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Rationale for Proposed Undergraduate Program Changes

**Overview:**

On behalf of the Undergraduate Committee in the Department of Classics, I would like to outline and provide a rationale for a proposed change to our undergraduate curriculum. The change focuses on one course (Cl 4999/4999H) but impacts three of our major concentrations. For simplicity and clarity, therefore, I will address the entire network of issues for all major concentrations here.

**Proposed Changes:**

 Classical Humanities Concentration:

1. remove Cl 4999/4999H as a required course (it will persist as an elective option)
2. increase the required courses at the 3000+ level from 2 to 3
3. total number of required credit hours stays the same

Greek and Latin Concentration:

1. add Cl 4999/4999H as a required course
2. offer Cl 4999/4999H for 4 credit hours, rather than 3 (thus raising the unit total for this major by one credit hour)
3. urge students to fulfill this requirement a year prior to graduating (traditionally: in the junior year)
4. reduce the number of elective courses from 5 to 4
5. total number of required credit hours increases from 30 to 31

Ancient History and Classics Concentration:

1. add Cl 4999/4999H as a required course
2. offer Cl 4999/4999H for 4 credit hours, rather than 3 (thus raising the unit total for this major by one credit hour)
3. urge students to fulfill this requirement a year prior to graduating (traditionally: in the junior year)
4. reduce the number of elective courses from 2 to 1
5. total number of required credit hours increases from 30 to 31

**Rationale for Proposed Changes:**

1. In evaluating our undergraduate major programs, the Undergraduate Committee, in close consultation with our entire faculty, came to the conclusion that the role of undergraduate research in our major concentrations could be adjusted to better meet the needs of our students. Our students most likely to pursue graduate work in classics or a related field take either our ‘Greek and Latin’ concentration or (somewhat less frequently) ‘Ancient History and Classics’. These are the students who need substantial writing samples for their graduate applications (typically in the late fall of their graduating year); these are the students who need the best possible foundation in professional research skills for their future careers. For this reason, we have decided to add Cl 4999/4999H as a requirement for these two major concentrations.
2. Our evaluation also suggested that students in our Classical Humanities concentration should not be asked to fulfill the Cl4999/4999H requirement (though it will remain an elective option). These students will be better served by increasing the breadth of their course work and integrating more research and writing into 3000- and 4000- level courses than by asking them to complete Cl 4999/4999H.
3. We have decided to offer Cl 4999/4999H for 4 credit hours, rather than 3, for two reasons. First, we plan to emphasize that the acquisition of requisite research skills is a basic component of Cl 4999/4999H. This added expectation placed upon students and advisors justifies the additional credit hour. Second, we hope to encourage all of our students to strive to graduate with Research Distinction in Classics, an honor that requires 4 credit hours of Cl 4999/4999H.
4. Two other major concentrations, ‘Classical Greek’ and ‘Latin’, were not felt to need any program changes at this time. As with the case of the Classical Humanities concentration, these concentrations do not typically lead to graduate work in classics or a related field. Furthermore, students in these majors tend to be seeking the most intense engagement possible with a single ancient language. (The ‘Classical Greek’ concentration is our least popular major; and students who take the ‘Latin’ concentration almost exclusively combine it with another major – most often pre-health sciences.)

Sincerely yours,



Associate Professor

Director of Undergraduate Studies