

1 November 11, 2010

2 **S.R. 1006**

3
4 **Title: In Support of the Creation of the Res Novae Initiative**

5
6 **WHEREAS,** Graduate programs and the research they produce are central to the University of
7 Texas at Austin, and undergraduate programs aspire to prepare students not only
8 for their future careers but also for graduate school; and,
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10 **WHEREAS,** Thus, it is an important objective of the University of Texas at Austin to provide
11 students with specifically tailored programs at the undergraduate level that
12 complement majors to prepare them for specialized areas of academic study at the
13 graduate level; and,
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15 **WHEREAS,** Interdisciplinary programs and capstone experiences can help students incorporate
16 related topics across traditional academic subjects areas in order to achieve
17 success in new and changing fields that positively impact society; and,
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19 **WHEREAS,** The University of Texas does not currently have a program on the university level,
20 available to all students that combines an interdisciplinary opportunity and a
21 capstone experience designed to prepare students for graduate school; and,
22

23 **WHEREAS,** The Curriculum Committee of the Senate of College Councils proposes the Res
24 Novae Initiative to provide students with a capstone opportunity that 1) prepares
25 them for graduate study and 2) allows them to demonstrate tangible evidence of
26 competency to graduate programs and future employers while 3) promoting the
27 development of innovative solutions to global issues; and,
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29 **WHEREAS,** The program combines survey courses, a capstone course, and a case competition,
30 among a number of other components such as a faculty lecture series; and,
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32 **WHEREAS,** A supplementary component of the program is a Distinguished Faculty Seminar
33 Series to acquaint students with the research interests of faculty at the top of their
34 respective fields; and,
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36 **WHEREAS,** The program will have students focus on a global issue that transcends traditional
37 focus areas in modern academics to give them the opportunity to analyze
38 problems that will impact society in the future in the hope that bright students can
39 identify uniquely innovative solutions; and,
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41 **WHEREAS,** The students in the program will center their capstone projects and survey
42 sequences around a single global issue and provide solutions that will be
43 presented in a thesis and in a case competition; and,
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45 **WHEREAS,** The Commission of 125 Report recommended that the university serve society by
46 addressing “major issues confronting society at large” by “[conveying] to students,
47 as well as to faculty and staff members, that a commitment to service is intrinsic
48 to a University of Texas education”¹; and,
49

50 **WHEREAS,** The Commission of 125 Report notes the importance of making students more
51 aware of their responsibility to improve society as they are the beneficiaries of
52 public education²; and,
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54 **WHEREAS,** The University of Chicago implemented a program called Big Problems to instill
55 this sense of public service and additionally created the Chicago Careers In
56 program to help students get a clearer sense of what career opportunities exist in
57 interdisciplinary fields; and,
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59 **WHEREAS,** The core of this program is based on these University of Chicago programs and
60 offers a substantially different opportunity from the Bridging Disciplines Program
61 and the Intellectual Entrepreneurship program as it focuses on global issues and
62 graduate school preparation; and,
63

64 **WHEREAS,** Interdisciplinary programs are a vital part of the educational experience of
65 students, particularly at research institution such as the University of Texas at
66 Austin, that offers an exceptionally broad range of coursework; and,
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68 **WHEREAS,** The Res Novae Initiative Proposal is a flexible document designed to convey a
69 vision for the program, clearly state its purpose and components, and suggest a
70 strategy to implement the program that is nonbinding as it will need to be altered
71 in response to administration concerns and interests; and,
72

73 **WHEREAS,** The Senate of College Councils shall create the Res Novae Program Design
74 Committee to dialogue with appropriate administration to assure the
75 implementation of the program with the understanding that the Committee will
76 function as outlined in the Res Novae Initiative Proposal; and,
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78 **WHEREAS,** The Res Novae Program Design Committee will be an independent committee
79 with the authority to implement its decisions while still respecting the input and
80 guidance of the College Councils; and,
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82 **WHEREAS,** The Senate of College Councils shall retain the right to dissolve the committee at
83 any point before the program is formally implemented; and,
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¹ The Commission of 125 Report, p. 28

² Ibid, p. 29

85 **WHEREAS,** The Program Design Committee should prioritize informal and periodic
86 consultation with the Colleges Councils about the progress and direction of the
87 program; and,
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89 **WHEREAS,** The Curriculum Committee welcomes additional input from the Councils after the
90 creation of the Res Novae Program Design Committee to further develop and
91 improve the program in terms of its goals or organization; therefore, be it,
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93 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils recommends the creation of the Res Novae
94 Initiative as outlined in the Res Novae Initiative Proposal and hereby creates the
95 Res Novae Program Design Committee as a partially internal body to facilitate the
96 creation of the program; and be it further
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98 **RESOLVED,** The Program Design Committee shall be exploratory in nature and will give
99 periodic updates at Senate General Assembly Meetings in order to give the
100 College Councils a forum to comment on and influence the direction of the
101 program; and,
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103 **RESOLVED,** That the Res Novae Program Design Committee shall be comprised of five
104 student members, one committee chair chosen among them, and three faculty
105 members, and the student members will be members of current standing
106 committees in the Senate of College Councils or of the College Councils; and be
107 it further
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109 **RESOLVED,** That the Program Design Committee shall have the authority to expand the
110 number of members or replace current members as needed, its initial student
111 members shall be chosen by the Curriculum Committee, and these student
112 members shall be responsible for recruiting the three faculty members; and be it
113 further
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115 **RESOLVED,** That the Senate of College Councils strongly supports the immediate and efficient
116 implementation of this program and supports the efforts of the Res Novae
117 Program Design Committee to dialogue with appropriate university administrators
118 to implement this initiative; and be it further
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120 **RESOLVED,** That this resolution be sent to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and
121 Faculty Governance Gretchen Ritter and Dean of the School of Undergraduate
122 Studies Paul Woodruff.
123

124 **Authors:** Josh Fjelstul (At-Large Representative, Curriculum Committee, Senate of College
125 Councils)
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127 **Sponsors:** Senate Curriculum Committee
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129 David Liu (Policy Director, Senate of College Councils)