

Summary Report from College of Fine Arts, Student Affairs

Response of College of Fine Arts – Student Affairs

We ... may have underestimated the % of UT students who first enter as transfer students, as opposed to first entering as freshmen. We hope it will be possible to enrich and improve UT's core curriculum without totally derailing articulation agreements or creating hostilities between our school and our sending institutions.

CBE, AP, etc.

...the State of Texas ... has now legislated that we must additionally award certain amounts of credit for IB programs. The State also insists on transfer credit being available for work students undertake at junior colleges via high school dual credit enrollment. We are troubled that the University's highest administration and the legislature seem to have completely different visions and agendas for these issues.

University College

We have serious concerns about any initiative which would force entering students into the proposed University College without the ability to hold official "dual citizenship" in a major in the College of Fine Arts.

...fundamental work in the major begins in the freshman year. ...BA in Theatre and Dance and the BA in Art History are the only two degrees offered by our college than can absorb a delay in declaration of major and beginning coursework in the major without almost certainly delaying graduation beyond four years.

...students who are committed to pursuing a certain major and who are admitted into that restricted major after undergoing a secondary application process (as is the case in Fine Arts) should be able to continue to do so as freshmen.

We are concerned that students who are certain that they wish to specialize early on not be penalized to allow for a longer period of exploration by others.

UC as Guardian of Core Curriculum

We wonder if many of the Task Force's recommendations could be achieved by injecting new content into existing courses, and if suggested reforms could be effectively administered by the Provost's Office.

...Task Force has identified problems with specific course or requirements of the existing basic education core, ...allot a smaller amount of resources directly to the offering departments and colleges to improve those courses, rather than ...establish a new University College.

Way-Finding

...very much opposed to allowing advising that would take place in a University College to supercede required academic advising in the College of Fine Arts, should the proposal for all freshmen to enter as UC majors be adopted.

...believe it is a false assumption on the part of the Task Force that students do not currently receive advising assistance outside their specific major departments, that departmental academic advisors are largely disinterested in the general undergraduate curriculum, and that departmental advisors do not actively assist students in finding ways to tailor satisfying basic education core requirements to student interest through strategies other than the metaphorical "patchwork quilt" or "vast a la carte menu" methods.

...our hope that funding strategies would not deprive existing academic advising programs, which are presently under-funded, of support.

Signature Courses

In theory, we have no serious objections to the freshman or sophomore Signature Course proposals. ...we observe that most of the energy necessary to implement SC and new flags will have to come from the faculty.

...primary concerns, as advocates for undergraduate students, are 1) the quality of courses, if they must seat 240 students, 2) avoiding ... additional degree requirements which may delay graduation, or subtracting from major requirements to make space for the new course, and 3) further restricting students' freedom to explore as undergraduates by imposing a new, explicit course requirement in place of a generically-expressed requirement (or a true, free elective in the case of existing highly proscribed degree programs).

...also concerned about the buy-outs that will be necessary to expose freshmen and sophomores to the University's finest teachers. ...unintended result of depriving our own majors of some of our finest teaching faculty.

Flags

...generally in favor of the writing, quantitative reasoning, multicultural perspectives and diversity and independent inquiry flags ... as long as they do not add on ...requirements that would delay graduation.

...impact of new flags on transfer students... courses from other institutions be accepted in transfer?

Math and Natural Science Courses

...strongly favor a new approach to math and sciences...which focuses on statistics and analysis...

Surprising Omissions

...the study of a language other than English.

Clarification

...begins on p.14 of the Task Force's report: "To ensure that students have a reasonable...to the 20 percent set-aside...such as for students majoring in cello performance."

The language of the report makes us unsure whether this is an admission quota requirement OR a mandate for actual reservation of seats for UC students in classes designed for and restricted to majors. Clarification would be greatly appreciated.