

**COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS
STANFORD UNIVERSITY**

Date: May 1, 2009

To: Karen Cook, Chair
XLI Senate of the Academic Council

From: Ian Hodder, Chair, Committee for the Review of Undergraduate Majors

Re: Recommendation to Renew the Individually Designed Majors in Humanities and Sciences

The Committee for the Review of Undergraduate Majors reviewed the Individually Designed Majors (IDMs) in Humanities and Sciences on May 1, 2009. This program has gone through a number of changes between the School of Humanities and Sciences and the Office of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, but it is now firmly set within the School of H&S, where it is structured to give students solid advice when they first propose an IDM and keep those who are accepted on a path of structured progress.

The number of students who complete IDMs is small each year, but they now receive serious advising from the Dean's Office in H&S, and student must meet with three faculty and the appropriate cluster dean before the major is approved. Faculty advisors keep the Dean's Office informed as to their meetings with the student and the progress being made, so monitoring is not difficult. There are a few template majors (medieval studies, teaching of physics) that are important and available to students as IDMs, but which do not have the demand for a separate degree program.

Some of the previous IDMs shown on the report might have been completed within departments, but some IDMs have been in disciplines that have only graduate programs with no undergraduate component. The students who create the strongest proposals have already taken science, engineering, and economics courses; they work with the H&S faculty advisors to develop a major with a solid four-year trajectory leading to a thesis project as the capstone.

The Interdisciplinary Program in Human Biology began as an Individually Designed Major, and that is always a possibility as students develop their plans. Students who complete an IDM in Bioinformatics (otherwise only a graduate program) are "exceeding the undergraduate bar" and should have the option to continue this kind of education. The School of Humanities and Sciences is willing to continue to oversee these Individually Designed Majors, and C-RUM agrees with their assessment that this program should continue.

The Committee for the Review of Undergraduate Majors therefore recommends the renewal of the Individually Designed Majors in Humanities and Sciences, with degree-nominating authority for the BA and BS degrees, for a five-year period, from September 1, 2009, through August 31, 2014.

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INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED MAJORS IN HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

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- III. Report from the School of Humanities and Sciences on the Individually Designed Majors

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