

CLAS GRADUATE STUDENT OPEN LETTER

14 September 2006

Dear President J. Bernard Machen:

We the undersigned graduate students within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida express grave concern about the proposed Five Year Plan. This plan directly conflicts with the vision of President Machen's Strategic Work Plan for UF to become a Top 10 public research institution. In order to achieve this goal, UF must provide an environment that will attract outstanding faculty and students to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

According to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' mission statement, CLAS "constitutes the intellectual core of the university." CLAS is between 7 to 14 times larger than other colleges on campus; with 14,495 students it represents approximately 1/3 of the total student population. However, these numbers do not include students enrolled in other colleges who take required courses in CLAS. The Institutional Research Website for UF shows that CLAS, in fact, teaches 48% of total Student Credit Hours with 42% of faculty, supported by only 20% of university funding. The health of any university depends on the health of the departments housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Currently, these budget numbers show that CLAS is not a priority for the university.

This failure to make CLAS a priority is vividly highlighted by both the Five Year Plan and the continued financial undervaluation of CLAS. We the graduate students of CLAS do not support the Five Year Plan because it is *irresponsible, impossible and unethical*.

- ➡ **It is Irresponsible.** We find that the proposed "structural reorganization," including a near college-wide hiring freeze, radically cripples the "intellectual core" of the University for undergraduate and graduate education.
- ➡ **It is Impossible.** We cannot achieve Top 10 status by increasing class size, decreasing resources that attract premiere faculty and students, and eliminating the diversity of available programs. This will produce and reinforce a widening gap between the University of Florida and other Top 10 public research institutions.
- ➡ **It is Unethical.** We agree with the University Work Plan's goal of shared governance. The development of the Five Year Plan explicitly violates this goal. Furthermore, we are concerned about the serious lack of communication between the Administration and students affected by the Five Year Plan. This creates a dangerous precedent for the security of students and faculty within their respective programs throughout the university.

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