

COMMITTEE ON MAJORS

The Committee on Majors was created in 2000 to oversee major programs in Yale College, a responsibility that previously fell to the Course of Study Committee. The committee has a threefold objective:

1. To gain a broader perspective on all programs and majors so that it can better understand how each one seeks to meet the educational objectives of undergraduates both within and outside the major;
2. To gain some sense of how the departments distribute their instructional and advising resources;
3. Through regular reviews of the majors, encourage each department and program to reflect on the particular needs, problems, and goals of its undergraduate curriculum, which can change over time, and provide a vehicle for making recommendations to the faculty and dean of Yale College.

Reviews of majors occur on a regular cycle, but a department or program may request a review, especially to coincide with other strategic planning in the department, and such requests are welcome. In advance of each review, the secretary of the committee provides the DUS and the students with an overview of the review process, as well as the questions the committee wishes to see addressed by the department or program. Ordinarily, the DUS prepares a short written response to the questions in the memo and then attends one of the regular meetings of the committee in order to explain the program in more detail and answer questions that members of the committee may still have. Frequently the chair of the department also attends the meeting. Undergraduate students who are majoring in the department are polled, and a small number are invited to meet with the committee separately.

The committee recognizes that the faculty of the department have primary responsibility for overseeing its undergraduate curriculum and major requirements, and the committee seeks to work in partnership with the department to identify any needs and make recommendations to support the department's goals. The chair and the secretary of the Committee on Majors always stand ready to help a director of undergraduate studies prepare a presentation. So far, these periodic reviews have proved interesting and rewarding both to the committee and to the directors of undergraduate studies. For 2023–2024, the secretary of the Committee on Majors is David Francis (david.francis@yale.edu).