



# State of the School: 2011-2012

**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, 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 the educational needs of students and faculty priorities.

**Innovative advising and academic support** help students find and execute four-year paths through the university and forward into careers or graduate school. Undergraduate Studies is the initial home for students who are in search of degree-granting programs that fit their academic interests as well as students who are not accepted into their first or second choice majors. School advisors also support interdisciplinary study, undergraduate research, and other student populations as described below.

**Our 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 3.2% of those changing to a related major often in the same department.



Undergraduate Studies exists to help each student explore options and create an individualized path toward a degree—we offer tools to harness the vast array of opportunities available at this amazing university: many disciplines, undergraduate research, internships, student leadership, honors programs, community volunteerism, and more.

We put the tremendous resources of a leading research university to work to deliver the personalized, transformative experience of a small, elite college to every student.



## Governance

- UGS Advisory Committee is comprised of **seven** faculty members, **six** associate and assistant deans, and **two** students
- Bridging Disciplines Programs Committees have **122** faculty members
- Flag Committees have **53** faculty members
- UGS Student Council has **34** students

## 2012-13 Fundraising Priorities

School of Undergraduate Studies Campaign Goal.....\$3M

The school's remaining piece of the capital campaign represents a \$3 million goal over the next two years. Our new development director is working with our school Advisory Council and with the leadership in the school to determine funding priorities and build endowments to meet our needs. An endowment has been established to honor the outgoing inaugural dean, Paul B. Woodruff.

[Learn more about the UGS Advisory Council](#)

## Assessment

UGS Assessment staff support and maintain comprehensive assessment plans for the programs, services, and courses within the school—the data from these assessments form the basis of continuous improvement cycles at the program and curriculum level. Staff also coordinate the collection of data on seven learning outcomes of the Signature Course, the assessment of which serves as the University's Quality Enhancement plan for SACS accreditation. During the 2011-12 academic year, staff analyzed survey results for 212 courses, with 2,960 student responses represented. Additionally, trained raters read and scored over 700 student papers to assess writing skills. Raters also visited 46 Signature Courses and scored 312 student oral presentations. As part of an effort to foster data-driven decision making, the team is developing online educational modules to train other educators on the use of data, thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

## Development of Interdisciplinary Degrees

We continue to work with groups of faculty on the development of college-bridging new degrees that will ease demand on traditional degrees. These are robust contemporary majors designed to prepare students for an array of new career fields while aligning university resources in ways that improve graduation rates. Students benefit from access to multiple disciplines for one degree, and graduate on time with the credentials they need.



## Summary of Programs & Centers

### First-Year Experience

The First-Year Experience Office serves every single first-year student at the University of Texas. From Signature Courses to First-year Interest Groups (FIGs).

- **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. Students get to know their classmates and campus resources by attending a weekly seminar facilitated by a peer mentor and staff member. Students also discuss social, emotional, academic, and developmental issues they encounter as they transition from high school to college. In fall 2011, 2,923 students participated in 183 cohorts.
- **Signature Courses** introduce students to UT's academic community by having top faculty teach a wide range of intellectually rigorous classes. Signature Courses are an integral part of the core curriculum and are required for all students graduating under the 2010-12 catalog. During the 2011-12 academic year, 9,528 students enrolled in 209 courses.
- **The University Lecture Series** gives students an opportunity to interact with leading members of our faculty—scholars, scientists, and civic leaders who are nationally and internationally renowned. The School of Undergraduate Studies produces the University Lecture Series each fall semester, and Signature Course students are required to attend one of the offered lectures, each designed to create a campus-wide conversation.
- **Peer Mentor and FIG Peer Mentor** positions offer exceptional students the opportunity to be both leaders on campus and mentors to new students participating in the Signature Course and FIG programs. FIG Peer Mentors assist in facilitating a one-hour seminar, once a week for the fall semester and are responsible for organizing educational and social activities to help students become better acquainted with each other, faculty members, and the UT community. UGS 302 Peer Mentors work with Signature Course faculty to assist students with the academic transition from high school to college.

### 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 522 students actively enrolled. Since the program's inception in 2002, 530 students have graduated with BDP certificates.

### Center for the Core Curriculum

Coordinates with colleges in implementing core and flag requirements. The UGS Advisory Committee voted in May 2012 to recommend that all undergraduate degree programs should require all of the flags beginning in the 2014-16 catalog. CCC staff assist with flagging appropriate course content and faculty development in newly emphasized curricular areas such as writing, ethics and leadership, and independent inquiry. There are 1,811 approved course flags to date.



### Office of Undergraduate Research

Informs undergraduates of research opportunities and serves as a university-wide resource for involving students in research. The office co-hosts UT's annual Research Week with the Senate of College Councils. **743** students attended information sessions in 2011-12.

### Archer Fellows Program

Supports competitive student internships in Washington, D.C. **64** students are selected as Archer Fellows from the UT system each semester; **14** were selected from UT for fall 2011, and **20** for spring 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 the day before fall classes begin. The program has grown steadily in student participants each year since the program started in 2003. In fall 2011, **58** unique book sessions involved **1,000** students, up from 53 book sessions with 859 freshmen in 2010.

### University Honors Center

Serves as the focal point for campus honors activities by providing administrative support for six national societies, coordinating programming for the university's eight first-year academic honors programs hosted in several colleges and schools, and supporting the Honors Residential Learning Community. Recognizes excellence in student, faculty, and staff achievement by supporting the nomination process for two national scholarships and awarding grants and scholarships specific to the school. Inducted more than **2,000** UT students into interdisciplinary national honors societies and provided more than \$29,000 in local chapter, alumni associations and national awards.

- Provides leadership and coordination of the school's **outreach and recruitment efforts**. Over **10,000** prospective students and guests learned about the opportunities at UGS through our **53** UGS information sessions and at **33** programs coordinated by the Office of Admissions. UGS was represented in 16 university-wide activities, such as Explore UT and Summer Orientation, and welcomed approximately **670** UGS students and family members at our Gone to Texas and Family Weekend events.
- Supports the school's student governance structure via the **UGS Student Council**, a member of the Student Senate
- **Society for Teaching Excellence** is a fellowship of junior faculty recognized for their commitment to undergraduate teaching.
- **Honors Colloquium** is a recruitment program in which more than **550** high-achieving rising high school seniors from throughout Texas experience college classes and life at UT. Over **86%** of all 2011 attendees applied to the university and over **67%** of those attending apply to one of the first-year honors programs. In 2011, **63%** of those accepted into one of the first-year honors program enrolled.



### **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, individualized academic advising and planning, learning communities, peer mentoring, and opportunities to develop leadership skills. In fall 2011, **276** first-year students entered the program, bringing the total population to over **1,300** students enrolled in all undergraduate schools and colleges across campus.

### **Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling**

Works closely with other advising centers across campus to provide academic advising, including major exploration assistance, to undecided and transitional students at the university. More than **1,100** students enrolled in UGS in 2011-12, of which over **600** have transferred to the colleges from which they will graduate. With our first class of students starting their fourth year at UT, **62%** are on pace to graduate in May 2013, with 6 students already finishing in just over three years.

During the 2011-12 academic year, the career counseling unit was moved to the academic advising center. Career counselors met with **1,921** students to explore career or graduate school options or choose or change their major. The center offered additional learning and career content through classes and workshops.

Through an agreement with the Study Abroad Office, the center also now provides on-site study abroad advising to UGS students.

- **Magellan's Circles** connect prominent professionals with UGS students for round table discussions about choosing a major, life after college, and pursuing careers. Magellan's Circles are held twice a semester on campus or at the speaker's place of business and are limited to students enrolled in the School of Undergraduate Studies. With only 20 students per session, discussion groups are small, informal opportunities for students to ask questions and gain insight into a variety of academic paths. Past speakers include UT president William Powers, lawyer Jo Anne Christian, advertising and public relations professional Yvonne Tocquigny, and entrepreneur Lee Walker

### **Sanger Learning Center**

Sanger Learning Center (SLC) provides academic assistance to UT students. During the 2011-12 academic year, the center offered **50,890** hours of tutoring to **5,701** students through Drop-in Tutoring (DIT), Appointment Tutoring (AT), and the Graduate Student Writing Service (GSWS). Learning specialists and trained peer academic coaches in the Peer Academic Coaching (PAC) program provided study effectiveness instruction to **768** students. The Peer-Led Undergraduate Studying (PLUS) program assisted **2,054** students through structured study groups, and the Supplemental Instruction (SI) program supported students in **59** courses, delivering over **38,000** instructional hours. The center offered **24** classes and **22** workshops, including math and science refresher courses, exam reviews for many lower-division math courses, workshops to enhance learning skills, and classes to prepare for the GRE exam.



### **Texas Success Initiative & College Readiness**

This statewide program identifies and serves students who have not met the statewide standard for college readiness by providing advising, academic courses and enrichment services to those students. Program staff worked with more than **2,400** students to determine their readiness status, resulting in more than **150** students needing intensive advising services and testing to determine their readiness status. Of those students, **84** are receiving comprehensive TSI services, including enrollment in developmental studies courses. Following a major course redesign, the program is employing undergraduate interns from the award-winning UTeach program as part of a collaboration to provide educational opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

College Readiness efforts, funded largely by two grants totaling \$1.4 million seek to enhance our understanding of the dimensions of college readiness while providing 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. Grant funded enhancements include the addition of a multimedia classroom for developmental studies courses to enhance hands-on learning for students needing assistance in their transition to UT. The on-campus centerpiece of our readiness initiative is the Texas Success Initiative.

### **Wayfinder**

A website that assists current and prospective students in choosing a major. Contains specifics on all 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, the Office of Admissions, and prospective students. In 2011-2012, Wayfinder had over **62,000** unique visitors. In 2011-2012, **3,100** newly admitted UGS students received a link to Wayfinder via their online admissions portal.



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