

# Office of Undergraduate Research Restructuring

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Update for Faculty Senate Council

2/1/21

# Undergraduate Research

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- **Undergraduate research is a high-impact transformative experience.** Because UK is an R1 institution, undergraduate research activities should be highly visible, available as a recruiting tool and successes highlighted and celebrated. This will augment the undergraduate educational experience.
- Currently, undergraduate research activities are dispersed and uneven across campus, so there are missed opportunities for efficiencies, communication and measuring/reporting impact.

# Timeline

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- ~ 2006, a central Office of Undergraduate Research was created
- Dec 2019 first External Review completed by SAL
- Sept 2020 the President moved UGR under the Office of the Vice President for Research
- Oct 2020 – discussed draft reorganization plan with academic leaders (Assoc VPRs, Deans, Assoc Deans for Research, Assoc Deans for Undergrad Education)

# UGR Office: Current staffing and External Review

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- Three admin staff
  - Student Recruitment and Advising, Faculty Recruitment, Faculty-Student Partnerships
  - Administer Programs to Support UGR
    - Presentation opportunities – Annual Showcase, Posters at the Capital
    - Mentor recognition
    - Research Activities – Summer Research Fellowships, Travel grants
    - Workshops and outreach events
- Comments from 2019/20 UGR External Review
  - The UGR office has a big impact on a limited number of students and faculty
  - Office does not have information about the overall impact of undergraduates doing research at UK
  - Made 15 recommendations, the first ones were to hire a Faculty Director, establish advisory council with reps from all colleges and review/revise Mission, Vision and Goals

# UGR Office: OVPR initial assessment

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- Improvement needs and issues:
  - More support for student research is needed (only 47.5% of the budget went to programs/students)
  - Need central tracking to know how many students have participated in an undergraduate research experience and breadth of faculty mentors
  - Better communication between the central office and college leadership, OVPR
  - Need consistent Faculty-level leadership
  - Need a clear assessment plan
- How can we better support and raise the profile of UGR activities across campus?
  - Restructuring, reordering the priorities of a central office vs college-level activities
    - Empower each college to develop and promote UGR using available/existing resources to support undergrad student research
    - Use existing college administrative structures (i.e., ADR, Assoc Dean for Undergrad Studies) to administer programs at the unit level to save resources to directly support undergraduate students in research

# UGR Central Office vs College-level Activities

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## **Central Office**

- Coordinate communication across colleges, share best-practices, maintain central website linked to college information
- Presentation opportunities – Annual Showcase, Posters at the Capital, Oswald Comp, etc
- Collect and report data from the colleges; assessment
- Promote UGR through PR and story-telling, workshop presentations
- Coordinate OVPR financial support to colleges to fund student UGR activities

## **College-level Offices**

- Student recruitment and advising; help students find research mentors
- Research Activities – awarding student stipend support, travel grants, research supplies – formulaic delivery of funds from OVPR to colleges to support these activities
- Report on funds use and overall UGR activities
- Faculty recruitment and recognition

# Timeline

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- Sept 2020 the President moved UGR under the Office of the Vice President for Research
- Oct 2020 – discussed draft reorganization plan with academic leaders (Assoc VPRs, Deans, Assoc Deans for Research, Assoc Deans for Undergrad Education)
- Nov 2020 – established college contacts for Undergraduate Research; worked with HR to revise the staffing plan and job description(s)
- Jan 2021 – informed staff of plans, meet with college Undergrad Research advisory group, Assoc Deans for Research and Faculty Senate Council

# Timeline

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- Feb 2 – Campus-wide Communication
  - Announce: Reorganization Plan
  - Faculty Director Search – description and deadlines
  - Summer Fellowship changes – provide college contacts
- ~Early-mid Feb – new staff position should be posted
- Feb 19 – applications for Faculty Director of UGR due
- Feb 22-early March – review applications and hold interviews
- Early-mid March – Faculty Director named
- April 27-29, 2021 – Research Showcase scheduled (virtual)



# Next Steps

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- Hire the Faculty Director of Undergraduate Research
- Hire the new staff position in the Office of Undergraduate research
- DRAFT Funding Formula to distribute funds to colleges for direct support of undergraduate research
  - Student stipend (summer, semester), meeting travel to present research, support for necessary research supplies
  - We expect that students should be able to work with faculty across campus, not just within their own colleges
  - We will request a plan from each college as to how the funds will be distributed
  - Use a 3-year average of **Credit hours completed** in research/independent study classes in each college as a proxy for “research activity”
  - Each college receives \$10,000 base plus funds in proportion to UG research activity: \$500K total from funds currently in Office of UGR (~\$300K) plus ~\$200K new VPR investment

## Faculty Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research (up to 50% effort)

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- Advocate for and promote undergraduate research and mentored independent studies across campus. Lead the campus wide communication strategy.
- Provide leadership for the Office of Undergraduate Research and the activities coordinated through the office; supervise office staff (initially one full-time Program Coordinator). Communicate regularly with the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Update Mission, Vision and Goals of the Office of Undergraduate Research. As the office transitions, consider new activities that could be coordinated from a central office.
- Develop and oversee data collection, data analysis and assessment of undergraduate research activities across campus.
- Support, promote and coordinate with efforts to increase diverse student participation in undergraduate research experiences, such as UNITE and LSAMP and track progress over time.
- Communicate and meet regularly with the College Representative Advisory Group and share best-practice ideas across colleges to enhance research and creative activities campus-wide.
- Represent activities of UGR to other domains, including the Office of the Provost, Student Academic Life, and College leadership.
- Prepare annual reports, budget requests and justifications for the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Coordinate with college representatives to provide student advisors with the information and resources needed to encourage and assist students in engaging in research and mentored independent studies.
- Solicit and review college plans for support of undergraduates in research within unit disciplines.
- Lead, promote or support, as appropriate, efforts to obtain external funding to support undergraduate research opportunities.