

State of the School of Undergraduate Studies January, 2012

The School of Undergraduate Studies serves students by sustaining a dynamic common curriculum and by enriching the undergraduate experience through innovative advising, academic support, learning communities, interdisciplinary programs, and undergraduate research.

The common curriculum refers to UT's unique way of satisfying the state-mandated core curriculum, including the First-Year Signature Course. It also refers to flag requirements in writing, ethics and leadership, quantitative reasoning, independent inquiry, global cultures, and ethnic diversity as implemented in each degree program. Undergraduate Studies is charged with managing this in a way that addresses faculty priorities and the needs of students.

Innovative advising and academic support, mainly through the Center for Strategic Advising and the Sanger Learning and Career Center, helps students find and execute four-year paths through the university and forward into careers or graduate school. Undergraduate Studies is an initial home for students who choose not to select a major upon applying, as well as students who are not accepted into their first or second choice majors. Additional advising offices support interdisciplinary study, undergraduate research, learning communities, and other student populations as described below.

Students. In fall 2011, 1,152 new students enrolled in UGS, bringing the total enrollment to 1,748. All were students in exploration mode, seeking majors in which they could successfully graduate. No student remains in UGS after the fourth semester. Compared to the more than 65% of students who changed majors prior to the creation of UGS, of the students enrolled in the first class (fall 2009), only 7% have changed majors, with almost half of those changing to a related major often in the same department as the original choice. Additionally, 2 transfer students from the first UGS class graduated from UT this past August.

Governance

UGS Advisory Committee: 7 faculty members, 6 associate deans, and 2 students
Bridging Disciplines Programs Committees: 122 faculty members
Flag Committees: 53 faculty members and 5 students
UGS Student Council: 34 students

Summary of programs

First-Year Experience

First-year Interest Groups (FIGs) are cohorts of up to 25 first-year students who develop community by taking clusters of two to four classes together. 2,923 students participated in 183 cohorts in fall 2011.

Signature Courses begin UT students' academic experience with top faculty teaching a wide range of intellectually rigorous classes, and are required for all students graduating under the 2010-12 catalog. 9,675 students have enrolled in 209 classes during fall 2011 and spring 2012.



School of UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Bridging Disciplines Programs

Undergraduates earn an interdisciplinary certificate, recognized on their official transcripts, through study integrating classroom, research, and internship experiences. The 11 BDPs currently have 572 students actively enrolled. Since the program's inception in 2002, 435 students have graduated with BDP certificates. In 2011, the Rapoport Foundation awarded the BDPs a \$50,000 grant to fund initiatives related to human rights, social justice, and service learning.

Center for the Core Curriculum

Oversees flag approvals as well as faculty development in newly emphasized curricular areas such as writing, ethics and leadership, and independent inquiry. Coordinates with colleges in implementing core and flag requirements. 1,811 course flags approved to date.

Office of Undergraduate Research

Informs undergraduates of research opportunities and serves as a university-wide resource for involving students in research. Co-hosts annual Research Week with the Senate of College Councils. 693 students attended information sessions in 2011.

Archer Fellows Program

Supports competitive student internships in Washington, D.C. 31 students are selected as Archer Fellows from the UT system each semester; 14 were selected from UT Austin for the fall of 2011, and 20 for the spring of 2012.

Freshman Reading Round-Up

UT's best professors are asked to sponsor books for summer reading and to lead small discussions with incoming students. 58 book sessions involved close to 1,000 students in 2011, up from 53 book sessions with 859 freshmen in 2010, and 853 in 2009.

University Honors Center

The School of Undergraduate Studies' office for Honors, Outreach and Special Projects. Focal point for campus honors activities: provides administrative support for six national societies and coordinates programming for the university's seven first-year academic honors programs hosted in several colleges and schools. Recognizes excellence in student faculty and staff achievement by supporting the nomination process for national scholarships, awarding grants and scholarships specific to the school and developing the **Society for Teaching Excellence**, a fellowship of junior faculty recognized for their commitment to undergraduate teaching. Coordinates and executes the school's prospective student outreach and recruitment efforts reaching more than 3,378 prospective students through 79 events annually. Supports the **UGS Student Council**, a member of the Student Senate. Runs the **Honors Colloquium**, a recruitment program in which more than 500 high-achieving rising high school seniors from throughout Texas experience college classes and life at UT during its three-day program. In 2010 over 90% of all attendees applied to the university, and over 87% were admitted.

Longhorn Scholars Program

Since its inception, this recruitment and retention program for underrepresented students has worked with over 3,700 students from 68 Texas high schools. Participants are typically first-generation students facing substantial financial barriers. They benefit from a scholarship program, academic advising, peer mentoring, and opportunities to develop leadership skills. 276 first-year students entered the program in 2011, bringing the total current population to 1,316 students enrolled in schools and colleges across campus.



Center for Strategic Advising

Works closely with other advising centers across campus to provide academic advising, including major exploration assistance, to undecided and transitional students at the university. About 800 students enrolled in UGS in 2009-2010. About 1,570 students enrolled for fall 2010, including 1,183 new students, of which 1,386 have transferred to the colleges in which they will graduate. In the fall 2011 semester, 1,748 students enrolled in UGS, including 1,152 new students, making "UGS Undeclared" the second largest major on campus.

Assessment

Supports and maintains comprehensive assessment plans for the programs, services, and courses within the school. Staff assess the Signature Course, which serves as the university's Quality Enhancement Plan for accreditation purposes. In fall 2011, staff analyzed survey results for 150 courses, with 3,000 student responses represented; over 700 student papers were evaluated to assess writing skills. Also in fall 2011, the team received a \$150,000 grant to develop online educational models on the use of data for Texas educators.

Texas Success Initiative/College Readiness

For students not meeting state college-readiness standards, Texas law requires that UT provide programs to help them transition to college. Fifty-five students were identified as needing services for the fall of 2011, all of whom were enrolled in TSI courses. College readiness efforts were greatly enhanced this year by two grants totaling \$1.4M, which have allowed us to increase our understanding of the dimensions of college readiness while providing expanded services to currently enrolled and future students throughout the state. Grant funded initiatives include development of college readiness assignments for use across the state of Texas, a comprehensive review of developmental education and providing enhanced services for students not meeting state college-readiness standards.

The Sanger Learning & Career Center

The Sanger Learning & Career Center provides academic assistance and career counseling to UT students. During the fall 2011 semester, the Center offered 28,000 hours of tutoring to 3,000 students through Drop-in Tutoring, Appointment Tutoring, and the Graduate Student Writing Service. 550 students received study effectiveness instruction from Learning Specialists and through the Peer Academic Coaching program. The Peer-Led Undergraduate Studying and Supplemental Instruction programs supported students in 47 courses with weekly sessions led by trained peer leaders and graduate Teaching Assistants. Learning Specialists also provided individualized teaching consultations to more than 100 Signature Course Teaching Assistants, enhancing the quality of discussion sections for more than 4,000 students. Career Counselors met with 1,200 students to explore options regarding careers, internships and graduate school or to choose or change their major. The Center offered additional academic and career content through 17 classes and 70 workshops.

Wayfinder

A website that assists current and prospective students in choosing a major. Currently contains specifics on over 100 majors offered at UT, along with career and certificate information. Funded by a grant from the AT&T Foundation, this resource is currently used by advisors working with undeclared students across campus, and is also utilized by prospective students. The site is coordinated with the university's admissions messages to students admitted to UGS.

