I. Rationale for the revision of the Russian major and minor

In the attached documents, we propose several changes to the Russian major and minor, as well as to the Russian Program curriculum, in order to make our major and minor a more accessible and competitive experience for students. Currently, a Russian major requires 27 credit hours after RUSS 1102 (Second-Year Russian II), meaning that it requires a total of 37 credit hours. This makes the Russian major extremely challenging compared to the majority of humanities majors at Vanderbilt. Similarly, a Russian minor requires 18 hours beyond RUSS 1102, for a total of 28 credit hours, several hours beyond the typical Vanderbilt humanities minor. We propose to reduce the major to 30 hours of coursework including the introductory-level language requirements, and the minor to 19 hours of coursework, likewise including the introductory-level language requirements.

These changes will make the Russian major and minor more comparable to other degrees offered in the humanities at Vanderbilt, including other degrees in language and literature. It is true that French, Italian, Spanish and German exclude some introductory-level courses from counting toward the requirements for the major and minor. However, it should be noted that a sizable proportion of the majors and minors in these programs arrive at Vanderbilt ready to study their respective language at more advanced levels. This is a very infrequent occurrence with Russian, given the lack of opportunities for studying the language at the high school level. Moreover, as a result of the relative difficulty of the Russian language (the US State Department’s Foreign Service Institute categorizes it as a Category IV language, as opposed to German, which is Category II, and French, Italian and Spanish, which are Category I), it is frequently the case that even students who have studied Russian in high school find it necessary to retake introductory-level courses at the college level. It is essential to take these factors into account in deciding the number of credit hours appropriate for our major and minor.

Our proposed revisions to major and minor requirements will also create a structure within which students can achieve proficiency in Russian language and culture without excluding the possibility of pursuing further concentrations. This is particularly important given Russia’s high profile on the international stage. Due to the country’s political significance, it is very common for our students to study Russian language and culture alongside additional concentrations such as History or Political Science with the intention of pursuing careers in politics or international business. Therefore, reduced major and minor requirements will not only make Russian more comparable to other humanities degrees at Vanderbilt, it will also make the program of concentration in Russian more open to interdisciplinarity and as a result make Russian majors and minors at Vanderbilt more competitive in pursuing their future careers.
An additional proposed change to our curriculum is the introduction of greater specificity regarding the number of course hours taken both at and outside of Vanderbilt that may apply to the major or the minor. Our goal is to allow students substantial freedom to pursue their particular interests within the Russian Program while simultaneously ensuring that they achieve a measurable basic standard of proficiency in both language and culture. Therefore, we propose that all majors must complete at least two years of language (through RUSS 2202) along with at least one 3-credit culture-related course taught in English and offered by the Russian Program. Similarly, we propose that all minors must complete at least one year of language (through RUSS 1102), along with at least one 3-credit culture-related course taught in English and offered by the Russian Program. Given the fact that our proposed changes are intended to increase interdisciplinarity within and around the Russian major and minor, we additionally propose to eliminate the Russian Area Studies Minor, as the flexibility of the new standard minor in Russian would make it redundant.

Regarding courses taken outside of Vanderbilt, we are conscious of the fact that programs based in Russia tend to be attractive to our students and offer excellent opportunities for immersion that are not comparable to programs within the United States. Therefore, for both the major and the minor, we propose to count up to 6 credit hours from courses taken in a study abroad program (upon approval by the Director of Undergraduate Studies). Additionally, in order to ensure that courses taken previous to study at Vanderbilt are commensurate with our own, we propose that AP and IB exam credit not be counted toward the major and minor. Instead, we will offer placement exams for RUSS 1101 and/or 1102; examination will take the form of a single test administered by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and will evaluate where the individual student should place in the Russian language curriculum at Vanderbilt. Students who place into more advanced levels of Russian after taking courses at the high school level will still be required to take a minimum of 30 hours of coursework for the Russian major and a minimum of 19 for the Russian minor. Transfer students may receive up to 6 credit hours toward the major and minor for courses taken at their previous institution.

Regarding the study of the Russian language specifically, we are proposing two changes that will make the study of the Russian language at Vanderbilt more effective. First, we propose to simplify the “Second-Year Russian” sequence, which currently includes RUSS 2201, 2202, 2211 and 2212. As of the moment, the “Second-Year Russian” sequence involves 10 credit hours, of which 6 are mandatory (2201 and 2202) and 4 are optional (2211 and 2212). The existence of non-mandatory credit hours, originally proposed to account for the fact that not all students can fit 5 credit hours per semester into their schedules, creates a situation in which students in a single language class have different levels of language skills. Therefore, we propose to reduce the “Second-Year Russian” sequence from 10 credit hours to 8 (i.e. to two 4-credit hour courses, under the course numbers 2201 and 2202), but to make all 8 mandatory. These changes will streamline the study of Russian at Vanderbilt while keeping the number of credit hours required for “Second-Year Russian” at a level that is manageable for all students.

Secondly, we propose to refocus the advanced Russian language curriculum along the development of particular skills rather than year of study. Currently, courses in “Composition and Conversation” (3301-3302) and “Advanced Composition and Conversation” (4401-4402) are offered every year, but both are taught as the same class, which negates the value of their
separation. We propose to introduce a new, two-year advanced language sequence consisting of “Advanced Grammar and Reading” (3303-3304) and “Advanced Conversation and Composition” (3305-3306), each of which will be offered in alternating years. As the courses will be organized according to skills to be developed rather than year of study, students will be able to take them in any order.

The following chart shows the current distribution of credit hours for the Russian language curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 1101 (5 credit hours, required for the major and minor)</td>
<td>RUSS 1102 (5 credit hours, required for the major and minor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 2201 (3 credit hours, required for the major)</td>
<td>RUSS 2202 (3 credit hours, required for the major)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 2211 (2 credit hours)</td>
<td>RUSS 2212 (2 credit hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 3301 (3 credit hours, required for the major, taught as the same course as 4401)</td>
<td>RUSS 3302 (3 credit hours, required for the major, taught as the same course as 4402)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 4401 (3 credit hours, taught as the same course as 3301)</td>
<td>RUSS 4402 (3 credit hours, taught as the same course as 3302)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following chart outlines our proposal for a new Russian language curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 1101 (5 credit hours, required for the major and minor, taught every year)</td>
<td>RUSS 1102 (5 credit hours, required for the major and minor, taught every year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 2201 (4 credit hours, required for the major, taught every year)</td>
<td>RUSS 2202 (4 credit hours, required for the major, taught every year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 3303 (4 credit hours, may be repeated once for credit, taught in alternating years)</td>
<td>RUSS 3303 (4 credit hours, may be repeated once for credit, taught in alternating years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS 3305 (4 credit hours, may be repeated once for credit, taught in alternating years)</td>
<td>RUSS 3305 (4 credit hours, may be repeated once for credit, taught in alternating years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the proposals listed above require additional resources from the university. The restructuring of the Russian Program will lead to a more efficient curriculum and a more satisfying and competitive experience for our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Meike G. Werner,
Associate Professor of German and European Studies
Chair, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages

II. Tallied and dated vote of faculty in the department
A vote on the proposal for revisions to the Russian Program curriculum was held by the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages on Tuesday, January 13. Of those present and eligible to vote on the proposal (Prof. Meike Werner, Prof. Lutz Koepnick, Prof. Christoph Zeller and Prof. James McFarland), 4 voted in favor and 0 voted against.

A second vote to confirm the importance of changing requirements to the Russian major and minor (reduction of the major to 30 hours of coursework including the introductory-level language requirements, and reduction of the minor to 19 hours of coursework, likewise including the introductory-level language requirements) was held on Thursday, March 26. Of those present and eligible to vote on the proposal (Prof. Meike Werner, Prof. Lutz Koepnick, Prof. Christoph Zeller and Prof. James McFarland), 4 voted in favor and 0 voted against.

A third vote to confirm the decision to not accept IB exam credit was held by email on Thursday, April 24. Of those eligible to vote on the proposal (Prof. Meike Werner, Prof. Lutz Koepnick, Prof. Christoph Zeller and Prof. James McFarland), 4 voted in favor and 0 voted against.

III. Entire current Catalog section with clearly marked changes

Text that currently appears in the Catalog, with proposed new text and with deletions highlighted in red:

Program of Concentration in Russian
Requirements for a major are a minimum of 27 hours beginning after 102. Required courses are 203-204, 223-224, and 9 hours of courses in English offered by the Russian program. Hours for study in Russia or in an American summer program may count toward a major, subject to approval of the director of undergraduate studies for Russian.

Requirements for a concentration in Russian include a minimum of 30 credit hours of course work. Required courses are RUSS 1101-1102, RUSS 2201-2202 (18 credit hours), and one English-language course with the RUSS subject code (3 credit hours; see the list of qualifying courses below). The remaining 9 credit hours may be earned either from Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code (see the list of qualifying courses below) or from other relevant courses that will be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies on a case-by-case basis. A maximum of 6 credit hours toward the concentration in Russian may be earned from courses taken from other US institutions or through study abroad programs. AP and IB exam credit will not count toward credit hours required for the concentration, but placement exams will be offered for RUSS 1101 and/or 1102. Students concentrating in Russian will be expected to take an “assessment exam” via colloquium prior to graduation.

Minor in Russian
A minor in Russian consists of 18 hours of course work in addition to Russian 101-102 (or the equivalent).

Requirements for a minor in Russian include a minimum of 19 credit hours of course work. Required courses are RUSS 1101-1102 and one English-language course with the RUSS subject code (3 credit hours; see the list of qualifying courses below). The remaining 6 credit hours may
be earned either from Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code (see the list of qualifying courses below) or from other relevant courses that will be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies on a case-by-case basis. A maximum of 6 credit hours toward the Russian minor may be earned from courses taken from other US institutions or through study abroad programs. AP and IB exam credit will not count toward credit hours required for the minor, but placement exams will be offered for RUSS 1101 and/or 1102.

### Minor in Russian Area Studies

Requirements for a minor are 18 hours of course work in addition to Russian 101-102 (or the equivalent). Nine of the hours must be taken in the Russian division; the other nine as approved Russian content courses taken outside the Russian division.

*English-language courses with the RUSS subject code that qualify for the 3 credit hour requirement of the concentration and minor in Russian: RUSS 1111, 1874, 2230, 2273, 2310, 2311, 2434, 2435, 2485, 2537, 2639 and 2745.*

*Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code that qualify for the remaining hours required for the concentration and minor in Russian: RUSS 1111, 1874, 2201-2202 [only in the case of the minor], 2210, 2230, 2273, 2310, 2311, 2434, 2435, 2438, 2485, 2537, 2639, 2745, 3303, 3305, 3850-3851 and 3890-3891.*

### IV. Proposed new Catalog section, incorporating all changes

#### Program of Concentration in Russian

Requirements for a concentration in Russian include a minimum of 30 credit hours of course work. Required courses are RUSS 1101-1102, RUSS 2201-2202 (18 credit hours), and one English-language course with the RUSS subject code (3 credit hours; see the list of qualifying courses below). The remaining 9 credit hours may be earned either from Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code (see the list of qualifying courses below) or from other relevant courses that will be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies on a case-by-case basis. A maximum of 6 credit hours toward the concentration in Russian may be earned from courses taken from other US institutions or through study abroad programs. AP and IB exam credit will not count toward credit hours required for the concentration, but placement exams will be offered for RUSS 1101 and/or 1102. Students concentrating in Russian will be expected to take an “assessment exam” via colloquium prior to graduation.

#### Minor in Russian

Requirements for a minor in Russian include a minimum of 19 credit hours of course work. Required courses are RUSS 1101-1102 and one English-language course with the RUSS subject code (3 credit hours; see the list of qualifying courses below). The remaining 6 credit hours may be earned either from Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code (see the list of qualifying courses below) or from other relevant courses that will be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies on a case-by-case basis. A maximum of 6 credit hours toward the Russian minor may be earned from courses taken from other US institutions or through study abroad programs. AP and IB exam credit will not count toward credit hours required for the minor, but placement exams will be offered for RUSS 1101 and/or 1102.
English-language courses with the RUSS subject code that qualify for the 3 credit hour requirement of the concentration and minor in Russian: RUSS 1111, 1874, 2230, 2273, 2310, 2311, 2434, 2435, 2438, 2485, 2537, 2639 and 2745.

Russian- and English-language courses with the RUSS subject code that qualify for the remaining hours required for the concentration and minor in Russian: RUSS 1111, 1874, 2201-2202 [only in the case of the minor], 2210, 2230, 2273, 2310, 2311, 2434, 2435, 2438, 2485, 2537, 2639, 2745, 3303, 3305, 3850-3851 and 3890-3891.

V. Revised assessment plan for the program of concentration in Russian

Vanderbilt University
Departmental Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

For: (Degree/Major) B.A. in RUSSIAN

Departmental Contact: Name: Jason Strudler Phone: 615-322-1579
Email Address: jason.strudler@vanderbilt.edu

Mission Statement: Our curricular objectives are 1) to promote students’ capacity to communicate in Russian using all four primary skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) [Learning Outcome 1], 2) to develop students’ understanding of Russian culture through the study of original texts (literature, art, music, film, mass media, etc.) and scholarly publications on them [Learning Outcome 2], and 3) to promote students’ awareness of Russian current events [Learning Outcome 3]. The objectives for LO1 have been designed in accordance with the goals outlined in the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. Students who have successfully completed a B.A. in Russian will be prepared to enter a wide variety of fields including international relations, law, government, business, medicine, teaching, and advanced study at the graduate level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes (add lines as needed)</th>
<th>Assessment Methods and Procedures</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Planned Improvements Based on Assessment Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the intermediate range in all four primary skills according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.</td>
<td>Each student will complete an assessment modeled after principles associated with the ACTFL OPI and rated on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale during their final semester of study at Vanderbilt.</td>
<td>100% of students must demonstrate proficiency in the intermediate range in all four primary skills according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.</td>
<td>If these benchmarks are not met, the faculty will review the Russian Program curriculum and implement all necessary changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Students will demonstrate awareness of and critical insight into important historical, literary, and cultural concepts relevant to the study of Russian language, literature and culture.**

Assessment of LO2 will be based on the submission and evaluation of two papers or equivalent assignments on subjects relating to Russian literature, culture, history or politics. The assignments must both have been produced for courses that contributed to the student’s major and will be evaluated by the director of undergraduate studies or by another appropriate instructor according to the following criteria (5 points each):

- a) originality and analytical thinking
- b) organization and clarity of ideas
- c) comprehension of the primary concepts expressed in the texts being analyzed
- d) knowledge of significant milestones in modern Russian history, politics, and culture

At least 75% of seniors intending to graduate will earn 32 or more points out of 40 when evaluated according to the established criteria.

If these benchmarks are not met, the faculty will review the Russian Program curriculum and implement all necessary changes.

3. **Students will demonstrate awareness of and critical insight into Russian current events.**

During the spring semester of every year, graduating seniors will participate in an undergraduate colloquium on Russian current events. The colloquium will be an event, not a course. Presentations, which will be devoted to topics chosen by the students, will last 10 minutes each and be followed by a question-and-answer session. Presentations will be evaluated according to the following criteria (5 points each):

At least 75% of seniors intending to graduate will earn 16 or more points out of 20 when evaluated according to the established criteria.

If these benchmarks are not met, the faculty will review the Russian Program curriculum and implement all necessary changes.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) knowledge of significant figures and events in current Russian politics, life and culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) awareness of fundamental cultural values in Russian society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) awareness of important changes in Russian society</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) ability to reflect on the significance of criteria A-C</td>
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