students to succeed in competing for desired goals, while membership in a community can build a sense of connection, enriching positive experiences by making them shared and mitigating negative experiences by offering support. A community can also serve as an arena where its members can exercise powers of citizenship and responsibility and can introduce its members to different intellectual groups and ideas. Moreover, interacting with others in noncompetitive settings can be a route to becoming aware of obstacles that others have overcome, which can serve as guidance or inspiration.

Therefore, students might benefit when people in mentorship roles acknowledge the complementary roles of leadership and citizenship or partnership; creativity and emulation; and independence and interdependence with others or apprenticeship to those with expertise, i.e., those with long-term, in-depth, well-tried experience. Moreover, a person who is a leader in one context may act as a partner in another; and while independence is sometimes appropriate, at other times the most constructive focus is on the collective. Expanding our focus to include interdependence may help students from all backgrounds prosper together. Finally, it may be worth emphasizing that accepting guidance or following directions from someone with expertise—and admitting to it—does not detract from students' achievement, their "ownership" of a project, or their ultimate ability to

lead. Indeed, initially adhering to the templates for success adopted by people with highly developed skills can be the springboard to creativity and originality. Communicating how to think about fostering the coexistence of the competitive and the communal could be achieved through several means. *The goal of all these approaches is to create conditions that foster interactions at the intersection of the social and the intellectual, so that the academic experience can be translated meaningfully into students' lives.*

At the level of admissions, Northwestern could consider adding application components that assess students' ability to participate as a partner or team member, experiences dealing with loss or failure, or engagement in restorative activities. Even the presence of such questions on an application would signal that these characteristics are valued at the University.

At the level of coursework, we can consider expanding the number of available for-credit courses, as well as extracurricular discussion groups, that include explicit consideration of the academic process and intellectual development all students are undergoing during their college careers. The content of some courses might include an exploration of emotional intelligence, empathy, and interdependence. Courses with such content, such as the PRDV 395 course cotaught by McCormick faculty and CAPS staff, might help provide a basis for developing a meaningful community characterized by sincere mutual respect among nonhomogeneous people and groups. Other courses might include opportunities for discussions and reflection with alumni and other professionals with field-specific knowledge or expertise. These courses might share features with the Career Treks currently offered through Northwestern Career Advancement. The goal of such courses would be to help students gain perspective on how their current academic endeavors may link to their lives in the long term, including the careers and other postgraduate activities they pursue. In addition, as reported by CAPS, building relationships with people at the next or more senior stages of life and livelihood can make it easier for students to negotiate the University and can encourage them to take advantage of previously unrecognized opportunities here at Northwestern. Common Experience courses, too, could provide a context for exploration of such topics, as could distribution requirements that are less disciplinary and more outcome-focused.

At the level of advising, it may be helpful to communicate to students that many postgraduate employers value depth of achievement and caliber of experience as well as quantity of activities. At present, many in academic and career advising roles at Northwestern indicate that their offices already deliver this message; continuing to convey these points through a variety of sources may be helpful.

At the level of out-of-class environments, students report lasting positive experiences through activities that promote a sense of belonging and membership, including pre-orientation activities, intramural or extramural athletics, participation in a fraternity or sorority, involvement in a faith-based group, or membership in specific residential colleges or other living communities. Student Affairs efforts to modify residence communities and residence requirements should therefore complement the recommendations here. If a Diversities and Social Inequalities requirement is partly enacted through cocurricular meetings, such meetings could provide another excellent context for explicit discussion of the distinct routes taken by people with professions, jobs, and other roles that may interest or inspire students. All these venues could be used to communicate how people at all stages of life have felt separate at times from the perceived mainstream and to illustrate how they have coped with those experiences. Such discussions may also help demonstrate that, although each person's strategies for success are unique, they may parallel one another and can inform each other.

The strongest enthusiasm for a conscious, concerted effort to build community for students in a way that balances their lives' competitive elements comes from CAPS and Student Affairs personnel, who have direct experience with acute student stress. Such an effort could help students develop a more realistic perspective on their Northwestern experiences and on life in general. A more realistic perspective may in turn help them define more attainable goals, possibly reducing experiences like "impostor syndrome." Cultivation of community may promote respect for and understanding of others with distinct areas of ability. An understanding and acceptance of the coexistence of talent and limitation within oneself may minimize despair and help increase resilience.

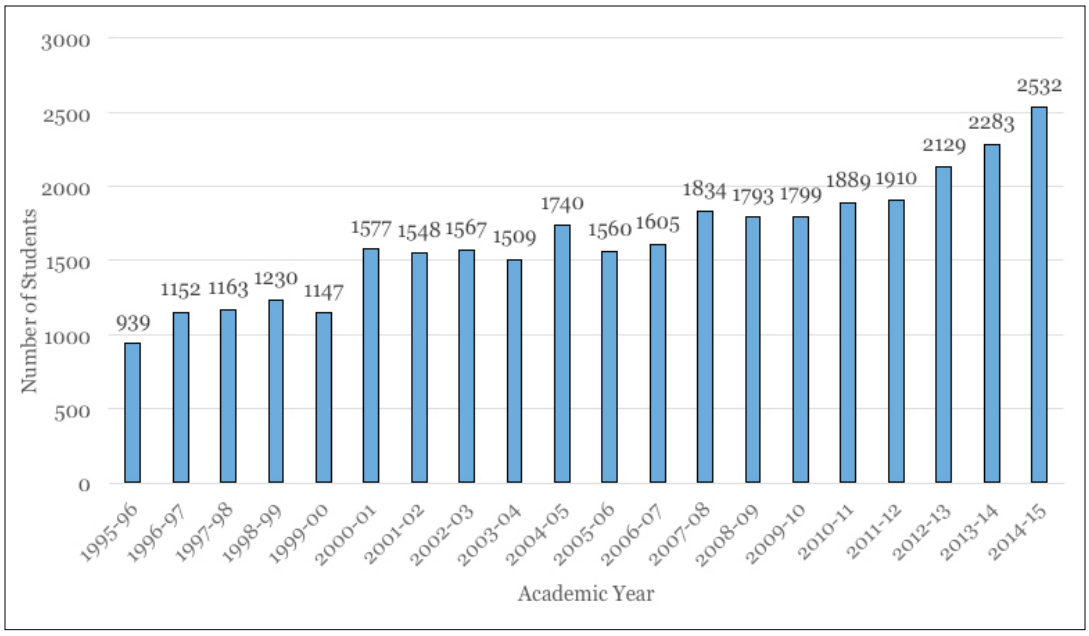
D. COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS) AND ACADEMIC ADVISING

Many recommendations in this report are directed toward promoting wellness through general measures, such as by trying to ensure the reasonable quantity, content, and delivery of the academic workload as well as by building the Northwestern community. Nevertheless, all students are likely to face specific and personal challenges at one time or another during their time at Northwestern. The individual attention and support provided through advising and CAPS are therefore fundamental to helping each student not only experience academic success but also remain or become mentally and emotionally healthy.

Counseling and Psychological Services.

CAPS provides a range of services, and the desire for these services is high. The number of students seeking counseling and psychological services has been growing over the last 20 years (Figure 2), and CAPS seems to be operating above capacity.

FIGURE 2: Number of students per year using CAPS since 1995.
Source: Dean of Students Office



The ratio of staff able to provide counseling and psychological services to students seeking these services is currently about 1 provider per 982 students across Northwestern, and only 1 per 1,032 students on the Evanston campus—considerably lower than the average at seven comparable universities, where it is approximately 1 to 748 (Appendix 20: "Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Services"). In addition, students are at present allotted only 12 visits at no charge before they are referred outside the University.

The importance of CAPS services has been emphasized by students, faculty, staff, and administrators alike. Nevertheless, all have also discussed the difficulties that arise from a shortage of counselors and other providers, as well as from limits on the number of visits at no charge.

PROPOSAL D1: PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, IN TERMS OF BOTH NUMBER OF PROVIDERS AND SESSION NUMBERS.

Because of the considerations above, the Task Force therefore strongly recommends expansion of CAPS, including an increase in the number of providers as well as in the number of visits allotted before a student is referred outside the University. In addition, if a student is on full or nearly full financial aid, this aid should include membership in Northwestern University student health insurance.

Advising

An issue affecting many students is the complexity of navigating the multiple options available to them at Northwestern and beyond. Advisers provide a wide range of service, including but not limited to course selection; planning course choices to fulfill majors; guidance on decisions about postgraduate training; personal support; and direction to further academic, advising, or counseling support. While most advisers carry out many of these tasks at once, rarely can a single individual address every matter that arises over a student's career. Consequently, many students must and do seek guidance from multiple advisers (Appendix 21: "Types of Academic Advisers by School"). Despite the variety of people willing and ready to serve as resources, students in several schools report not knowing where to go for specific matters, frequently being referred from one office to another, and not being able to figure out who has authority, responsibility, the most reliable knowledge, or the final say; ironically, some students report simply not having time to seek the appropriate advising. One student brought up these matters at the forum:

> *I will honestly say to you when I have many academic questions, I don't know who to go to because my advisers in my majors are very narrow… as to what is the right answer. And I respect that—if you are a political science adviser then you should just know political science, but that's not all I need. I benefit from that relationship with an adviser who was a professor—I think our major advisers are specifically for that. But if I want help with careers or if I don't know if I should quit a student group or want to talk about a comp sci class, or what to do with my workload, my options right now are to talk to a faculty member with a narrow expertise, or go straight to CAPS, which I don't think I need to do right now, or talking to peers.*

Another student made a similar comment on the forum website:

> *As a journalism student, [I've found that] my adviser, while a phenomenal person and very supportive, isn't able to offer me much guidance outside of Medill, or even her particular specialization…within Medill. When I was exploring additional majors, minors, and certificates, she couldn't help me, and as I was deciding between different options, I had to talk to people in all of the respective departments to discuss my various options, which was confusing and time-consuming. Additionally…what if there were other options that may have dovetailed better with what I want to do career-wise, or programs that may have interested me that I had never heard of?*

Conversely, several people in advising roles report difficulty both in getting students to schedule appointments and in obtaining accurate reports of other advising interactions, because of either misunderstandings or the complexities of the issues.

Matters pertaining to advising also vary across schools. Some schools, by their nature, provide a more goal-oriented education, i.e., targeted toward specific professions, and advising is structured by this attribute of the subjects of study. The smaller schools have dedicated advisers who are not professors, whose sole role is to guide students, and who often have pertinent disciplinary knowledge (Appendix 21: "Types of Academic Advisers by School"). Discussions with students, faculty, and staff in these schools (e.g., SoC, SESP, Bienen) suggest that their primary need is to maintain or achieve an appropriate student-to-adviser ratio. A target number that came up repeatedly was 100 to 150 students per adviser, although the Bienen School of Music does well with approximately 400:1 and a well-structured route of access to the single adviser.

Some schools and/or fields of study are more process-oriented without a clear class of professions prespecified at the end of each major. An appropriate student-to-adviser ratio is important in these schools as well. Nevertheless, the challenges go beyond the quantity of advisers available. Advisers in these schools do not, and cannot, have disciplinary or profession-related knowledge for all students assigned to them; in fact, with Northwestern encouraging students to develop unusual and original combinations of fields of study, a single adviser may not be even desirable. In such cases, students may need advising from a variety of people with non-overlapping areas of expertise. The complexity arises in coordinating and unifying the different components of advice received by all parties, as different advisers do not always have a means of communicating and recording their interactions. For instance, a student double majoring and considering a premedical path might talk to (1) one or more college advisers, depending on the schools housing the majors, (2) at least one faculty member, (3) a premed adviser, and (4) an adviser in career services, each of whom may offer advice on different aspects of the student's experiences and route.

Examples have also arisen of students experiencing undesirable consequences when confidentiality is applied inappropriately, preventing people who are most capable of offering the right advice from doing so because they lack the data. It is therefore crucial to communicate relevant information to the relevant people and manage the access to this information. Otherwise, in the worst cases, students are left responsible for summarizing, explaining, and accounting for their experiences at times when they may be least equipped to do so.

The issue of advising therefore has two components: maintaining an appropriate number of advisers, and making the advising system navigable so that the right information is appropriately communicated to students as well as advisers.

PROPOSAL D2A: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO DECREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS SEEN BY A SINGLE ACADEMIC ADVISER.

Some students report excellent experiences with advising and advisers, while others—even those who are nominally covered by the same advising structure—report poor experiences. As this disparity makes clear, advising structures are only useful to the extent that the advisers who actually serve the students not only are of the highest quality but also are themselves well supported so that they can give their best to students. The latter depends on each adviser having a reasonable and manageable number of students to serve. Therefore, the necessary resources should be allocated to attract, retain, and train an appropriate number of the best advisers, as well as the associated staff and infrastructure.

PROPOSAL D2B: COORDINATE INTERACTIONS AMONG ADVISERS, POSSIBLY THROUGH A PERSONALIZED ADVISING SITE FOR EACH STUDENT.

A central advising portal has recently been created through the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning (www.northwestern.edu/searle/resources/undergraduate-academic-resources/index.html). The portal is designed to serve as a single website repository of information that directs students (and their primary advisers) to appropriate advisers and resources. This system promises to be highly valuable, and its features should be well advertised to promote its use. As a complement to this general site, and to address the specific, ongoing, evolving needs of individual students, a means should be developed for the different advisers seen by a single student to communicate readily with each other and the student. Ideally, the Undergraduate Council and the Searle Center will continue to work together on this question. One possibility would be to establish a new University leadership position whose role would be to facilitate and coordinate advising of individual students by different advisers as well as to deal with complications, complaints, or ambiguities arising from one student's navigating among several advisers. Importantly, such a person would navigate the University from the perspective of a student but have the power to make decisions and guide discussions of

advising excellence across schools. This person could not only direct individual students but also help improve and coordinate elements of the advising network that are only weakly linked or currently difficult to navigate.

Another nonexclusive possibility to make advising more navigable for students would be to create a personalized online advising site—nonconfidential but privileged—for each student, somewhat like medical records that are viewed by a general practitioner, specialists, and the patient. Such a site would allow the student and advisers with student-granted access to view the content relating to that particular student.

Advisers and students would use personalized advising sites to make notes before, during, and after face-to-face meetings, in order to facilitate discussions about students' academic records and plans as well as their evolving long-term goals, to resolve apparently conflicting advice offered by different people, and to reduce the sense of runaround currently experienced by many students. Records could include summaries of advising conversations, particularly career goals, academic planning, course planning, or career advice. It is important to note that an online form of record keeping is not intended as a substitute for face-to-face conversations. Instead, it would make advisers aware of the other people providing advice to the student and could facilitate communication among these advisers, as necessary. Such a system could also provide a single, accessible repository for student conversations with a variety of advisers, minimizing instances where advisers refer students away without providing sufficient guidance.

Responses and considerations. Advisers in some schools (WCAS, Bienen) welcomed the possibility of personalized advising sites and indicated that they might consider it a desirable formalization of procedures they currently use informally; one senior adviser/administrator indicated that it would be very helpful for working with students pursuing majors in two schools.

The primary concern expressed by some administrators is that such a system would introduce an administrative burden. They reiterated that the single important need for them is to maintain an appropriately low student-to-adviser ratio. This is a legitimate point that should be considered in implementation of such a plan.

Another concern is the technological difficulty of making a functional personal advising-site system. People who favored such a system, however, drew analogies to the athletics recruiting system, in which interactions with prospective students are maintained through smartphone applications. The reported success of these systems suggests that there may be an existing and functional template to draw upon.

E. FACILITATING, SUPPORTING, AND REWARDING EFFECTIVE TEACHING, IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

The Faculty Experience. As mentioned above, students' experience of the content of a course and the associated workload is often highly affected by the delivery of the material: good teaching can raise students' interest, curiosity, and motivation, and poor teaching can reduce their enthusiasm. Thus, in considering the academic experience, it is appropriate to examine the situation of faculty members—their contributions, their responsibilities, their constraints, their conflicts, and their overall experience.

It is repeatedly stated that Northwestern excels in both teaching and research—which here means all original work, including discovery-oriented, invention-directed, and creative endeavors—but the two are often discussed and experienced as though they oppose one another. Tenure-line faculty members frequently voice the perception that their research and scholarship, with the associated funding, publicity, or prestige, is valued by the University more highly than is their work related to training undergraduates inside or outside the classroom. Regardless of perceived University priorities, even those who are committed to undergraduate education and who excel in teaching often find that this work can conflict with their scholarly efforts, owing to the time and focus that both teaching and research require. To achieve both goals, they are faced with the choice of either letting their scholarly work slip, decreasing their commitment to the classroom, or working extraordinarily long hours at intense levels, at the expense of other components of their lives. Meanwhile, those faculty members who are less accomplished at teaching have little incentive to improve, and those who disregard teaching experience no penalty. Those in the latter group may even find themselves relieved from serious teaching duties and thereby freed to pursue their research to a greater extent than peers who, independently of their potential as researchers, may be more successful at teaching.

Perhaps owing to their own skills in the classroom, many good teachers resist the arguable notion that high-quality teaching may be as much talent as technique. Although some mediocre teaching can be traced to irresponsibility, some faculty members point out that, despite their efforts to improve, teaching undergraduates does not come easily to them. Others state that they intentionally selected a position at a research-intensive university, where they expected that training graduate students would outweigh undergraduate teaching, because the former plays to their strengths. We must therefore cultivate opportunities for professors, regardless of their classroom teaching skills, to give of their disciplinary expertise to undergraduates in contexts outside the classroom.

Nevertheless, the academic experience for undergraduate students obviously centers on professor-student interactions in the classroom or in classroom-like situations. The faculty and students alike therefore would benefit from significant gestures from the administration indicating that the broad endeavor of education consists of teaching as well as research, and that both are valued and rewarded.

As part of its outreach, the Task Force met with a group of professors who had received major awards for teaching excellence. We asked these "master teachers" to discuss techniques that worked well in the classroom. Beyond the content of their statements to us, a striking aspect of this discussion was the contagious pleasure expressed by these professors as they discovered commonalities in teaching approaches across widely disparate disciplines. Several Task Force members agreed that including new as well as seasoned faculty in such discussions would almost certainly have a positive influence on the larger teaching endeavor. In fact, after Task Force interviews of faculty groups, a repeated comment was that faculty members—at all levels and regardless of tenure-line or non-tenure-line status—appreciated the opportunity to share ideas with one another about teaching. This idea was echoed in a comment from a McCormick faculty member to the forum website:

> *I think that we need to make more effort to educate faculty about teaching, especially as new faculty come in. Some of them will have had exposure to the growing number of programs around the country for educating grad students about teaching, but many won't, and there is a lot to learn. I would favor emphasizing the importance of teaching in the first couple of years of a faculty member's career, and rewarding participation in some ongoing forums about topics in teaching that involve some of the senior faculty as well. There are some opportunities now, but no real rewards for new faculty as they start planning courses, or for any faculty to spend time talking to their colleagues about teaching. The tenure-line faculty have a lot to learn from lecturer faculty, actually, who generally pay more attention to these things. I argue for doing this early, because after they have created courses, there is less incentive to change. There is a tremendous amount to discuss—cultural competence, grading policies, manageable workloads, technologies, active learning, knowledge of the resources for underprepared students, etc. We will have a new director for the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching soon, so perhaps some changes will occur. I would like to see the committee recommend that the Searle Center be given a central location on campus to facilitate this change.*

Undergraduate Research and one-on-one learning opportunities. Long-term satisfaction with the undergraduate experience tends to be high among those students who have had the chance to cultivate lasting bonds with faculty members who ultimately serve as advisers and guides. Although many of these relationships originate through interactions initiated by students with teachers they come to respect and like through classes, many are reinforced through other teacher-student interactions outside the physical classroom, e.g. in laboratories, in field studies, and/or through guided research projects. As a WCAS attendee at the faculty forum stated:

> *Undergraduate research… in the sciences is sort of equivalent to the internship that one might do outside the University through Chicago field studies. My own perspective, from my own experience as an undergraduate and from the undergraduates whom I have mentored in research here, is that this can be one of the most valuable parts of an undergraduate's experience at the University; that's true in the sciences, it's probably true in other fields as well. Some kind of in-depth experiential learning with a faculty member helps students develop those personal interactions with faculty, and it teaches them a whole different set of skills than they would learn sitting in a classroom.… Many of us would actually welcome the opportunity to mentor more undergraduate students in research than we can afford to both in terms of time and literally in terms of money, because in the lab sciences research is expensive; reagents are used and I can't afford [to] allow some of my research budget to go to [an undergraduate's] work that has… a lower chance of contributing in a substantial way to the research program. If there were a way for the University to support faculty in hosting more undergraduate students in their research labs in the sciences and in their scholarly work and whatever discipline they are in, I think that would be welcomed by many faculty and would have a positive impact on students' lives here.*

Another WCAS faculty member immediately followed up:

> *[It] is the cost but it's also time; there's a lot more time in bringing undergraduate students up. One thing I see in my department is sometimes a differential level of engagement between faculty and undergraduate research mentoring, and part of that is that if somebody is doing one, two, five, seven 399 research credits with undergraduate students, it actually doesn't count toward our teaching credits even when they become significant. That's an open loop; it's not a closed loop.*

A related point was brought up by a Bienen faculty member in a comment to the forum website:

> *A very important part of studying in a music school is the interaction with the primary teacher… This weekly individual attention affords the students not only mentoring on their instrument but also mentoring on many aspects of living and the professionalism they will need to have after school. Think of what just some of that individual attention could add to the educational experience for students in other disciplines.*

Our recommendations therefore center on making it easier for faculty to give their best to teaching without doing so at the expense of the scholarly work that their positions demand and enabling faculty to generate undergraduate research opportunities or other one-on-one guided or mentored intellectual activities or community projects. The Searle Center as well as the Center for Civic Engagement would be ideally suited to participate in and lead the parts of these initiatives that fall within their purview.

PROPOSAL E1: INITIATE A CONTINUING HIGHER EDUCATION CREDITS PROGRAM TO FOSTER AND REWARD FACULTY FOR COMMITMENT TO HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING, BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM.

The Northwestern administration could most convincingly demonstrate its commitment to teaching by offering concrete research support to reward professors who either provide high-quality instruction or engage in efforts at self-improvement with scholarship.

To this end, a program of Continuing Higher Education Credits (CHEC) could be established— loosely inspired by continuing medical education credits, which are intended to keep medical professionals actively engaged in learning new content related to and approaches to their professions. For a CHEC program, credits would be given to professors who seek *and* professors who offer CHEC training. Possible for-credit events could include but not be limited to

1. Attending a presentation by/discussion with "master teachers" (e.g., McCormick Professors of Teaching Excellence) on teaching strategies.
2. Attending a workshop with theatre faculty on performance in the classroom.
3. Attending a lecture by relevant SESP faculty on a pedagogy-related topic.
4. Attending a session with CAPS staff on working with students with mental-health issues or disabilities.
5. Attending a discussion among faculty offering undergraduate research experiences.

6. For new faculty, attending teaching training programs offered by the Searle Center.
7. Working directly with education-credentialed faculty (Searle Center faculty or education postdoc or SESP faculty) on one's own teaching, e.g., by being observed in the classroom or by discussion of specific assessments.
8. Engaging in assessment of teaching or pedagogical research, presenting such assessment at the provost's annual assessment conference each November, or attending the assessment conference.
9. Teaching one of the proposed cross-school Common Experiences courses or other course designed to bring together students from multiple schools.
10. Training postdocs in the proposed Teaching Fellows program (*Section F*).
11. Engaging in one-on-one teaching or training of undergraduates, as in mentoring an undergraduate research project.
12. Partnering with University librarians in teaching, as suggested by a comment to the faculty forum website:

    In some University courses librarians… collaborate with faculty to teach research skills to undergraduates. [Librarians] also partner in pedagogical innovation, particularly in fostering critical inquiry and digital literacy skills.… Expanding this [collaboration] to promote academic inquiry would… make an already vibrant academic environment even more so for our undergraduates.

An indispensable component of such a program is that accumulated credits could be "cashed in" in various ways that support the faculty member's scholarship, including but not limited to a quarter's worth of support for a graduate student or research assistant, insurance for gaps in funding, funding for scholarship-associated work (e.g., travel or meeting costs), seed funds for pilot research projects, or some portion of a summer salary. Note that CHECs would be available to both tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty. Ideally, CHECs would be viewed as a positive factor in salary decisions.

The advantages to such a system are many. Most simply, by providing support for faculty members' scholarship, this program would provide incentive for good researchers to continue or renew their commitment to teaching. More broadly, it would forge a formal link between teaching and research that would demonstrate Northwestern's commitment to both. Cultivating and rewarding good teaching may help contribute to restoring the classroom as the intellectual center of the Northwestern experience, a point raised by master teachers. The CHEC program has the potential to help create community among faculty members, by providing incentives to participate in overt discussions of teaching and actions to improve it. In fact, as mentioned above, many faculty members have expressed

enthusiasm at having the chance to talk about teaching matters with other faculty but indicate that their long lists of responsibilities make it difficult to give priority to doing so, even when opportunities arise. In addition to the tangible benefits, the system may serve to ease the sense shared by some faculty members, as well as some students, that undergraduate teaching is of secondary importance at a "very high research activity" university (in the Carnegie Classification).

The program also acknowledges, however, the diverse, necessary roles played by different professors at the University. For this reason, the initial conceptualization of the program is that CHECs should not be compulsory but that the rewards should make them appealing. Not all University faculty members are, or should be expected to be, outstanding teachers; some professors are in fact recruited to excel almost entirely in other domains. Recognizing that reality, the proposed system intentionally does not penalize those whose primary contribution to the University is through means other than teaching. Instead, it aims to give credit and support to those who do focus a significant portion of their efforts on good teaching. It is worth emphasizing that this program would be complementary to and independent from the academic leave program, which provides faculty members with a gap in teaching and administrative responsibilities so they may have time to focus on scholarship.

A well-established CHEC program may ultimately influence hiring, as a commitment to teaching may become a legitimate factor in hiring decisions (in all departments), and job candidates combining scholarly talents with teaching skills and interests will be attracted to the University. The CHEC program may give faculty members tangible reasons to think that their time spent on teaching is valued. Some of this conviction will almost certainly be transmitted to students, which is likely to have a positive impact on the classroom experience.

PROPOSAL E1A. GRANT TEACHING CREDIT FOR CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING AND TEACHING IN RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES AND SERVICE LEARNING COURSES (OR THE EQUIVALENT).

Multiple faculty members discussed administrative barriers to experimental or creative teaching. The most common point was that no departmental credit is awarded for coteaching with a member of another department/school or in a residential college. Since this type of teaching is exactly the sort that can increase the cohesion of the academic experience, by linking departments and schools and blurring the lines between the classroom and the residence, teaching credit should be assigned for such efforts. In fact, developing new cross-disciplinary or exploratory courses could also confer eligibility for CHECs.

PROPOSAL E1B. MAKE COURSE EVALUATIONS (CTECS) COMPULSORY.

Course and Teacher Evaluations, known as CTECs (the final C stands for Council but has become part of the acronym) serve a dual role: they allow students to tell each other about courses, often in colloquial terms, and they are also used by the University administration for major professional decisions, e.g., tenure, promotion, and salary setting. Sometimes these roles come into conflict. Although CTECs are currently undergoing changes, it is worth summarizing some of the issues. The Task Force notes that the Office of the Registrar is currently installing a new CTEC support system, Explorance Blue, which will offer increased flexibility and the capability of greatly expanded reporting formats. The present recommendations should be considered in light of these changes.

In the past, CTECs were filled out by individual students, in class, as a requirement. Currently, CTECs are completed online, outside class hours, and are required only if the student wants to view other CTECs in the coming quarter. Because they are not strictly required, they tend to draw from the extremes of the student distribution, with highly satisfied and highly dissatisfied students overrepresented in the sample of responses. Particularly with regard to this point, many faculty members have asked the Task Force to "fix the CTECs." As one WCAS faculty member wrote:

> *CTECS are expected to… allow students to quantify and narrativize their assessments of classes, which in turn will inform future students qua consumers what products to buy or eschew, inform profs how to improve and otherwise modify their courses and teaching, [and] inform administrators about profs' teaching effectiveness; indeed data from CTECs are the basis of very serious decisions about promotion, tenure, and salary merit increases…. The fit between these functions is an awkward one, but whatever and however one thinks about the relationship between product assessment and nuanced evaluation of teaching effectiveness, the entire process is threatened, indeed undermined, by the low return rates. To tell the truth, rates under 100 percent should be seen as unacceptable.*

Graduating seniors have expressed the perception that they "don't have to" fill out CTECs because they don't have to read them in coming quarters, not realizing that their lack of participation can be read negatively by administrators evaluating courses. Possibly because they are no longer completed during class time, seriousness and individual effort cannot be guaranteed. Especially in some of the larger classes, professors note frivolity, superficiality, and in some cases inappropriate comments. Many professors, especially those earnestly wishing to address and improve their teaching or course content, are disturbed and discouraged by the nature and style of CTEC comments. They suspect that sometimes groups of students are filling out CTECs together, under circumstances that minimize the seriousness of what they are doing. The fact that these comments are used

for administrative decisions is doubly distressing. From the student side, many students criticize professors for "not caring," a claim that unfortunately may sometimes be legitimate. Nevertheless, these same students may not realize that using CTECs as a retaliatory tool does not improve the quality of the poorest teachers and undermines the zeal of the moderate teachers who are striving to improve.

We therefore propose that filling out CTECs be a requirement for students to see their own grades for that quarter. Ideally, the CTECs would be done in class (so that the window for that course's evaluation is only during class time and perhaps for a few hours afterward), or at the least, the hours of CTEC accessibility could be limited to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The conflict between students' manner of communicating to each other and communicating to administrators should be explicitly acknowledged and addressed. A straightforward fix would be to inform students that they are writing to University administrators and faculty for purposes of professional decisions, not to each other. Students might fill out a set of compulsory administrative CTECs available *only* to faculty and administrators. At the students' request (i.e., with a click of a button), their comments could be transferred in full to a second, separate system that students can access. Thus, other students would not be denied the opportunity to see the content, except by students who actively choose not to transfer their comments, but the evaluations' serious professional purpose (of which many students remain unaware) would be evident.

Advantages to compulsory CTECs are quite straightforward. By receiving evaluations from all students and, possibly, by restricting the time window when CTECs can be filled out, the University is more likely to garner a meaningful sample of serious responses that can legitimately be used in professional decisions. By knowing their audience to be administrators and faculty members, students are more likely to take the responsibility seriously. This approach is also likely to make faculty take the comments more seriously, so that students can have the sense of giving meaningful feedback.

PROPOSAL E2: EXPAND AND SUPPORT UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES.

As described above, among the most enriching opportunities that undergraduates can take advantage of at a research-intensive university like Northwestern is the experience of conducting research or engaging in other one-on-one learning with a faculty mentor. Indeed, undergraduate research at Northwestern has grown appreciably in recent years, as measured by the significant increase in research grants awarded to students. With the expansion in this area, there is a need for research mentorship, including an assessment of student learning through research. An increase in the staff of the Office of Undergraduate Research could satisfy this need for mentorship; alternatively, faculty could be recruited to serve as summer mentors for summer projects similar to the

Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP). Providing research experiences to students is demanding, however, in terms of both time and resources, and faculty members involved should be tangibly supported.

Undergraduate research grants. At present, summer undergraduate research grants offer students a "stipend to cover living and research expenses for full-time eight-week independent academic and creative work in all fields of study under faculty supervision." Such granting programs should be maintained and even expanded, so that research support in all fields may be available year-round.

In disciplines where research or related endeavors require consumable materials (e.g., in the laboratory sciences), however, research supplies are usually ordered through the University from faculty research accounts. Therefore, undergraduate research funds awarded to students can rarely be applied toward laboratory work. In addition, in labs supported by granting agencies, even "independent" research projects are usually components of a larger, professor-defined endeavor that the faculty member as principal investigator has contracted with outside funding agencies to undertake and complete. Undergraduates understandably cannot jump into such lines of research and be instantaneously productive, and it is necessary to acknowledge that taking on undergraduates in the laboratory can sometimes be more worthwhile from an educational standpoint than from a research productivity standpoint. Acknowledging this reality need not detract from recognizing the many significant research contributions made by undergraduates. Faculty members should therefore be supported in their efforts to admit undergraduates into laboratories and to train them in research. A separate stipend should go directly to the lab, so that the funds can be used for the undergraduate's research project. Equally important, however, is that undergraduates in research laboratories benefit from, and require, training, supervision, and ongoing guidance. In some cases, these are provided by the faculty member. In other cases, the undergraduate works closely with a graduate student or postdoc. While the latter relationship can ultimately be beneficial to both parties, supervising an undergraduate can, at least initially, slow a graduate student's or postdoc's research. One possibility is for the University to contribute partial support for the stipend of a *graduate student or postdoc* who is actively and substantially supervising an undergraduate in a research project. Such a scenario would provide incentive for the PI and graduate student or postdoc to absorb the legitimate costs associated with creating research experiences for undergraduates; it could also serve to integrate postdocs and graduate students more effectively into undergraduate education.

Undergraduate language grants. As stated on the Northwestern website, "Undergraduate Language Grants (ULGs) provide up to $5,000 (up to 75 percent of total expenses) for the intensive and experiential learning of foreign language during the summer." The Task Force recognizes the necessity of international experience for students to become fully proficient in another language and culture, and Task Force members who investigated this area in detail were impressed by both the level of funding and the level of applications. Nevertheless, there is an appreciable need for more funding for undergraduate summer language training grants; demand for financial support far exceeds the amount of funding annually awarded. The Task Force therefore recommends that the number and amount of the awards be increased.

The undergraduate granting programs would benefit from self-assessments that help demonstrate their success, e.g., measuring not only what research students complete but also its impact on the field and on students' intellectual and professional growth. We recommend that data on how the experience affects learning be gathered in one of two ways: first, within an academic context—how many students publish, how many use the experience to write honors theses or win fellowships upon graduation (e.g., Fulbright or Marshall Scholarships), or how the research enhances students' applications to graduate schools; second, measuring how their research aids their professional goals (e.g., in private industry, finance, policy, nonprofit, or other professional contexts). These could be measured by surveys, by enumeration of awards, by obtaining information from companies with strong Northwestern relationships, or from internship and job placement data.

F. SUPPORTING TEACHING IN LARGE CLASSES

While classes with fewer than 50 students are appealing, because they allow one instructor to get to know and attend to the intellectual trajectory of each student, limiting all classes to 50 students is neither realistic nor practical. Many courses are necessarily large, sometimes with a few hundred students. These include gateway courses to fields of study in high demand as well as popular distribution courses. Since they are often gateway or otherwise required courses, and since experiences in these courses can significantly influence students' success at later levels as well as their perception of their academic career, these large courses merit special attention.

Faculty members teaching large courses must serve large numbers of students but do not always have adequate support to do so, often owing to a shortage of suitable teaching assistants (TAs) (Appendix 22: "Teaching Assistants in High Enrollment Courses"). In some STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) courses, as many as 150 students may be served by only two TAs, limiting possibilities for personal attention and often restricting assessments to those that can be graded in a relatively automated fashion. In some of the writing-intensive humanities courses, only one TA may be responsible for 50 students. In addition, many young graduate students may not be fully prepared to teach, for a variety of reasons: they may be at an early stage of training; they may not yet have developed appropriate teaching or general communication skills; or they may prematurely face educationally challenging tasks, such as teaching general physics without calculus. Thus, despite many creative efforts on the part of faculty teaching these courses, students in these large courses often have limited personal contact with an instructor affording appropriate teaching experience and disciplinary expertise.

Simply adding TAs is impractical: taking graduate students in lab-based disciplines out of the laboratory for extended times can be problematic for graduate students and faculty alike. In disciplines with relatively small graduate programs, an adequate number of graduate students simply may not be available. Indeed, the demand for TAs in some large humanities courses requires recruiting TAs from other disciplines, and they may lack the knowledge base necessary for providing meaningful guidance to undergraduates in the course.

At the same time, however, many postdoctoral fellows (postdocs), especially those who wish to explore teaching-related careers, are interested in and committed to teaching. In disciplines that do not generally include postdoctoral training, the same can be said of recent PhD graduates, or in some cases of graduates with bachelor's degrees. Nevertheless, even those faculty members who would like to support their postdocs in seeking teaching opportunities cannot legally do so, owing to commitments to funding sources, especially the federal government. In other disciplines, recent PhD graduates who are still seeking long-term employment rarely continue to receive support from their department, if only because of a lack of existing positions.

PROPOSAL F1: INITIATE A TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM.

Interested postdocs or recent PhD graduates could apply to become part-time Teaching Fellows. Teaching Fellows would be centrally supported at 25 percent, 50 percent, or 75 percent effort and would allocate the corresponding proportion of their time to assisting with teaching one, two, or three courses per year. The rest of their time would continue to be devoted to research, supported by their laboratory. For fellows not engaged in lab research or the equivalent, the proportion could be adjusted as appropriate. Teaching Fellow responsibilities could take the form of serving as course TAs, particularly as "super TAs," as selected senior graduate students in some current natural-sciences courses do: serving as a personal tutor and/or training first-time or less experienced TAs. Teaching Fellows would receive explicit training in pedagogy, e.g., through the Searle Center, or by working with master teachers (e.g., McCormick Professors of Teaching Excellence) or interested SESP faculty. Postdocs who do well in a 25 percent teaching–75 percent research role might be allowed to progress to higher proportions of teaching relative to research. If necessary, the total number of years in such a position could be capped. An important point, however, is that stipends must be set to equal the stipend associated with 100 percent lab work, so that the Teaching Fellows program neither lures postdocs out of laboratories nor produces a pay cut.

Among the advantages of such a program are that undergraduate students in large courses would receive more personal attention from people with substantial disciplinary knowledge as well as an interest in teaching. Professors of large courses would be supported by fellows who are likely to be both capable and committed. Postdocs or recent PhDs would be able to take advantage of teaching opportunities and, importantly, would be more fully integrated into the Northwestern community, by both interacting with undergraduates and getting to know more faculty members and staff engaged in education. The pay would formally justify the time spent. Graduate students would continue to TA at current levels but, in some disciplines, could perhaps defer their TA assignments until they were more fully prepared academically. Professors employing postdocs would receive incentives for encouraging their trainees to contribute to undergraduate education. They would also receive a concrete message that the Northwestern administration values teaching and financially supports faculty members training postdocs who teach. This approach would help alleviate pressure on faculty to provide financial support for postdocs who may not wish to continue in research or who simply want to build on their teaching experience. In this way, the program could be a "win-win-win-win-win" situation for undergraduates, graduate students, teaching fellows, large-course professors, and professors who employ postdocs.

Finally, if the diversities and inequalities requirement is indeed instituted, and must serve some 2,000 students per year, Teaching Fellows from relevant disciplines could make a substantial contribution to this endeavor.

G. ORIENTATION TO, PLACEMENT IN, AND ACCESS TO ACADEMICS

Academics at Northwestern ought to be challenging, but the challenges must not be rendered insurmountable by nonacademic factors. Three points that should be ensured are that (1) students' class performance is not excessively influenced by matters of adaptation to the University environment, (2) students are properly placed in classes that begin from their level of knowledge, and (3) financial considerations neither restrict which courses students enroll in nor pose major hardships. The Office of Student Enrichment Services and the International Summer Institute are well placed to shape, lead, and implement the specific parts of these recommendations that pertain to the students they serve.

G1 Adaptation. Learning to navigate the University environment is naturally a complex undertaking for all newly admitted students, but it can be particularly complicated for students newly arrived from abroad. For international students, whose number is likely to grow in coming years, adaptation to the United States as well as to the American academic system can be difficult. The International Summer Institute, in which international graduate students spend approximately one month at Northwestern prior to the start of classes, has been highly successful. As stated on its website (http://groups.linguistics.northwestern.edu/isi/), the institute provides "linguistic, emotional, academic, and practical support to entering Northwestern PhD students through intensive instruction in English, opportunities to socialize outside the classroom, and practical advice on integrating into an American university and the local culture." A similar experience for international undergraduates is appealing but may be hampered by issues of scale.

PROPOSAL G1: USE CANVAS FOR AN ONLINE SUMMER ORIENTATION COURSE FOR NEWLY ARRIVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

The International Summer Institute for graduate students has been very successful. Discussions with this program's director have led to the suggestion that a similar approach for a subset of international undergraduates might help "seed" the undergraduate population with individuals who would be encouraged to transmit their new knowledge to international peers. In addition, she pointed out that some of the orientation information that lends itself to online learning could be incorporated into a Canvas course that all newly arriving international students take, so that they are at least partly prepared for the transition to a new culture. Further work with faculty and staff associated with these programs will be useful in defining content.

G2. Placement. AP credit is often used to determine freshman placement in courses at Northwestern, and later courses rely on prerequisites. It is important, therefore, to confirm that AP performance is an appropriate indicator of students' knowledge bases. Professors in some departments responsible for large gateway courses are currently examining various forms of assessment testing and learning-processes data that these tests can provide, with a goal of trying to place students more precisely and to determine the best ways of interpreting AP scores.

PROPOSAL G2: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TO ENSURE THE APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS.

Efforts to engage in and validate assessment testing should be supported and expanded in fields where a number of different introductory courses are available that start from different levels (such as introductory STEM courses). Ideally, we will be able to gather sufficient data to tell students that "students with your academic profile do best when they do *x*," and then be able to define and offer *x*, whether it is placement in an existing class, participation in a bridge program, or taking advantage of other options that are developed as specific needs are recognized. As needed, placement examinations could be incorporated into Canvas summer orientation courses for all students. These placement tests would function much like foreign language exams. Information from placement testing should be communicated to advisers and possibly recorded through personalized advising sites.

Placement continues to be relevant after the initial quarter, as students proceed through course sequences that build upon one another. Faculty members have commented that the registration process does not prevent students from registering for courses for which they have not fulfilled specified prerequisites. The reasons for this situation are unclear. Ideally, prerequisites should be enforced at the time of registration, or at least students who have not fulfilled prerequisites but who are nevertheless registering should be identified to the professors.

The advantages of providing orientation courses and validated placement testing are twofold. First, unnecessary struggling to adapt would be minimized; second, the Northwestern academic community's sincere interest in and commitment to ensuring student academic welfare and success would be communicated. A possible concern is that placement would be seen as a form of exclusiveness, but this perception can and should be combatted by indicating that identifying the appropriate level reflects Northwestern's commitment to providing a personalized education, tailored to help each student achieve maximal potential.

G2a Financial considerations. Many courses at Northwestern require materials, such as textbooks or supplies. The cost for such items can be substantial and in some cases may be prohibitive for some students. Although faculty members are asked to announce their courses' required materials in advance of registration as a means of compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, sometimes they do not or are unable to do so. As a result, a high cost of materials can make it necessary for a student to drop a course. As one student said at the forum:

> *As a low-income student I am looking at… my tuition and my housing and my meal plan, and those are all scary but I've worked it out and planned and think I have it covered…. Then I come here and start the quarter and it is like $100, $200, $300 per textbook…. It stacks up so fast, and I don't have flexibility in my expenses for that.*

It has been suggested that the announcement of course materials should be enforced. This action is appropriate, but a deeper issue is that it is not acceptable for some courses to be open only to students with the resources to pay for materials.

PROPOSAL G2A. ASSUME FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVER-THE-CAP COURSE MATERIALS COST.

The Task Force agreed that Northwestern should set a reasonable cap for the cost that any student is expected to pay for course materials (per four-credit quarter, or other suitable unit). If a student's costs goes over that cap, the University should cover the balance, for any student, regardless of financial aid status. Ideally, to avoid the need for students to go out of their way to seek this additional aid, each course should list the cost of its associated materials so that when students register, the total materials cost could be immediately calculated. If the amount exceeds the cap, instructions or a direct hyperlink should appear, directing the student how to cover the balance. The cap amount should also be communicated clearly to faculty, so that they can inform appropriate administrative staff if they know that their course necessarily exceeds the average suggested amount. In this way, faculty members would not be restricted in the assignment of necessary course materials, but they could participate actively in ensuring that financial considerations do not exclude students from their classes. Implementation of a cost calculation system and the associated data entry, although labor intensive, would achieve the goal of making all courses open to all Northwestern students.

PROPOSAL G2B. FURTHER FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds can face significant challenges when they arrive on the Northwestern campus. If such a student, upon completing the undergraduate experience, were to consider pursuing graduate study, turning down a high-paying job—one with a salary much higher than that of anyone else in the student's family—in favor of additional student debt may simply be out of the question in the face of family pressures and responsibilities. Northwestern could substantially help such students who wish to make a transition to a master's degree program.

PROPOSAL G3: EXTEND FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES TO A FIFTH YEAR FOR PELL GRANT AWARDEES WHO QUALIFY FOR A BACHELOR-MASTER DEGREE PROGRAM.

One way to make graduate school realistic for a student from a financially disadvantaged background is to defray the cost of a master degree (MA or MS) through a bachelor-master degree (BA/MA or BS/MS) program, particularly for Pell Grant awardees. The Task Force recommends that students who are Pell Grant awardees be able to continue for a fifth year at the same financial cost as the fourth year, provided they qualify for admission to a Northwestern master's degree program. Such a policy will enable students to perform well in advanced classes, obtain a graduate grade point average (GPA) independent of their undergraduate GPA, pursue advanced study in a given field, and develop appropriate credentials for entering a PhD program if they wish.

H. ASSESSMENT

The purpose of instruction is, of course, to help students learn material, approaches, and skills that will be of value to them—either practically or less tangibly—in their subsequent pursuits. Achieving this end requires (1) "intentional teaching," i.e., an awareness on the part of instructors not only of what information or skills they are trying to transmit but also of what broader abilities or mental habits they are trying to cultivate, as well as the means by which they will do so, and (2) reliable assessment, i.e., methods to verify that desired outcomes have been attained. Assessment translates into grades that end up on transcripts, which, in some fields, can influence students' future careers and prospects. Indeed, concerns about grades often lie at the heart of self-reported academic stress. The sources for these concerns can include students' uncertainty about their own mastery of the material, their doubt about the quality or accuracy of a grading scheme, or the burgeoning competition arising from a sense that relative rather than absolute performance determines outcomes. Student concerns about grading are also often expressed in CTECs. For both pedagogical and wellness-related reasons, therefore, it is necessary to ensure that grades reflect an accurate assessment of students' achievement, based on realistic and justified classroom goals. The Task Force therefore discussed how Northwestern might focus attention on continued development of meaningful assessments that track and encourage student growth over the course of a quarter (termed "Formative Assessment" by Northwestern's Assessment/Accreditation Council), in addition to evaluating mastery in its many forms at the conclusion of course (termed "Summative Assessment" by Northwestern's Assessment/Accreditation Council). These topics are under active discussion by Northwestern's Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Subcommittee, convened in September 2015 by Northwestern's Assessment/Accreditation Council, and the Task Force's analysis and recommendation should be viewed within the context of their work. Nevertheless, a few common themes have emerged in the Task Force's discussions.

Regarding intentional teaching, instructors and students alike often benefit from an explicit articulation, to the extent possible, of the course's goals and the routes to be taken toward those goals; formalization of these ideas can be especially helpful for new teachers or those developing novel courses. Letting students know what is happening during a course, why it is happening, and to what end can help students develop their own awareness not only of their learning processes but also of the teaching process. As students develop this perspective, they can come to view instruction as less mysterious and the associated assessments as more intelligible. In particular, an increase in intentionality on the part of both instructors and students can reduce the aspects of uncertainty that can be unproductively stressful. In fact, many educators agree that the route to mastery often involves errors, misunderstandings, or unfruitful explorations, yet such mistakes can be perceived by students as unacceptable setbacks or recorded by less-than-ideal grading schemes as permanent demerits. With overt discussion of the learning process, and

correspondingly thoughtful approaches to assessment, mistakes can be acknowledged as acceptable and even necessary missteps along a path to knowledge or ability. Moreover, recognizing the role of errors and error correction, both in education and in assessments, can make the process of learning more recognizable and less unnerving to students and can help learning become more an active than a passive undertaking.

Regarding reliable assessment itself, high-quality teachers with manageable class sizes can consciously monitor their class members, thereby providing themselves with an awareness of individual students' responses to, and progress regarding, the information, ideas, and skills presented throughout a course. This awareness usually arises through combining several sources of data: students' in-class demonstrations of ability, out-of-class interactions such as those during office hours, performance on homework and other assignments, execution of projects, and scores on carefully designed exams. For teachers who are obliged to deal with class sizes greater than about 50, however, developing a personal knowledge of each student's intellectual trajectory is difficult if not impossible; inexperienced or less engaged teachers of smaller classes may likewise be unable to do so. In these latter cases, clearly stated goals and carefully designed assessment systems are especially critical.

Different disciplines will inevitably lend themselves to different types of assessment, and even within a discipline, different instructors will, appropriately, settle on distinct modes of interacting with and grading students. Nevertheless, a central concern of many students and faculty alike is how to keep the focus on subject matter rather than on the anticipation, favorable or otherwise, of a grade. The Task Force considered a number of possibilities to deal with this issue.

Much discussion centered on the possibility of making the first term pass/fail, as at MIT. In such a system, students would still be assessed, receive feedback on their performance, and be informed of the grades corresponding to that performance, but the grades would neither appear on the transcript nor count toward a GPA. Task Force members favoring this idea thought that this approach would (1) allow students to become calibrated to the Northwestern academic system as well as to its grading policies, which may differ from those of their high schools, and (2) permit students to make the personal and social transitions necessary for adapting to the Northwestern environment without consequences to the grades that may define their future opportunities. Task Force members expressing reservations about this idea thought that (1) deferring grades for a short period may simply delay the onset of any associated problems and (2) whether or not feedback is provided through assessments, many students actually find grades a source of motivation that drives their performance. The Task Force came to no final conclusion but agreed that the idea of a pass/fail first quarter is worthy of further exploration by a group devoted to this subject.

Although different courses will use different approaches, key elements regarding formative assessment might involve (1) providing students with the opportunity to work with subject matter during the course and to receive feedback on the caliber of their efforts as well as advice on how to improve; (2) providing multiple assessments that are parallel in structure or offering opportunities for revision, e.g., for written compositions or other creative work, so that progress can be affected by both instructor and student; (3) permitting a subset of graded work not to count toward a final grade, especially that done early in the course or on an initial attempt at mastery. Note also that these proposals could be facilitated by initiating both CHECs and a Teaching Fellows Program. In addition, the proposals could be substantiated and further developed through interactions with the Searle Center as well as by encouraging faculty to attend the provost's annual assessment forum.

PROPOSAL H1. PROVIDE CLEARLY ARTICULATED GRADING POLICIES IN EACH CLASS SO THAT ASSESSMENTS ARE CLEARLY LINKED TO GRADES.

Based on the idea that the most fundamental aim of summative assessment is to promote a high degree of correlation between final grades assigned and absolute mastery with respect to learning goals, some Task Force members advocated agreeing upon meaningful definitions of grades in terms of student mastery and performance. At a departmental level, for example, such grading guidelines are stated on the Department of History's website (www.history.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/grading.html). Other Task Force members, however, were concerned that a general policy, even at the department level, might limit the flexibility of individual instructors to determine grades as they saw fit—for example, to acknowledge improvement during a quarter. The question of whether a common definition of grades is desirable or feasible might best be included in the charge of the Undergraduate Education working group proposed in Section B2. Nevertheless, the Task Force members agreed that grade definitions and grading policies should be clearly communicated by each instructor at the onset of a course. For instance, for courses graded on a curve, the peer group for relative grading must be identified. Moreover, students should undergo assessments and be provided with feedback in a timely manner throughout the course in order to facilitate intellectual growth and development of mastery during the quarter.

PROPOSAL H2. CONTINUE TO HELP FACULTY MEMBERS CLEARLY ARTICULATE LEARNING GOALS OR OUTCOMES FOR EACH COURSE AND COMMUNICATE THESE TO STUDENTS.

In all classes, it will be valuable to articulate learning goals clearly and to specify the means by which acquisition and mastery can and should occur in that particular class. The Task Force notes that the Higher Learning Commission's accreditation process also places significant emphasis on precisely stated learning goals and outcomes. In fact, approval of new courses in WCAS and McCormick currently requires a statement of learning goals (Appendix 23: "Current School Practices for Learning Outcomes and Assessment"). It will be useful to strive to ensure that these articulations are meaningful to faculty and informative to students.

PROPOSAL H3. ENCOURAGE FACULTY TO GIVE SPECIFIC THOUGHT TO THE FORMS OF ASSESSMENTS AND HOW THESE TRANSLATE INTO GRADES.

Assessments should be tailored to each course, and must themselves be evaluated for reliability. Once the meaning of grades is agreed upon and publicized, the most straightforward means of matching mastery to a grade is through assessments that can be graded on a criterion scale, in which specific grades are assigned to specific predetermined percentages of correct or otherwise acceptable responses (e.g., 90–100 percent correct earns an A). In these cases, instructors must be careful to ensure that information has been taught and that exams and assessments are structured so that students can indeed achieve the criterion matching their level of preparedness; dry runs of exams or assignments with TAs or advanced students can be one way of testing the tests.

The Task Force acknowledges, however, that a criterion grading approach is not always possible. Even when responses are easily quantifiable, performance my deviate somewhat from that expected by an instructor. In such cases, a small curve may reasonably be applied after grades are calculated that shifts a criterion scale by a small amount (e.g., 85–100 percent correct earns an A). A point to emphasize here is that curves should not be used to grade students downward; students should not be penalized if they all learn the material well. In other cases, an instructor may deem it appropriate to present students with assignments or exams that fall toward the high end of a difficulty spectrum, with the expectation that even the highest performers may only complete a small fraction of the assignment or exam successfully; these can be useful to challenge students and to allow a class's strongest students to demonstrate their full ability. In these instances, a strongly curved grading scheme is necessary, as it is the only way to take into account the reality of student performance on such an assignment. The nature of the assignment and expected performance must be relayed to students, however, so that they can maintain appropriate

internal calibration as to their own progress. Moreover, the Task Force agreed that few if any courses should rely entirely on such extreme curving, because grades that reflect relative performance may not be well correlated with mastery. In addition, student comments indicate that this approach can foster unhealthy competition. Therefore, each course should include some forms of assessment in which students demonstrate their facility with material or skills they are expected to master fully and obtain feedback on their progression to that goal. Finally, in some cases, a particular assignment, such as an essay, may not have preset correct or acceptable responses, and a grade will necessarily draw on an instructor's expertise in making an evaluation; in these instances, the person responsible for grading should make an effort to articulate how the student's performance matches or deviates from a stated learning goal or outcome, ideally offering guidance for improvement.

I. CLASSROOMS

The classroom itself is the center for disciplinary learning as well as instruction in how to approach intellectual questions. A number of faculty members expressed the perspective that rarely are classrooms ideally structured to allow even the best professors to make a class period the best it can be. Among the comments received by the Task Force are the following: few classrooms are well suited for classes of 30–50, even though this is a good target size for relatively personalized instruction; chalkboard and audiovisual needs are often not met; and rooms are not always suited for the one-on-one communication that is appropriate to the class. The attributes of classrooms needed by different faculty are in flux, however, as teaching is taking on additional forms, based on disciplinary needs as well as technological advances. As a McCormick professor wrote to the faculty forum website:

> *We have very few of the flexible classrooms that can promote peer learning, active learning, etc., which would support the efforts of faculty who want to do more than lecture. The best classrooms are currently often renovated and then claimed by specific units of the University, making them inaccessible for others. It would be great to have a new building devoted to classrooms, and possibly labs, somewhere in the middle of campus.*

In addition to classical classrooms, nontraditional venues are increasingly being used for a variety of forms of learning. Learning tools have developed dramatically in the last decade. Northwestern has led, participated in, and observed many of these changes, including online classes reaching thousands worldwide (e.g., the Coursera platform, EdX, and other online platforms), the incorporation of online resources into daily, campus-oriented teaching (e.g., the use of Blackboard and then Canvas for class management), and the development of new technologies (e.g., Northwestern's lab-in-a-backpack initiative). At the same time, students have been independently innovating in their education and intellectual development. Social media plays a daily role in students' social and intellectual lives; students access content in many forms (e.g., paper documents, electronic documents, video, software) and through many media (e.g., books, phones, tablets, computers) and participate in cocurricular activities that often complement their academic experience in physical spaces conducive to productivity (e.g., makerspaces, The Garage at Northwestern University, the Segal Design Institute). Environments suited for social learning are a critical aspect of engaging all students and ensuring that they benefit from each other.

PROPOSAL I1. BUILD AND/OR RENOVATE MORE CLASSROOMS, ESPECIALLY FOR CLASS SIZES OF 30–50.

Multiple professors expressed the desire for rooms that are bigger than a seminar room but smaller than a lecture hall, with movable furniture, and with the professor's physical position accessible to students; for many, this means that the teacher would not be on a stage. They also pointed out the need to consider acoustics and visibility. Professors of all sizes of classes requested options for simultaneous projecting and writing on a board, e.g., with screens next to rather than covering a board. Especially for large classes, professors requested high-quality audiovisual support staff, who would not only help with technology but also attend to simple but essential matters like ensuring the availability of chalk or markers that write and are visible on boards. Finally, in a university that excels in both teaching and research, teaching laboratories play a pivotal role and must not be underestimated. These laboratories have special needs and require regular upgrading and renovation.

The advantages of high-quality classrooms are self-evident and are largely analogous to the advantages associated with pleasant living spaces. A suitable environment for learning is likely to foster learning. Good and welcoming classrooms also convey the value of time spent in class.

PROPOSAL I2A. CREATE A CLASSROOM SPACE WORKGROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR ADDRESSING CHANGES IN THE TYPES OF SPACES THAT ARE AVAILABLE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

As teaching formats evolve and diversify, needs for teaching spaces undergo parallel changes, ranging from upgrades or renovations of traditional classrooms (but without fundamental alterations) to novel spaces that are not yet easily labeled or categorized. Establishing a workgroup, modeled after the Faculty Distance Learning Workgroup, or, alternatively, including space usage in the directive of the Faculty Distance Learning Workgroup (consisting of faculty from across the University), could encourage faculty experimentation in the use of space. Similar to the current model of providing seed funding for digital learning experimentation, seed funding for innovation in using and developing classroom space could help the University learn about possible options. Potential areas of focus include whether classrooms all need white boards, what types of desks and workspaces should be available, what physical artifacts support collaboration among students, and how reconfigurable a room needs to be. This workgroup could work in tandem with or inform the Classroom Committee led by the associate provost of budget facilities and analysis and, after some experimentation has taken place, could advise the Provost's Office on what investments make sense.

PROPOSAL I2B. EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT USES AND DESIGNS OF LEARNING SPACES THROUGH THE SEARLE CENTER FOR ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Experimentation requires assessment, and the Searle Center and Northwestern University Information Technology (NUIT) currently assess the effectiveness of existing technology-driven learning tools. Once the Classroom Space Workgroup has made recommendations based on faculty and student feedback, the Searle Center and NUIT are well positioned to apply formal, evidence-based methods that would greatly enhance decision making on space usage. The University already has campus spaces, such as The Garage, that are nontraditional in the sense that they do not have a board at the front of classroom seating. These spaces are a natural choice of venue for experimentation. Moreover, the Searle Center can interact with faculty to find out what they hope to achieve by changing the use or type of space. In buildings and classes where the type of space has historically been an explicit or implicit obstacle to learning, the University should be prepared to invest in updating classrooms and potentially non-classrooms, e.g., creating makerspaces in residential halls.

PROPOSAL I2C. CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Traditional classrooms and nontraditional venues are both likely to contribute meaningfully to education in the 21st century. To be effective, we must create learning environments that are consonant with how students actually learn, both in and out of the classroom. The increased electronic connectivity of students and faculty has both enhanced and complicated the classroom experience. Corresponding changes in institutional, faculty, and student behavior suggest that how and when different types of instruction and classrooms are used may also change. With the advent of new capabilities and complexities generated by technology, the classroom experience will likely continue to shift. Moreover, students arrive at Northwestern with different levels of technological facility. We must ensure that we offer opportunities for them to develop the necessary technical abilities for success. Additionally, through a continued focus on all elements of teaching and learning, we must continue to be attentive to—and imaginative about—how emerging technologies influence classroom spaces and the people within them, so that Northwestern may attain still greater stature as a premier university in a rapidly changing world.

Conclusions and Next Steps

This report represents the Task Force's efforts to meet the provost's charge. Having engaged colleagues across the University, identified issues, and discussed them deeply, we now offer a set of proposals that we believe have the potential to greatly enhance the Northwestern undergraduate academic experience. While making our recommendations with an eye toward implementation, we intentionally did not refrain from developing proposals that may be challenging to implement. It is our hope that the report will stimulate significant discussions among faculty, students, staff, and administrators regarding the value of the proposals as well as the specifics of how they may best be realized. We further hope that such discussions will result in the prioritization and implementation of the report's recommendations in a manner that has lasting, positive outcomes for the quality of the undergraduate academic experience at Northwestern.

APPENDICES TO THE FINAL REPORT OF THE 2015 FACULTY TASK FORCE ON THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY TABLE

Issue	Proposal(s)	Key Points and Recommendations
A. Modifying the academic calendar	A1. Adopt a "10-5-5-10" Calendar.	• Academic year shifts five weeks earlier to align with schedules of semester schools • A five-week "early session" of winter quarter precede a holiday break; a five-week "late session" follows • A split winter quarter structure may allow innovative course structures
B. Achieving a cohesive, consolidated academic experience across schools	B1. Develop a set of "Common Experience" courses that would bring together students of multiple schools in one classroom.	• All courses would explore a multi-faceted theme from a range of scholarly approaches • Each course would have students from multiple schools but would remain relatively small, with no more than 30 students per course
	B2. To the extent possible, align the graduation requirements that are common to all undergraduate schools through an Undergraduate Education faculty working group. B2a. Normalize AP credits accepted in all schools. B2b. Normalize the foreign language requirement. B2c. Update and normalize distribution requirements across schools.	• Charges could include: "Common Experience" courses; diversity requirements; normalizing AP credits and foreign language requirements; reexamining and aligning distribution requirements; and supporting elective courses • This working group may also consider whether guidelines for grading or assessment would be desirable as well as the possibility of creating a pass/fail term • The goal would be to find the balance between requirements that fulfill core learning outcomes and room for electives that promote students' agency to forge novel academic paths • The best format may be an intersection of existing committees or the formation of a new group.
	B3. Workload Experience B3a. Maintain a reasonable academic workload for each course by limiting each one-credit course to an average of up to ten committed hours per week. B3b. Decrease the total required academic workload through school-specific reductions of required credits (where possible) or committed hours (elsewhere). B3c. Make the workload more flexible by allowing courses to be dropped as needed, without unrelated long-term negative consequences related to financial aid.	• Schools could explore ways to reduce the total workload to 30 hours per week in at least three quarters that currently require 40 hours per week of coursework • In schools with a 45-credit graduation requirement, reduced workloads could be achieved by reducing requirements to 42 credits • Encourage all majors and programs to engage in a cross-disciplinary review of requirements • Increase course offerings in the summer and make institutional aid for courses taken during 13th quarter readily available • Examine current difficulties of re-entry after medical leave, administrative and financial aid hurdles, and scheduling barriers to achieving a flexible workload

Issue	Proposal(s)	Key Points and Recommendations
C. Collectively shaping perceptions that influence the undergraduate academic experience	C1. Actively ensure that Northwestern's messages guide students toward balancing and benefiting from both individually focused and community-based elements of education.	• Expand the number of available for-credit courses and extra-curricular discussion groups that include considerations of academic, emotional, and intellectual development • Assess Northwestern applicants' team membership skills, experiences dealing with failure, or engagement in restorative activities • Communicate to students that many employers value depth of achievement and caliber of experience as well as numbers of activities
D. Supporting wellness through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Advising	D1. Provide additional resources to increase the availability of counseling and psychological services in terms of number of providers as well as session numbers.	• For students on full or nearly full financial aid, provide membership in Northwestern University student insurance
	D2. Advising D2a. Provide resources to decrease the number of students seen by a single academic adviser. D2b. Coordinate interactions among advisers, possibly through a personalized advising site for each student.	• Consider the creation of a leadership position whose role would be to coordinate advisers as well as deal with complications or ambiguities across advising systems • Develop a personalized, privileged advising site for each student that can be viewed by the student and all of their advisers
E. Facilitating, supporting, and rewarding effective teaching in and out of the classroom	E1. Initiate a Continuing Higher Education Credits Program to foster and reward faculty for commitment to high-quality teaching, both within and outside the classroom. E1a. Grant teaching credit for cross-departmental teaching and teaching in residential colleges and service learning courses (or the equivalent). E1b. Make course evaluations (CTECs) compulsory.	• Continuing Higher Education Credits (CHEC) could be "cashed in" to support the faculty member's scholarship • CHEC credits would be given to tenure-line and non-tenure line faculty who seek training and who offer training. • This system intentionally does not penalize those faculty members whose primary contribution is through means other than teaching • Students would be required to fill out CTECs in order to see their grades for that quarter
	E2. Expand and support undergraduate research opportunities.	• Provide stipends to labs that house undergraduate researchers and to graduate students or post-docs who supervise these students • Increase number and amount of Undergraduate Language Grants
F. Supporting teaching in large classes	F1. Initiate a Teaching Fellows Program.	• The teaching fellows program would centrally support postdocs or recent PhD graduates in proportion to their time spent assisting faculty with teaching and training other TAs

Issue	Proposal(s)	Key Points and Recommendations
G. Orientation to, placement in, and access to academics	G1. Use Canvas for an online summer orientation course for newly arriving international students.	• A program similar to the International Summer Institute could be offered to a subset of undergraduate international students who can transmit this knowledge to international peers • All incoming international undergraduates could also participate in an online course
	G2. Continue to support data collection and analysis to ensure the appropriate placement of students. G2a. Assume financial responsibility for over-the-cap course materials cost. G2b. Further financial considerations.	• Incorporate placement examinations into Canvas summer orientation courses for all students • Enforce prerequisites at the time of registration • Set a reasonable cap that any student, regardless of financial aid status, should be expected to pay for course materials • If a student's cost goes over that cap, the university would cover the balance to ensure that students are not excluded from classes because of financial considerations
	G3. Extend financial aid package for a fifth year for Pell grant awardees who qualify for a bachelor-master degree program.	
H. Assessment	H1. Provide clearly articulated grading policies in each class so that assessments are well connected to grades.	• Provide students with timely assessment feedback throughout the course • Whether common definitions of grades are desirable and whether one term should be Pass/Fail may be considered by the proposed Undergraduate Education working group
	H2. Continue to help faculty members clearly articulate learning goals or outcomes for each course and communicate these to students.	
	H3. Encourage faculty to give specific thought to the forms of assessments and how these translate into grades.	
I. Classrooms	I1. Build and/or renovate more classrooms, especially for class sizes of 30-50.	
	I2. Assessment Types of Classroom Space I2a. Create a Classroom Space Workgroup responsible for addressing changes in the types of spaces available at the University. I2b. Evaluate the effectiveness of different uses and designs of learning spaces through the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning. I2c. Continue to respond to technological developments and their effects on teaching and learning.	• The workgroup may be modeled after the Faculty Distance Learning Workgroup or the charge could be added to the Faculty Distance Learning Workgroup's directive • Seed funding could be provided for the innovation in the use and development of classroom space • This workgroup would work in tandem or inform the Classroom Committee • Offer opportunities to ensure that students with different levels of technological facility will develop the necessary technical abilities for success • Continue to be attentive to how emerging technologies influence classroom spaces and the people within them

APPENDIX 2: UAETF CHARGE

Charge of the Task Force on the Undergraduate Academic Experience
February 2015

Purpose:
Over the spring and fall 2015 quarters, the task force will engage with faculty, students, and administrators across the University to assess the undergraduate academic experience for Northwestern students and to develop recommendations for enhancing the overall undergraduate student experience.

The 1988 Heyck report had an enormous impact on Northwestern. Some of the issues identified in that report continue to be important areas that would benefit from a fresh look and new ideas, while other issues have emerged more recently as we have become a more global institution and one of the most selective in the nation for undergraduate admissions. With the many changes in laws and expectations for higher education today compared to the 1980s—from Title IX to access and affordability to entrepreneurship and careers—in-depth discussion on these issues can clarify and advance our priorities as an institution.

A number of issues addressed in the Heyck report may be considered cocurricular or issues on which the Office of Student Affairs and others at Northwestern are focusing their efforts. While this task force may address some of these issues and consult in those areas as appropriate to its work, the focus of this task force will be the undergraduate academic experience, including such topics as:

- Credit requirements for undergraduates, including graduation requirements or credits for experiential learning or academic bridge programs
- Implications of the quarter-based academic calendar
- Research and internship opportunities for undergraduates
- Academic support initiatives

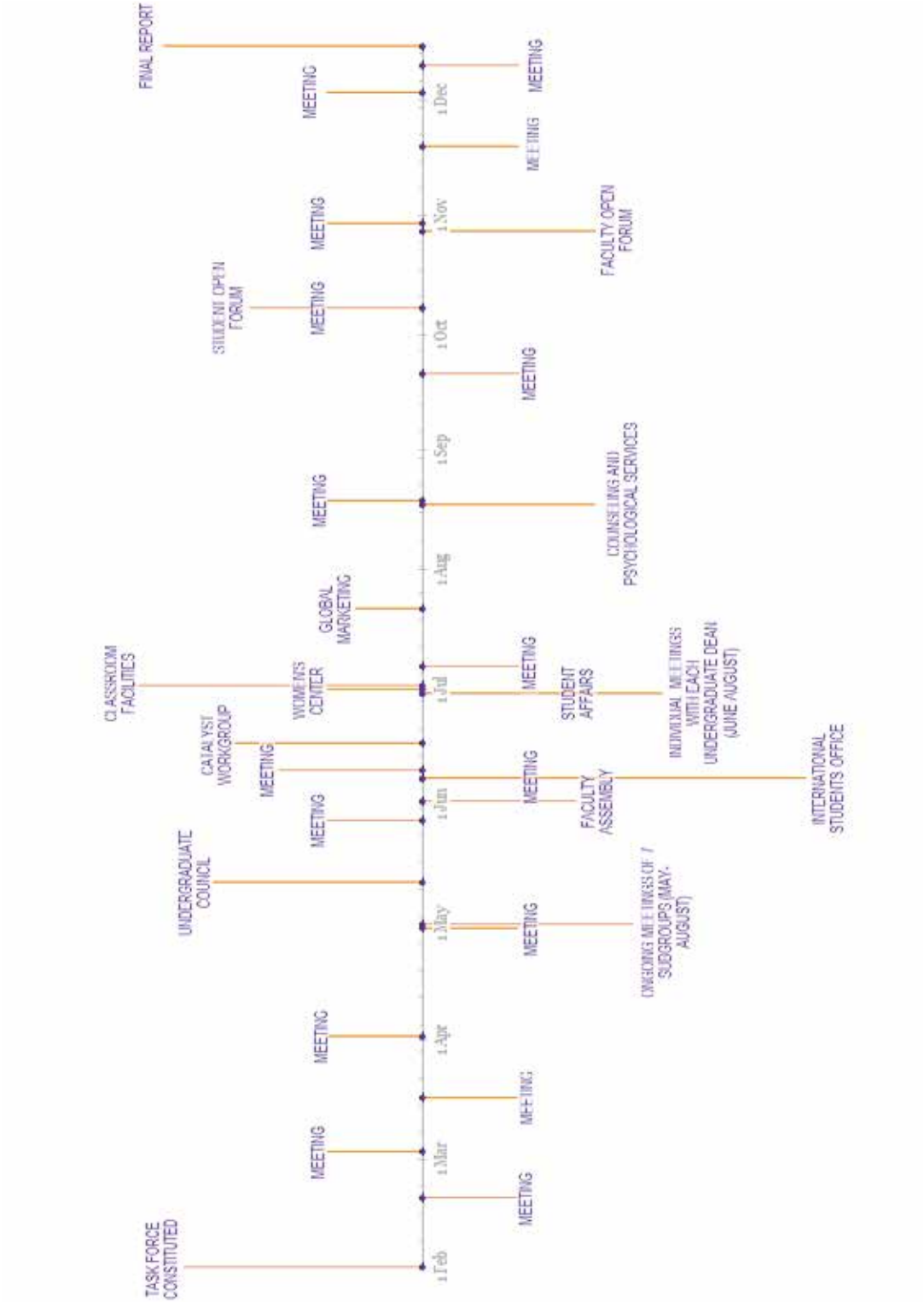
Charge:

- Engage with faculty and student colleagues, School leadership, and administrative leaders across the University to assess the undergraduate academic experience of Northwestern students
- Explore issues and identify opportunities around the undergraduate academic experience at Northwestern
- Advise the Provost on findings and recommendations emanating from the task force's work, culminating in a report to the Provost by December 15, 2015; and
- Undertake other related activities that emerge or evolve as Northwestern moves forward in this area.

Structure:

- The task force will report directly to the Provost, and while working independently of the University's Catalyst Workgroup (CWG), would be chartered within the Catalyst Workgroup umbrella and utilize the CWG as a resource as appropriate.
- The task force will be comprised of faculty members and students appointed by the Provost and representative of the entire University, with *ex officio* representation from the Faculty Senate and the Catalyst Workgroup.
- Staff support for the task force will be provided by the Office of Change Management, by Jake Julia, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President, and Eileen McCarthy, Director of Change Management.

APPENDIX 3: HIGH-LEVEL TIMELINE



APPENDIX 4: UAETF MEMBERSHIP

Members

Steve Carr, Professor, Material Sciences and Engineering, McCormick School of Engineering

Mesmin Destin, Assistant Professor, Human Development and Social Policy, School of Education and Social Policy, and Assistant Professor, Psychology, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

Kimberly Gray, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Chemical and Biological Engineering, McCormick School of Engineering, Chair

Robert Gundlach, Professor, Linguistics, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and Director, The Writing Program

Eszter Hargittai, April McClain-Delaney and John Delaney Research Professor, Communication Studies, School of Communication

Candy Lee, Professor, Communication Management and Strategy, Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications

Andrew Mills, Assistant Professor in Residence, Journalism Program, Northwestern University-Qatar

John Mordacq, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Program in Biological Sciences, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and Laboratory Director, Program in Biological Sciences

Todd Murphey, Charles Deering McCormick Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering, McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science

Riko Ohashi, ASG Academics Vice President, member since May, 2015

Susan Piagentini, Charles Deering McCormick University Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Music Theory and Cognition, Bienen School of Music

Indira Raman, Bill and Gayle Cook Professor, Neurobiology, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (**Task Force Chair**)

Anna Rennich, ASG Academics Vice President, member February, 2015-May, 2015

Harvey Young, Professor, Theatre and Performance Studies, School of Communication, Chair, Theatre, and Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Theatre and Drama

Laurie Zoloth, Professor, Religious Studies, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, Bioethics and Medical Humanities, Feinberg School of Medicine, and Faculty Senate representative

Ex Officio Members

Todd Adams, Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students

Cheryl Berriman, the Graduate School representative

Ron Braeutigam, Harvey Kapnick Professor, Economics, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, and Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

Christina Kim, ASG Executive Vice President, member since June, 2015

Michael Mills, Associate Provost for University Enrollment

Noah Star, ASG President, member since June, 2015

Staff support provided by **Jake Julia,** Associate Vice President and Associate Provost for Academic Initiatives; **Eileen McCarthy,** Assistant Vice President for Administration and Planning; and **Rebecca Pinchuk,** Project Coordinator 2, Office of Change Management

APPENDIX 5: NUMBER OF MAJORS AND MINORS AVAILABLE IN UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
Majors: **47***
Minors and Certificates: **58**

School of Communication
Majors: **6**
Minors and Certificates: **6**

School of Education and Social Policy
Majors: **4**
Minors and Certificates: **1**

McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science
Majors: **17**
Minors and Certificates: **13**

Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications
Majors: **1**
Minors and Certificates: **1**

Bienen School of Music
Majors: **9**
Minors and Certificates: **9**

Northwestern University in Qatar
Majors: **2**
Minors and Certificates: **2**

Total
Majors: 86*
Minors and Certificates: 90

**Includes adjunct majors*

Note: Total includes only the majors, minors, and certificates available full-time in the above schools at Northwestern.

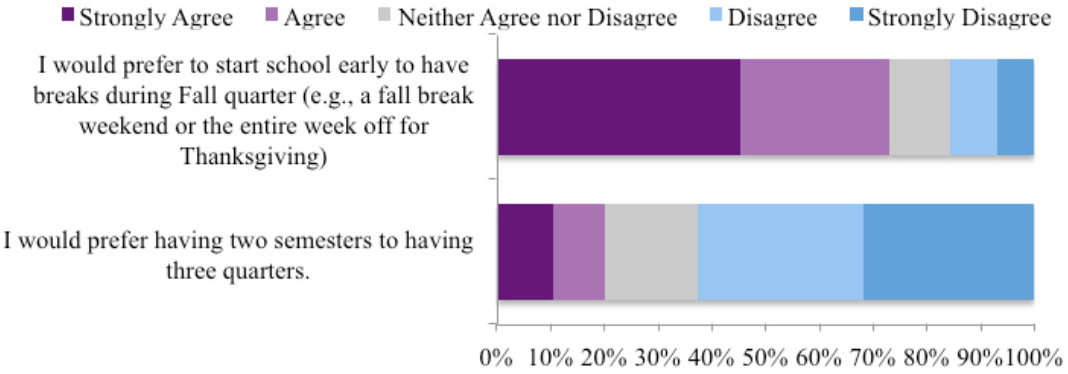
Clubs and Organizations on Campus: 546

Source: Northwestern website

APPENDIX 6: STUDENT SURVEY ON UNIVERSITY CALENDAR SYSTEM

Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Question	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total (N)
I would prefer having two semesters to having three quarters.	524 (32%)	505 (31%)	284 (17%)	162 (10%)	170 (10%)	1645
I would prefer to start school early to have breaks during Fall quarter (e.g., a fall break weekend or the entire week off for Thanksgiving)	113 (7%)	145 (9%)	186 (11%)	458 (27%)	745 (45%)	1674



Source: ASG 2014-2015 Annual Survey ASG Analytics Committee

APPENDIX 7: SEMESTER ACADEMIC CALENDARS 2015-2016

Northwestern University:
Start Date: September 21
Winter Break: December 12–January 4
End Date: June 17

Brown University
Start Date: September 8
Winter Break: December 21–January 27
End Date: May 29

Columbia University
Start Date: September 8
Winter Break: December 23–January 19
End Date: May 18

Cornell University
Start Date: August 25
Winter Break: December 19–January 27
End Date: May 29

Duke University
Start Date: August 24
Winter Break: December 13–January 13
End Date: May 13

Harvard University
Start Date: September 2
Winter Break: December 22–January 24
End Date: May 26

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Start Date: September 9
Winter Break: December 18–February 2
End Date: June 3

Princeton University
Start Date: September 16
Winter Break: December 18–February 1
End Date: May 31

University of Pennsylvania
Start Date: August 26
Winter Break: December 8–January 13
End Date: May 16

Washington University in St. Louis
Start Date: August 24
Winter Break: December 16–January 19
End Date: May 20

Yale University
Start Date: September 2
Winter Break: December 22–January 19
End Date: May 23

Source: Online academic calendars of Northwestern University, Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Duke University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, Washington University in St. Louis, and Yale University.

APPENDIX 8: QUARTER ACADEMIC CALENDARS 2015-2016

Northwestern University:
Start Date: September 21
Winter Break: December 12–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 29
End Date: June 17

Dartmouth:
Start Date: September 16
Winter Break: November 25–January 4
Spring Break: March 15–March 28
End Date: June 12

University of Chicago:
Start Date: September 28
Winter Break: December 12–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 28
End Date: June 11

Stanford University:
Start Date: September 21
Winter Break: December 12–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 28
End Date: June 12

University of California-Los Angeles:
Start Date: September 24
Winter Break: December 11–January 4
Spring Break: March 18–March 23
End Date: June 10

University of California-San Diego:
Start Date: September 21
Winter Break: December 12–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 24
End Date: June 10

University of California, Davis:
Start Date: September 21
Winter Break: December 11–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 24
End Date: June 9

DePaul University:
Start Date: September 9
Winter Break: November 24–January 4
Spring Break: March 19–March 28
End Date: June 10

Source: Online academic calendars of Northwestern University, Dartmouth, University of Chicago, Stanford University, University of California-Los Angeles, University of California-San Diego, University of California, Davis, and DePaul University.

APPENDIX 9: SAMPLE 10-5-5-10 CALENDAR

Here is an example Northwestern academic calendar for 2015-2016:

Fall Quarter:
Start Date: Monday, August 17
Final exams: October 26–October 30
Break: November 1–November 8

Additional notes:
- Fall quarter would start at the same time that most semesters do, in the third week of August.
- Classes would be suspended for Labor Day Monday (in the fourth week of classes.)
- Ten weeks would be completed on October 23.
- Part of the 10th week of classes could be used as a reading period.

Early Winter Session:
Start Date: Monday, November 9
Final or midterm exams: December 16–18
Break: December 21–January 5

Additional notes:
- Classes would be suspended for Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday (in the third week of classes, and would include Thursday, and Friday.)
- Five weeks would be completed on Tuesday, December 15.
- Part of the 5th week of classes could be used as a reading period.
- Exams would be given December 16-18. A shortened window may be acceptable, since only a fraction of courses will be completed at this time
- Whether exam week must be extended can be discussed.
- No assignments would be given over the two and a half week break.

Late Winter Session:
Start Date: Tuesday, January 5
Finals: February 15–February 19
Late Winter Break: February 22–March 5

Additional notes:
Since calendars shift across years, this sample calendar begins on a Tuesday.

- Classes would be suspended for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Five weeks would be completed on Tuesday February 9.
- Reading period could be February 10-12.
- The break would be two weeks.

Spring Quarter:
Start Date: Monday, March 7
Finals: May 16–May 20
Senior Week: May 23–May 27
Commencement/Convocation: May 27–28

Additional notes:
- Ten weeks would be completed on Friday, May 13.
- Part of the 10th week of classes could be used as a reading period.

APPENDIX 10: SAMPLE MODELS FOR COMMON EXPERIENCE COURSES

Design Thinking and Communication (DTC) Course, McCormick

- Students work on design problems submitted by individuals, non-profits, entrepreneurs, and industry members.
- Students learn how to design and communicate ideas to real audiences.
- Courses are cotaught by faculty in McCormick and Weinberg's Writing Program.

Kaplan Humanities Scholar Courses, Weinberg

- Courses are taught by a team of three professors from different departments.
- The coteachers design the lecture course revolving around a specific topic that approaches that topic from a variety of perspectives.
- Students also take a coordinated freshman seminar with one of the coteachers in the course, who becomes their freshman adviser.

Learning Philanthropy Course, SESP

- Students participate in a course cotaught by SESP's Dean and the Director of the Spencer Foundation, where they learn about philanthropy from a variety of perspectives.
- Students have the opportunity to decide how and why to donate $100,000 to nonprofit organizations.
- Students work on task forces examining key areas of philanthropy. They receive proposals from nonprofit organizations, may conduct site visits to many of these organizations, and then decide how to allocate the $100,000 to the various proposals.

NUvention Course, McCormick

- An academic partnership course between McCormick, startups, and other Northwestern schools.
- The courses combine students from a wide range of disciplines and have them develop services, products, business plans, and other deliverables together. Students work together as an entrepreneurial team and often present to an advisory board or other individuals, including alumni and outside businesses.
- NUvention has 7 different tracks, ranging from analytics, arts, energy, web + media, and medical focuses.

Source: Northwestern website search

APPENDIX 11: COMPARATIVE DATA ON SCHOOL COURSE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

School	# Credits for a Degree	Distribution Requirements[1]	Distro Reqs in Home School/ Outside/Both	AP Credit Policies (see page 99 for more detail)	Foreign Language Requirement
Bienen School of Music	50 – 54 (BM) Or 45 (BA/BS)	• **12 – 13 units** (varies by degree) • Requirements follow the most common 6 distribution areas[2]. They are non-music credits, and are in addition to core music and major requirements. • BM – 12 units gen ed.; 8 are music education • BA and BS. gen ed. are similar to WCAS distro reqs (13 units). • BA and BS also require non-music electives (6 and 12 units, respectively)	• Both • All outside of home school for BA/BS	• AP units can be used to fulfill distro requirements. • Bienen defines which distro area can be fulfilled by each authorized unit. • No cap on number of units that can be fulfilled.*	• **Only for BA degree** • 6 units
McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science	48	• **18 required units in non-engineering fields**[3] • Most of the 18 are in WCAS. • These 18 are a sub-set of the 32 units of "core courses" that all engineering students must take.	• Outside of home school	• AP credits can be used to fulfill distro requirements. • McCormick defines which requirement(s) can be fulfilled by each authorized unit. • For example, the authorized 1 unit (Art History 2X) can be applied to McCormick's social sciences/ humanities theme. • No cap on number of units that can be fulfilled.*	• **No**

[1] Some schools do not specifically define any courses as "distribution requirements." In these cases, courses that would appear to be similar to distribution requirements are noted (such as required courses that expose students to a wide range of academic disciplines, and required courses outside of the home school). In SESP, these are "areas of inquiry" and in McCormick, "core course requirements."

[2] Natural Sciences; Formal Studies; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Historical Studies; Ethics and Values; Literature and Fine Arts.

[3] Math; Basic Sciences; Design and Communications; and Social Sciences/Humanities.

School	# Credits for a Degree	Distribution Requirements[1]	Distro Reqs in Home School/ Outside/Both	AP Credit Policies (see page 99 for more detail)	Foreign Language Requirement
Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications	45	• 27 units required outside of Medill. • These 27 **include 12 units** across six broad areas[4] • The 27 units also include a Weinberg elective concentration (5 units) and a non-Medill elective requirement (10 – 14 units).	• Outside of home school	• AP units generally count toward the 45 units needed for a degree. • Exceptions are courses in journalism; the social science concentration; and the six-unit elective concentration. • No cap on number of units that can be fulfilled.*	• **Yes** • 3 units or demonstrated proficiency as defined by WCAS
School of Education and Social Policy	45	• **10 units** across six broad areas.[5]	• Outside of home school	• For each authorized AP unit, SESP determines the degree requirement (major, distro area, and/or whether it can satisfy an elective) to which it can apply. • 7 of the 10 distribution requirement units can be filled with AP units.	• **No**
School of Communication	45	• **18 units** across three broad areas[6], specifics vary by department.	• Both	• Up to 12 AP units may be applied to degree requirements. • Within the 12, there are additional restrictions (restrictions on how many can be applied to distro requirements and to how many can be applied as electives).	• **Only for BA degree** (not for BS) • Same as WCAS

[4] Five are the same as WCAS with an added required course in social inequalities and diversities.

[5] Natural Science; Formal Studies; Historical Studies; Ethics and Values; and Literature and Fine Arts; Social Inequality and Diversity

[6] Science, Mathematics, and Technology; Individual and Social Behavior; Humanities and Fine Arts.

School	# Credits for a Degree	Distribution Requirements[1]	Distro Reqs in Home School/ Outside/Both	AP Credit Policies (see page 99 for more detail)	Foreign Language Requirement
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences	45	• **12 units** with 2 in each of 6 broad areas.[7]	• Both; majority of approved courses are in home school.	• AP units generally count toward the 45 units needed for a degree. • AP units may be used to satisfy 2 of 12 units of the distro requirements. • No cap on the number of graduation units that can be fulfilled.	• **Yes** • Proficiency equivalent to work covered in a second-year college-level course.[8]
Northwestern University in Qatar BS in Journalism	32 (semester units)	• **21 units in the Arts and Sciences**	• Same as prescribed for Medill.	• All posting of AP credit is conducted in consultation with WCAS's rubric posted on the WCAS website. • AP credit may be used to satisfy distribution requirements.	• Yes
Northwestern University in Qatar BS in Communication	32 (semester units)	• **10 units outside of major courses.**	• Same as prescribed for SoC.	• All posting of AP credit is conducted in consultation with WCAS's rubric posted on the WCAS website. • AP credit may be used to satisfy distribution requirements.	• No

[7] Natural Sciences; Formal Studies; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Historical Studies; Ethics and Values; Literature and Fine Arts.

[8] Students can complete designated NU coursework or fulfill the requirement with placement scores (using AP scores or a placement test). The number, level, and sequence of courses that can fulfill the requirement are defined for each language. For most languages, the requirement can be fulfilled with 3 units of either 100 or 200 level courses. For some languages, the requirement can be fulfilled with 1 unit at the 200 or 300 level.

AP Credit Policy Notes

AP scores at an appropriate level may apply toward an undergraduate degree.

Authorized units

- For each test and score, the number of units, and which units, can be fulfilled is determined centrally.
- For example, 1 unit (Economics 201) is authorized for a five on the macroeconomics AP test.
- This is applied consistently across all majors.

Application of authorized units towards degree

- Each school defines how the authorized units can be applied to their individual degree requirements.
- For example–the school determines whether authorized units can be applied to distribution requirements and in what areas.

Source: Northwestern website and Undergraduate Catalog 2015–2016

APPENDIX 12: UNDERGRADUATE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT

The Undergraduate Registration Requirement (URR) applies to undergraduate students seeking a bachelor's degree and must be completed in addition to the degree requirements established by the school faculties. The URR is predicated on the principle that when a student receives a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University, the majority of the student's academic work is completed at the University. Each school specifies a minimum number of units of credit needed for a bachelor's degree (45 or more, depending on the degree). In addition, the URR specifies:

1. The number of quarters a student must be registered at Northwestern
2. The number of units of credit a student must earn at Northwestern

URR for First-Time Freshmen^		
Degree Type	4–Year Degree	Dual Bachelor's degree*
Quarters at Northwestern	9	12
Earned Northwestern Credits	32	42

URR for Transfer Students^		
Degree Type	4–Year Degree	Dual Bachelor's degree*
Quarters at Northwestern	6	9
Earned Northwestern Credits	23	32

** See the Undergraduate Catalog for information on approved dual bachelor's degree programs.*

^ Students in the Honors Program in Medical Education (HPME) and Integrated Science Program (ISP) are subject to special URR regulations. Check with the program for the most accurate information.

For the purpose of counting toward the URR, a "quarter at Northwestern" requires:

1. Being under the supervision of Northwestern faculty member(s),
   AND
2. Registering for and completing classes worth at least 2.00 units of credit in a term
   AND
3. Receiving any of the following grades in credit-bearing classes: A, B, C (including pluses and minuses), D, F, P, N, X, Y, K, or W.

*Please note that most study abroad and transfer credit does **not** count toward either requirement of the URR. There is one exception: Completion of Northwestern study abroad programs that offer courses with Northwestern course numbers and the "-SA" course suffix counts toward the URR as long as all other provisions are met. To review the URR policy in full please visit www.registrar.northwestern.edu/graduation/urr.html*

APPENDIX 13: GRADUATES WITH DOUBLE MAJORS OR DUAL DEGREES

School	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Avg.
Bienen School of Music	22%	33%	29%	42%	31%	35%	34%	39%	49%	41%	**36%**
School of Communication	34%	31%	29%	24%	28%	30%	23%	28%	27%	30%	**28%**
School of Education and Social Policy	18%	20%	17%	11%	17%	16%	19%	16%	25%	22%	**19%**
McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science	18%	17%	14%	19%	21%	17%	17%	14%	15%	17%	**17%**
Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications	43%	39%	36%	43%	36%	33%	40%	37%	34%	30%	**37%**
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences	35%	34%	36%	36%	39%	36%	38%	34%	31%	33%	**35%**
All School Average	**31%**	**30%**	**30%**	**30%**	**32%**	**30%**	**30%**	**29%**	**27%**	**29%**	**30%**

Year shown is end year of the academic year.

Source: The Office of the Registrar

APPENDIX 14: SAMPLE ACADEMIC SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS FOR A PRE-MED PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT

Pre-Med Requirements

- Chem 101, 102, 103 with labs **OR** Chem 171 or 172 with labs. **(3 quarters)**
- Chem 210-1,2,3 with labs **OR** Chem 212-1,2,3 with labs **(3 quarters)**
- Three of the following: Bio 215 (offered spring quarter), Bio 217 (offered fall quarter), Bio 219 (offered winter quarter), Bio 308 (offered spring quarter) **(3 quarters)**
- Bio 220 (offered fall quarter) **AND** Bio 221 (offered winter quarter) **AND** Bio 222 (offered spring quarter) **(3 quarters)**
- Physics 130-1,2,3 **OR** Physics 135-1,2,3 **(3 quarters)**
- Two or three quarters of Calculus: a variety of options offered **(2–3 quarters)**
- 1 quarter of Statistics: a variety of options offered **(1 quarter)**
- 1 year of English: a variety of courses offered **(3 quarters)**
- Many medical schools require additional courses such as: 2 years of biology, human anatomy, courses in specific humanities or social and/or behavioral sciences areas. Students that wish to apply to these specific schools, or want to ensure that they are not limited in their medical school applications, must also take these courses.

WCAS Degree Requirements

- Two years of foreign language **(6 quarters)**
- Two Freshman seminar courses **(2 quarters; mandatory registration fall quarter)**
- 2 courses in each the following broad areas: 1) Natural Sciences (covered by pre-med requirements), 2) Formal Studies (covered by pre-med requirements), 3) Social and Behavioral Sciences (covered by Psychology major requirements), 4) Historical Studies, 5) Ethics and Values, and 6) Literature and Fine Arts **(estimated 6 additional courses)**

Psychology Major Requirements

- Psychology 101 **(1 quarter; prerequisite for other requirements)**
- Stats 201 (covered with pre-med requirement; **prerequisite for other requirements)**
- Research Methods 205 (prerequisite Stats 201) **(1 quarter; prerequisite for other requirements)**
- 8 additional courses with the following requirements according to the chart on the following page: **(8 additional courses)**
    - At least 2 from column A **AND** at least 2 from Column B **AND** at least 1 from Row 2

COLUMN A (social/personality/clinical)	COLUMN B (cognitive/neuroscience)	COLUMN C (other courses)
Row 1-Foundation Courses. Prerequisites other than Psych 110 are shown in parentheses.		
204 Social Psychology 215 Psych of Personality 303 Psychopathology 306 Intro to Clinical Psych *(303)* 376 Cognitive Behavior Therapy *(303)* 385 Psychology of Attitudes *(204)*	212 Introduction to Neuroscience *(1 biology course recommended)* 228 Cognitive Psychology 312-1, -2 Selected Topics in Neuroscience & Psychophysiology *(1 biology course for 312-1; 312-1 for 312-2; 205 recommended)* 324 Perception 336 Consciousness (*1 course in cognition and/or neuroscience; 205 recommended)* 346 Psychology of Instructional Design & Technology *(205 recommended)* 361 Brain Damage & the Mind *(110 or 212 or CogSci 210)* 365 The Brain & Cognition Cog Sci 210 Language & the Brain Cog Sci 211 Learning, Representation, & Reasoning	218 Developmental Psychology 248 Health Psychology 314 Special Topics in Psychology *(prereqs vary)* 323 Deception: Processes & Detection 332 Native Americans & Envir. Decision Making 339 Psychology of Gender 340 Psychology & Law 344 Cultural Psychology **You can count at most 1 quarter of 397-1 or 399 toward the major. You cannot count both courses.** 397-1 Advanced Supervised Research *(205)* 399 Independent Study
Row 2-Upper-level Research Courses. **Psych 205 is a prerequisite for all upper-level research courses. Additional prereqs are in parentheses.**		
326 Social & Personality Development *(1 of the following: 204, 215, 218)* 357 Advanced Seminar in Personality, Clinical, or Social Psychology *(prereqs vary)* 371 Personality Research *(215)* 375 Psychological Tests & Measures *(1 of the following: 204, 215, 303)* 377 Child Psychopathology *(303)* 381 Children & the Law *(218)* 386 Stereotyping & Prejudice *(204)* 387 Consumer Psychology and Marketing Research	321 Neuroscience & Behavior Lab *(312-2; Physics 135-2 recommended)* 333 Psychology of Thinking *(228)* 334 Language & Thought *(228)* 335 Decision Making *(228)* 355 Social, Cultural, & Affective Neuroscience (*1 course in cognition and/or neuroscience)* 358 Advanced Seminar in Cognition or Neuroscience (*prereqs vary)* 362 Cognitive Development *(218 or 228)* 363 Images of Cognition (*1 course in cognition and/or neuroscience)* 368 Human Memory *(361 or consent of instructor)*	351 Advanced Statistics & Experimental Design *(two 200-level math courses)* 359 Advanced Seminar in Psychology (*prereqs vary)* **You can count at most 1 quarter of 397-2 toward the major.** 397-2 Advanced Supervised Research *(397-1 w/ same professor)* 398-1,2,3 Senior Thesis Seminar *(by invitation; apply in spring of junior year)*

Sources:

www.northwestern.edu/advising-center/pre-med/required-courses/

www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/degree/

www.psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/major-requirements.pdf

APPENDIX 15: SAMPLE ACADEMIC SCHEDULE CALENDAR FOR A PRE-MED PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT

1st Year

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4		
	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Lab (.34 credit)	Credits
Fall Quarter	Chem 101	Pre-med	Math 220	Pre-med	Fresh Sem	WCAS	Lang 101	WCAS	Chem 101 lab	4.34
Winter Quarter	Chem 102	Pre-med	Math 224	Pre-med	Fresh Sem	WCAS	Lang 102	WCAS	Chem 102 lab	4.34
Spring Quarter	Chem 103	Pre-med	Bio 215	Pre-med	Math 230	Pre-med*	Lang 103	WCAS	Chem 103 lab	4.34
Summer Quarter										

2nd Year

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4		
	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Lab (.34 credit)	Credits
Fall Quarter	Bio 217	Pre-med	Chem 210-1	Pre-med	Psych 101	Major	Lang 201	WCAS	Bio 220	4.34
Winter Quarter	Bio 219	Pre-med	Chem 210-2	Pre-med	Stats 201	Major	Lang 202	WCAS	Bio 221&Chem 230-2	4.68
Spring Quarter	Bio 308	Pre-med*	Chem 210-3	Pre-med	Column B	Major	Lang 203	WCAS	Bio 222&Chem 230-3	4.68
Summer Quarter										

3rd Year

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4		
	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Lab (.34 credit)	Credits
Fall Quarter	Research	Major	Column B	Major	Physics 135-1	Pre-med	Lit/FA	WCAS	Physics 135 1 lab	4.34
Winter Quarter	Lit/FA	WCAS	Ethics	WCAS	Physics 135-2	Pre-med	Column A	Major	Physics 135 2 lab	4.34
Spring Quarter	Psych 397**	Major	History	WCAS	Physics 135-3	Pre-med	Sociology	Pre-med*	Physics 135 3 lab	4.34
Summer Quarter										

4th Year

	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3		Class 4		
	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Name	Req. Type	Lab (.34 credit)	Credits
Fall Quarter	Ethics	WCAS	Thesis 1**	Major	Bio	Pre-med*	History	WCAS		4
Winter Quarter	Psych	Major	Thesis 2**	Major	Anatomy	Pre-med*	Column A	Major		4
Spring Quarter	Elective	NONE	Thesis 3**	Major	Elective	NONE	Elective	NONE		4
Summer Quarter										

*=These courses are not required by all medical schools, but students must take them if they wish to apply to specific schools or ensure that they qualify for all medical schools.

**=This sequence of courses are only required (or highly recommended in the case of 397) to receive departmental honors in Psychology. Students must apply to participate in the honors program.

Note that this sample schedule does not include any AP credit or language placement credit that may count towards requirements. Most students are able to use AP credit or test placement to fulfill some requirements, most typically Math 220 and some language.

APPENDIX 16: DRAFT POLICY ON AWARDING CREDIT

Federal definitions and regulations regarding the assignment of credit hours appear as follows under Section 600.2 and 600.24(f) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act:

Credit hour: Except as provided in 34 CFR 668.8(k) and (l), a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Draft Policy (December-2015): Northwestern University credit for undergraduate and graduate programs is awarded in units, rather than credit hours. Courses are most often assigned 1.0 unit of credit.

Quarter-long classes typically meet three hours per week on average (three 50-minute sessions per week or two 90-minute sessions) over a 10-week term. Students are generally expected to spend two hours outside of class preparing for each hour in class. Courses that meet less or more often may bear proportionally more or less credit. For example, those that meet for three hours every other week, rather than every week, receive 0.5 units of credit. The University's standard meeting times illustrate meeting patterns that meet the requirement for direct faculty instruction each week, and faculty curriculum committees evaluate the expected student work per week at the time of course approval.

Teaching and learning at Northwestern take many forms. A number of classes consist entirely of research and writing, work in a studio or lab, or other independent work. In such cases the University awards one unit of credit when at least nine full hours of work per week are expected of the student. No separate policy is specified for online or blended courses as they are held to the same standard.

Semester-long classes conducted at Northwestern University in Qatar also award 1.00 unit of credit and typically meet four hours per week on average over a 15-week term. Courses meeting more or less hours per week may carry proportionally more or less credit. Students are expected to spend two to three hours outside of class preparing for each hour in class.

Northwestern does not typically offer conversions to other credit systems; however, institutions accepting NU quarter credit in transfer can consider 1.0 Northwestern quarter unit to be approximately equal to 4.0 quarter hours, and 1.0 Northwestern semester unit equal to 4.00 semester hours.

APPENDIX 17: CURRENT SUMMER COURSE FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT POLICY

The Financial Aid Office has a small financial allocation to support students taking summer classes on the Evanston campus that does not count towards their 12 quarters of aid. Priority for this limited aid is determined by the following rules:

- First priority for this aid allocation is given to students that can graduate in August;
- Second priority is given to students that need to take academic work to "catch up" with their cohort;
- Third priority is given to student wishing to participate in a special program that they would be unable to participate in at any other point in time.

Students that are unable to fit into one of the priorities above, or do not receive this aid because the office has run out of funding, are able to "borrow" aid from another quarter to attend summer session. This means that at some other point during their academic career they would need to take a quarter off, graduate early, or apply for an additional quarter of aid.

Students taking two credits could fall into one of the priority categories above, or could borrow a half quarter of aid. Students taking only one course during the summer are not eligible for any financial aid assistance unless they have extraordinary special circumstances. *The university and federal policy requires that students be at least half time (2 credits) to qualify for most sources of aid.*

Students that are unable to complete their degree in 12 quarters (or 15 for a recognized double degree program) have the opportunity to petition for an additional quarter of aid.

Source: Office of Undergraduate Financial Aid

APPENDIX 18: MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND REINSTATEMENT STEPS

Purpose of MLOA

The purpose of a medical leave of absence (MLOA) is to provide students time away from campus for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that impairs a student's ability to function safely and successfully as a member of our community. The authority to grant a MLOA and permission to return from a MLOA resides with the Dean of Students Office. Students who request and obtain a voluntary MLOA during an academic quarter may be eligible for a number of benefits, including:

- Tuition adjustments or refunds
- Later course withdrawals
- A coordinated treatment plan
- For international students, depending upon the circumstances, a MLOA may provide a way to remain in the U.S. while maintaining legal status

Departure from University Housing during MLOA

A student will be required to vacate university housing within 48 hours of the approval of the leave, which includes removal of all belongings. The student must complete a request to cancel his/her residence and board contract with Residential Services. The student must also officially check out of the residence hall by completing a Room Condition Inventory and returning all keys to a member of the Residential Life staff. Failure to properly check out may result in additional charges.

Approval for Reinstatement from MLOA

Applications for reinstatement must be submitted to the Dean of Students office no later than eight weeks for law students and six weeks for all other students before the term in which you wish to start. Applications for reinstatement will NOT be considered after the deadlines.

Step 1 – Applying for Reinstatement From MLOA

Complete the online reinstatement form to start the application process. A link to the form is provided online when reinstatement is available for the following quarter. Students must complete the reinstatement process no less than six weeks before the term in which they wish to start.

Step 2 – Contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or Health Services

The student must schedule an interview for reinstatement with CAPS (for mental health reasons) or Health Services (for physical health reasons) and provide documentation of treatment efforts/resolution. Students should also sign a release of information allowing their current treatment providers to speak with CAPS or Health Services staff.

Step 3 – Contact the Dean of Student's Office
After the CAPS or Health Services evaluation, the student should contact the Dean of Students office for a reinstatement appointment with one of the Assistant Deans in the Students and Support Services Office.

Determination
The Dean of Students (DOS) will make a determination regarding reinstatement based on the recommendation provided by CAPS and/or Health Services. Reinstatement is based on the student's readiness to manage an academic course load and safely function in our community. The DOS will notify the student and other necessary University offices in writing of the determination, and if approved, whether any conditions will apply. If reinstatement is denied, the student may appeal the determination.

Appeal
If reinstatement is denied, the student may appeal the determination to the Dean of Students (or his or her designee) in writing within ten (10) business days of the decision. The appeal should be made in writing and should set forth the basis for the appeal. The Dean of Students shall review the record and any additional information submitted by the student and renders a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal. The Dean of Students decision shall be final.

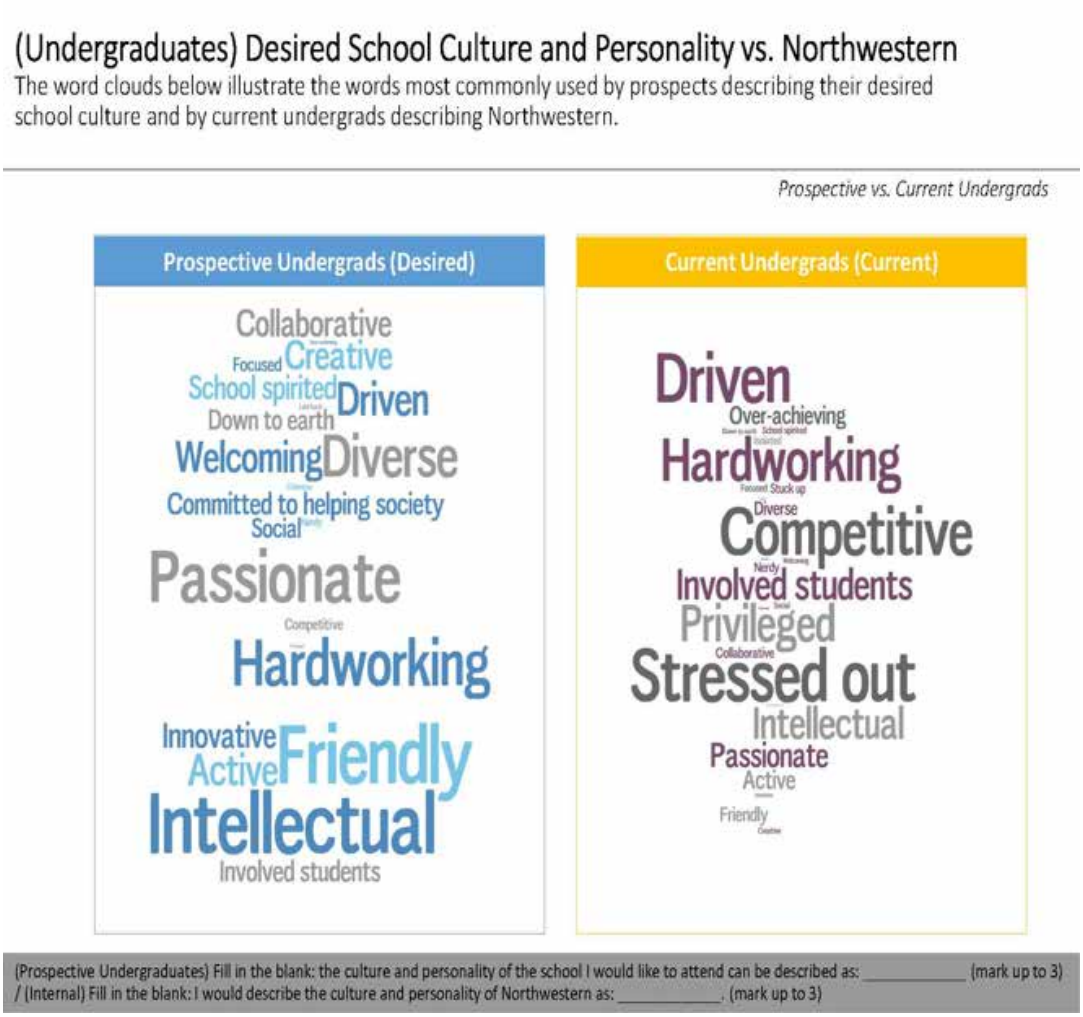
Step 4 – Complete the Former Student To Re-Enter Form
If reinstatement is approved, complete the FRET Form and submit it to your academic dean's office. If approved, the dean's office will forward the application to the Office of the Registrar. The completed and signed application should be received in the Office of the Registrar six weeks before the first day of registration of the quarter of return. If approved, the Office of the Registrar will reactivate your record and assign a registration appointment time. Registration can take place any time after the appointment date and time.

Step 5 – Reactivate NetID
NetIDs must be reactivated through the NUIT Support Center. Your school dean's office must send a request for a reactivation code to consultant@northwestern.edu. The code will then be sent to the dean's office, who will send it to you. If you have questions call 847-491-HELP (4357).

Source: Dean of Student website

APPENDIX 19: GLOBAL MARKETING WORD CLOUD

Source: Office for Global Marketing



APPENDIX 20: COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS) SERVICES

Individual Psychotherapy Sessions: Sessions consist of meeting one-on one on a regular basis (usually once a week or every two weeks) for 45–50 minute sessions for up to twelve sessions in an academic career. Typical therapy goals include helping students feel better and function at their best, managing and coping with emotions more adaptively and healthily, improving relationship skills, helping with self-concept and esteem, and achieving greater understanding and perspective on life experiences.

Same-Day Services: CAPS staff are available to students who are in crisis on a same-day basis. Students may call to arrange a crisis appointment or walk in to see the Crisis Counselor. There is a Crisis Counselor available in person during regular business hours, Monday–Friday 8:30AM–5PM on the Evanston campus. A counselor can be made available on the Chicago campus with advance notice.

After-Hours Emergency: Students can call an after-hours emergency number; answering service personnel will contact a CAPS counselor who will speak with the student over the phone. A CAPS counselor is available via the phone 24 hours a day, year round.

Group Therapy: Each quarter, CAPS offers several self-exploration and therapy groups designed to facilitate healing, learning, and change. Group meetings do not count towards the 12 sessions allotted to each student. Therefore, full-time Northwestern students can participate in as many groups as they would like throughout their tenure at NU. Groups are free to students.

Psychiatric Consultation: CAPS has three psychiatrists on staff who see students on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses. They provide a wide range of services including assessments, evaluation, and medication consultation. Students are eligible for psychiatric services when they are in ongoing counseling at CAPS. Medication management without ongoing counseling is typically not offered by CAPS psychiatrists.

Stress Management Clinic (SMC): The SMC is dedicated to providing information and a set of practical tools and strategies for coping with the negative consequences of stress. Participants in our various groups and workshops learn to: recognize the signs and symptoms of dysfunctional stress; learn and practice relaxation techniques including biofeedback; and receive support and encouragement for engaging in healthy lifestyle practices such as exercise, yoga, and meditation.

The QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training Program: To help our community recognize warning signs for suicide and assist others in need, CAPS has chosen the QPR (Question-Persuade-Refer) Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training Program, a community-focused, nationally-recognized, empirically-based suicide prevention program, to educate our community about suicide and the resources available for those needing professional help. The training program is appropriate for students, staff, and faculty. QPR sessions last 1.5 hours and have a 35-person maximum. If requesting a program, please allow at least three weeks advance notice due a large number of requests for training.

Consultation for Faculty, staff, administrators or parents: Faculty, staff, and administrators may consult with CAPS staff about difficult situations involving students about whom they may be concerned. Parents are also welcome to consult with CAPS staff about their student if they have concerns.

Eating Concerns: CAPS, in conjunction with University Health Service has developed the Eating Concerns Assessment and Treatment Team (ECATT) to address each person's individualized needs. Typically care is provided by a licensed health professional, including but not limited to a psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker, nutritionist, and/or medical doctor. Care should be coordinated and provided by a health professional with expertise and experience in dealing with eating disorders. The exact treatment needs of each individual will vary.

Drugs and Alcohol: CAPS staff provide leadership in the university efforts to reduce high-risk and illegal drinking, and the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs. CAPS also offers services to students who may be struggling with an alcohol or other drug problem.

Campus-Wide Crisis: CAPS staff are also available for campus-wide crises. Should there be a difficult situation that involves more than one student or system, there are a variety of services available.

Referrals: Given the short-term nature of CAPS counseling, CAPS may also assist students in a referral to a community therapist for specialized or longer-term therapy. CAPS also provides referrals for psychiatric consultation services for students that are not in ongoing CAPS counseling.

Source: www.northwestern.edu/counseling/

APPENDIX 21: TYPES OF ACADEMIC ADVISERS BY SCHOOL

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

- **First-year Adviser:** Fall quarter of their first year, students receive advising support from their first-year seminar professor. This faculty member is only an Adviser for their first quarter freshman year.
- **College Adviser:** Starting winter quarter of their first year, students are assigned to their college adviser. This adviser provides support and guides overall academic planning. This person remains their adviser for the remainder of their time in the college.
- Major, minor, and program advisers: Once a student chooses a major, and also a minor or program, the student will have an academic adviser situated in each department or program as well.
- All Advisers are faculty members.

School of Communication

- Students are assigned one adviser for all four years; Advisers are split by concentration (major).
- All Advisers are lecturers as well as Advisers.

School of Education and Social Policy

- Students are assigned one adviser for all four years; Advisers are split by concentration (major) and have experience in that field.
- Advisers are not faculty members.

McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science

- First-Year Adviser: Students are assigned one of four first-year advisers during their freshman year, after completing the McCormick Online Dossier which provides detailed information on the student's background and placement scores to the Advisers. These Advisers are faculty members and operate as college-wide advising.
- Major Adviser: Starting their sophomore year, students receive advising from a McCormick faculty member from the degree that the student is pursuing. Undeclared sophomores have an Adviser for undeclared students (typically a staff member, not faculty) until they choose a major.
- All Advisers are faculty members other than the undeclared sophomore exception above.

Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications

- Student Life Adviser: Students are assigned one Student Life adviser for all four years in Medill's Office of Student Life.
- Faculty adviser: First-year students are assigned a faculty adviser before they arrive for Wildcat Welcome. This faculty member teaches the student's fall quarter discussion section for JOUR 202 Philosophy of Modern Journalism.
- Students have one faculty member adviser and one adviser that is not a faculty member.

Bienen School of Music

- There is one full-time Adviser for all Bienen undergraduate students.
- The Adviser is not a faculty member.

Northwestern University in Qatar

- Students are assigned one adviser for all four years.
- Advisers are not faculty members.

University Academic Advising Center:

- This center offers academic advising for all pre-health students at Northwestern.
- The advisers are not faculty members and are available to students in any school.

Source: The Undergraduate Council

APPENDIX 22: TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN HIGH ENROLLMENT COURSES

Course	Average # of Students	Average # of TAs	Average # Students per TA	Notes
Bio 215	342	5	76	
Bio 216	159	2	71	
Bio 217	137	2	61	
Bio 218	131	2	65	
Physics 130	139	2	70	
Physics 135	333	4	87	
Psych 110	300	3	100	No discussion section or lab
Religion 210	151	3	50	Assessments are entirely essay-based
Slavic 210	500	12	43	Assessments are entirely essay-based
Total Average	**218**	**4**	**69**	

Note: Data include courses from Fall quarter 2013 through Fall quarter 2015.

Source: Faculty members who taught the course and historical course data provided through the department.

APPENDIX 23: CURRENT SCHOOL PRACTICES FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

- All curricular proposals must include learning outcomes assessment plans.

School of Communication

- SoC has redesigned its curriculum—and by extension, its assessment of learning—by envisioning the course structure as a new modular curriculum.
- Faculty who teach these modular courses have begun to develop assessment plans, so that learning objectives, teaching methods, activities, and assessments are all aligned.

School of Education and Social Policy

- While courses apply authentic assessment tasks, specific assessment practices vary across SESP.

McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science

- All courses in McCormick are required to have stated learning objectives that are tied concretely to the assessment process under ABET accreditation.

Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications

- Medill uses established learning outcomes to guide its assessment efforts in undergraduate programs.

Bienen School of Music

- Each program specifies its own assessment criteria.

Source: Report to the Higher Learning Commission in Support of Reaffirmation of Accreditation for Northwestern University Assurance Argument: March 30, 2015

Northwestern