

1 September 3, 2009

2 **S.R. 601**

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4 **Title: In Support of College-Bridging Programs at UT Austin**

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6 **WHEREAS,** “College-Bridging programs” are defined as any formal course of study
7 involving degrees or certificates combining coursework from more than
8 one school or college; and

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10 **WHEREAS,** Students and faculty have expressed interest and support for college-
11 bridging programs at UT¹; and

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13 **WHEREAS,** According to the Commission of 125, “a narrow education, no matter how
14 deep in its field, will not be sufficient” to produce leaders in the modern
15 world;²and

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17 **WHEREAS,** The undergraduate experience ought to be “carefully constructed as an
18 integrated, interdisciplinary...experience”;³and

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20 **WHEREAS,** College-bridging studies are “an effective way to create coherence in the
21 undergraduate curriculum”;⁴and

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23 **WHEREAS,** Many of the most important and interesting challenges facing society can
24 be fully understood only in an interdisciplinary context. As Dean of Arts
25 and Sciences Robert Sternberg of Tufts University has pointed out, only a
26 broadly interdisciplinary approach will be adequate in teaching
27 undergraduates about pressing issues such as global epidemics, terrorism,
28 global warming, and ethical leadership.⁵ Major or certificate programs in
29 any of these areas would necessarily draw faculty expertise from more
30 than one college or school; and

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32 **WHEREAS,** The successes of existing programs such as the Bridging Disciplines
33 Program (BDP) in the School of Undergraduate Studies, and the Bachelor
34 of Arts in Urban Studies degree, offered through the College of Liberal
35 Arts, demonstrate the viability of college-bridging programs; and

¹ Based on feedback from Council Presidents and University administrators during Summer 2009

² Commission of 125 Report, pg. 15

³ Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduate in the Research University, pg. 29

⁴ Quality Enhancement Plan, pg. 14

⁵ See Robert J. Sternberg, *Interdisciplinary Problem-Based Learning: An Alternative to Traditional Majors and Minors*; http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-wi08/le-wi08_inter_prob.cfm

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37 **WHEREAS,** Many of UT’s peer institutions⁶ have already developed opportunities for
38 college-bridging studies far beyond those offered at UT; and
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40 **WHEREAS,** Several of these peer institutions⁷ consistently produce students graduating
41 from their college-bridging programs who are more competitive in the job
42 market and in graduate school admissions to Ivy League and Top-Ranked
43 competitive universities across the country⁸; now, therefore be it
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45 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils supports the development of college-
46 bridging programs as valuable options for undergraduate students at the
47 University of Texas at Austin; and be it further
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49 **RESOLVED,** That Senate and its College Councils will engage the student body to
50 assess their specific needs and interests as they relate to current and future
51 opportunities for college-bridging studies; and be it further
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53 **RESOLVED,** That this will be done through focus groups, surveys and all other
54 necessary measures, beginning with an open forum to be held in
55 September 2009 to which all relevant parties will be specially invited; and
56 be it further
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58 **RESOLVED,** That upon completion of these measures the Senate of College Councils
59 will call on university administrators to act accordingly to the specific
60 needs identified by these efforts; and be it further
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62 **RESOLVED,** That this Resolution be sent to President William Powers, Provost Steve
63 Leslie, Executive Vice President and Provost Gretchen Ritter, and the
64 members of the Undergraduate Studies Advisory Committee via Dean of
65 Undergraduate Studies Paul Woodruff.
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67 **Authors:** Drew Finke (Policy Director, Senate of College Councils)
68 Carisa Nietzsche (Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee, Senate of College Councils)
69 Chelsea Adler (President, Social Work Council)
70 David Liu (Chair, Curriculum Committee, Senate of College Councils)
71 Emily Chen (President, Student Engineering Council)
72 Matthew Allen (President, Natural Sciences Council)
73 Mykel Estes (President, Liberal Arts Council)
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⁶ University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; Michigan State University, East Lansing; University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; Ohio State University, Columbus; University of Washington, Seattle; University of Wisconsin, Madison

⁷ University of California, Berkeley and University of California, Los Angeles

⁸“Interdisciplinary Studies Field Major: University of California, Berkeley”
<<http://ls.berkeley.edu/ugis/isf>>

75 **Sponsors:** Liberal Arts Council, Natural Sciences Council, Social Work Council