

E. President's Initiative on Undergraduate Education

Chancellor Zinser expressed excitement in bringing a presentation on the university's undergraduate initiatives to the Board. She introduced Dean Philipp Kraemer and briefly reviewed his credentials.

Dean Kraemer became Dean of Undergraduate Studies in 1999, but before that he served for two years as Chair of the Department of Psychology. He came to the University of Kentucky in 1989 to serve on the faculty. He served in a number of leadership capacities in that department prior to serving as Dean of Undergraduate Studies. His background is extensive with numerous external grants for his work in biopsychology of memory, including work on the effects on the brain and on behavior as it relates to closed head injuries. He continues to advise students. He has served at least eighty undergraduate students through supervision of their undergraduate research activities in his laboratory.

Dean Kraemer has taken the Swift Report as well as other insights from discussions on campus, broken them into an action plan that focuses on the key priorities for immediate attention, and has begun to create more coherence and direction around many of the exciting initiatives on campus. This also gives us great focus on the kinds of things that donors in our campaign will be interested in, such as investing new funding in some of these most exciting endeavors. Chancellor Zinser noted that moving forward as a top twenty public research institute comes with the obligation to be a leading institution in undergraduate education.

Dean Kraemer thanked Chancellor Zinser for the nice introduction. He said that he believes the University has a very focused, coherent and realistic plan by which to enhance the quality of undergraduate education. His report follows.

The President's Initiative on Undergraduate Education offered a number of provocative recommendations for improving the undergraduate experience at UK. Most of those recommendations, as well as some additional ideas, have been integrated into a coherent, focused, realistic action plan. This plan is intended to advance the quality of the undergraduate experience in ways that are consistent with the University's Top-20 aspiration. The action plan is based on four guiding principles: (1) a focus on first-year retention; (2) an emphasis on innovation; (3) actions that create stronger linkages between learning, research, and student life on campus; and (4) a commitment to build on existing strength.

The framework for the action plan consists of four parts. First, we need to create a context for success. We need to address problems and issues that left unattended will undermine the success of the entire plan. For example, we need to address course bottlenecks. Courses must be offered regularly, sufficient sections must be available, and these sections must be widely distributed across schedules times so that students can get the courses they need to complete their degree programs in a timely fashion. We have