

## **Senate of College Councils Policy Briefing**

### **S.R. 1104 – In Support of Integrating Research and Inquiry-Based Courses into an Undergraduate Research Certificate Program**

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#### **BACKGROUND**

- Currently, there is no formal research program available to all undergraduates across colleges and schools that equips students in the background, methodology, and skills needed for future research projects or graduate work. A certificate program could offer a credential and promote students to enroll in research-based courses by enhancing the visibility and support for undergraduate research participation.

#### **PURPOSE**

- To expand access to undergraduate research opportunities to more students by integrating existing research-related courses into an Undergraduate Research Certificate Program specific to each individual college and compatible to existing degree plans

#### **SUMMARY**

- An undergraduate research certificate program will enable students to incorporate research into their degree plans and will be cost-efficient by drawing on existing resources
- Senate recommends implementing an undergraduate research certificate program at the college level and specific to each department with the intent of engaging and training undergraduates in research
- The program will consolidate research methods and inquiry-based courses into a transcript-recognized academic certificate and also require a final research project

#### **WHEREAS SUMMARY**

Lines 7-26

The value of undergraduate research is embedded in the University mission as well as affirmed in the Commission 125 Report - every student should engage in inquiry learning on this campus under the guidance and the collaborative supervision of faculty. Senate also passed S.R. 505 a few years ago regarding a research methodology certificate program

Current issues in undergraduate research are low participation, difficulty

Lines 28-36	fitting research into students' degree plans, and there is no program open to undergraduates from every discipline to learn research methods and develop skills
Lines 38-56	An undergraduate research certificate program will be comprised of a track of research methods and inquiry-based courses that will be recognized on a student's transcript upon completion, and is it seen that students value a certificate through the high enrollment in other certificate programs at UT such as the BDPs or BFP
Lines 58-68	There are many benefits of participating in research, especially for lowerclassmen, such as improved academic performance, higher retention and graduation rates, and greater development of skills.
Lines 70-82	Formal research-based programs are offered by top public research universities, and by creating a program at UT, it can promote a culture of undergraduate research and allow students to add a sense of practicality to their education

<b>RESOLVED SUMMARY</b>	
Lines 84-95	Senate calls for the integration of research-based courses into an undergraduate research certificate program that will be customized for each individual college and school.
Lines 97-112	The certificate program will offer introductory research methods courses, research-exposure courses, and research intensive courses in addition to requiring a final research project requirement. Upperclassmen may petition for credit during the transition period, and transfer students may also claim credit towards this program if the courses are equivalent.
Lines 114-119	After the program is designed and developed, the program will be evaluated and followed up with assessment plans to continue its implementation across colleges and schools

<b>SENT TO</b>	Executive Vice President and Provost Steven Leslie, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Faculty Governance Gretchen Ritter, Dean of Undergraduate Studies Paul Woodruff, Dean of College of Liberal Arts Randy Diehl, Interim Dean of College of Natural
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Sciences David Laude, Dean of Cockrell School of Engineering Gregory Fenves, Dean of College of Communication Roderick Hart, Dean of School of Architecture Frederick Steiner, Dean of McCombs School of Business Thomas Gilligan, Dean of College of Education Manual Justiz, Dean of College of Fine Arts Doug Dempster, Dean of Jackson School of Geosciences Sharon Mosher, Dean of School of Nursing Alexa Stuijbergen, Dean of School of Social Work Barbara White, Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Senior Program Coordinator Lisa Wyatt in the Office of Undergraduate Research, and Associate Dean of Academic Initiatives and Director of the Bridging Disciplines Programs Jeanette Herman

**NEXT STEPS IF PASSED**

- Senate's Undergraduate Research Committee will work with the college councils, deans, faculty, and administrators to determine feasibility and establish a timeline for design and implementation.

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