

To: The University Undergraduate Programs Committee:  
 From: The Distinction through Discovery Curriculum Committee  
 Date: 9-24-2014  
 Re: Establishment of the Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee (URCC), a sub-committee of the UUPC

As part of our Distinction through Discovery (DTD) efforts associated with the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan, the DTD Curriculum sub-committee would like to establish a process for certifying courses as “Research and Inquiry Intensive” within the undergraduate curriculum. To do so, we are asking the UUPC to approve the establishment of a standing committee—the Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee as a sub-committee of UUPC.

**Rationale for Certifying Research and Inquiry Intensive (RI) courses**

There are five main reasons for the RI course designation

1. Engagement of students in high impact educational practices such as undergraduate research has been shown to have positive impacts on student professional development skills and retention. The RI designation will identify these courses to students.
2. RI designation will appear on students’ official transcripts and may be positively viewed by graduate admissions and future employers
3. RI designation will assist the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry in maintaining comprehensive records of research activities undertaken by FAU students in the curriculum
4. RI designation will assist FAU in distinguishing itself as an institution that values student engagement in undergraduate research practices
5. FAU would like to join the growing pool of institutions nationwide currently participating in the Research and Inquiry intensive designation including:
  - a. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
  - b. George Mason University
  - c. University of Toledo, Ohio
  - d. University of Alabama at Birmingham

RI certification within the FAU curriculum could potentially lead to the development of other initiatives such as an RI compact and/or an RI Certificate Program.

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
DTD Curriculum Committee Chair : <i>Jenna Clavelly-Witt</i>	9-24-14
UUPC Chair: _____	_____
Undergraduate Studies Dean: _____	_____
UFS President: _____	_____
Provost: _____	_____

## **Guidelines for the Establishment of a Florida Atlantic University Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee (URCC)**

### **Purpose:**

The *proposed* Florida Atlantic University Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee (URCC) will function in two capacities.

1. As a subcommittee of the University Undergraduate Program Committee, the URCC will advise the UUPC on *curricular matters related to undergraduate research and inquiry education* at Florida Atlantic University, including whether:
  - a. Courses proposed for research and inquiry certification meet appropriate institutional standards.
2. As a council within the Division of Academic Affairs, the URCC will:
  - a. Promote the development of additional research and inquiry enriched courses and programs.

### **Membership:**

1. The *proposed* Florida Atlantic University Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee will have eight voting members, all chosen according to the appropriate policies in their colleges:
  - a. One faculty each from each of the 8 colleges that confer undergraduate degrees. The Graduate College and the College of Biomedical Science are not represented on the URCC since this body deals exclusively with the undergraduate curriculum.
2. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of the QEP (for as long as the University's QEP topic deals extensively with undergraduate research and inquiry education) will be *ex officio*, non-voting members of the URCC.
3. The presence of four of the Committee's eight voting members will be considered a quorum for the purposes of conducting business.
4. It is strongly recommended that individuals elected to membership on the URCC by their colleges have experience in undergraduate research education at the faculty or administrative level either at Florida Atlantic University or at another institution.

### **Operation:**

1. The chair of the Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee will be elected by the eight voting members.
2. The University Undergraduate Research and Inquiry Curriculum Committee will have at least one regular meeting per semester from September through April.
3. Additional meetings may be called by the chair of the URCC or by one of the *ex officio* members.

## Defining Research and Inquiry Intensive Courses

Research and Inquiry Intensive courses are courses in which undergraduate students **actively engage in the complete cycle of research and inquiry with facilitation provided by an instructor or faculty mentor**. These courses are typically upper-division and address all six Distinction through Discovery student learning outcomes listed below. This definition includes but is not limited to original research, scholarship and creative activity where the student makes either an original, intellectual, technical or creative contribution to the discipline or practice and applied research where the student uses primary data sources to solve an unstructured problem for which no clear solution exists. In these courses, students develop and explore a question or problem and have the opportunity to communicate the design, method and results of this work. Research Intensive courses must include assignments which target all six (6) DTD student learning outcomes:

1. **Knowledge:** students will demonstrate content knowledge, core principles, and skills.
2. **Formulate Question/Problem:** Students will formulate research questions, scholarly or creative problems with integration of fundamental principles and knowledge in a manner appropriate to the discipline.
3. **Plan of Action:** Students will develop and implement a plan of action to address research and inquiry questions or scholarly problems.
4. **Critical Thinking:** students will apply critical thinking skills to evaluate information, their own work, and the work of others.
5. **Ethics:** students will identify significant ethical issues in research and inquiry and/or address them in practice.
6. **Communication:** students will convey all aspects of their research and inquiry (processes and/or products) in appropriate formats, venues, and delivery modes.

*The Distinction through Discovery (DTD) Research Intensive course designation is part of FAU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) efforts at expanding a culture of undergraduate research and inquiry at FAU. RI language was obtained from [FAU's QEP: Distinction through Discovery](#) and adapted from [George Mason University's Students and Scholars](#) program. For questions about this program, DTD and the QEP, please visit [www.fau.edu/ouri](http://www.fau.edu/ouri).*