

At our last Faculty Senate meeting, there were concerns about the new course proposal for INDI 1000. Below are responses from the proposal submitter, Dr. Anita Easterly, in regards to the questions raised at that meeting.

Q: Senate noted that the course will only be available to HS students. Senators wondered why this was the case and why it could not be opened up to other undergraduate students in the major. Can you provide more information on the HS only population and what kinds of projects these students would be working on?

This course is intended to provide high performing HS students exposure to a variety of scientific skills which will assist them in making educated choices before applying to undergraduate programs. The students will be assigned to selected graduate students and post-doctoral fellows for ongoing lab projects. INDI1000 will provide a great opportunity for HS students to a wide range of scientific careers including basic laboratory techniques (such as preparation of buffers, reagents, sterilization by autoclaving), data analysis, statistics, handling bio- specimens (collected from the laboratory animals), regulatory aspects (research ethics), and presentation skills.

Q: Second, some senators worried that the course may overlap with a similar course: INDI 4000 Directed Research in Human Health Sciences (Course description: “The Directed Research in Human Health Sciences course is designed to help undergraduate students gain real insight into specific human health science research programs by involving them in Mentor’s research program and working on an ongoing project. Students learn and execute the experimental techniques required to examine the question, analyze data and draw conclusions. May be repeated for credit.”) I had mentioned that it may not be possible for HS students to take a 4000 level course, thus the reason for creating the INDI 1000 course. But, if you can provide me with information on how INDI 1000 differs from INDI 4000, that would be helpful.

The reason INDI 1000 interdisciplinary course (3 credits) is intended only for selected high performing HS students is to motivate them for life science research at the college entry level. There could be some overlap in learning basic laboratory skills but this course has distinction from INDI4000. For instance,

1. INDI 1000 provides the opportunity to assist HS students in making educated career-decisions, while INDI 4000 is targeted for undergraduates who are already committed to Biology.
2. INDI 1000 aligns with HS curriculum and is offered during the Summer and Fall Semester only.
3. INDI 1000 will be inclusive to any UT science lab, not exclusive to medicine-related research or COMLS. (unless you want to focus on biomedical research only, in that case specify COMLS, College of Engineering, and School of Biological Sciences & Mathematics)
4. Registration to INDI 1000 is via HS science teacher’s recommendation, high performing students who can handle both HS and university-grade curriculum are targeted.