A Twenty-First Century Arts and Science Curriculum: Discovery Without Boundaries

College of Arts and Science Curriculum Revision Work Group

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I. Introduction

A. The Rationale for a New College of Arts and Science Curriculum

The current College of Arts and Science curriculum, the "College Program in Liberal Education," commonly known as the CPLE, dates from 1980. Although minor changes have been made since then, it has been in effect for more than two decades. The CPLE replaced the previous curriculum instituted ca. 1970. The 1970 curriculum, perhaps reflective of the social upheaval of the 1960s, was by the late 1970s broadly judged by the faculty as too permissive. Professor Paul Conkin stated "...perceived deficiencies, along with a more deferential student body, led to the adoption of the present and very ambitious and complex CPLE in 1980." The CPLE requires that students meet specific proficiency requirements in three areas: languages, mathematics, and writing. It also requires that students complete complex distribution requirements in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and history and culture. An attempt to replace the CPLE, the proposed CLUE curriculum, occurred in 2000; however, CLUE failed to gain approval of the College of Arts and Science faculty. The reasons it failed were complex, and beyond the scope of this report, but centered on several ambitious mandates that it would have imposed upon College of Arts and Science faculty and on the absence of support by the Office of the Dean.

The primary reasons for designing a new curriculum are the needs of students and the expectations of faculty in the College of Arts and Science in the twenty-first century. The CPLE has admirably served a generation of students in the College of Arts and Science. During these two decades, Vanderbilt University has accelerated its ascension into the top ranks of the teaching and research universities in the United States. Academically, students and faculty in the College of Arts and Science are stronger than ever before. Equally important, the world for which we prepare our students has changed dramatically over the lifetime of the CPLE.

*An exciting curriculum designed to attract the best students and to promote intellectual discovery without boundaries through excellent teaching by faculty who are leaders in their respective fields will contribute strongly toward achieving these objectives. As the quality of each incoming class improves, the academic backgrounds and the levels of basic skills with which our students matriculate rise. The proposed "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum recognizes the impressive backgrounds of our students by reassessing the balance between skills and intellectual breadth.*

The College of Arts and Science Curriculum Revision Work Group (CRWG; see Section I.B) compared the CPLE to curricula from peer institutions. This research revealed a wide range of curriculum options among these institutions. It became evident that no single approach to curriculum exists. However, as compared with our peer institutions, the CPLE was found to be curiously remedial, considering that Vanderbilt
students are culled from the top high school graduates in the United States, and, increasingly, from around the world.

It was remarked to the CRWG on several occasions that the CPLE represented an exercise in checking boxes on a skills inventory. This contradiction between the outstanding academic credentials of Vanderbilt students and the CPLE is reflected in the lack of enthusiasm for the CPLE by both faculty and students. Increasing numbers of students exempt themselves from one or more areas of the CPLE and this exacerbates the lack of a common undergraduate academic experience within the College of Arts and Science. The bureaucracy associated with monitoring the content of CPLE courses inhibits the development of new courses.

The proposed "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum builds on several of the great strengths of Vanderbilt University--our world-class faculty, the tradition in which all of our faculty teach undergraduates, and the presence of a top-tier liberal arts college that is at the heart of a great research university. In the proposed curriculum, these institutional strengths are utilized to educate our students to become leaders in all fields in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, the "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum recognizes that in the twenty-first century, the residential campus liberal arts colleges that stand out, let alone survive, will be those that engage their students in meaningful ways that ensure the value of a residential campus experience over that obtained via distance-learning.

The "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum encourages small classes that provide greater student-faculty contact. The small class format Freshman Writing Seminars enhance the already strong Writing program to ensure that our students emerge with excellence in their abilities to persuasively communicate and articulate arguments in the public arena. The "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum also opens greater opportunities for building better oral communication skills, encourages students to recognize and become deeply involved in the research enterprise of the university and of their faculty, and gives all students greater flexibility to become deeply engaged in the study of those areas of intellectual thought in which they develop a passion.

Above all, the "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum is a Vanderbilt curriculum. It re-asserts the authority of College of Arts and Science faculty over the liberal arts curriculum for our students by ensuring that all undergraduates in the College of Arts and Science complete their liberal arts program in classes taught by Vanderbilt faculty. Furthermore, this proposed change in our program ensures that this liberal arts curriculum becomes a common, shared experience for our students. Finally, the additional flexibility inherent in the new curriculum, combined with the reinvigoration of the Freshman Writing Seminars and the addition of the freshman year Vanderbilt Visions program, provides greater choice for students and provides opportunities for cohesion among the freshman curricula for all four undergraduate colleges at Vanderbilt University.
The Curriculum Revision Work Group (CRWG) was convened by Dean Richard McCarty, of the College of Arts and Science, in Fall 2002, and charged with creating a new College of Arts and Science Curriculum to replace the existing CPLE.

The CRWG convened weekly beginning in September 2002. The committee organized its task into three phases. The first phase was one of listening to faculty colleagues regarding curriculum concerns. Committee members met with the faculty of each department in the College of Arts and Science to discuss curriculum issues. In addition, committee members met with the directors of several College of Arts and Science programs. Each CRWG committee member was assigned a "constituency" consisting of one portion of the College of Arts and Science faculty. Effort was made to ensure that all faculty members would have input into the curriculum revision process. The committee also met with undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Science and, through a series of working luncheons, with College of Arts and Science alumni. In April 2003, a retreat was held by the College of Arts and Science to enable its faculty to further discuss curriculum issues. More than one hundred College of Arts and Science faculty attended. During Spring 2003, the information gathered from faculty, students, and alumni was organized and evaluated.

The College of Arts and Science faculty raised many issues. Four issues were expressed universally. The first was a need to reduce the administrative overhead associated with the CPLE. The operation of the CPLE requires various oversight committees and an associated bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is both a burden on faculty (for whom time is a precious resource) and a source of frustration. The second was a need to provide faculty with encouragement and freedom to develop and teach innovative courses. The structure and philosophy of the CPLE has often stifled innovation. The third was a need to provide a more diverse selection of courses with which to satisfy requirements, including courses appropriate to the junior and senior years. The CPLE encourages students to satisfy their area requirements in large survey courses, most of which are targeted toward freshmen and sophomores. Many students do not complete their requirements by the end of four semesters, resulting in juniors and seniors enrolling in freshman- and sophomore-level survey courses, which are not necessarily appropriate for them. The fourth was a need to simplify the curriculum and improve the student advising process.

A dominant theme arising in discussions with students was a desire for a more diverse selection of courses, with more options for satisfying requirements, particularly in

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**Mission Statement**

The faculty of the College of Arts and Science is committed to educating its students in the liberal arts, enabling them to become leaders and innovators, in various professions, within their local and global communities. The College curriculum is in need of revision to better serve the emerging educational needs of students in the twenty-first century. We envision a new College curriculum that enables students to master the requisite skills and breadth of knowledge, which collectively as a faculty, we believe exemplify a contemporary education in the liberal arts at Vanderbilt University.
the junior and senior years. Students were concerned that courses should be offered on a regular basis and, to the extent possible, taught by tenure-stream faculty. These concerns reflect the fact that a limited number of courses are available with which to satisfy some of the distribution requirements in the CPLE and, indeed, that some of these required courses are not taught regularly. Students strongly favored the inclusion of a diversity/multicultural component in the curriculum.

Alumni suggested that the new curriculum must not simply be a list of required courses or set of skills; rather, it should prepare graduates for leadership roles in the twenty-first century. They agreed that writing and oral communication skills would be critical to our graduates. These elements should be included. They also suggested that students do not necessarily appreciate the value of specific curriculum requirements until they enter the job market.

The second phase in the CRWG mission, formulating a new curriculum, was begun during Spring 2003 and continued during Summer 2003. The committee crafted and refined a set of essential elements that define a liberal arts education. Next, each member of the committee constructed a model curriculum based upon their analysis of the issues presented by faculty, students, and alumni. The entire committee debated these models. They provided substance for a retreat of the CRWG, held over two weeks in May 2003. After this retreat, the CRWG crafted the central elements of the "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum presented here.

The third phase of the CRWG mission commenced in Fall 2003. The "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum was evaluated by a number of focus groups, consisting of members of the College of Arts and Science faculty. The goal was to identify specific issues and concerns early. Based upon their input, a number of modifications were made to the first draft proposal. The CRWG subsequently met again with faculty from all College of Arts and Science Departments and Programs to discuss this curriculum. This proposal was also discussed with students.

Based upon these discussions, additional and substantive modifications were made to the "Discovery Without Boundaries" curriculum, yielding the present document.
II. Essential Elements of a Vanderbilt University Liberal Arts Education

One mission of the College of Arts and Science is to educate undergraduate students in the liberal arts. Consequently, the CRWG initiated the curriculum revision process by asking the question, “What are the essential elements of a Vanderbilt University liberal arts education?”

Students educated in the liberal arts at Vanderbilt University will have acquired the foundations for creative expression, critical thinking, and moral and ethical reasoning. These foundations will foster the development of students as future leaders in their chosen fields and professions. The proposed liberal arts curriculum is designed to foster the intellectual rigor expected of students broadly educated in the traditions of the liberal arts. A liberal arts education at Vanderbilt will encompass both depth and breadth of knowledge. Depth, which is achieved by completion of a program of study leading to one of the majors in the College of Arts and Science, develops both confidence and competence in one area of knowledge and is a stepping-stone toward a variety of post-graduate options and experiences. Breadth, which is achieved by completion of courses in a variety of disciplines beyond the major, covering different modes of thinking and expression, is designed to foster qualities of mind, and to promote a lifelong intellectual curiosity. The requirements of the curriculum for breadth demand that students become exposed to areas of study that they might not otherwise explore. At Vanderbilt University, a liberal arts education must address aspects of human diversity and challenge students to understand their world from a multi-cultural perspective. The vast array of options for study within the College of Arts and Science combined with the breadth requirement, forces students to make choices about their own educations. Thus, students are encouraged, with the counsel of their advisors, to think deeply about their own educational decisions.
III. The Proposed College of Arts and Science Curriculum: 
"Discovery Without Boundaries"

A. Outline Summary

The Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum consists of four parts: the Freshman Year Common Experience, the Writing Requirement, the Liberal Arts Requirement, and the Major.

The Freshman Year Common Experience includes a Freshman Writing Seminar and participation in Vanderbilt Visions.

The Writing Requirement has three segments: demonstration of basic skills in English Composition, completion of a 100-level W course no later than the fourth semester in residence, and completion of either a second 100-level W course or a 200-level W (discipline-specific) course or an approved course in Oral Communications at Vanderbilt University as a graduation requirement.

The Liberal Arts Requirement is composed of a total of thirteen courses taken at Vanderbilt, and distributed across six areas of inquiry. The Freshman Writing Seminar and all 100-level and 200-level W courses and all Oral Communications courses are also counted in the thirteen-course Liberal Arts Requirement.

1. The Freshman Year Common Experience
   a. Freshman Writing Seminar (one course)
   b. Vanderbilt Visions (two 1-hour courses)

2. The Writing Requirement (2-3 courses)
   a. English Composition (appropriate test score or one course)
   b. 100-level W Requirement (one course)
   c. 100-level or 200-level W or Oral Communications Course (one course)

3. The Liberal Arts Requirement (13 courses)
   a. Humanities and the Creative Arts (three courses)
   b. International Cultures (three courses)
   c. History and Culture of the United States (one course)
   d. Mathematics and Natural Sciences (three courses)
   e. Social and Behavioral Sciences (two courses)
   f. Perspectives (one course)

4. The Major1 (27-36 credit hours)

Total Credit Hours: 122

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1 The Major, and the requirements thereof, are not addressed in this curriculum, but are included in this Outline Summary to indicate the complete set of graduation requirements that are proposed for the College of Arts and Science.
B. Detailed Description

1. The Freshman Year Common Experience

The common experiences of the freshman year are critical to integrating students into the intellectual life of Vanderbilt University. All freshmen must successfully complete the Freshman Year Common Experience no later than the end of their second semester at Vanderbilt University. The Freshman Year Common Experience consists of two parts. The Freshman Writing Seminar program introduces students to independent learning and inquiry in a small group setting. These seminars also provide a forum for students to develop writing skills that will be critical to their success at Vanderbilt University. The Vanderbilt Visions program provides a common shared academic experience in a larger group setting, and introduces students to the broad scope of intellectual inquiry inherent to a great university.

a. Freshman Writing Seminar

The Freshman Writing Seminar Program is an integral part of the freshman year experience in the College of Arts and Science. Through these seminars, freshmen engage in independent learning and inquiry in an environment in which they can express knowledge and defend opinions through intensive class discussion, oral presentations and written expression. The small-group nature of these seminars allows for direct student-faculty interaction that stresses training in techniques of scholarly inquiry. The students' written work and oral presentations are subject to thoughtful critical review by the faculty member, providing feedback that can be used to reconsider the manner in which they articulate their ideas and to refine their skills in these areas. Thus, freshmen learn not only about the subject matter of the seminar, but are also exposed to new methods of acquiring knowledge, different ways of expressing and sharing ideas, and unique opportunities to participate in critical inquiry.

All freshmen must enroll in a Freshman Writing Seminar. This course may be taken during the fall or the spring semester. All Freshman Writing Seminars also count in their appropriate distribution areas within the Liberal Arts Requirement.

Additional discussion related to the Freshman Writing Seminar Program may be found in Appendix B.

b. Vanderbilt Visions

Vanderbilt Visions provides a shared academic experience and offers a venue in which each entering class will assemble on a regular basis during the freshman year. It is intended to promote a sense of community among faculty and freshmen, and to encourage students to explore and to identify intellectually with the particular communities that comprise a major research university. Vanderbilt Visions engages students in the many intellectual and artistic opportunities available to them at Vanderbilt. It complements the Freshman Writing Seminar program by introducing freshmen to the wider range of interdisciplinary intellectual
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inquiry at Vanderbilt University. The invited lectures and presentations associated with Vanderbilt Visions also engage faculty from the other undergraduate colleges and the professional schools in the College of Arts and Science curriculum. All freshmen enroll in Vanderbilt Visions during both semesters of the freshman year. This course is 1 unit each semester, graded P/F.2

Additional discussion of the Vanderbilt Visions Program may be found in Section IV.2 and Appendix B.

2. The Writing Requirement

Excellent communications skills, including the ability to articulate ideas and defend positions in writing, will be paramount for twenty-first century graduates of Vanderbilt University; therefore, all students in the College of Arts and Science must successfully complete the Writing Requirement.

All students must successfully complete at least one 100-level W course at Vanderbilt University, regardless of AP credits or SAT II Writing scores earned prior to matriculation. All 100-level W courses also count in their appropriate distribution areas within the Liberal Arts Requirement.3

All students must successfully complete either (1) a second 100-level W course, or (2) a 200-level W course, or (3) an approved course in Oral Communications at Vanderbilt University, regardless of AP credits or SAT II Writing scores earned prior to matriculation. All 200-level W courses and approved Oral Communications courses also count in their appropriate distribution areas within the Liberal Arts Requirement.

Additional discussion of the Writing Requirement may be found in Appendix C.

a. English Composition

All students must demonstrate competence in English composition. Appropriate skills in composition are essential to successful progress at the University. Most students will complete this requirement by presenting a score of 560 or above on the SAT II Writing examination, or by appropriate AP or IB credit in English. Students who do not must enroll in English 100 in the freshman year.

b. Successful Completion of Any 100-level W Course

These writing-intensive courses emphasize general writing skills within the context of discipline-specific subject matter. All students are encouraged to complete Part b of the College of Arts and Science Writing Requirement as soon as possible; this

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2 All other courses taken to satisfy any Curriculum requirement must be taken for a letter grade.
3 The course currently taught as Engl 100W shall be renamed as Engl 100 and will not be considered as a W course.
requirement must be completed no later than the fourth semester at Vanderbilt University.

c. Successful Completion of a Second 100-level W Course, or Any 200-level W Course, or Any Approved Course in Oral Communications

The 200-level W courses foster advanced, discipline-specific writing skills. Departments or programs that offer these courses determine their specific writing content. In 200-level W courses, continued attention to the process of writing is included in the classroom. Students receive regular writing assignments throughout the semester and regular feedback on their writing that will contribute toward enhancing writing skills appropriate to specific disciplines. The process of revising written work allows students to reflect on the writing process; writing tutorials may also be included. Students may take 200-level W courses offered by any Department or Program in the College of Arts and Science, provided they meet the prerequisites, if any, for enrolling in that course.

Oral communications courses focus on developing improved public speaking skills. These courses introduce students to the principles and practices of public discourse and reasoned argument. Attention to the process of effective oral communication is inherent to these classes. Students receive regular speaking assignments throughout the semester and regular feedback on their speaking that will contribute toward enhancing effective speaking skills.

All students must complete Part c of the College of Arts and Science Writing Requirement before graduation.

3. The Liberal Arts Requirement

The Liberal Arts requirement consists of successful completion of thirteen courses (see Appendix E) from the College of Arts and Science.4

With the exception of Study Abroad, participation in which can be used in partial fulfillment of the International Cultures requirement, only courses taken at Vanderbilt University or taught by Vanderbilt University faculty in off-campus programs may be used in fulfillment of this requirement. All College of Arts and Science courses, with the exceptions of Vanderbilt Visions, English 100, all courses carrying less than three hours of academic credit, and any other courses that departments choose to exclude,5 fulfill one of these Liberal Arts requirements. Although some courses may be appropriate to more than one requirement, each

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4 Students transferring into the College of Arts and Science with advanced standing shall be entitled to petition for liberal arts curriculum credit based upon having completed substantially equivalent liberal arts coursework at another accredited college or university. They will also be exempted from completing the Freshman Seminar and Vanderbilt Visions.

5 Departments and Programs may exclude a number of their courses from fulfilling the requirements of this curriculum; unless specifically excluded, it shall be assumed that all courses taught in the College of Arts and Sciences will meet one requirement of this curriculum. Examples of courses that might be excluded include courses containing content that is substantially remedial in nature, or that cover material that would normally be included in high school courses, seminar or special topics courses that are not taught regularly or which have content that changes substantially from one semester to the next, or other courses that are not taught regularly.
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course shall be placed in the single, most appropriate area, as determined by a recommendation agreed upon by the Implementation and Curriculum Committees and the faculty and departments responsible for each course (see IV.1). The listing for each course in the Course Catalog will indicate the Liberal Arts area in which that course has been placed.

These thirteen courses must be distributed as outlined below. They must be taken from at least seven departments or subject areas.

Advanced Placement credit may not be used to satisfy any distribution requirements. Advanced Placement credit may be used to partially satisfy the 122-hour graduation requirement, as permitted by College of Arts and Science rules pertaining to AP credit. All students must successfully complete the Liberal Arts Requirement before graduation.

a. **Humanities and the Creative Arts** (3 courses)

Courses in the humanities and the creative arts challenge students to examine their personal understanding of life and how their individual experiences overlap with those of the rest of humankind. These courses testify to the varying ways in which people think, form values, confront ambiguity, express spiritual and aesthetic yearnings, and grapple with moral and ethical problems. By analyzing and interpreting literary, philosophical, religious, or artistic works, students examine the foundations of human experience. By producing original artistic works in imaginative writing, studio art, theatre, film, music, and dance, students have the opportunity to connect the universal sources of human inspiration with their own creative processes.

b. **International Cultures** (3 courses)

The study of international culture provides students with a basis for understanding the diversity of experiences and values in our contemporary, global society. Options in this category include not only international history and cultural studies courses, but also courses in literature, film studies, the social sciences, art, music, and languages. Students may satisfy this requirement by choosing courses that focus on the history and culture of a single society or time period in human history and/or that represent a broad spectrum of different human societies and time periods. A semester or summer study abroad experience in a Vanderbilt-sponsored program or a pre-approved non-Vanderbilt-sponsored program will count as one course in this area.

Language courses introduce students to the language of a different culture and provide insight into that culture in ways that are not possible to achieve through detached study. At intermediate and advanced levels, students are able to explore the culture in depth, using the language itself to read, discuss and write about its various aspects. This level of mastery prepares the student for the option of Study Abroad, which the College of Arts and Science strongly recommends (see Appendix F). Even at the most basic levels, exposure to the language of a different culture prepares students to both think and act in terms of living in a global community.
One of the three courses presented in fulfillment of this category must be an approved second semester language acquisition class taught at Vanderbilt University, unless (a) the student successfully completes any higher level class taught in a language other than English at Vanderbilt University, or (b) the student successfully demonstrates proficiency in a language other than English at or above the level achieved by approved second semester language acquisition classes taught at Vanderbilt University. All students must complete three courses in this category, irrespective of previous language study or proficiency in a language other than English.

c. **History and Culture of the United States** (1 course)

The study of the history and culture of the United States provides students with a basis for understanding the American experience and the shaping of American values and viewpoints within the context of an increasingly global society. Interpreting history and culture in the broadest sense, options in this category include traditional history and cultural studies courses, but also courses in literature, film studies, the social sciences, art, and music, which illuminate historical periods or cultural themes in United States history. Students may satisfy this requirement by choosing a course that focuses on the history and culture of a single social group or time period in American history and/or that represents a broad spectrum of different social groups and time periods.

d. **Mathematics and Natural Sciences** (3 courses, one of which must be a laboratory science course)

Courses in mathematics emphasize quantitative reasoning and prepare students to describe, manipulate, and evaluate complex or abstract ideas or arguments with precision. Skills in mathematical and quantitative reasoning provide essential foundations for the study of natural and social sciences. Students are generally introduced to mathematical reasoning through the study of introductory courses in calculus or probability and statistics.

Courses in the natural sciences engage students in hypothesis-driven quantitative reasoning that enables natural phenomena to be explained, the roles of testing and replication of experimental results, and

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6 The International Cultures requirement must be satisfied by the successful completion of courses corresponding to the appropriate academic placement for each student. The first semester of an introductory language acquisition class in the language a student presents as a condition for admission to the University, or in which a student transfers credit from another institution, cannot be used in partial fulfillment of this requirement.

7 Laboratory science courses may consist of single 3, 4, or 5 credit hour courses that include a laboratory component, or coupled courses in which the lecture and laboratory components are listed as separate courses. In the latter instances, both the lecture and laboratory courses must be completed to fulfill the laboratory science requirement.

8 The Mathematics and Natural Sciences requirement must be satisfied by the successful completion of courses corresponding to the appropriate academic placement for each student. Students who received a score of either a 4 or 5 on either Calculus AP test or a score of either 6 or 7 on the corresponding IB exam—or who have completed or transferred credit from another institution for any Department of Mathematics course equivalent to a Vanderbilt University Mathematics course numbered 140 or above—may not satisfy the Mathematics and Natural Science requirement by completing either Math 127ab or Math 133, and may not receive academic credit for these courses, without approval from the Department of Mathematics.
the processes through which scientific hypotheses and theories are developed, modified, or abandoned in the face of more complete evidence, or integrated into more general conceptual structures. Laboratory science courses engage students in methods of experimental testing of hypotheses and analysis of data that are the hallmarks of the natural sciences. Natural science courses prepare students to understand the complex interactions between science, technology and society; teach students to apply scientific principles to everyday experience; and develop the capacity to distinguish between science and what masquerades as science.

e. **Social and Behavioral Sciences** (2 courses)

Social scientists endeavor to study human behavior at the levels of individuals, their interactions with others, their societal structures, and their social institutions. The remarkable scope represented by these disciplines extends from studying the underpinnings of brain function to the dynamics of human social groups to the structures of political and economic institutions. The methods employed by social scientists are correspondingly broad, involving approaches as varied as mapping brain activity, discovering and charting ancient cultures, identifying the societal forces that shape individual and group behavior, and using mathematics to understand economic phenomena. By studying how humans and societies function, students will learn about individual and societal diversity, growth, and change.

f. **Perspectives** (1 course)

Courses in Perspectives give significant attention to individual and cultural diversity, multicultural interactions, sexual orientation, gender, racial, ethical, religious, and "Science and Society" issues within a culture across time or between cultures, thereby extending the principles and methods associated with the liberal arts to the broader circumstances in which students live. These courses emphasize the relationship of divergent ethics and moral values on contemporary social issues and global conflicts.

4. **The Major**

All students must successfully complete a course of study leading to one of the approved major programs in the College of Arts and Science, or successfully complete an independent contract major designed in consultation with College of Arts and Science Faculty and approved by the College of Arts and Science.

5. **Total Hours**

Students who begin as freshmen at Vanderbilt must complete 122 hours prior to graduation. Transfer students must complete 120 hours, as they will not be required to take the Vanderbilt Visions course.
IV. Management of the Discovery Without Boundaries Curriculum and Outcomes Assessment

1. Implementation Committee

The Dean of the College of Arts and Science, upon the adoption of the Discovery Without Boundaries Curriculum by the faculty, shall appoint the Implementation Committee. The Implementation Committee shall be charged with adjudicating unforeseen issues associated with the implementation of this proposal. The Implementation Committee shall also be responsible for working with the Office of the Registrar to develop the software, etc., required to monitor student compliance with the requirements of the new curriculum. It is expected that existing students shall be "grandfathered" into the existing CPLE curriculum, but may have the option of choosing the new curriculum requirements instead. The Implementation Committee, in consultation with Chairs of various Departments and Directors of interdepartmental Programs, who in turn shall consult with individual faculty, instructors, and Directors of Undergraduate Studies, shall recommend to the faculty of the College of Arts and Science the appropriate initial placement of existing College of Arts and Science courses into the various categories of the Liberal Arts Requirement, including those courses that will satisfy the 200-level W and Oral Communications options of the Writing Requirement. The Implementation Committee shall be authorized to negotiate with Departments/faculty, as necessary, to ensure a reasonable balance of courses in each Liberal Arts Requirement category. Individual Departments shall have the option of requesting that specific courses be excluded from the curriculum; in the absence of such a request, the default assumption will be that each course shall satisfy one of the area categories of the Liberal Arts Requirement. The Implementation Committee shall also be responsible for the necessary revisions to the Catalog of Courses, describing the new curriculum. The Committee shall ensure that an appropriate labeling scheme be added to the course catalog such that each course is clearly marked as to which Liberal Arts Requirement distribution category it satisfies or whether it does not satisfy any category. During the initial years, the Implementation Committee shall have the responsibility of identifying problems with the curriculum and recommending to the faculty of the College of Arts and Science incremental minor changes to the new curriculum as they become necessary. It is anticipated that the Implementation Committee will be disbanded upon the constitution of the Review Committee (see below).

2. Vanderbilt Visions

Decisions regarding the annual content and format of the Vanderbilt Visions program shall be vested with the faculty assigned to Vanderbilt Visions. The Dean of the College of Arts and Science shall appoint annually these faculty members to plan the Vanderbilt Visions program; the group shall have representatives from the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The planning of Vanderbilt Visions is anticipated to involve a substantial time commitment and it is recommended that this assignment be reflected in a reduced teaching load for these faculty members. Faculty shall be appointed to the Vanderbilt Visions Program for staggered terms of three years so as to maintain academic continuity in the Program. The responsibilities of these faculty members will be twofold: to administer the current year’s program and to plan the next year’s schedule.

Vanderbilt Visions provides a venue for the faculty to introduce students to the
rich diversity of the University's intellectual enterprises and its role in the world today. It is intended to be the marquee program of the College of Arts and Science, responsible for offering freshmen outstanding, high-impact, intellectually provocative presentations and performances. It is recognized that this may be accomplished using multiple mechanisms, and that the specific content of Vanderbilt Visions may vary considerably from one year to the next. The Vanderbilt Visions faculty may wish to focus the program on some coherent theme that extends throughout the year, or it may prefer to organize a series of diverse topics and ideas. Required summer reading to incoming freshman might be assigned by the faculty, to tie in with Vanderbilt Visions presentations at the beginning of the Fall semester. (Although the program is designed to showcase Vanderbilt’s intellectual vitality through presentations by current faculty, the faculty in charge shall have the discretion to invite prominent alumni and friends of the University, who have achieved significant recognition in their fields of endeavor.)

The wealth of research being undertaken at Vanderbilt University offers many possibilities for intellectually stimulating faculty presentations: technology and ethics in fetal surgery; video and on-line gaming as literary "texts;" funerary cannibalism among indigenous people in Brazil; the gentrification of white nationalism; debates in reproductive cloning; archaeological excavations in Guatemala; "passing" strategies of gay men in straight society; solo or in-the-round arts performances; the dynamics of human facial and vocal communications of emotion; a cost-benefit analysis of the death penalty; etc. Faculty invited to participate will be challenged to create presentations that will engage freshmen in a brief session, large-audience format, enhanced by audio visual or dramatic aids.

3. **Curriculum Committee**

Faculty proposing new courses shall indicate into which Liberal Arts Requirement category each proposed course should be placed. Faculty proposing new 200-level W courses shall provide documentation to the existing College of Arts and Science Curriculum Committee as to how discipline-specific course content satisfies the expectations for 200-level W courses. The Curriculum Committee shall have the responsibility of reviewing new courses proposed in the College of Arts and Science as to appropriate placement as W courses and placement into liberal arts curriculum categories.

4. **Committee on Writing**

The College of Arts and Science Committee on Writing shall have the responsibility of managing the content requirements for 100-level W courses. The CRWG committee strongly recommends that in order to reduce the administrative and oversight burden placed on instructors of 100-level W courses, syllabi should be approved once in advance. Subsequent review should not be necessary unless the courses have been substantially altered.

5. **Review Committee**

In the fourth year after it takes effect, the new curriculum shall undergo a general review and assessment. The Dean of the College of Arts and Science shall appoint an independent Review Committee. The Review Committee shall consist of tenure-stream College of Arts and Science faculty distributed from the arts and humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The committee shall evaluate how the curriculum is functioning with respect to the stated "Essential Elements of a Vanderbilt University Liberal Arts Education," as articulated in this document, and with respect to the goal of
preparing Vanderbilt University College of Arts and Science graduates for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Factors to be included in this assessment include, but are not limited to (a) the distribution of courses that students are taking, (b) whether the balance of courses taken by students across the various liberal arts categories is reasonable, (c) the success of the Vanderbilt Visions program and the Freshman Writing Seminars in the Freshman Year Experience, (d) the success of the 200-level W courses, (e) the balance of courses being taught by tenure-stream faculty and the exposure of undergraduates to tenure-stream faculty, (f) the degree of curriculum oversight, (g) whether the new curriculum is sufficiently user-friendly and easily understood by faculty, students, and parents, and (h) issues regarding pre-major advising. The Review Committee should ask whether continuing increases in interdisciplinary research and inquiry on the part of the College of Arts and Science faculty suggest a further role for interdisciplinary study within this curriculum. Finally, the Review Committee should evaluate progress toward the establishment of a Center for Writing.
Appendix A: Comparison with the CPLE

The CPLE is reminiscent of the 1930s Vanderbilt curriculum, when the College of Arts and Science was formally divided into junior and senior colleges. The CPLE is predicated, in part, upon the expectation that the first two years of course work at Vanderbilt will be dedicated to completion of the CPLE requirements. Most courses approved for CPLE credit are at the introductory level. In the CPLE, students demonstrate mastery of specific skills. In writing, mathematics, and languages, students demonstrate specific levels of proficiency. In the liberal arts distribution areas, students demonstrate proficiency by taking specified numbers of courses using a complex formula. In practice, many students delay completing portions of the CPLE until their senior year, at which time many of the approved courses are no longer appropriate. In any event, it is assumed that students who complete the CPLE have the requisite skills to complete a program of study in one of the majors offered in the College of Arts and Science.

Students satisfy CPLE requirements by presentation of AP credits from high school work, by presentation of SAT II or comparable achievement test scores, or by examination of language skills at Vanderbilt University. The academic credentials of Vanderbilt University students have substantially increased over the past two decades, as reflected in higher SAT and SAT II test scores. An increasing number of students are presenting significant levels of AP credits from high school work. One consequence is that many College of Arts and Science students have satisfied significant portions of the liberal arts curriculum with work taken in high school. This has the unfortunate consequence of creating two classes of students in the College of Arts and Science: one group that is required to complete a liberal arts education in accordance with the dictates of the CPLE and another group that is exempted from one or more of these requirements and can select whatever courses they like. Another unfortunate consequence is that, effectively, the College of Arts and Science has ceded control of large segments of its curriculum to high school teachers and the AP College Board.

The Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum differs significantly from the CPLE in terms of its philosophy. In the Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum, all students must complete a reasonably balanced course of studies in the liberal arts at Vanderbilt University, irrespective of AP credit or test scores from high school work. With the exceptions of the Writing Requirement, and the language component of the International Cultures category, the Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum does not define specific skills or core knowledge that must be achieved by all graduates of the College of Arts and Science. It is the expectation of the CRWG that all students entering the College of Arts and Science will possess basic academic skills necessary for success in introductory level courses in all areas of the liberal arts; some students will possess sufficient skills to enable them to begin with advanced courses. The consensus of the CRWG is that the primary responsibility of the College of Arts and Science with respect to its curriculum is to ensure that all students experience a broad-based liberal arts education, rather than to dictate which specific courses should be completed or what specific skill levels should be attained by individual students. The CRWG argues that expectations regarding the completion of specific courses and attainment of specific skills at discipline-appropriate levels by students majoring in specific disciplines should be vested primarily with the faculty of the various disciplines, rather than in the general curriculum requirements for all students. This fundamental change in emphasis re-positions the College of Arts and Science curriculum toward ensuring that all students complete a balanced course of studies in the liberal arts at Vanderbilt University and away from dictating what specific skill levels must be achieved in each discipline.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>CPLE Curriculum</th>
<th>Discovery Without Boundaries Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students present a score of 560 or greater on the SAT II writing examination or have appropriate AP/IB credits or take Engl 100 W.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students must complete a Freshman Writing Seminar.</td>
<td>No. The freshman seminar is not required to be a W course.</td>
<td>Yes. All Freshman Writing Seminars will include writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students complete one 100-level W course.</td>
<td>No. the only requirement is that they complete any W course before the end of their first year; it might be a Freshman Seminar.</td>
<td>Yes. In addition to a Freshman Writing Seminar and before the end of their second year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students complete an additional writing course or oral communications course.</td>
<td>No. It depends on their SAT II or AP writing score.</td>
<td>Yes. Students must choose a second 100-level W course or a 200-level W course or an Oral Communications course. The 200-level W courses provide discipline-specific experiences in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A second writing course must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.</td>
<td>Yes. But only if the student is required to complete a second W course. Many students are exempted based upon SAT II or AP scores.</td>
<td>Yes. The second writing course is a 100-level W course that must be completed by the end of the sophomore year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students present a SAT II Math test score of at least 620 (Level I) or 570 (Level II) or present appropriate AP math scores or complete Math 127a,b or Math 140 or Math 15a or Math 150a and Math 180.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No. A student could elect to complete the Mathematics and Natural Sciences requirement by taking three science courses, one of which must be a laboratory science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students present a satisfactory score on an SAT test or departmental placement test in language or present appropriate AP credit in language or complete a first-year language course.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students take courses in math or language at Vanderbilt.</td>
<td>No. Students who present satisfactory SAT test scores or AP credit may satisfy the CPLE math and language requirements without completing any courses at Vanderbilt University.</td>
<td>No. Students who demonstrate proficiency at or above the level of a second semester language acquisition class in a language other than English are not required to study language. A student could elect to complete the Mathematics and Natural Sciences requirement by taking three science courses, one of which must be a laboratory science.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students fulfill curriculum requirements in History and Culture, Humanities and Creative Arts, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences, by completing courses at Vanderbilt.</td>
<td>No. Students may satisfy one or more of these requirements with work taken in high school, by presenting satisfactory AP credit. Creative arts courses do not fulfill CPLE requirements.</td>
<td>Yes. All students complete curriculum requirements by coursework taken in the College of Arts and Science. AP credits can be used for placement purposes but not to satisfy the requirements. AP credits may be applied toward the 122-hour graduation requirement. Creative arts courses do fulfill requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>All courses satisfy liberal arts area requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Only &quot;CPLE&quot; courses or AP credits satisfy liberal arts requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All courses that satisfy the area requirements have specific College of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Science-mandated content restrictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All &quot;CPLE&quot; courses include a writing component, and other area content</td>
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<tr>
<td>mandates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To complete each of the area requirements, students must complete</td>
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<td>courses from at least two Departments or Programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes. There is a &quot;two-department&quot; rule in each area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. However, of the thirteen courses required to satisfy the requirements, students must include courses from at least seven different departments or programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes. All &quot;CPLE&quot; courses include a writing component, and other area content mandates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. Only Freshman Writing Seminars and courses with a W designation have College of Arts and Science-mandated content (writing) restrictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students use AP or IB credit to partially satisfy breadth requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes. In these instances students may decide which requirement the course will count for.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. Each course is designated by faculty to count in only one area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students use AP or IB credit to partially satisfy graduation</td>
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<td>requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes. College of Arts and Science rules govern the number of hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>permitted to partially satisfy graduation requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Arts and Science rules govern the number of hours permitted to partially satisfy graduation requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students complete the same number of courses to fulfill breadth</td>
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<tr>
<td>requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. The number of courses varies depending upon AP credit and test scores. It is possible to fulfill area requirements with as few as two courses: a W course and a &quot;Science and Society&quot; course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students complete one semester of laboratory science.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. Students complete at least eight hours in natural science or present appropriate test scores. A laboratory science is not required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes. All students complete thirteen courses at Vanderbilt to fulfill the area requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All students complete one semester of laboratory science.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Students complete at least eight hours in natural science or present appropriate test scores. A laboratory science is not required.</td>
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Appendix B: The Freshman Year Common Experience

The CRWG committee believes that the freshman year is critical to the University experience and recommends that all freshmen complete two requirements during this year.

*The Freshman Writing Seminars.* The intent of these courses is to allow freshmen to participate in small enrollment seminars taught by tenure-stream faculty. The language used to describe Freshman Seminars when they were founded reads as follows: "the major objectives of the Freshman Seminar Program are (A) to present an intellectually stimulating opportunity for active participation in the learning process and in the development of a critical inquiring attitude, and (B) to increase close faculty-student interaction." The CRWG committee learned from interviews with both faculty and students that these seminars remain highly regarded.

Since its inception, the Freshman Seminar program evolved to become a significant component of the College of Arts and Science Writing program. These courses provided an ideal venue for context-specific writing by students. Since writing is one effective means for teaching the content of any subject area, many faculty found that "115 W" classes were successful in engaging the students in the intellectual content of their courses. Also, since 100-level W courses had enrollment caps of 20 students while Freshman Seminars had enrollment caps of 15 students, teaching a 115 W course became more desirable than teaching a 100-level W course. From the perspective of students, the fact that a "115 W" course counted as both a Freshman Seminar and as a "W" course students was attractive, and students tend to favor Freshman Seminars that "double count." Some faculty have been discouraged from developing "115" classes that lack the "W" label. Moreover, the College Writing Committee must routinely review proposals for all "W" courses. Some faculty members have declined to subject their proposals to this additional layer of oversight. Each year the students who matriculate at Vanderbilt University arrive with stronger academic backgrounds. Presently, more than 40% of freshmen are required to take no other "W" course beyond the Freshman Seminar. As good as the writing instruction in "115 W" classes may be, when the faculty of the College of Arts & Science created the freshman seminar program, they did not intend to replace the traditional 100-level W course with a freshman seminar since the goals of the freshman seminar program were broader than teaching writing.

In response to these concerns, the CRWG came to the conclusion that all Freshman Writing Seminars should count identically in the curriculum. This ensures that students will be encouraged to select Freshman Writing Seminars on the basis of their intellectual interests, as opposed to whether or not they will receive a "W" credit.

In extensive discussions with faculty groups in Fall 2003, the CRWG committee found an overwhelming sentiment to retain writing as an integral component of these seminars. The CRWG committee recommends that all freshman seminars incorporate writing content. The number of Freshman Seminars offered in recent years that have been "115" classes as opposed to "115-W" courses has fluctuated somewhat in recent years (32 in 2003-2004; 24 in 2002-2003). The CRWG committee recommends that faculty teaching the "115" courses adapt their courses to incorporate writing content. Additionally, the CRWG committee recommends that faculty in all Departments of the College be encouraged to develop Freshman Writing Seminars. This recommendation not only maintains the strong program in writing and the widely heralded

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9 The proposal for the Freshman Seminar Program as presented to the College of Arts and Science Faculty Council by Professor Charles M. Vance, Chairman, the Committee on Educational Programs, April 25, 1974. The Freshman Seminar program was initiated in response to a proposal from Dean Holladay in September 1973 that an examination of the opportunities open to freshmen in the College of Arts and Science be given high priority on the CEP agenda.
Freshman Seminar program that are two of the prides of the College of Arts & Science, it strengthens both. All students will complete two writing courses no later than their fourth semester at Vanderbilt University (see Appendix C). The first of these will be the Freshman Writing Seminar, ensuring that all freshmen engage in writing during their freshman year. The second, required by the end of the fourth semester, will be a traditional 100-level "W" course.

Third, the CRWG committee recommends that all Freshman Writing Seminars include content designed to introduce freshmen to literature research, including library and database orientation, experience with critical evaluation of the validity, relevance, and significance of source material obtained through literature searches, and instruction regarding the proper citation of source materials, with specific emphasis placed upon ensuring that all freshman sufficiently understand inappropriate practices that constitute plagiarism.

Vanderbilt Visions. All freshmen must complete the two semester Vanderbilt Visions series. As opposed to being yet another classroom experience, Vanderbilt Visions complements the Freshman Seminar experience and is intended as a broad venue that will introduce freshmen to the wide range of interdisciplinary intellectual inquiry inherent to a great university. Vanderbilt Visions will provide a venue in which each entering class of students will assemble on a regular basis during their freshman year, thus promoting a greater sense of academic community among the students. The invited lectures and presentations associated with Vanderbilt Visions will provide an opportunity to engage faculty from the other undergraduate colleges and the professional schools in the College of Arts and Science curriculum. Longer term, the CRWG foresees the integration of the Vanderbilt Visions program with the other undergraduate colleges and Residential Colleges, and possible integration between Vanderbilt Visions and community involvement on the part of College of Arts and Science students through programs such as the Alternative Spring Break.

Vanderbilt Visions would be presented regularly during the academic year, with students receiving 1 unit pass/fail credit each semester. Grading would be attendance-based, with attendance at most of the lectures required to receive a passing grade. The CRWG recommends that the 120 credits currently required for graduation be increased to 122 credits so that the nominal two credits associated with Vanderbilt Visions would not interfere with other graduation requirements. It is envisioned that Vanderbilt Visions will be structured into the new class scheduling system that is being developed, so that all students would attend the lectures simultaneously. This addition would necessitate an arrangement to allow the use of Langford Auditorium in the School of Medicine, the only venue sufficiently large to simultaneously accommodate all College of Arts and Science freshmen.
Appendix C: The Writing Requirement

All students must demonstrate competence in English composition. Appropriate skills in composition are essential to successful progress at the University. The Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum maintains the existing English 100 minimum skill level in composition, which can be satisfied by passing English 100 or by presentation of a score of 560 or higher on the SAT II writing test or earning appropriate AP/IB credit for 100-level writing courses. In practice, approximately 90% of entering freshmen in the Class of 2006 satisfied this requirement with AP or IB credit, or a SAT II writing test score.

In the CPLE, all students must meet the English 100 requirement and must complete one writing course in the freshman year. Depending on their SAT II writing score, some students must complete one additional writing course no later than their fourth semester. In the Class of 2006, approximately half of the students tested out of taking an additional writing course.

The Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum formalizes a requirement that all students will complete at least two writing courses beyond the English 100 requirement (a Freshman Writing Seminar and a 100-level W course), and many will complete three writing courses (an additional 100-level W course or a 200-level W course), irrespective of SAT II Writing or AP English test scores. This change will improve the communication skills of all students and should simplify the administration of the Writing Requirement. Completion of a Freshman Writing Seminar as a component of the Freshman Year Common Experience ensures that all freshmen have an opportunity to hone their writing skills in their first two semesters at Vanderbilt University. Because all Freshman Writing Seminars satisfy the same writing requirements, students may enroll in any available seminar without concern as to whether it fulfills a specific writing requirement. Those students who must enroll in English 100 will also complete a Freshman Writing Seminar course their freshman year—for those students the CRWG strongly recommends completion of English 100 during the Fall semester, and completion of the Freshman Writing Seminar in the Spring semester. Students will be required to complete a 100-level W course by the end of their sophomore year. This maintains flexibility for course programming during the freshman and sophomore years, particularly for pre-medical students or students who plan to begin or continue with the study of a language in their freshman year.

The CRWG recognizes that these changes will create enrollment pressure on the 100-level W courses. The CRWG encourages departments and programs in addition to English, Philosophy, Classical Studies, Religious Studies, and Humanities (the departments/programs that currently offer 100-level W courses) to identify or develop additional 100-level W courses. In addition, the CRWG recommends that the Dean of the College of Arts and Science make available funds to hire full-time teaching-track faculty (i.e., not short-term instructors) to staff additional sections of the multiple-section 100-level W courses with large enrollments. The College of Arts and Science Writing Program will govern the requisite content for 100-level W courses. Finally, the CRWG recommends that enrollment in all 100-level W courses be capped at 15 students, with a long-term goal of reducing this to 12 students.

The third part of the proposed writing requirement allows students to choose between completing an additional 100-level W course or a 200-level W course or an approved Oral Communications course. The 200-level W course is new. The intent is to allow students to fulfill the third part of the Writing Requirement with a discipline-specific course at a more advanced level. The CRWG believes that many advanced discipline-specific courses with appropriate writing content already exist, but they are not labeled as W courses in the CPLE. It is anticipated by the CRWG that many existing courses will be identified and designated as 200-
level W courses, obviating the need to develop substantial numbers of new courses. However, Departments are encouraged to create new 200-level W courses. The content of the 200-level W courses is anticipated to be diverse, reflecting the fact that writing styles are discipline-specific. For example, in the natural sciences, an advanced laboratory course in which students prepare reports in the style of a professional journal article could fulfill the 200-level W option. Advanced courses requiring writing in a language other than English could also fulfill the 200-level W option. The submission of an approved undergraduate thesis resulting from honors research could also fulfill this option. The CRWG recommends that each Department identify those 200-level courses under their jurisdiction that have significant discipline-specific writing content.

The CRWG does not recommend that all students be required to complete a 200-level W course, that individual students be required to complete 200-level W courses within their major program, or that all Departments be required to teach these courses. The CRWG recognizes that some students might be best served by completing two 100-level W courses, that a 200-level W course might be completed in a discipline other than the major, and that it may not be practical for all Departments to offer 200-level W courses.

The option to complete the third portion of the Writing Requirement with an approved Oral Communications course is also new. The CRWG recommends this option based upon feedback from College of Arts and Science alumni, students, and many faculty members, all of whom expressed a desire for graduates of the College of Arts and Science to possess strong skills in oral communication. After considerable discussion of this issue by the CRWG committee, it was recognized that given the existing resources for teaching oral communication skills, it was not practical to require that all students complete an Oral Communications course. This proposed option, however, encourages all College of Arts and Science students to consider completing an approved course in Oral Communications. The Departments and programs that offer approved Oral Communications courses will determine the specific nature and content of their classes. Similar to writing courses, these courses will include regular attention to the oral communications process in class, the opportunity to refine speaking skills through multiple presentations over the course of a semester, and feedback from the instructor.

The CRWG does not recommend that all students be required to complete an approved Oral Communications course, that individual students be required to complete Oral Communications courses within their major program, or that all Departments and programs be required to teach these courses.

Oversight of Writing Courses. In its meetings with College of Arts and Science faculty, the CRWG committee determined that excessive oversight of W courses by the Committee on Writing of the College of Arts and Science Writing Program was a major concern. The CRWG committee recommends that until a Center for Writing is established at Vanderbilt University (Appendix D) the 100-level W courses continue to be managed by the Committee on Writing of the College of Arts and Science Writing Program. The CRWG committee recommends that the College Writing Program not administer the Freshman Writing Seminars and the 200-level W courses.

The CRWG committee suggests that the Implementation Committee (or the Curriculum Committee, in the case of new courses) require the following content be present in Freshman Writing Seminars. Students shall be asked to write a minimum of 15-20 typescript pages. Faculty shall be encouraged to derive a considerable portion of each student’s grade from written assignments, in addition to class participation, quizzes, and tests. The specific writing assignments shall be at the discretion of the instructor and may be discipline-specific. However, at least three of these must be graded at intervals during the semester, enabling the instructor to
provide feedback that will enable students to improve their writing. To minimize oversight, the CRWG committee recommends that faculty teaching Freshman Writing Seminars demonstrate, at the time the course is submitted for approval to the Implementation Committee (or, in later years, the College Curriculum Committee) that their course meets these standards. After this initial review and approval process, the CRWG recommends that Freshman Writing Seminars need not undergo further review, providing that the course description remains unchanged. The CRWG committee recommends that at the beginning of each semester, those faculty members who will be teaching Freshman Writing Seminars be reminded of these expectations.

The CRWG recommends that the content for 200-level W courses be under the professional jurisdiction of the various Departments offering these courses, subject to periodic review by an appropriate College of Arts and Science committee. The common element in 200-level W courses is that students will receive feedback on their writing over the course of the semester, affording them the opportunity to improve their skills. In all 200-level W courses, attention to the process of writing relevant to that discipline is included in the classroom and students receive regular writing assignments throughout the semester and regular feedback on writing that will contribute toward enhancing writing skills appropriate to specific disciplines. The process of revising written work allows students to reflect on the writing process; writing tutorials are also encouraged.

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10 Faculty shall be encouraged to include any or all of the following tools in helping their students improve their writing and communication skills: tutorial sessions devoted to writing, regular class time devoted to discussion of the writing process, oral presentations of written work, revisions of critiqued written work. Once a College Writing Center is established (Appendix D), faculty shall be encouraged to introduce students to the services that the College Writing Center will provide.
Appendix D. Creation of the Vanderbilt University Center for Writing

The CRWG committee recommends, in the strongest possible terms, the creation of a Center for Writing for Vanderbilt University undergraduates, in coordination with the Provost and the four undergraduate colleges.

It is envisioned that this Center for Writing might be centrally located on the College of Arts and Science campus, perhaps in a remodeled Buttrick Hall. The Center for Writing would serve as a resource facility for students enrolled in all writing courses and for the graduate teaching assistants and faculty teaching these courses. It might include offices for graduate teaching assistants and faculty associated with the University writing program, classroom space and conference space for holding writing tutorials and workshops, informal working space configured for wireless laptop computer access allowing students to complete or revise writing assignments, and perhaps space to accommodate literary performances, etc.

Another function of the Center for Writing would be to coordinate content and to supervise teaching assistants for 100-level W courses. The CRWG recommends that the Directorship of the Center for Writing be modeled on that of the Teaching Center. The CRWG recommends that the Director of the Writing Center also take over many of the duties and responsibilities of the Committee on Writing, including mentoring graduate students who are teaching W courses and providing support for faculty who wish to learn new techniques for the teaching of writing. It is envisioned that the content requirement for 100-level W courses would remain similar to the W courses currently included in the CPLE curriculum. The Center for Writing would also provide resources for faculty teaching 100-level W courses.

While specific writing content for the Freshman Writing Seminars and 200-level W courses would be controlled primarily by faculty in the various disciplines, the Center for Writing would assist, as necessary, students and faculty in these courses. It is important to recognize that while faculty appreciate outstanding examples of scholarly writing in their disciplines, it should not be assumed that they are trained to teach students to "produce" such writing. The writing across the curriculum (WAC) movement has expertise regarding 1) effective writing-instruction methods that are field invariant and 2) instruction methods that are particularly suited to specific disciplines. There is a need for a center of expertise that can work with faculty to facilitate the teaching of writing. The proposed Center for Writing would serve as this center of expertise.

The CRWG feels that it is important that this Center for Writing be physically separated from the Learning Center since the latter tends to be associated with helping students overcome various learning difficulties.
Appendix E: The Liberal Arts Requirement

The emphasis on the liberal arts distinguishes the College of Arts and Science from the other undergraduate colleges at Vanderbilt. The CRWG believes that all College of Arts and Science graduates should be broadly exposed to different disciplines and modalities of intellectual inquiry that comprise the liberal arts. Nearly all courses taught in the College of Arts and Science inherently contribute to the fabric of the liberal arts. Therefore, it is inappropriate to segregate an exclusive subset of College of Arts and Science courses to fulfill this requirement. Accordingly, the thirteen courses required to fulfill the proposed liberal arts requirement will be selected according to a simple formula and from many choices. The decision to require thirteen distribution courses was arrived at by consideration of the average number of courses taken by College of Arts and Science students to satisfy the CPLE requirements. The actual number of courses individual students take to fulfill CPLE requirements varies widely. An inspection of CPLE audits from the class of 2002 revealed a range from 15 to 66 units of CPLE courses, with the average being about 40 units.11 This number of units corresponds to about thirteen separate classes. There will be no specific writing content associated with the Liberal Arts Requirement, but all courses taken by students to fulfill the Writing Requirement will "double-count" toward fulfillment of the Liberal Arts Requirement.

The issue of how to categorize courses in the languages was one of the most vexing faced by the CRWG. After considerable discussion with the College of Arts and Science faculty in Fall 2003, it was decided by the CRWG to include the languages within an "International Cultures" grouping, the rationale being that a culture and its language are intertwined. Furthermore, and in light of the lack of consensus elaborated in the previous paragraph, the CRWG made the following decision. To ensure that all graduates of the College of Arts and Science exhibit minimum proficiency in a language other than English, it was decided by the CRWG that to satisfy the requirements of the International Cultures category, all students must complete a second semester language acquisition class at Vanderbilt University, unless they can meet one of following conditions. 1. They successfully complete any higher-level course taught in a language other than English at Vanderbilt University. 2. They demonstrate that they already possess proficiency in a language other than English, at or above the level anticipated of students completing a second semester language acquisition class at Vanderbilt University. The CRWG recommends that the existing metrics for evaluating whether students have fulfilled the CPLE basic skills requirement in language, be utilized for assessing proficiency in language. Irrespective of whether individual students fulfill either of these two conditions, all students must complete three courses in this category.

Students enter Vanderbilt University increasingly prepared for language study. However, a significant number require the second semester of a language acquisition course to meet the CPLE basic skills requirement. This Discovery Without Boundaries curriculum effectively maintains the existing CPLE basic skills requirement, by embedding it within the International Cultures category. Thus, students who can meet the CPLE basic skills requirement in language upon matriculation at Vanderbilt University may fulfill the International Cultures category without completion of further language study; those who do not meet the CPLE basic skills requirement must complete, at a minimum, a second semester language acquisition course.

The diversity of the student body is revealed by the fact that many students are native speakers of a language other than English. Furthermore, increasing numbers of students are self-selecting into language courses, with particular emphasis on Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and

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11 In the class of 2003, one student completed the CPLE by taking only 6 units of CPLE courses at Vanderbilt University!
Spanish, reflecting the importance of these languages in the global economy of the twenty-first century. The CRWG recommends that the College of Arts and Science commit itself to implementing a long-term goal of having most students complete a semester of study abroad (or summer abroad program), with language courses at Vanderbilt University preparing them for such study (see Appendix F).
Appendix F: Endowment for Support of Study Abroad

Study Abroad is an extremely important component of the internationalization of the undergraduate experience in the twenty-first century; however, the CRWG does not feel that Study Abroad can or should be a required part of the curriculum. We reiterate that an important goal for the College of Arts & Science should be to dramatically increase the number of students who voluntarily participate in Study Abroad programs. We suggest that a reasonable goal should be to increase the fraction of undergraduates in the College of Arts & Science who take part in Study Abroad programs to greater than 50% by 2010.

The additional cost of Study Abroad, above and beyond the cost of an eight-semester education on the Vanderbilt campus, is a significant impediment to participation in Study Abroad programs, especially for students whose programs of study and/or whose participation in university sanctioned activities (e.g., intercollegiate athletics, concert choir) make participation in academic year programs very difficult. Such students, most notably but not exclusively science majors, pre-medical students, and athletes, must consider summer Study Abroad programs, if any.

Participation in Summer Study abroad programs includes a double hit, financially: both a partial ninth semester of tuition and the loss of some or all income from a summer job. For other students, although an academic semester of Study Abroad nominally costs no more or less than a semester at Vanderbilt, Study Abroad carries additional costs, especially for travel.

The CRWG urges the College of Arts & Science and Vanderbilt University to seek an endowment to offset the costs of Study Abroad programs and thereby to more strongly encourage participation in Study Abroad experiences for our students. Priorities should be clearly set, taking into account financial aid issues for students and possibly giving more weight to Study Abroad experiences in non-English speaking countries. Scholarships for Study Abroad might be included in offers of admission for some students. Increasing the number of students participating in Study Abroad programs might also require additional staffing of support services for those programs; additional staffing needs could also be considered when seeking endowment funds for Study Abroad. The CRWG recommends seeking a $10 million endowment, enabling an annual payout of approximately $500,000 in Study Abroad scholarships.