

Tuesday, September 19, 2006 1:00 a.m.

Letter to the Editor

Open letter to President Bernie Machen

48 CLAS graduate students

We, the undersigned graduate students within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, express grave concern about the proposed five-year plan.

This plan directly conflicts with the vision of UF President Bernie Machen's Strategic Work Plan for UF to become a Top 10 research institution. In order to achieve this goal, UF must provide an environment that will attract outstanding faculty and students to CLAS.

According to its mission statement, CLAS "constitutes the intellectual core of the university." CLAS is seven to 14 times larger than other colleges on campus. With 14,495 students, it represents approximately one-third of the total student population - not including students enrolled in other colleges who take required courses in CLAS.

UF's Office of Institutional Planning and Research Web site shows that CLAS, in fact, teaches 48 percent of all student credit hours - with 42 percent of all UF faculty and only 20 percent of university funding. But the five-year plan shows that CLAS is not a priority for the university.

We, the graduate students of CLAS, do not support the five-year plan because it is irresponsible, impossible and unethical.

It is irresponsible because the plan's "structural reorganization" of CLAS would radically cripple the "intellectual core" of the university. It is impossible because UF cannot achieve Top 10 status by increasing class size, decreasing resources that attract premier faculty and students, and eliminating the diversity of available academic programs. It is unethical because the five-year plan violates the goal of shared governance.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the lack of communication between the administration and students affected by the five-year plan. This creates a dangerous precedent.

We, the undersigned, would like these issues addressed by President Machen, Provost Janie Fouke and CLAS Dean Neil Sullivan in a public forum as soon as possible.