

Tuesday, September 26, 2006 1:00 a.m.

Be a leader, Bern

So UF President Bernie Machen says the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences isn't his responsibility. Interesting. CLAS has more than 12,000 undergraduates in 40 different majors. It provides most of UF's mandatory courses. And now, thanks to a \$4 million-dollar debt, it's downsizing. But hey, Machen says, it's not my problem. Well, nuts to that.

For CLAS, UF's biggest college, this is a crucial moment. But it's just as important for Machen. His Top 10 plan promises a lot - prestige, smaller classes and more resources - and demands just as much from the student body. We're not just talking about higher tuition. Machen has also proposed a 15-credits-a-semester minimum for undergraduates, among other things.

For the administration's plans to succeed, students and faculty must trust Machen to make the right changes with all the money he's asking for. That's not easy, especially considering some of Machen's past decisions. But now it's even harder to believe him when he says students are his first priority.

If Bernie Machen wants to lead, he should start now. CLAS is the most important part of UF - without it, the university can barely function, let alone crack the Top 10. So step up now, Mr. President. If you don't, students won't trust you again.