

John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education
Review of Undergraduate Education at the University of Central Florida
Summary Findings and Recommendations

PURPOSE:

This report summarizes an external evaluation of UCF's coordination of undergraduate education and Office of Undergraduate Studies from the John N. Gardner Institute in December 2014. Commissioned by the Provost and the Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Services (SDES), the review assessed the current structure of Undergraduate Studies and provided recommendations for new organizational directions for undergraduate education to advance UCF's goals and its primary focus on moving to a 21st-century model of undergraduate education emphasizing *excellence, innovation and distinction* within and beyond the state of Florida.

KEY FINDINGS:

The review found great uncertainty and lack of clarity about the mission, purposes and organizational structure for Undergraduate Studies as a unit that transcends the academic colleges and therefore undergraduate education at UCF. These findings are in contradiction to the high level of importance given to undergraduate education in President Hitt's five key goals for UCF, and contrast with the clearly understood mission of SDES in promoting academic student success. The review also found disproportionate attention the current structure provides graduate education, given the gross number of undergraduate students versus graduate students (about 51,000 vs. 9,000) and the nature of structure that supports graduate education (a College) versus the structure that supports undergraduate education (currently an Office).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A summary of the report's recommendations are grouped into four themes –

Creation of a College

The Office of Undergraduate Studies should be elevated to a College in parallel with the College of Graduate Studies, and the dean position should be regarded as one with a level of authority, status and access to the highest levels of university leadership and officers for decision-making and resource allocation.

Undergraduate Studies should be reconstituted as a College to provide the normal administrative structure that could allow for future faculty appointments or joint appointments as appropriate to degrees and certificates offered by the College.

Curricular Leadership

The most important overarching role of the Undergraduate Studies is to enhance, complement, strengthen and support undergraduate education across the university and existing colleges.

Undergraduate Studies should serve as the academic home and degree-awarding College for students enrolled in selected interdisciplinary degree programs, and the new College should initiate and develop new undergraduate degree programs either not appropriate to other colleges or primarily interdisciplinary in nature.

Undergraduate Studies' role for championing, revising, studying, assessing and monitoring general education programs must be strengthened and made more explicit across the university. The new College of Undergraduate Studies needs to lead UCF's rethinking of its general education program assessment, particularly to move beyond course-level assessment to overall general education curriculum-level assessment.

Greater Collaboration Across the University

The new College and Dean must serve as the convener, moderator and simulator of university-wide conversations and activities to affect UCF's transformation to a 21st-century prototype university noted for *excellence, innovation and distinction* in undergraduate education.

This includes collaborating with deans of all Colleges, and partnering with the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies to promote further connections and integration between undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, instruction and research; and increased movement of UCF undergraduates into graduate programs.

The new College and Dean should provide a principal advocacy role alongside SDES in supporting all undergraduate students, including transfer students, and function in a strong partnership with SDES for integrated academic advising and personal development to enhance student success and learning for all undergraduate students.

An Incubator for Teaching and Learning

The new College and Dean should serve as an advocate for a university-wide emphasis on undergraduate innovation. This innovation would be applied in nature but have a scholarly basis.

The College should coordinate integration of these innovation efforts across campus and sponsor and house research initiatives to study, assess and support undergraduate education, including the specific support of the scholarship of teaching and learning. The College should disseminate UCF's findings across campus, and more broadly to the national and international scholarly and practitioner community to help further innovation in undergraduate education.