

A Review of Program Size at Westmont

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Introduction

Since coming to Westmont, I have been impressed with the high quality of Westmont's faculty, students, and academic programs. In reviewing the catalog, I have also been struck by the wide variation in program size across the departments as well as the size of the programs in general, in terms of required major/minor hours.

The chart below summarizes Westmont's programs. Objective standards for program size are difficult to come by (I have queried other institutions and have consulted my previous institutions), so I also reviewed Wheaton's catalog for some comparative programs. The purpose of the Wheaton columns is to not imply that we should be like Wheaton, but simply to provide an external frame of reference from an institution with a similar liberal arts emphasis.

So what?

Large programs can create challenges for a college. For students, they can make it more difficult to graduate in four years, to study abroad, or to double major (something Westmont encourages students to do).

From an institutional perspective, large programs tend to lower overall class sizes, since the same number of students are spread out over more courses. Perhaps more importantly, by making double majors more difficult, they can create additional enrollment challenges for Humanities departments, which tend to rely more on double majors than, say, Business or Kinesiology.

My main area of responsibility at Westmont is innovation and new program development, but I'm also concerned about the general academic health of the college; hence my attention to this issue. Moreover, sometimes appropriate innovation means doing less, not doing more.

Some possible changes

Moderately reducing program size could produce benefits for students, departments (particularly Humanities), and the institution at little cost. Some modest changes could be:

- 1) cap minors at 20 hours
- 2) have B.A. majors trim down to 36-40 hours, or 44 at the most.
- 3) if some of the larger B.S. programs (both in terms of students and required hours), were to moderately reduce requirements, Humanities majors, study abroad programs, and perhaps student graduation rates would indirectly benefit.

Furthermore, now is the best time to discuss the issue of program size, since we are still months away from the deadline for approving any program changes for the next academic year.

Major	BA hours	BS/Prof. hours	Wheaton	Minor hours	Wheaton	Notes
Art	59		42	24	19	hours are averaged
Art/Art History	49		35	24	19	
Biology	48	64	52	20	20	
Chemistry	46	60	52	20	20	BS hours are averaged
Communication	48		32	24	20	
Computer Science	44	56		20		
Data Analytics		56				
Econ/Business	53		44	24	20	
Engineering		86		24		
Engineering Physics	48	60				
English	40		40	20	20	
Environmental St.				20		
Ethnic Studies				24		
Film Studies				20		
Gender Studies				24		
Global Studies				26		
History	40		36	20	20	
Kinesiology		51-79		24		
Liberal Studies/Ed.						
Math	46	54	36-48	24	20	
Music	48-58		52	24		
Philosophy	36		32	20	20	
Political Science	48	68	38	24	20	
Psychology	48	60	36	24	20	
Religious Studies	48		32	20	16	
Sociology	46		40	24	20	
Social Science	48					
Spanish/Language	40		32	20	20	
Theatre Arts	44	60		24		
Average	46	61	40	22.3		
Norms	36-40	48-54		18-21		