Self-Determined Major Committee
2021–2022 Annual Report

Function

The Self-Determined Major Committee acts for the faculty in overseeing the Self-Determined Major (SDM) Program by setting the academic criteria and procedures required of self-determined majors.

Meetings

The Self-Determined Major (SDM) Committee met 19 times, on a weekly basis during the fall and a biweekly basis in the spring for the 2021-2022 academic year, for a total of 12 meetings in the fall and 7 meetings in the spring.

Regular SDM Business:

When the fall semester began, we had an unusually large number of students who needed to change their faculty advisors and their core courses and in one case the second reader on their final project because of faculty who had left the college. Therefore, we spent our first meetings working through finding suitable replacements and approving the changes.

Given that all the committee members were new this year and the director had just returned from a year-long sabbatical, the committee began its work by reviewing first the final project proposals that the previous year's committee had already approved for three of the SDMs in the class of 2022. That review prepared us to evaluate the final project proposal for the remaining senior later that that semester.

Second, we reviewed the major proposals of the SDMs in the class of 2023. That review prepared us to evaluate the major proposal that the previous year's committee had not yet approved as well as the proposals we received in the spring from students in the class of 2024.

Third, we reviewed the student learning goals for the SDM as well as the literacy maps as a way of orienting all the committee members and as preparation for designing this year's assessment project. We decided to delay implementing the information literacy assessment project the committee designed last year until next year (Fall 2022) when we will have 10 annotated bibliographies to assess (instead of one). Instead , we decided to conduct an oral presentation literacy project assessing the four seniors final project presentations. In the fall, we searched for oral presentation rubrics to use.

After orienting the new committee members (and the returning director), we wrote guidelines for the essay component of SDM final projects that do not already have a written component.

We implemented those guidelines in the fall and will revise them next year based on our experience with them this year.

The Committee carried out its charge of evaluating and approving proposals, including final project proposals, for self-determined majors.
- Approved 1 new SDM for the class of 2023
- Approved 1 new SDM for the class of 2024
- Approved 1 final project proposal for the class of 2022

The Committee completed other work related to the functioning of the program, including:
- Revised SDM forms and website to reflect the approval of SD 374 (formerly ID 351A) by the Curriculum Committee
- Continued revisions to the SDM website, particularly the final project page
- Updated program brochure
- Read two essays that accompanied final projects that were films rather than research papers
- Designed and completed an assessment project regarding the final project presentation of SDM seniors
- Evaluated three See-Beyond proposals
- Held three final project presentations, including one hybrid and one solely over zoom
- Reviewed faculty readers' evaluations of final projects
- Decided on awarding academic honors in the Self-Determined Major Program

Other Business:

The Committee completed other College business:
- Participated in SDM Academic Showcase Zoom sessions for Admissions on October 29, 2021.
- Participated in ExploreMore for SDM on February 21, 2022.
- Participated in SDM Accepted Candidates Day Zoom sessions for Admissions on April 8, 2022.

SDM Committee Membership:

2021–2022 Members
Michael Arnush, Office of Academic Advising (Fall 2021)
Bakary Diaby, English (Fall 2022)
Catherine White Berheide, SDM Director (2022)
Ryan Homsey, Office of Academic Advising (Spring 2022)
Michael Paulmeno, Scribner Library (2022)
Sheldon Solomon, Psychology (2024)
Melora Wolff, English (Spring 2022)

2022–2023 Members

Catherine White Berheide, Sociology, SDM Director (2024)
Ryan Homsey, Office of Academic Advising (2023)
Michael Paulmeno, Scribner Library (2023)
Sheldon Solomon, Psychology (2024)
Melora Wolff, English (2023)

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine White Berheide
SDM Director
July 18, 2022