

1 September 29, 2011

2 **S.R. 1105**

3
4 **Title: In Support of Developing a Comprehensive Degree Planner**

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6 **WHEREAS,** Increasing the four-year graduation rate was identified by President Powers in the
7 2011 State of the University Address as one of the primary ways that can help the
8 university decrease costs in the face of severe budget cut; and,

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10 **WHEREAS,** The Commission of 125 Report states that “effective academic advising is crucial
11 to the goal of increasing the four-year graduation rate”; and,

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13 **WHEREAS,** The Report claims that “informed advising can help students avoid enrolling in
14 courses that do not fulfill degree requirements and can also enrich learning by
15 tailoring The University experience to the needs and interests of individual
16 students”; and,

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18 **WHEREAS,** The Office of the Register has formed the Degree Audit Policy Joint Application
19 and Development Group (DAP-JAD) to improve the services of the Registrar and
20 to evaluate the effectiveness of the Interactive Degree Audit tool; and,

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22 **WHEREAS,** The Degree Planner Subcommittee of DAP-JAD has been tasked with
23 determining how a new degree planning tool should be designed to improve
24 undergraduate graduation rates and the efficiency of academic advising in all
25 colleges and departments; and,

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27 **WHEREAS,** The Senate of College Councils has appointed three students to sit on this
28 subcommittee alongside faculty and administrators in order to offer suggestions as
29 to how the current degree planner could be improved; and,

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31 **WHEREAS,** The Degree Planner Subcommittee has presented a report to DAP-JAD that
32 identified thirteen features that any new degree planning tool should include and
33 evaluated the degree planning tools of various other universities; and,

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35 **WHEREAS,** The Senate of College Councils conducted a nonscientific survey of Senate
36 representatives and college council members to determine which of these features
37 students considered most important in a new degree planning tool; and,

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39 **WHEREAS,** Students responded that the functionality of the current degree planning tool
40 would be improved by the addition of visual scheduling, a four year plan feature,
41 and a measurement of degree progress; and,

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43 **WHEREAS,** The creation of a new degree planning tool will help to improve graduation rates
44 by providing students with information that will decrease scheduling errors and
45 increase the motivation on the part of students to take ownership of their degree
46 progress; therefore, be it,
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48 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils supports the efforts of the Office of the
49 Registrar to improve the functionality and usability of the current degree planner
50 to encourage students to actively plan their schedules prior to academic advising;
51 and be it further,
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53 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils asks the Office of the Registrar to consider
54 implementing the following features into the new degree planning tool; and be it
55 further,
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57 **RESOLVED,** That the degree planner should support multiple degree plans in one report, allow
58 students to evaluate hypothetical combinations of majors and minors, and support
59 certificate programs and flag requirements; and be it further,
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61 **RESOLVED,** That the degree planner should include a degree process methodology that
62 informs students how many hours they must complete to graduate in the form of a
63 percentage and how remaining requirements relate to their majors, minors, and
64 certificate programs; and be it further;
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66 **RESOLVED,** That the degree planner should offer a flow chart feature that explains
67 prerequisites for all degree plans, the courses that will satisfy them, and whether
68 those courses are offered in a predictable pattern; and be it further;
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70 **RESOLVED,** That the degree planner should include a four year plan feature that allows
71 students to visually tell whether their proposed degree plan combinations will
72 allow them to graduate in four years and visually categorize all courses into core,
73 major, minor, certificate, or elective requirements (including any other categories
74 that degree plans in individual colleges necessitate); and be it further,
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76 **RESOLVED,** That this degree planning feature should be advertised and demonstrated to
77 incoming students at orientation to ensure that students inform themselves before
78 going to academic advising; and be it further,
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80 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils strongly believes that a comprehensive
81 degree planner is key to improving graduation rates as well as the academic
82 experience of students at the University of Texas at Austin; and be it further,
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84 **RESOLVED,** That this resolution be sent to Shelby Stanfield, Associate Vice President for
85 Student Affairs, Registrar; Dan Knauff, Associate Registrar; and the members of
86 DAP-JAD.
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