

State of the School of Undergraduate Studies



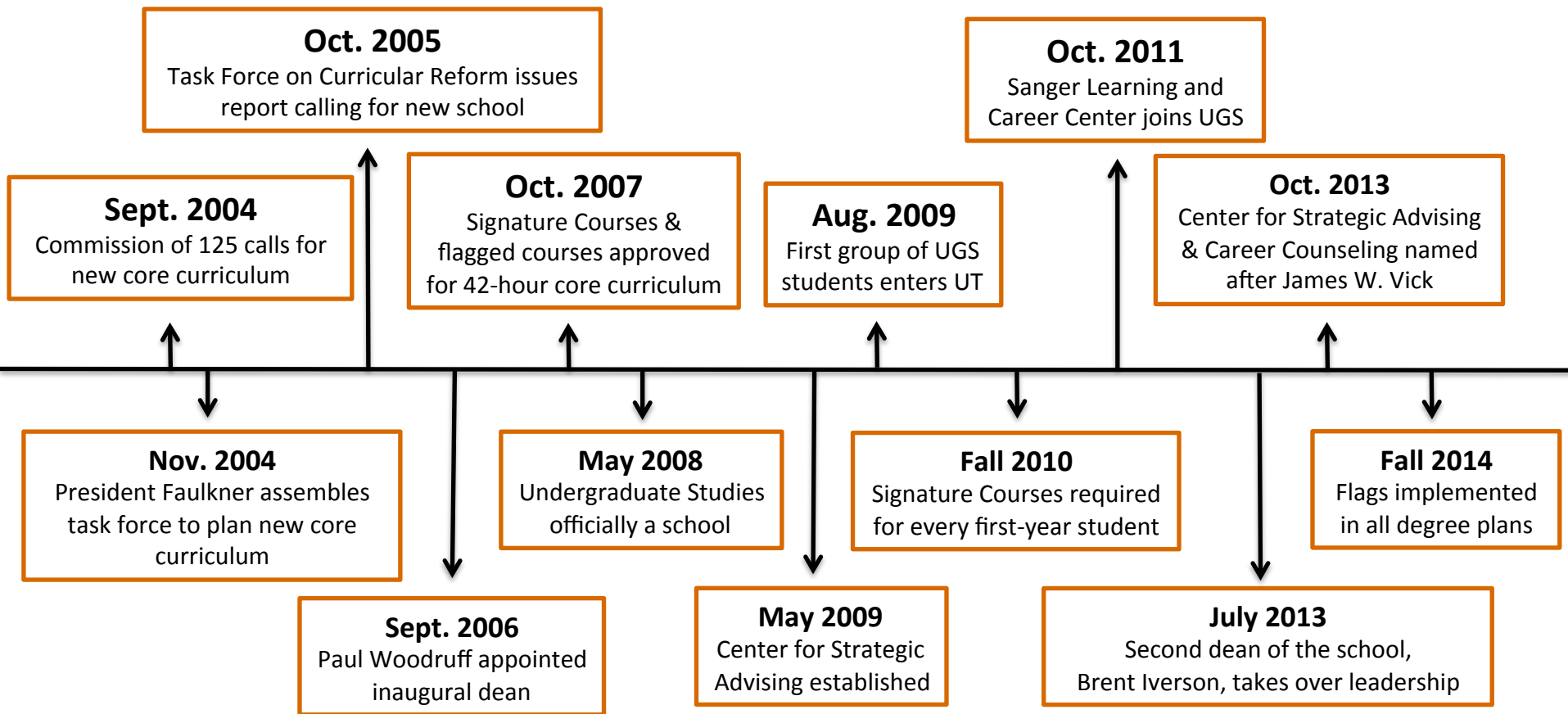
School of
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The School of Undergraduate Studies

Mission

The School of Undergraduate Studies oversees the components of a college education that are shared by all undergraduates at the university. The mission of the school includes the responsibility for sustaining a dynamic common curriculum and enriching the undergraduate experience through innovative advising, career counseling, academic assistance, learning communities, interdisciplinary programs, and undergraduate research.







In 2014: An integral piece

The School of Undergraduate Studies is now a cornerstone of the academic infrastructure.

The school oversees many required programs on behalf of the entire University, enhancing the experience of every undergraduate.

In 2008 we officially became a school, and in fall 2009, we admitted our first cohort of 708 students. This year, there are 2,100 first and second year students enrolled in UGS.



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Programmatic Priorities

Denotes University or State-mandated curriculum, advising, or success programs

Archer Fellowship Program

Honors Colloquium

Signature Courses

Bridging Disciplines Programs

Office of Undergraduate Research

Texas Success Initiative

Core Curriculum & Flags

Path to Admission through Co-Enrollment

University Honors Center

Discovery Scholars

Sanger Learning Center

Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

First-Year Interest Groups

Freshman Reading Round-Up

Wayfinder



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Core Curriculum Reform – The most frightening three words in Higher Education.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ONE: A NEW CORE CURRICULUM
Develop a new undergraduate core curriculum to better prepare students for lives of accomplishment.

The modern world presents challenges that our graduates must be prepared to meet. In particular, they must learn to achieve in a world made smaller by technology and even more complex by the importance of different cultures and peoples. A narrow education, no matter how deep in its field, will not be sufficient. Future citizens will need to think critically and have a confident grasp of the arts, the humanities, mathematics, science, and technology.



Faculty Council motions approved in fall 2006:

“Require all undergraduate students to complete two Signature courses. These courses will be interdisciplinary, be taught by distinguished faculty members, and use the unique resources of the University.”

“Require all undergraduate students to complete courses—selected from qualifying (“flagged”) courses in the core curriculum and their chosen major—that are approved to provide a certain set of important skills and experiences.”



Core Curriculum Reform – UT's most important academic initiative

The combination of Signature Courses and Flags represents the most successful core curriculum reform accomplished at any major university in the country.



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All Signature Courses require the following:

[Interdisciplinary & Contemporary Content](#)

[Writing](#)

[Oral Communication](#)

[Information Literacy](#)

[Gems of the University](#)

[University Lecture Series](#)

[Distinguished Faculty](#)

Flags: Evolution of the Core Curriculum:

[Writing \(3 courses\)](#)

[Cultural Diversity in the United States](#)

[Ethics and Leadership](#)

[Global Cultures](#)

[Independent Inquiry](#)

[Quantitative Reasoning](#)



Core Curriculum Reform – UT's most important academic initiative

Every student is now required to take a Signature Course at the University of Texas at Austin. Over 220 courses offered with over 10,400 seats taken in 13-14.

All Signature Courses require the following:

[Interdisciplinary & Contemporary Content](#)

[Writing](#)

[Oral Communication](#)

[Information Literacy](#)

[Gems of the University](#)

[University Lecture Series](#)

[Distinguished Faculty](#)

The SG Advisory committee turned down dozens of Signature Course proposals this year.

Represents a sustainable financial model for encouraging academic innovation and excellence



Core Curriculum Reform – UT's most important academic initiative

Overseen by a staff of only 5 individuals

Innovative assessment built into the entire program: Mid-semester reviews with feedback and writing quality assessments.

All Signature Courses require the following:

[Interdisciplinary & Contemporary Content](#)
[Writing](#)

[Oral Communication](#)

[Information Literacy](#)

[Gems of the University](#)

[University Lecture Series](#)

[Distinguished Faculty](#)

The assessment taking place in Signature Courses right now is a model for the constructive use of assessment to enhance the quality of academic programs on an institutional scale.



Core Curriculum Reform — UT's most important academic initiative

Flags teach exactly the content and skills our graduates need to be successful in today's professional world.

Writing: The purpose of the Writing flag is to improve the quality of students' writing across all disciplines at UT Austin

Cultural Diversity in the United States: The purpose of the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States is to increase students' familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience.

Ethics and Leadership: The purpose of the Ethics and Leadership flag is to equip students with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in their adult and professional lives.



Core Curriculum Reform — UT's most important academic initiative

Global Cultures: The purpose of the Global Cultures flag is for students to gain greater familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States.

Independent Inquiry: The purpose of the Independent Inquiry flag is to engage students in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing them with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to their major.

Quantitative Reasoning: The purpose of the Quantitative Reasoning flag is to equip students with skills that are necessary for understanding the types of quantitative arguments they will encounter.



Core Curriculum Reform — UT's most important academic initiative

Flags can be earned within the state mandated core or within major required classes.

The flags are approved by broadly representative faculty committees.

The flag program is overseen by 6 staff members in UGS.

A constructive engagement approach is taken in which UGS staff work with faculty to improve subsequent flag course proposals when a deficiency is found.



Most schools have already adopted all or a majority of flags:

	<u>10-12 Catalogue</u>	<u>12-14 Catalogue</u>	<u>Anticipated 14-16 Catalogue</u>
Architecture:	2	8	8
Business:	4	5	8
Communication:	2	2	8
Education:	2	3	8
Engineering:	4	7	7
Fine Arts:	2	6	7
Geosciences:	2 or 4	2 or 4	8
Liberal Arts:	2	4	8
Natural Sciences:	2	2	5
Nursing:	7	8	8
Pharmacy:	8	8	8
Social Work:	5	7	8



Core Curriculum Reform — UT's most important academic initiative

We continue to build capacity:

Seats Taken	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Writing:	21,645	25,504	30,004
Cultural Diversity in the US:	12,786	13,593	15,073
Ethics and Leadership:	8,160	9,626	12,560
Global Cultures:	8,857	13,619	17,056
Independent Inquiry:	4,756	6,293	6,607
Quantitative Reasoning:	36,024	38,853	40,443



UGS Goals for 2014

We are pushing hard to maximize implementation of flags for the 14-16 catalogue.

We will focus on pioneering better academic assessment in all of our programs, enabling us to benchmark our performance and set achievable goals for adding value to the academic preparation of all undergraduate students.

We are attempting to create a new type of student support program within the Discovery Scholars



Discovery Scholars

Provides academic and social support to students enrolled in UGS predicted to need it most. Replaced the original campus-wide support program known as Longhorn Scholars.



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Sanger Learning Center

Provides math and science tutoring, study skills workshops, peer mentoring, and other innovative services to over 20,000 students each year.

The center also offers supplemental course instruction to faculty members teaching the largest undergraduate sections of many core courses.



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Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

A powerful combination of career counseling with course and major advising puts undecided 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. Ex: 199 transferred to Liberal Arts, 116 to Communication, 104 to Natural Sciences, 57 to Business, 15 to Engineering.

86% of the students who started in UGS kept the major they first declared



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Discovery Scholars

Provides academic and social support to students enrolled in UGS predicted to need it most. Replaced the original campus-wide support program known as Longhorn Scholars.

The student success program reimagined In 2014 we will reorganize the Discovery Scholars in 2 important ways:

Any UGS student needing extra academic support will be asked to join the Discovery Scholars program.

We will coordinate all of the resources of the Vick Strategic Advising Center and the Sanger Learning Center along with the Discovery Scholars counselors to provide comprehensive support.



Concerns moving forward

The difficult financial situation at the University will create an environment in which the natural tendency of individual schools and colleges might be to pull away from the core while they focus on “keeping the lights on” in their individual programs.

Offerings of flagged and Signature Courses might be cut.

UGS students will be denied admission to schools and colleges as enrollments are decreased to help manage resources.



Concerns moving forward

Units may be forced to consider more cost-effective ways of teaching courses without being asked to worry about quality or student outcomes.

The University must adopt a financial model that incentivizes excellence, stabilizes the core curriculum, and adapts to changing student interests.





Questions?

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