

## **WORK PROPOSAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH COURSE DESIGNATION**

### **1. Background**

“Undergraduate Research is an inquiry or an investigation conducted by an undergraduate in collaboration with a faculty mentor that *makes an original, intellectual, or creative contribution to the discipline*” (Council for Undergraduate Research). Historically, undergraduate research has focused on experiences for juniors and seniors at four-year institutions. A growing body of research is showing that undergraduate research is of benefit to all undergraduates. Students who participate in an undergraduate research experience show greater gains in disciplinary knowledge, information literacy, communication skills, and a clarification of career paths (Lopato 2010). Studies by the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) at the University of Michigan and Nagda et al. (1998) found increased student success, retention, and graduation rates. Beck et al. (2007) reported increased opportunities for historically under-represented populations (e.g. involving women in computer, electronics and information technology fields by forging interdisciplinary connections to the Life, Health and Social Sciences.) The UROP program also reports increased opportunities for at risk populations.

At the College, faculty have been integrating undergraduate research projects into their existing courses for some time. A group of West Campus faculty wanted to codify the various ways undergraduate research were being implemented. A work team put together a proposal for a non-honors undergraduate research program and shared it with Dr. Williams who suggested that it be shared college-wide. The Deans of Academic Affairs and the Executive Deans met and decided to move forward with the proposal. After this meeting, these Deans met with the Campus Presidents. Subsequently, the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Planning called a college-wide conversation. After this conversation, it was recommended that work plan be submitted to the Learning Leadership Council.

### **2. Charge and Work Products**

Charge:

1. To define what undergraduate research will look like at Valencia.
2. To develop principles for naming a course as a non-honors undergraduate research course.
3. To delineate how undergraduate research differs between disciplines.
4. To study and propose a compensation model for faculty
5. To develop a recognition process for students who complete an undergraduate research course.

Work Products:

The team will conduct a needs assessment, studying existing practices. Then it will develop a plan for implementing a process for designating courses as an undergraduate research course. The plan will also address the following: recognition for students and a compensation model for faculty.

### **3. Known Constraints, Criteria, or Design Principles**

#### **A. Known Constraints:**

1. The characteristics of what constitutes an undergraduate research course have to be agreed upon.
2. This program would have to be delineated from East Campus' Undergraduate Honors Program.
3. Different disciplines have differing models of undergraduate research.

#### **B. Design Principles:**

1. Ensure that work is collaborative.
2. Ensure clear definitions of Undergraduate Research are established.
3. Ensure clear criteria for denoting a class as Undergraduate Research.
4. Ensure a clear process for recognizing students who have taken an Undergraduate Research course.

### **4. Relevant Strategic Goals:**

- Learning Assured

### **5. Council Overseeing Work:**

- Learning Leadership Council

### **6. Sponsors of Work**

- Dr. Falecia Williams, West Campus President

### **7. Decision-making Authority**

- Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Planning
- Campus Presidents
- Deans of Academic Affairs or designate

### **8. Internal Stakeholders of Constituents**

- Deans (Academic Affairs, AA, AS)
- Faculty
- Campus Presidents
- Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Planning

**9. Final List of Team Members:**

Name	Department	Campus
Nick Bekas	Academic Affairs	West Campus
Cheryl Robinson	Director of the Seneff Honors College	College-wide
Director of Institutional Assessment	Laura Blasi	College-wide
Faculty	Mary Beck	West
Faculty	Jerry Reed	West
Faculty	Diana Ciesko	East
Faculty	Eunice Laurent	West
Faculty	Jovan Trpovski	East
Faculty	Georg Brooks	East
Faculty	Keith Malmos	East
Faculty	Jolene Rhodes	East
Faculty	Laura Sessions	Osceola

**10. Final Design Principles**

- Ensure that a clear definition of undergraduate research exists at the college.
- Ensure that a workable model for designating a course as undergraduate research, non-honors has been established.
- Ensure that students have a rigorous undergraduate research experience at the college.
- Ensure that faculty teaching undergraduate research have the requisite experience or training.

**11. Teamwork and Interpersonal Communication Principles**

- Principles outlined in *How We Treat Each Other* by the *Peace and Justice Initiative*

**12. Evaluation Plan**

A more comprehensive evaluation plan will have to be designed once the team is formed. However, success overall will be measured by the degree to which an undergraduate research plan is formed and implemented. This plan will have to be comprehensive and inclusive of all disciplines.

**13. Communication Plan**

Nick Bekas will communicate the progress of the work of the team with the Learning Leadership Team, the IAC as necessary, and the Campus Presidents.

## **References**

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