Self-Designed Major and Minor: Procedures and Guidelines

Purpose of the Self-Designed Major or Minor

A self-designed major is an appropriate choice for students who want to major in:
- a subject that crosses disciplinary lines,
- the study of a single topic using several disciplinary perspectives, or
- a discipline in which CSS offers courses but not a major.

A self-designed major is rarely appropriate when:
- the courses chosen are very similar to an existing major or minor except for one or two courses or
- the courses chosen are a broad selection, as in a School major, rather than a focused selection around a coherent intellectual concept.

Requirements for the Self-Designed Major or Minor

Self Designed Major
- No fewer than 34 nor more than 58 credits
- At least 12 credits at 3000-level or above
- Minimum of 16 credits at CSS (cross-registered courses do not count)
- At least 50% of credits completed after approval of the Self-Designed Major
- Support of two faculty sponsors

Self Designed Minor
- No fewer than 18 and no more than 22 credits
- At least 8 credits at the 3000-level or above
- Minimum of 10 credits earned at CSS (cross-registered courses do not count)
- At least 4 credits must be completed after approval of the Self-Designed Minor
- Support of two faculty sponsors

Policies for Self-Designed Majors and Minors
- Students must earn a grade of C or better in all the courses in the Self-Designed Major or Minor
- The plan of study approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UGCC) cannot be revised by the student and/or faculty sponsors without approval from the UGCC

<h1 style="text-align:center">Process of Designing the Self-Designed Major or Minor</h1>

Designing a Self-Designed Major or Minor (SDM) requires research and development. Students must submit both the attached proposal form and a typed narrative that addresses the following elements:

1. *The central concept*. A SDM is organized around a single intellectually coherent concept. The title of the major/minor states this concept briefly; the narrative defines it and makes clear its connections with one or more academic disciplines. The UGCC looks for a statement of a single focus and the outcomes that the student will achieve in pursuing it (e.g., preparation for graduate study, a career path, or other purpose). The proposal should show the same careful definition of an area and outcomes as the definitions of existing majors found in the CSS catalog.

2. *Choosing courses and experiences linked to the Central Concept*. The proposal must include a listing of courses and some brief description of their linkage to the SDM's central concept.

- *Core and Elective courses*. Some SDMs list specific core courses for about two-thirds of the credits and a list of elective courses from which the remaining credits will be chosen with the stipulation that the faculty sponsors can also approve the inclusion of new courses or Topics courses that are relevant to the central concept.

- *Off campus courses*. SDMs may include courses from other colleges or universities and credits earned in Study Abroad and Internship programs relevant to the core concept.

3. *Comparison to similar majors or minors at other institutions of higher education.* The proposal should include at least one comparison to the requirements and courses of a similar major or minor at another college or university. This demonstrates to UGCC that the major or minor is consistent with the requirements and expectations of other universities and colleges.

4. *A plan or discussion of the proposed major or minor in your overall academic program*. The proposal should indicate the timeframe in which the SDM will be completed as well as the student's current academic standing.

Students must also secure **two faculty sponsors** for a SDM. The faculty sponsors assist in developing the proposal and shaping a cogent and focused statement of the intellectually coherent concept. In signing the Proposal Form, each faculty member indicates her or his willingness to provide on-going advisement to the student with regard to this SDM.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Submission of the Self –Designed Major or Minor Proposal</h2>

It is the responsibility of the student to electronically submit the signed Self-Designed Major or Minor Form with an attached narrative to the Chair of the UGCC. The first reading of the proposal will be held at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the UGCC. SDM proposals may be approved after a first reading. If UGCC members have questions or suggestions for revision, the Chair will send them to the student and faculty advisors by email. Most proposals are approved at the second reading.

<h2 style="text-align:center">After Approval</h2>

Advisement: Students should meet with faculty sponsors for course selection and on-going development of the SDM during the Advisement period each semester.

Revision of a Self-Designed Major/Minor: If a core course is not available, or if the student redefines his or her interests, the revised SDM must be submitted. Petitions to revise the SDM are not always approved. In those situations, the UGCC works intensively with the student and advisers to find solutions that permit the student to graduate on time.

Graduation: The title of a student's Self-Designed Major will be listed in the Commencement Program. The title of both Self-Designed Majors and Minors are listed on the permanent transcript.

Be sure to consult the Guidelines for Self-Designed Majors and Minors (above) while preparing this proposal.

- *Complete this Cover Sheet proposal form, answering each question thoroughly.*
- *Attach your narrative proposal that addresses:*
  - *The central intellectual concept or purpose of this major*
  - *The core and supporting courses selected and their relationship to the intellectual concept*
  - *A comparison to similar major or minors at other institutions of higher education*
  - *A plan or discussion of the proposed major in your overall academic program*
- *Obtain signatures from two faculty sponsors who will advise you for this major*
- *Submit electronically the proposal to the Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee*

NAME OF STUDENT	
IS THIS A SELF-DESIGNED MAJOR OR A SELF-DESIGNED MINOR?	
NAME OF PROPOSED MAJOR/MINOR	

Proposed Courses (Curriculum) for this Major or Minor:

CREDITS	COURSE <u>NUMBER</u> AND <u>NAME</u> (INDICATE IF <u>CORE</u> OR <u>ELECTIVE</u>/SUPPORTING)	COMPLETED?

Faculty Sponsors

Faculty Sponsors' signatures indicate their:

- *support for this Self-Designed Major or Minor,*
- *assurance that the curriculum proposed is intellectually coherent and rigorous, and*
- *willingness to serve as Advisor and Mentor to this student.*

	SIGNATURE	DATE AND ANY COMMENTS
FACULTY #1		
FACULTY #2		

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

*The **signature of the Chair** of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee indicates that:*

- *the Committee supports this Self-Designed Major or Minor,*
- *the curriculum proposed is intellectually coherent and rigorous, and*
- *this curriculum meets the requirements and standards of the College.*

*The Self-Designed Major or Minor Curriculum approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee becomes the list of courses **required** for graduation. Any change to this plan requires the submission of a proposal from the student to revise their Self-Designed Major or Minor*

	SIGNATURE	DATE AND ANY COMMENTS
CHAIR, UGCC		