

Attachment 5

UGS Impact Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018

UGS Program Review
Fall 2019





TEXAS Undergraduate Studies

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Undergraduate Studies

2016 IMPACT REPORT





MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

"THE SCHOOL OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES (UGS) is ahead of its time," and "I wish UGS had been around when I went to college" are sentiments I heard often this past year. Whether I was visiting with parents about the best place for their students to start college or presenting to leaders of other universities about how to update their core curricula, all recognized the value of our unique programs and their cumulative impact. As one dean from another university put it: "You are solving the problems that are so big and important that we are afraid to even admit they exist."

This past year was notable for more than just conversations. The incoming class that arrived on the Forty Acres in the fall of 2016 will be the first required to take all of the Flags, our reimagined and comprehensive core requirements designed to educate future leaders. This milestone achievement, combined with our celebrated Signature Course program, represents the fulfillment of our original Commission of 125 charge to "develop a new core curriculum to better prepare students for lives of accomplishment."

That's not all. Students starting in UGS transferred to all of UT's undergraduate colleges and schools and graduated at the same or better rates than students starting elsewhere. We established the first UGS dean's list, and our students are so accomplished that only those with a perfect 4.0 received this prestigious academic honor. Our Undergraduate Research office connected more students than ever with research opportunities on campus and also introduced the Texas Student Research Showdown, a competition showcasing student projects from all disciplines. We also launched the new Public Speaking Center, dedicated to helping students give masterful and memorable oral presentations.

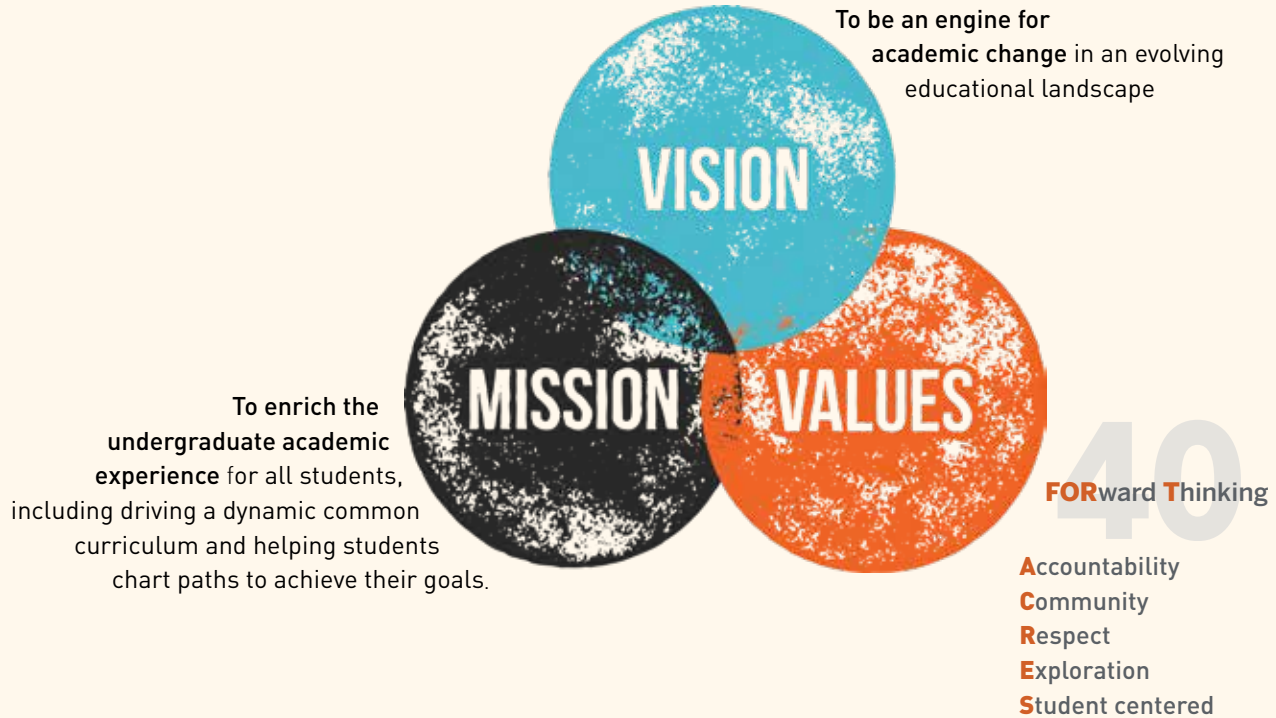
What's next? Stay tuned for the launch of more original programs for all UT undergraduates including a new focus on entrepreneurship and leadership.

Hook 'em,

Brent Iverson
Dean, School of Undergraduate Studies

VISION, VALUES, AND MISSION

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ADVISING AND CAREER COUNSELING

INITIAL HOME



For 8 of 10 undergraduate colleges, students who started in UGS in 2012 graduated in 4 years at a higher rate than students who entered and stayed in the same school

James W. Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

THE VICK CENTER offers academic advisors and career counselors to help students explore interests, identify goals, and plan out their four-year academic paths through the university.

The Vick Center was recently awarded the Outstanding Advising Program Award from the National Academic Advising Association.

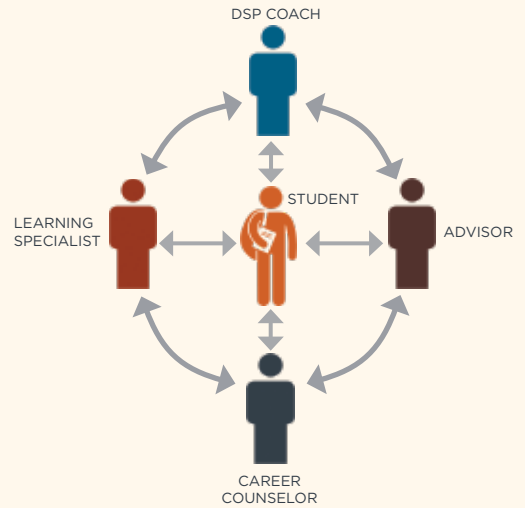
90%

of UGS students who graduated in 2016 graduated in 4 years from the same college into which they first transferred when they left UGS



Discovery Scholars Program

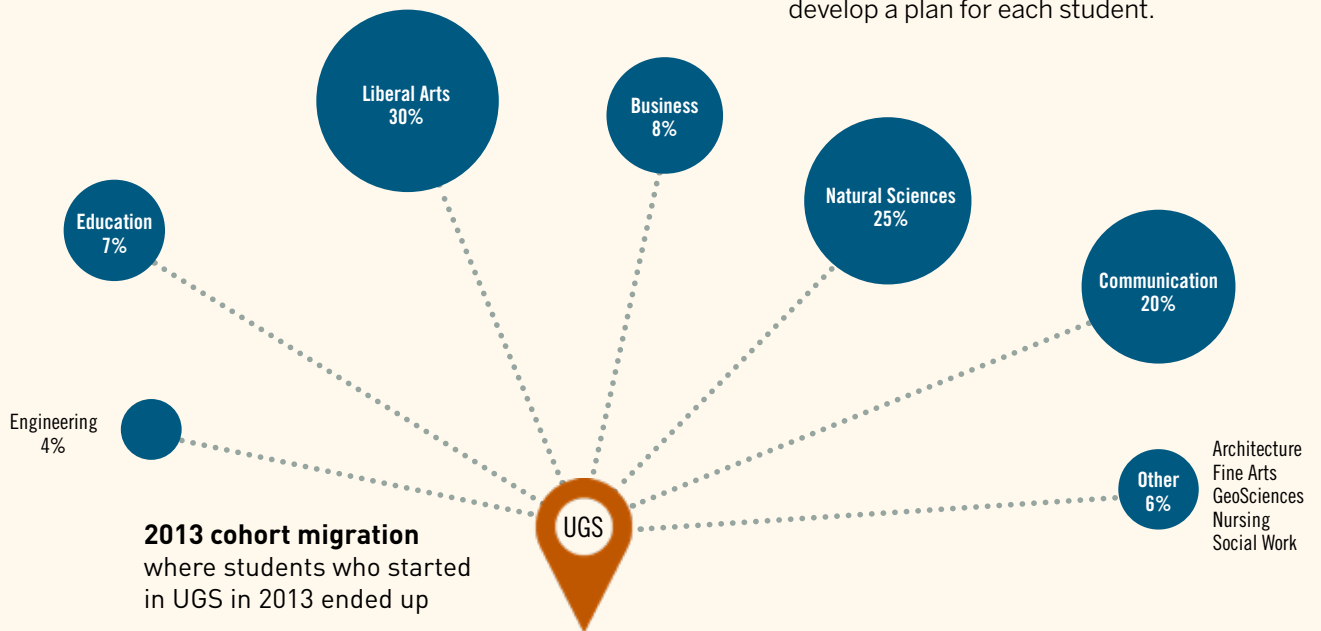
We have pioneered a new team approach that combines the services of the Sanger Learning Center, the Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling, and the Discovery Scholars Program to provide our students with every type of support they need to succeed in college.



“I’m relieved I found someone I can talk to about my future career and actually get help deciding it.”

—UGS student

Each student works with the same team members all year: a Discovery Scholars coach, an academic advisor, a career counselor, and a Sanger Center learning specialist. The team meets regularly to share information and develop a plan for each student.



SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE FLAGS

CORE CURRICULUM

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE FLAGS are degree requirements that add new breadth to undergraduate education. The six Flags teach students to communicate effectively, engage in ethical decision-making and independent problem solving, and understand the diverse, data-dense world around them.

An innovative feature of a UT Austin degree, the Flags teach students to become future leaders in a complex world. Throughout their UT coursework, students earn Flags in the following six areas:

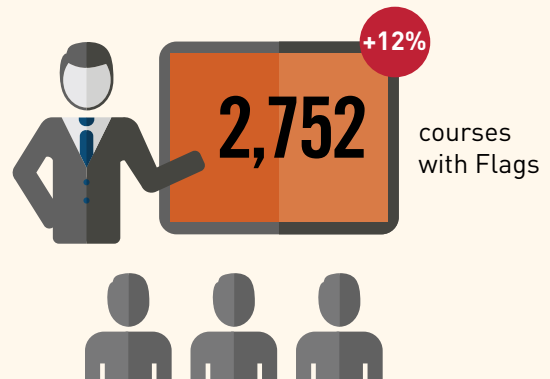
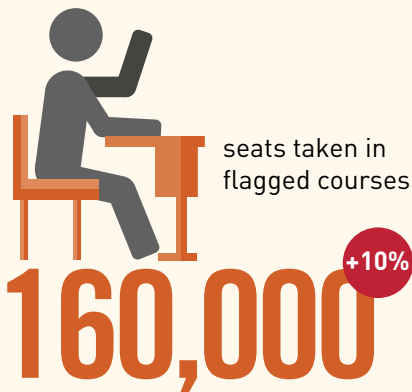
- Ethics & Leadership
- Global Cultures
- Cultural Diversity in the United States
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Independent Inquiry
- Writing



“These courses are about building you up—not just as a student but as an independent thinker and person.”

—Emily Neie
English and Rhetoric & Writing major

66% of Writing Flag students said their writing improved



SIGNATURE COURSES

CORE CURRICULUM



SIGNATURE COURSES bring together first-year students and distinguished faculty members in contemporary environments. By way of these rigorous classes, students develop skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is interdisciplinary and experiential. Students develop critical thinking skills that are crucial to their success at the university and beyond. Courses include:

- Globalization and Social Media
- Leadership in Complex Organizations
- Medical Ethics
- From Gutenberg to Your iPod
- Dante's Hell and Its Afterlife



11,000 ^{+5%}

seats taken in Signature Courses



“Any professor who is able to organize academic work in a way that draws students deeply into the ideas, yet simultaneously invites them to make connections between abstract ideas and their own lives, becomes an unforgettable professor.”

—recent Signature Course student



220+ Signature Courses
offered each
year to first-year
students

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH connects students with faculty from all disciplines who are conducting ground-breaking research. Sponsored events include Research Week and the Texas Student Research Showdown.

Research Week is the university's annual celebration of undergraduate research and showcases projects from across campus. Texas Student Research Showdown, which was new in 2015, is a video and presentation competition that awards scholarships to students in recognition of their research communication skills.

In 2015, more than 70 UT undergraduates were authors or co-authors on more than 50 papers published in national or international research journals.



90%

of students agreed or strongly agreed that their research experience enhanced their academic experience

“This research project was one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career thus far, as I was able to put into action the skills I had been learning.”

— Shannon Dupont, biochemistry

+23%

171

student researchers presented posters at the 2016 Longhorn Research Bazaar

246

research projects listed in EUREKA, a database for finding current research on campus



BRIDGING DISCIPLINES PROGRAMS

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES



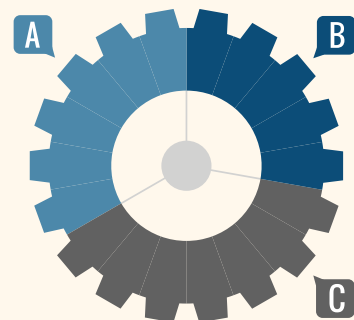
BRIDGING DISCIPLINES PROGRAMS allow students to supplement their degrees by pursuing one of 15 interdisciplinary certificates that combine classroom, research, and internship experiences. Certificates available include:

- Children & Society
- Digital Arts & Media
- Environment & Sustainability
- Ethics & Leadership in Health Care
- Human Rights & Social Justice
- Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship
- Museum Studies **New in 2015-16**
- Public Policy

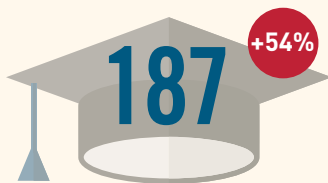
“My BDP . . . opened doors for me to participate in internships and research experiences. When I go for job interviews, I have numerous examples to draw from that stem directly from my BDP internship.”

—recent BDP graduate

Impact made by connecting internship experiences



- \$678,643 Economic impact
- 172 Internship experiences
- 27,520 Hours served



number of students who graduated with BDP certificates



students pursuing BDP certificates

93%

of students agreed or strongly agreed their BDP gave them the ability to apply perspectives from multiple disciplines to their topics of study

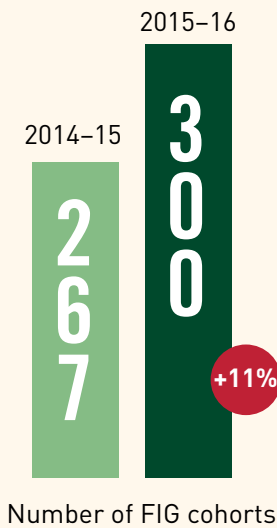
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE programs help new students integrate successfully into the academic and social aspects of college life.

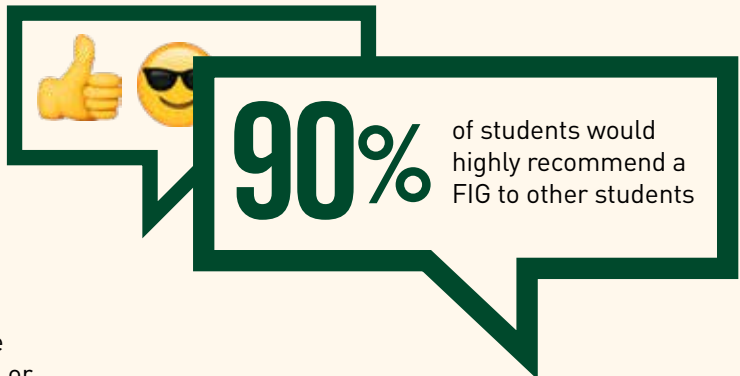
Programs include:

- First-year Interest Groups (FIGs): cohorts of 15–20 students take classes together and meet regularly to develop skills for academic success
- 360 Connections: All first-semester first-year students can participate in a small learning community
- Transfer-Year Experience: serves as a resource for students transferring to UT from other institutions
- University Lecture Series: a showcase of lectures by renowned scholars, scientists, and civic leaders



“The FIG program is one of the most valuable programs on campus because it touches the lives of so many students and makes the campus seem smaller.”

—Cody Permenter, FIG Mentor



98% of students were enrolled in a FIG or similar community

SANGER LEARNING CENTER

ACADEMIC SUPPORT



THE SANGER LEARNING CENTER is the university's main resource for academic support. Through services offered in three main areas—tutoring, academic counseling, and course support—the center helps students boost their course performance and achieve their goals.

In addition to delivering graduate student teacher training for the Signature Course program, the center provides:

- one-on-one tutoring
- drop-in tutoring
- learning specialist group sessions
- peer academic coaching
- peer-led study groups
- study skills workshops
- public speaking coaching **New in 2015–16**

“Who knew I’d discover my own set of study tools by helping another to develop their own?”

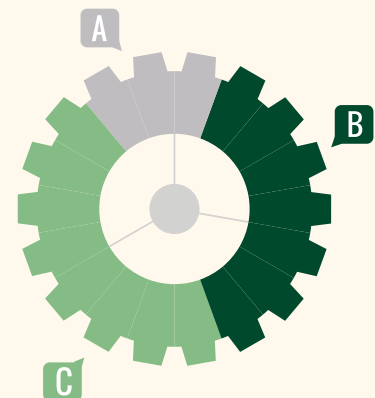
—Briana Criaco
Peer Academic Coach, Nursing major

94% of students said their understanding of course material improved as a result of tutoring

11,564 students used Sanger services

**30,000** hours of tutoring

Breakdown of core services



- Developing academic skills: 16%
- Mastering course content: 40%
- Course-specific support: 44%

FRESHMAN READING ROUND-UP

ACADEMIC TRANSITIONS

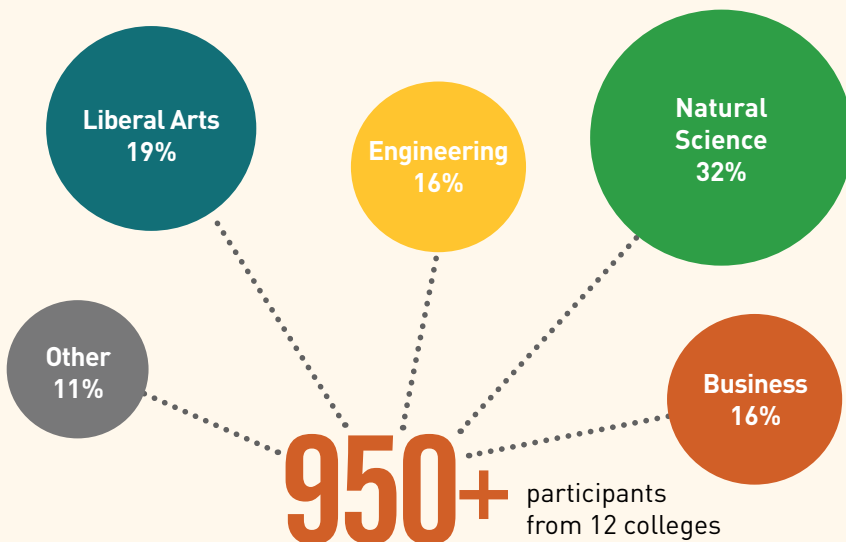
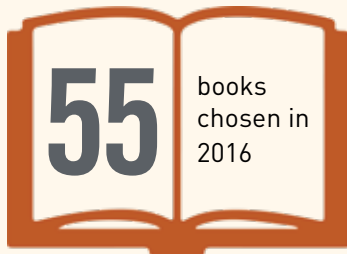
THE FRESHMAN READING ROUND-UP marked its 14th anniversary in 2016 with a collection of 55 books chosen for their literary merit by some of UT's most distinguished faculty. UT Austin President Greg Fenves led a discussion of the book, *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. Fenves described why he chose this book:

"This novel has been classified as science fiction, psychological thriller, and morality tale. While it is all of those things, it's also a coming-of-age novel, set in a boarding school in England for special students with controversial origins and fixed destinies. As the characters grow and mature and leave their sheltered childhoods, they explore themes of personal freedom and self-sacrifice."



"My group had fascinating discussions about the concepts in the book. Everyone got involved and it was the perfect, most adult, way I could think of to start college. Thank you for this."

—2015 attendee



70%

of students said they would feel comfortable contacting the professor who led their session to ask a question or seek guidance



The University of Texas at Austin
School of Undergraduate Studies



WWW.UGS.UTEXAS.EDU



The University of Texas at Austin School of Undergraduate Studies

IMPACT REPORT | 2017





“By incorporating a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, student wellness, and teaching every student how to become a lifelong learner, our programs will continue to anticipate the needs of tomorrow’s Longhorns.”

Dean’s Message

A promise kept

In 2004, the Commission of 125 challenged The University of Texas at Austin to “develop a new undergraduate core curriculum to better prepare students for lives of accomplishment.” President Larry Faulkner, soon followed by President Bill Powers, promised to respond to that challenge with a reimagined core curriculum. The promise was kept. Our groundbreaking and dynamic core curriculum, anchored by the highly successful Signature Courses and innovative Flags, is now fully implemented. Detailed assessments are proving the many ways in which this is advancing the quality of education at the university.

While the core curriculum now provides a unique set of universal skills like critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and effective communication, the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) is future-proofing UT graduates in other ways as well, from connecting more students to research experiences to improving their oral communication skills.

The core was just the beginning

Students who start in UGS are successfully transferring to every undergraduate school or college at the university. Even better, those students

report overwhelming satisfaction with the majors they chose.

The Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling is now the campus source for career counseling and intercollege advising, visited by nearly 2,000 non-UGS students this past year. Our First-Year Interest Groups, Transfer-Year Experience Office, Discovery Scholars Program, and Sanger Learning Center’s many services support the success of most UT undergraduate students in multiple ways. And the increasingly popular Bridging Disciplines Programs offer a powerful vision of a more interdisciplinary and customizable future of higher education.

The school’s future will be built on the foundation of these successes. By incorporating a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, student wellness, and teaching every student how to become a lifelong learner, our programs will continue to anticipate the needs of tomorrow’s Longhorns.

UGS is now the university’s infrastructure for systemic academic change, and I am exceedingly proud to be a part of it.

Brent Iverson
Dean

“The modern world presents challenges that our graduates must be prepared to meet. . . . 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.”

—Commission of 125 Report

Celebrating 10 Years of UGS

Implementing the recommendations of the Commission of 125 and the Task Force on Curricular Reform

2008



UGS established as an official school at the university

2009



Vick Center for Strategic Advising created for undecided students

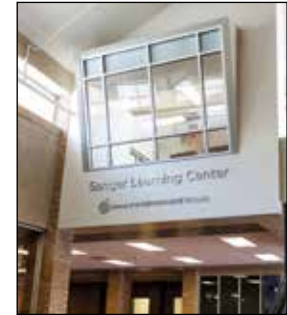
First class of UGS students admitted

2010



Signature Courses required for all undergraduates, taught by some of UT's most distinguished faculty

2011



The Sanger Learning Center joins UGS, adding career counseling to the school's advising resources

2012



The Sanger Learning Assistance Fund endowment created

2013



Set up a Professorship for Excellence in Undergraduate Studies

360 Connections rolled out, increasing number of FIGs dramatically

2014



Implemented team advising with a coach, advisor, academic specialist, and career counselor for each Discovery Scholar

2015



Transfer-Year Experience created to help transfer students acclimate and find resources

2016



Skills and Experience Flags implemented in all degree plans ensuring transferable skills for all

Public Speaking Center opens

2017



Bridging Disciplines Programs celebrate 15 years of steady growth

Blackstone LaunchPad opens and creates a footprint for student entrepreneurship



“My UGS advisor did a great job of talking me through my interests and suggesting majors that corresponded to those interests. She was also very helpful in planning my coursework both during and immediately after I decided on a major.”

—UT Austin student who uses the Vick Center’s services

Success Starts Here

UGS prepares students to thrive in college and beyond

Each fall, hundreds of new Longhorns begin their studies at The University of Texas at Austin without knowing for certain what majors they will pursue. In fall 2016, a diverse group of 815 incoming freshmen enrolled in the School of Undergraduate Studies.

From the moment students begin in UGS, they have a distinct advantage: they get personalized academic advising paired with career counseling, along with a wide range of programs that help them and all other UT undergraduates integrate seamlessly into the pace and demands of college.

We know that starting out undecided doesn’t delay graduation because UGS students are graduating in four years at similar rates to students who begin in UT’s other colleges and schools.

UGS is the ideal starting point for students who go on to flourish in and graduate from every UT college and school. We’re proud of our thousands of graduates who started in UGS, found their paths, and have gone on to become distinguished University of Texas at Austin alumni.

“They encouraged me to seek out what my strengths and passions were to help guide my decision. Because if I didn’t know what I was good at and what I really liked to do, I wouldn’t have been able to narrow down the decision process of choosing a major.”

—UT Austin student who uses the Vick Center’s services

Success Starts Here

UGS programs build a strong foundation for success

Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

Students explore majors, identify goals, investigate career options, and discover strengths

Discovery Scholars Program

Team-based holistic approach to support students with coaching, academic support, career counseling, and advising

First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs)

Small-group communities that help students integrate into college life, academically and socially

Sanger Learning Center

Students receive tutoring, group study sessions, one-on-one help from peers and professionals, and public speaking coaching

Transfer-Year Experience

Support for the large population of students transferring to UT from other institutions

8,108

incoming freshmen (93%) participated in FIGs or other small-group learning communities



3,449

students came to the Vick Center for advising and career counseling (1,941 non-UGS)



54%

of incoming freshmen (4,691) used the Sanger Learning Center’s services



80%

of UGS students surveyed said they were admitted to their first choice of major when transferring





“UGS helps you understand what college is all about. They give you the resources you need to make an informed decision about your future.”

Michael Pontikes

Electrical and computer engineering major

CHOOSING TO START IN UGS

WHEN MICHAEL PONTIKES WAS ACCEPTED into The University of Texas at Austin, he was put on a waitlist for his desired major, computer science. Unenthusiastic about the other majors available to him, he decided to enroll in the School of Undergraduate Studies. “I knew it was for students exploring options,” Michael says, “but besides that I had no expectations.” It was during that fall’s UGS Leadership Summit when Michael says he was able to fully grasp the opportunities afforded to him as a UGS student. “I understood that I was in a position to explore and diversify my interests in ways other students didn’t necessarily have.”

Michael started by securing a seat on student council to explore his academic interests. Interacting with students from different majors and colleges allowed him to better understand the requirements and characteristics of each major. Michael registered for an engineering-based First-Year Interest Group, where his FIG mentor was a former UGS student who transferred into the School of Engineering. That ended up being a valuable connection, providing Michael with specifics about changing schools.

While Michael has always had an interest in engineering, he was unsure which major would best match this interest; he points to the Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling as the resource that helped him conceptualize his current values and future career path. After exploring a number of options, including management information systems, he decided to major in computer engineering. Michael says that his experience and time spent in UGS helped connect him to many of the university resources he uses to this day.

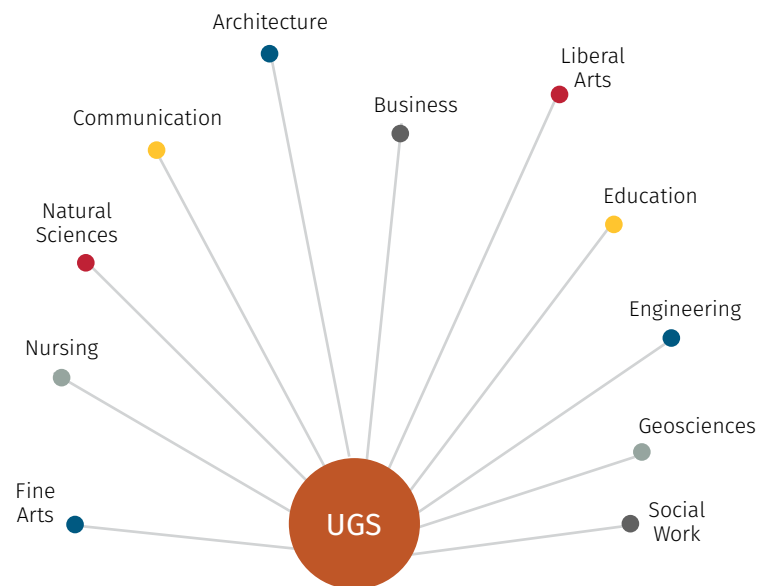
“The Sanger Learning Center has been extremely invaluable to me. I learned so many great study techniques, time management skills, how to create a balance between school and fun, and so much more.”

—UT Austin student who uses Sanger Center services

Success Starts Here

UGS students successfully transfer to all UT schools and colleges

And once they transfer to their major, **81%** say they are satisfied with the major they’re now pursuing.



73,658

instructional hours delivered to students by Sanger Learning Center specialists



89%

of students surveyed said their understanding of course material improved after using the Sanger Learning Center



80%

increase in the number of FIGs offered between 2011 and 2016



70%

of students surveyed said their career goals had changed since starting in UGS





“Wayfinder is a great resource to quickly assess and compare UT majors and degree plans across colleges. Even after I declared my major, Wayfinder helped me see how my double major and certificate could fit neatly together.”

—Meagan O’Brien, anthropology and sociology majors, with a minor in Spanish, and a certificate in forensic science

Success Starts Here

WAYFINDER

Helping students find the majors that lead to extraordinary futures

Trying to wade through the array of choices can be overwhelming. With 107 majors, 62 minors, and 42 certificates, the university offers 11,128 possible combinations of one major with a minor or certificate. Wayfinder is a one stop shop for major and career exploration where students can access in-depth information on the requirements for any major, minor, or certificate. Students use the site to research degree options, figure out how to pursue internship and volunteer

opportunities, take inventory of their strengths with self-assessments, and watch videos of UT alumni sharing candid insights about the path from graduation to career.

100,000
unique visitors this year

Dulce Trejo

Architectural engineering major

FINDING YOUR WAY


OVERWHELMED BY THE SHEER NUMBER of available majors at the university, Dulce began her undergraduate career as a UGS student. “I didn’t know what I liked,” she says.

Dulce credits her inclusion in the Discovery Scholars Program for jump-starting her search for an academic track and career. It was during her time as a Discovery Scholar that Dulce found her aptitude for linguistics, a field she never had the opportunity to explore in high school.

Caught between her newfound interest in linguistics and her strong background in the STEM fields, Dulce credits her Discovery Scholars academic coach for providing her with the framework she needed to compare and contrast her strengths, potential career fields, and academic interests. It was through this self-assessment process that Dulce developed an interest in architectural engineering.

Dulce points to the Vick Center as one of the most important resources that helped her navigate the transfer process. “Their doors are always open,” she says “you just have to go and get the help.” The Vick Center connected Dulce with an advisor in the School of Architecture, who gave her an in-depth explanation of what was required to successfully transfer.

Currently a sophomore in the Cockrell School of Engineering, Dulce fondly looks back on her time as a UGS student.



“UGS gave me the skills and the resources I needed to explore and then apply that knowledge to my major.”



“The internship and research aspect of the program helped me form important networking relationships and gave me a glimpse into future careers that I am now pursuing.”

—Bridging Disciplines Programs alumnus

UGS Is Future-Proofing UT Graduates

Providing undergraduates the education that will shape the world

According to studies, only 25–30% of recent graduates hold jobs related to their majors. And top employers agree that broadly useful skills, like critical thinking, writing, and communication, are far more important than an applicant’s major (*Wall Street Journal*, 2013).

In response, UGS is focused on giving students the experiences and learning they need to future-proof their careers. No matter what happens in an ever-shifting job market, our graduates must have the adaptability they’ll need to prosper in the future—a future where some careers are disappearing, others are just taking shape, and some have yet to be imagined.

To ensure a UT degree is always world-class, we assess and maintain a quality, modernized core curriculum so new Longhorns learn fresh perspectives and then evolve into analytical thinkers who can tackle complex problems. Every student, in every major, takes a Signature Course that establishes critical skills like good writing, research methods, and problem solving. All students earn Flags by taking courses enriched in six areas: ethics and leadership, global cultures, quantitative reasoning, independent inquiry, cultural diversity, and writing. We also offer 15 interdisciplinary certificates, partnerships with faculty conducting research, access to internships, and help with starting a company.

“I took Sociocultural Influences on Learning only because I needed a Cultural Diversity Flag and it looked different than my normal courses. To this day, it is one of my favorite classes at UT. It gave me a new perspective on education that I still use.”

—Micky Wolf, business honors and Plan II major

Future-Proofing

UGS programs provide future-proofing for students in every discipline

Signature Courses

Interdisciplinary first-year courses taught by some of the best faculty at UT

Skills and Experience Flags

Enriched course content in six areas like effective communication, ethical decision-making, and critical thinking

Bridging Disciplines Programs

BDP students earn interdisciplinary certificates that combine coursework with research and internships

Undergraduate Research

Students can assist faculty conducting ground-breaking research in an array of academic disciplines

Blackstone LaunchPad

Center designed to promote the exchange of ideas and an entrepreneurial student mindset

220

Signature Courses available to first-year incoming students



702

students advised about their research by the Undergraduate Research team (up 37%)



99%

of BDP alumni surveyed agreed that their BDP was a valuable part of their education at UT



93%

of students surveyed said their flagged Independent Inquiry course was valuable

Bryan Klingner

Software engineer, Google

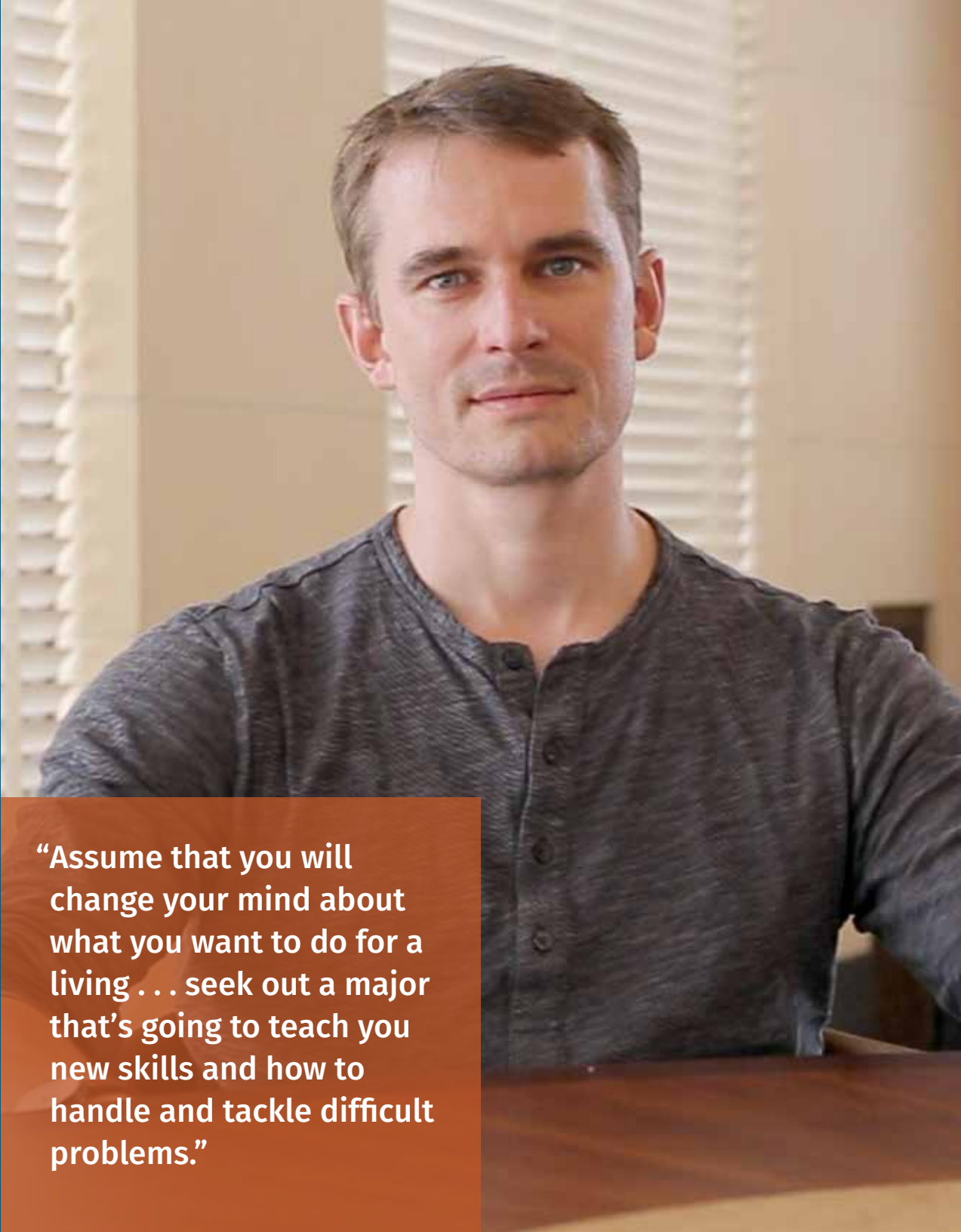
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS MATTER

CURRENTLY A SOFTWARE ENGINEER AND RESEARCHER at Google, Bryan Klingner graduated from UT Austin in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in Plan II and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering. While neither of his degrees taught him the specific knowledge required to succeed at Google, “both of them gave me the skills I need to succeed at my current job on a day-to-day basis.”

Bryan identifies communication, especially written communication, as one of the most important skills he acquired as an undergraduate. “If you can’t convince people of the validity of your idea, it doesn’t matter how good it is,” he notes. From running meetings to communicating with counterparts across the globe, to making effective presentations of technical content, communication is an essential skill in his industry.

“Another skill that makes people stand out more than any other at Google is the ability to tackle hard problems and to know how to approach them.” Bryan’s undergraduate study of differential equations and Russian literature gave him a framework that allows him to tackle new and difficult technical concepts with a strategy and confidence. While problem solving opportunities in technology might differ from those found in undergraduate coursework, Bryan says he’s continually grateful for his UT classes, where he was given “the opportunities to solve very hard problems in a structured environment where the solutions are known.”

Bryan believes that majors that apply to many potential jobs instead of just one allow for flexibility in the shifting job market. His advice for students who haven’t yet picked a major: “If you like something and it challenges you, go for it, and chances are, what you learn there you can transfer to whatever you end up actually doing after you graduate.”



“Assume that you will change your mind about what you want to do for a living . . . seek out a major that’s going to teach you new skills and how to handle and tackle difficult problems.”

“When hiring recent college graduates, employers say they place the greatest priority on a demonstrated proficiency in skills and knowledge that cut across majors. Written and oral communication skills, teamwork skills, ethical decision-making, critical thinking skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings are the most highly valued.”

—Hart Research Associates, 2015



98%

of graduating seniors surveyed said participating in research was valuable



90%

of Signature Course students surveyed said listening to classmates' ideas was a valuable learning experience



914

unique flagged writing courses improved students' ability to communicate effectively



352

research projects, internships, and creative projects completed by BDP students



“I remember a sheet that listed my career counselor, my Discovery Scholars coach, my academic advisor, my learning specialist, and my CARE counselor, and thinking wow, I have a whole team dedicated to my success.”

Hifza Hamid

Chemistry major

BRIDGING DISCIPLINES

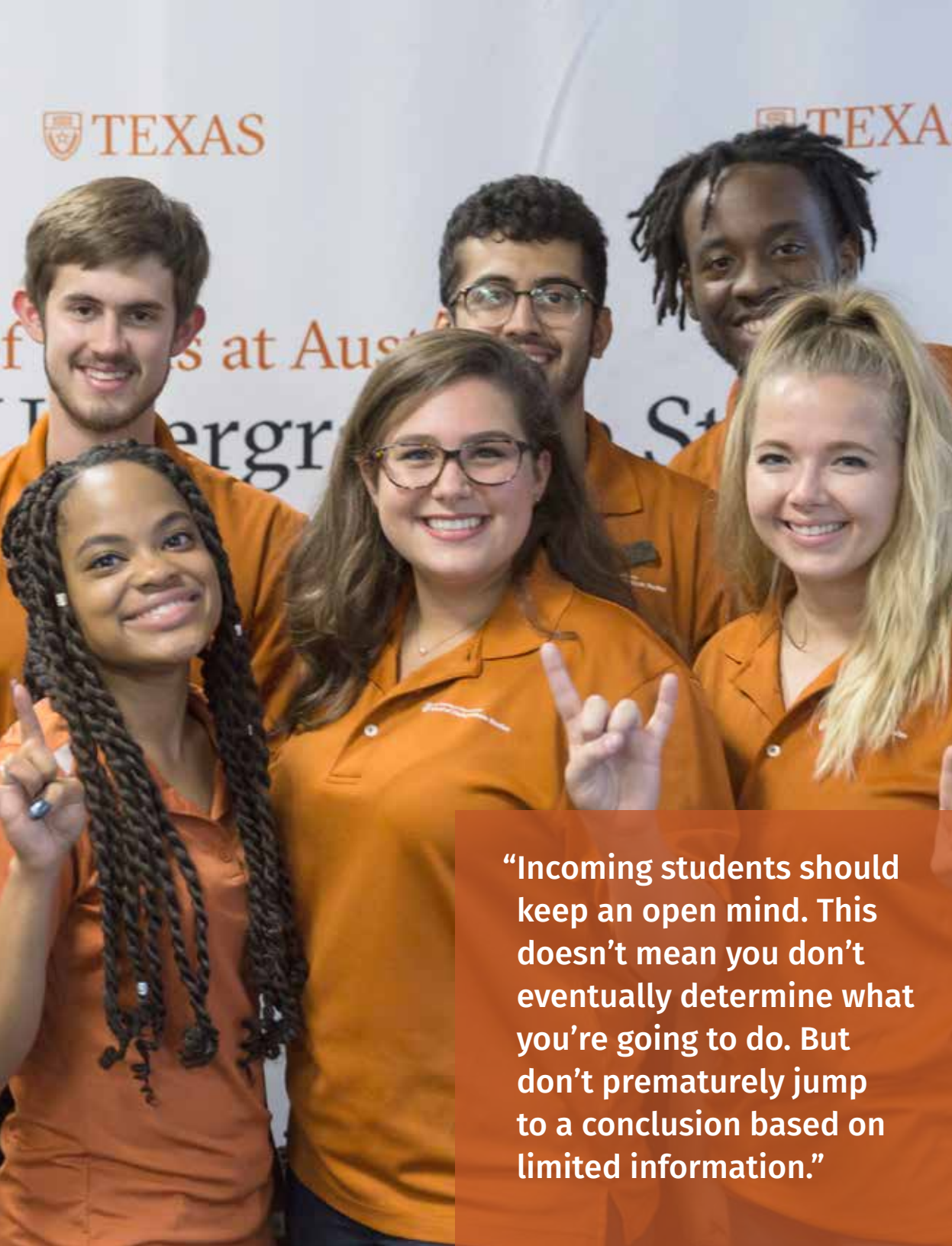
WHILE MOST STUDENTS' FIRST FEW WEEKS of college are hard, Hifza Hamid's were especially difficult. Tearing her ACL a few days before the start of class, she had to navigate a new university with limited mobility. A member of the Discovery Scholars Program (DSP), Hifza points to Emily, her DSP academic coach, as one of the key figures who helped her adjust to life at the university.

Emily connected Hifza with the Office of the Dean of Students, who provided her with the accommodations she needed to navigate campus. Because she missed several days of class, Emily walked Hifza through the process of communicating with her professors and making up missed work. What could have been a hopelessly stressful and difficult situation was transformed into a valuable introduction to UT resources.

Though she began her undergraduate career with the clear goal of becoming a pediatrician, Hifza was unsure of which major to pursue. Faced with competing interests in neuroscience, nutrition, and sociology, she leveraged her status as a UGS student to explore majors.

Connecting with students from prospective majors allowed Hifza to get a better sense of the requirements of each field and decide if it was right for her before committing. She enrolled in a BDP certificate program called Social Inequality, Health & Policy, which will greatly expand her grasp of the social factors that impact health.

UGS was one of the key resources that helped Hifza adjust to college life, and exploring majors allowed her to engage in interdisciplinary scholarship instead of focusing solely on hard science. She's certain this background will help her in her future career as a pediatrician.



“Incoming students should keep an open mind. This doesn’t mean you don’t eventually determine what you’re going to do. But don’t prematurely jump to a conclusion based on limited information.”

Walt Saunders

BBA 1958

WHY I SUPPORT UGS’s MISSION

WALT SAUNDERS (BBA '58) COMES FROM a long line of Longhorns dating back to his grandfather, John William Matlock, who graduated in 1898. While Saunders studied accounting, members of his extended family have pursued a wide range of majors including English, education, and economics. He remembers this advice from his mother, Miriam Matlock Saunders (MA '32), “Everything you learn may be of use one day.” With this multidisciplinary UT legacy, and the spirit of learning inherited from his mother, Saunders was looking for a way to give back to the university. He found it in the School of Undergraduate Studies.

Saunders credits his introduction to UGS to his granddaughter, with whom he attended undergraduate orientation in 2013. Realizing that many students come to UT without the same tradition of higher education as his family, he was impressed with the guidance UGS provides to all undergraduate students. “The worst assumption you can make is that the world is always going to be the same, because it’s not,” he says.

Having worked with clients in about 30 different industries over the course of his life, Saunders is no stranger to the ebb and flow of job markets. He believes UGS is vital in helping students learn to be flexible, adaptable, and nimble.

Saunders understands the integral role UGS plays in helping students embrace change and create a broad educational experience that equips them for whatever lies ahead. By supporting the school with a bequest in his estate plans, he is ensuring students have the resources and help they need to be successful in whatever career paths they choose.



THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

1936



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The University of Texas at Austin School of Undergraduate Studies

IMPACT REPORT | 2018



“I showed up as an undeclared freshman in the School of Undergraduate Studies. I never realized the passion I had for research until I got involved with a student organization that clued me in to all of the research opportunities here on campus.”

CHRIS STOJANIK

B.S. Biology: Genetics and Genomics



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE DO

Students who start in the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) are thriving and then graduating from every college and school at The University of Texas at Austin. Our students have a distinct advantage: personalized advising paired with expert career counseling, along with academic support and a wide range of programs to guide their choice of major and help them adjust to the college environment. The school also continues to assess and enhance the core academic experience for all UT students with the nationally recognized Signature Course and Flag programs.

ADAPTING OUR SUCCESS

The challenge now is to continue to adapt to keep pace with our students' changing needs. And we are meeting that challenge. We're supplementing traditional degrees by developing new interdisciplinary perspectives, so students can earn certificates in emerging areas like design thinking, sustainability, and patient-focused healthcare.

We offer early opportunities for internships and campus leadership roles. We host competitions to encourage undergraduates to participate in life-changing research. We're thinking about education more

holistically and providing grants for students who are ready to explore bold career options.

EVOLVING FOR THE FUTURE

Over the coming year, we will launch exciting collaborative efforts with Student Affairs and the Counseling and Mental Health Center to design and pilot a national model to infuse student wellness into the classroom and transform how we prevent substance misuse among UT students. We'll also encourage students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset so that even if they don't want to start a business, they'll know how to approach problem solving in the quickly changing workplace of the future.

There is more exciting work to be done and the school will continue to serve as the infrastructure and catalyst for academic change. As the future continues to unfold, I promise UGS will continue to innovate and evolve to meet the needs of present and future Longhorns.



Brent Iverson
Dean



COLLEGE SUCCESS STARTS HERE



UGS PREPARES ALL UT STUDENTS TO THRIVE IN COLLEGE AND BEYOND

MORE THAN 1,400 STUDENTS are enrolled in the School of Undergraduate Studies each year, making it the sixth largest cohort at The University of Texas at Austin. In fall 2017, a diverse group of 806 incoming freshmen started in UGS.

UGS was created for students who want to explore their academic opportunities before deciding on a field of study. From day one, students benefit from personalized academic advising paired with career counseling; UGS is the only UT college or school that assigns both an academic advisor and a career counselor to every student. This team approach helps each individual

focus on foundational courses while beginning to narrow the choices to transfer to another UT college or school. Advisors and counselors encourage UGS students to get the most out of college by being well-informed about their options and by taking advantage of formative experiences like internships, research, and interdisciplinary coursework.

UGS is the ideal starting point for undeclared students who go on to flourish in and graduate from every UT college and school. We're proud of our thousands of graduates who've found their paths and gone on to become distinguished UT alumni.

“The counselor did a great job of listening to my needs. She was empathic throughout the session, and her suggestions took into account the various issues that I presented. She provided a variety of resources—the session was immensely helpful.”

—UT Austin student who uses the Vick Center's services

UGS PROGRAMS BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

In addition to supporting undeclared students, the school offers all UT students programs aimed at providing academic support, connecting with faculty, and making the transition to a large campus less intimidating. For example, all incoming freshmen have the opportunity to participate in small communities called First-year

Interest Groups (FIGs) or similar cohorts. These programs help students develop a sense of community as they attend classes, study, and participate in activities designed to help them learn about the many resources the university has to offer.

Vick Center for Strategic Advising & Career Counseling

Students explore majors, identify goals, investigate career options, and discover strengths

Discovery Scholars Program

Team-based holistic approach supports students with coaching, academic support, career counseling, and advising

First-year Interest Groups

Small-group communities help students integrate into college life, academically and socially

Sanger Learning Center

Students participate in tutoring, study groups, and academic coaching to support performance

Transfer-Year Experience

Students transferring to UT from other institutions build peer networks and connect with mentors

UGS STUDENTS TRANSFER TO ALL UT SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Starting out in UGS does not adversely affect the time it takes students to graduate. In fact, by taking advantage of the personalized advising services UGS offers and by engaging in the major and career exploration process, our students are better positioned to make educated

decisions about their major and path after college. While many UT students change their majors at least once, 85% of graduates who started undeclared in UGS graduated with the first major they declared and transferred into!



Once they transfer, **81%** of students who started in UGS say they are satisfied with the major they're now pursuing.

Amar Hajj-Ahmad


Mechanical engineering major

BE OPEN TO OPPORTUNITY

AMAR HAJJ-AHMAD HAD always dreamed of going to UT, so much so that she moved from Lebanon to attend. Although she began her college career as a UGS student, her main goal was to transfer into the mechanical engineering program. During her first semester, she visited the Cockrell School's advising office to get a better understanding of the transfer process; it was there that she experienced her first major challenge as an undergraduate.

After supplying an advisor with her test scores and high school transcript, Hajj-Ahmad was told to consider applying to a different institution due to the incredibly competitive nature of the mechanical engineering program. "I was devastated," she said. "Did I make a mistake moving all the way here?" Instead of giving up on her goals, Hajj-Ahmad doubled down on her studies, pointing to the encouragement of her UGS advisor as a major motivation. "She really cared that I was working towards my goals, but at the same time kept reminding me to enjoy my time in college."

She transferred into UT's mechanical engineering program after two years as a UGS student. After graduating from UT, she began pursuing her Ph.D. at UC Berkeley in the fall of 2018 and views her time as a UGS student as incredibly formative: "It's definitely a little scary when . . . you don't even know what you want to do. There's a lot of uncertainty, but once you realize all of the opportunities that are available, you see there is so much you can do."



"Once you realize all of the opportunities that are available, you see there is so much you can do."

UGS SUCCESS PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

11,388 ^{+5%}

students visited the Sanger Learning Center to access one or more of their services



98%

of students surveyed said they would recommend the Public Speaking Center



95%

of students surveyed felt the Vick Center would be helpful to their fellow students

938

students participated in a Transfer Interest Group and/or a Transfer Student Signature Course

54%

of fall 2017 incoming freshmen participated in one or more Sanger Learning Center services

3,238

students came to the Vick Center for advising and career counseling



36%

increase in tutoring appointments when fees were eliminated*

51%

of Discovery Scholars were the first in their families to attend college compared to UT's average of 22%

8,381 ^{+4%}

incoming freshmen participated in FIGs or other small-group learning communities

* Fees were eliminated in spring 2018

FUTURE-PROOFING UT GRADUATES



UGS PROVIDES CRITICAL SKILLS FOR THE JOB MARKET

RECENT STUDIES INDICATE that 93% of employers believe a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a student's undergraduate major (*Inside Higher Ed*).

In response to the market's needs, UGS shapes undergraduate education at UT through the Signature Courses, the entire core curriculum, the Flags, and other programs. This ensures students develop a well-rounded, broad set of skills beyond their academic disciplines. Signature Courses embrace UT's mission of connecting first-year students at one of the nation's best research universities with distinguished faculty members. These courses, which serve about 11,000 students each

year, establish critical skills like good writing, research methods, and problem solving. The Flags require students to take courses enriched in six areas: ethics, global cultures, quantitative reasoning, independent inquiry, cultural diversity, and writing. UGS also helps maintain programs like the Archer Fellowship, which provides students the chance to live, learn, and intern in the nation's capital.

By focusing on what employers are looking for, UGS creates a solid academic and professional foundation that gives all UT students the educational breadth, skills, and adaptability they'll need to remain competitive over a lifetime.

"The Signature Course I took my freshman year was critical to my success at UT the last three years. I not only developed useful college skills like learning to write college-level essays, but this class also gave me a route to become comfortable in college."

—Signature Course student

UGS PROGRAMS GIVE STUDENTS THE ADAPTABILITY THEY'LL NEED

UGS is focused on giving all students the experiences and learning they need to future-proof their careers. No matter what happens in an ever-shifting job market, UT graduates must have the adaptability they'll need to prosper in the future—a future where some careers are disappearing, others are just taking shape, and some have yet to be imagined. Through opportunities like the

Bridging Disciplines Programs (BDPs), undergraduate research, and the Blackstone LaunchPad, students gain first-hand experience in emerging fields and industries. For example, the BDPs offer 15 interdisciplinary certificates that combine coursework with research and internships to customize a student's traditional degree.

Signature Courses

Interdisciplinary first-year courses taught by some of the best faculty at the university

Skills and Experience Flags

Innovative course content included in all undergraduate degrees that's designed to develop effective future leaders

Bridging Disciplines Programs

Students earn interdisciplinary certificates that combine coursework with research and internships

Undergraduate Research

Students can assist faculty conducting ground-breaking research in an array of academic disciplines

Blackstone LaunchPad

An interdisciplinary hub and entry point to the campus startup ecosystem that helps students launch ventures



“The Blackstone LaunchPad has been a really important part of my experience at UT and an invaluable resource for my startup. I’ve gotten feedback from the staff about presentations, input on our website and product, and introductions to investors and lawyers.”

—Robert Mendelsohn,
Mathematics major

Kevin Helgren

Management Consultant,
Accenture

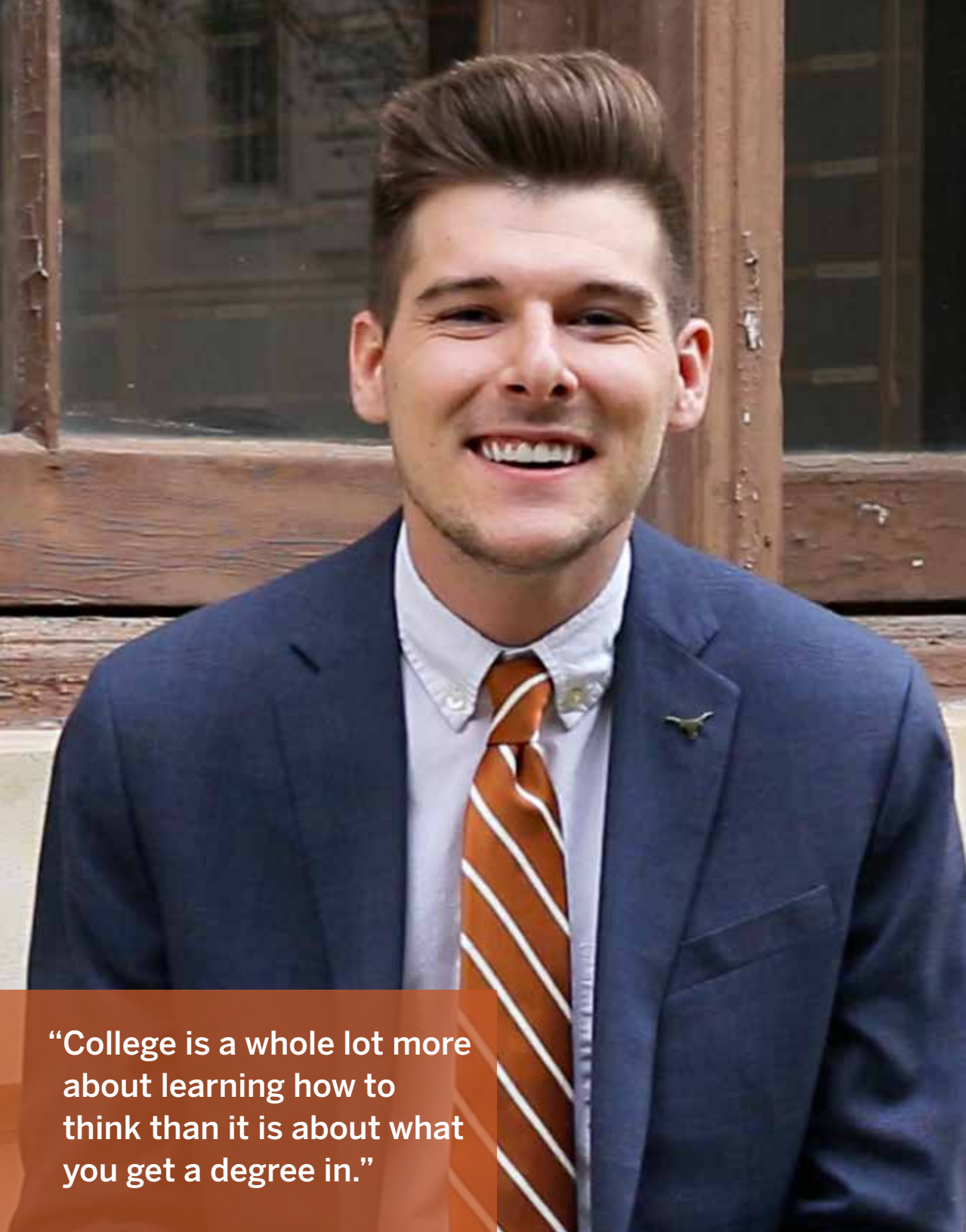
SKILLS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR MAJOR

KEVIN HELGREN GRADUATED from UT in May of 2017 with degrees in neuroscience, psychology, and liberal arts honors.

He now lives and works in Chicago as a management consultant with Accenture. His current job doesn't exactly relate to what he studied in school, but as he's learned over the past few months, that's okay. "In fact, college is a whole lot more about learning how to think than it is about what you get a degree in," Helgren said. "Consulting is all about solving problems, communicating, and taking an issue and working together with people who come from different backgrounds to harness the single best solution to fit a given problem." Helgren credits these skills and knowing his strengths to landing his position at Accenture.

In order to get a job at a company like Accenture and thrive, Helgren says it's really important to know your story. In fact, he adds, "I think it's important to know your story regardless of what you do professionally."

"We all come from various backgrounds and walks of life and bring a lot of unique experiences and skill sets to the table," Helgren said. "The more you're able to wrap your head around who you are, what you're good at, and what you need to work on, the better you're going to be at asking the right questions and surrounding yourself with the right people, which in turn will set you up for future success."



"College is a whole lot more about learning how to think than it is about what you get a degree in."

UGS FUTURE-PROOFING PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

104

Undergraduate Research Fellowship proposals funded, totaling \$89,000



94%

of students surveyed said their BDP was a valuable part of their education at UT Austin

768 ^{+10%}

students were advised about their research by the Undergraduate Research team



92% ^{+4%}

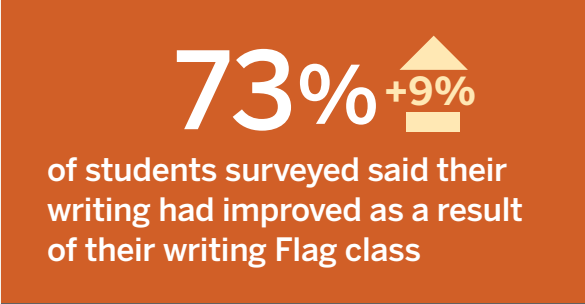
of students surveyed said their BDP helped them refine their career goals

10,706

students took one of the more than 219 Signature Courses

92%

of students surveyed said participating in research was a valuable experience for them



73% ^{+9%}

of students surveyed said their writing had improved as a result of their writing Flag class

38

student start-up ventures supported by the Blackstone LaunchPad



177,988 ^{+11%}

seats offered in courses with one or more of the Flags

Stephen Nachazel


Mathematics major with a
business minor

BUILD TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

STEPHEN NACHAZEL CHOSE to begin his college career as a UGS student in order to gain exposure to a number of different disciplines. “I had an idea that I wanted to do something in STEM, but I wasn’t sure exactly what it was. Or if I even wanted to go into STEM at all,” he said.

As a UGS student, Nachazel was able to explore a number of different disciplines before settling on a major, including liberal arts, business, and computer science. “Being in UGS and taking the Flags and core curriculum very early on emphasized to me that your major isn’t the only thing that’s important,” said Nachazel. “Many of the skills that you gain outside of your major can be transferred into any aspect of your daily life, whether that’s an interview or perhaps work within your student organization. It’s important to be able to see that although subject areas may be different, concepts and ideas often flow together.”

Currently a math major, Nachazel views the diverse skillset he gained as a UGS student essential to making him a well-rounded student. “It’s important for people in STEM fields to be able to write and be able to think about things that are perhaps less technical than systems of equations. A lot of essential skills are developed outside of technical courses,” he added. “UGS has taught me to always reflect on what I’m doing and assess if it’s what I really want to do,” Nachazel said. “And if it isn’t, I feel as though I now have a framework to take charge and find something that I may be better suited for.”

A portrait of Stephen Nachazel, a young man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic design. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred bookshelf filled with books.

“Being in UGS and being exposed to the Flags and core curriculum very early on emphasized to me that your major isn’t the only thing that’s important.”

BRIDGING DISCIPLINES PROGRAMS: 15 YEARS OF INNOVATION



“My BDP experience allowed me to customize my coursework and then have the opportunity to practice the theories and skills in the real world. The experience is the most valuable when it comes to deciding what career field you want to enter. It’s one thing to study and another to practice what you’ve learned.”

—BDP student

In 2017, the Bridging Disciplines Programs (BDPs) celebrated 15 years of helping students enhance a traditional degree with interdisciplinary coursework. Students earn a certificate that complements their major and provides a secondary area of specialization.

Each certificate includes 19 hours of carefully curated coursework as well as research, internships, or creative experiences. This hands-on learning has always been an integral part of the BDP experience and allows students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real life.

New in 2018, the Design Strategies certificate is a collaborative effort with UT’s Center for Integrated Design that gives structure to students looking for ways to explore innovative human-centered problem-solving. The certificate provides a design-thinking approach to solving problems aimed at students who want to develop

an understanding of the people for whom organizations are designing products and services.

And coming in 2020 is a healthcare-focused certificate. Patients, Practitioners & Cultures of Care will help students understand the human side of medicine as they pursue a science-rich education. Studying health care as a shared responsibility, students will refine skills such as ethical sensitivity and cultural awareness.



BDP Certificates

- Children & Society
- Conflict Resolution & Peace Studies
- Design Strategies
- Digital Arts & Media
- Environment & Sustainability
- Ethics & Leadership in:
 - Business
 - Health Care
 - Law, Politics & Government
 - Technology & the Media
- Human Rights & Social Justice
- Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship
- Museum Studies
- Public Policy
- Social Entrepreneurship & Non-profits
- Social Inequality, Health & Policy

Evana Wang

Civil engineering major

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

EVANA WANG SAYS her First-year Interest Group (FIG) was crucial in helping her understand how professors interact with students and conduct research. While she initially intended on majoring in environmental science, her FIG helped her realize that she wanted to focus more on application-based work. After attending a UGS alumni panel, Wang connected with a former UGS student who had transferred into civil engineering. "I had never considered going into engineering, but the more I learned about what it is that an engineer does, the more I thought that it might be for me," Wang said.

Wang attended a number of UGS mixers with successful professionals and then began to solidify her plan of majoring in engineering. "I saw how graduates were able to apply a non-related major to the business realm. I noticed that a number of engineers go into business, and while I'm not sure that I want to take that path, I started to realize the transferable skills that I would pick up as an engineering major," she said.

After shadowing a civil engineering student during Interdisciplinary Studies Week, Wang finally decided to go into engineering. "I got to see the kind of work they were doing and the labs they were working in; I discovered that there were real world applications for the theories I had learned." As a recipient of UGS's Summer Exploration Grant, she was able to get first-hand engineering experience as an intern for Habitat for Humanity in Dallas. "I got to meet a lot of engineers . . . and it allowed me to get a hands-on approach to what engineering is and why it's so important."



"At Habitat for Humanity, I got to meet a lot of engineers . . . and it allowed me to get a hands-on approach to what engineering is about and why it's so important."



Kim & Scott Martin

Donor Spotlight

SUPPORTING THE UGS MISSION

KIM AND SCOTT MARTIN ARE not only UGS donors but parents of a UGS student as well. “From the very first presentation I heard about UGS, I knew it was the perfect spot for our daughter, Margaret,” said Kim. “UGS is the only school at UT that could have provided her with the broad and diverse educational background she received.”

Kim and Scott understand from personal experience that most incoming freshmen need exposure to a variety of fields and disciplines before settling on a path. “As a 17- or 18-year-old student, how in the world do you really know what you want to do with your whole life?” asked Kim. The Martins believe that the diverse coursework available to UGS students allows them to find a path that suits both their personality and interests. “The tremendous support and counseling staff gave us an extra degree of comfort as parents,” Scott said.

Scott and Kim recently made a donation to UGS’s Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). The Martin’s passion for academic research was sparked by personal experience—the diagnosis of their son, Scott, with type B hemophilia. “We saw real outcomes in what researchers were doing all across the country,” Kim said. These positive experiences with research led Kim to judge the 2017 Texas Student Research Showdown. “I was so impressed by the breadth and the creativity of all of the submissions I was able to review. I believe we need to grow this program and invest heavily in students who are doing research.” The Martins hope their gift might inspire others to support undergraduate research and encourage more students to think creatively and get involved.

“From the very first presentation I heard about UGS, I knew it was the perfect spot for our daughter.”



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