



# State of the School: 2012-2013

The School of Undergraduate Studies serves students by sustaining a dynamic common curriculum and 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, and 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 works with broadly representative faculty input and that encourages innovation, rewards excellence, and addresses the educational needs of students.

In fall 2009, the school admitted its first cohort of 708 students. **In fall 2012**, 1173 new students enrolled in UGS, bringing the **total enrollment to 2,100**. All were students in exploration mode, seeking majors in which they could successfully graduate. No student remains in the school after the fourth semester.

Undergraduate Studies offers a powerful combination of career counseling with course and major advising to put undecided entering students on the road to degrees in four years and careers they are excited about. Students from the 2009 cohort successfully transferred into *all* of the university's colleges with undergraduate programs. Evidence that this unique method of advising is working: 86% of the students who start in UGS keep the major they first declare, compared to 33% of the general UT population.



The school exists to help each student create an individualized path toward a degree—we offer tools to harness the vast array of opportunities available at the University of Texas at Austin.

School staff and advisors promote interdisciplinary study, internships, student leadership, tutoring and mentoring, honors programs, volunteerism, undergraduate research, and more.

These transformative learning opportunities are described in the summary of programs

below.

As an integral part of the university's academic infrastructure, UGS works hand-in-hand with every college and school on campus to enhance every undergraduate's educational experience.



## Governance

Faculty, staff, and students from across campus are involved in UGS programs. During the 2012-13 school year, advisory committees and councils worked with Undergraduate Studies leadership to set policy and provide input.

- UGS Advisory Committee was comprised of seven members of the general faculty, six associate and assistant deans, and two students
- Signature Course Advisory Committee had four faculty members and one student
- Five Flag Committees had 52 faculty members
- Texas Success Initiative Advisory Committee had six faculty members
- 12 Bridging Disciplines Programs Committees had 126 faculty members
- UGS Student Council had 34 students

## Fundraising Priorities

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

In 2012-13, work continued on the remaining piece of the school’s capital campaign: raising \$3 million over two years. Looking to the final year of the campaign, only \$2.3 million is lacking. The Assistant Director for Development worked with our school’s Advisory Council and with the leadership in the school to determine funding priorities. The continued focus was on building endowments to meet the school’s needs.

## Assessment

Data from the assessment plans maintained for many of the school’s programs, services, and courses formed the basis of continuous improvement cycles at the program and curriculum levels. Staff coordinated the collection of data on learning outcomes of the Signature Course, the assessment of which served as the Quality Enhancement Plan for the university’s accreditation. During the 2012-13 academic year, staff analyzed student survey results for 225 Signature Courses. As part of an effort to foster data-driven decision-making, the team has been developing online educational modules to train educators on the use of data, thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

## Development of Interdisciplinary Degrees

Building on our experience with interdisciplinary certificate programs, we continued to assist groups of faculty developing college-bridging degrees that will provide exciting new options for study and also ease demand on oversubscribed traditional degrees. These robust contemporary majors will prepare students for an array of new career fields while aligning university resources in ways that improve graduation rates. Students will benefit from access to courses from multiple disciplines for one degree and will graduate on time with the credentials they need.



## Summary of Programs

### First-Year Experience

The First-Year Experience Office continued to serve every single first-year student at the university and help them transition to college.

Signature Courses introduce students to UT's academic community by having top faculty teach a wide range of rigorous classes. An integral part of the core curriculum, UGS administered Signature Courses to *every* entering undergraduate student at the university, including transfer students. During the 2012-13 academic year, 10,400 students enrolled in 221 courses.

The University Lecture Series showcased six leading members of our faculty—scholars, scientists, and civic leaders who are nationally and internationally renowned. UGS produced the annual lecture series over two nights in fall 2012, and Signature Course students were required to attend one of the events, each designed to create a campus-wide conversation.

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 got to know their classmates and discover campus resources by attending a weekly seminar facilitated by a peer mentor and staff member. In fall 2012, 2,923 students participated in 270 cohorts.

### Center for the Core Curriculum

Center staff continued to coordinate the implementation of core and flag requirements by flagging appropriate course content and facilitating development in newly emphasized curricular areas such as writing, ethics and leadership, and independent inquiry.

The UGS Advisory Committee voted in May 2012 to recommend that all undergraduate degree programs require all of the flags beginning in the 2014-16 catalog. All colleges will require a majority of the flags, and 9 of the 12 colleges will require all of the 8 flagged courses in the 2014-16 catalog.

Importantly, the systems and relationships developed with faculty committees and departments to incorporate flags have provided the mechanisms required for a responsive core curriculum in perpetuity. UGS approved 513 course flags in 2012-13.

### James W. Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

Advisors in the center worked closely with advisors across campus to provide academic advising, including major exploration assistance, to undecided and transitional students at the university. 1,173 students enrolled in UGS in 2012-13, of which over 572 have now transferred to the colleges from which they will graduate.

Career counselors met with 1,847 students to explore careers, graduate school options, or academic paths at the university. The center offered additional career content through classes and workshops.



Events called Magellan's Circles connected prominent professionals with UGS students for round table discussions about choosing a major, life after college, and pursuing careers. Held twice a semester on campus or at the speaker's place of business, they were limited to small sessions of students enrolled in the School of Undergraduate Studies.

### **Bridging Disciplines Programs**

Undergraduates earned interdisciplinary certificates, recognized on their official transcripts, through study integrating classroom, research, and internship experiences. The 11 BDPs had 466 students actively enrolled. Since the program's inception in 2002, 601 students have graduated with certificates.

### **Sanger Learning Center**

During the 2012-13 academic year, center staff continued to provide academic assistance to all UT students, with 45,153 hours of tutoring supplied to 7,320 students. Learning specialists and trained peer academic coaches provided study effectiveness instruction to 1,065 students. The Peer-Led Undergraduate Studying program assisted 1,864 students through structured study groups, and the Supplemental Instruction program supported students in 49 courses, delivering over 34,204 instructional hours.

The center offered 24 classes and 29 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.

### **Discovery Scholars Program & Longhorn Opportunity Scholars**

These programs provide academic and social support to students predicted to need it most. The Discovery Scholars program, consisting solely of UGS students, recently replaced the original campus-wide support program known as Longhorn Scholars. As the fall 2013 semester began, 200 students had joined the new program.

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

This statewide program identifies students who have not met the statewide standard for college readiness and provides them advising, academic courses, and enrichment services. In 2012-2013, program staff worked with more than 1400 students. Of those, 246 students needed intensive advising services and/or testing to determine readiness status. 108 received comprehensive TSI services, including enrollment in developmental studies courses.

Following a major course redesign, the program began employing undergraduate interns from the UTeach program as part of a collaboration to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

### **Freshman Reading Round-Up**

UT's best professors sponsor books for summer reading and lead small discussions with incoming students the day before fall classes begin. Since the program's inception in 2003, participation has grown steadily. In fall 2013, over 900 freshmen participated in 65 unique book sessions.



## Wayfinder

Over 100,000 unique visitors accessed this interactive website in 2012-13. With specifics on all majors offered at UT, along with career and certificate information, this resource was used by advisors working with undeclared students across campus and by prospective students. In 2012-2013 over 30,000 prospective students were directed to complete activities in a special applicant portal. 11,000 of those applicants did the activities.

## Path to Admission through Co-Enrollment (PACE)

Participants take a UGS Signature Course requirement and receive academic advising at UT, while taking other core classes at Austin Community College (ACC). Students who complete the ACC core coursework and maintain eligibility will be enrolled in UGS. As fall 2013 began, 92 students had accepted this offer, with an expected class of 400 this coming year.

## University Honors Center

The University Honors Center continued to serve as a focal point for campus honors activities and has inducted more than 1,300 UT students into national honors societies. The center awarded UGS grants and scholarships and coordinated outreach and recruitment efforts, reaching more than 10,000 prospective students and their families through 58 school and university-wide programs.

An annual recruitment program, the Honors Colloquium, brought 600 high-achieving rising high school seniors to campus to experience classes and life at UT. Over 78% of all 2012 attendees were admitted into the university, and over 66% of those attending applied to one of the first-year honors programs. Of those accepted into one of the first-year honors programs, 55% enrolled at the university.

The center also supported the school's student governance structure via the UGS Student Council and coordinated activities for the Academy of Distinguished Teachers and the Society for Teaching Excellence, a fellowship of junior faculty recognized for their commitment to undergraduate teaching.

## Archer Fellowship Program

Program staff continued to support highly competitive student internships in Washington, D.C. Of the 40 students selected as Archer Fellows from the entire UT system each semester, 15 were from UT Austin in fall 2012, and 16 in spring 2013.

## Office of Undergraduate Research

Staff gather information about ongoing research from all over campus and serve as a university-wide resource for involving students in research opportunities. The office continued to co-host UT's annual Research Week with the Senate of College Councils. Over 1000 students attended information sessions in 2012-13.



## 2013-2014 Staff



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