A Note from Dr. Benjamin Withers, Interim Associate Provost

During this time of incredible change at UK, the commitment of the faculty and staff in the Division of Undergraduate Education (UGE) remains a constant. The consistency and impact of this commitment has never been more evident than over this last year. You will read about some of their achievements and accomplishments reported here; even more information can be found in the UGE blog The Bluegrass Blade. I extend my thanks to the members of UGE and those partners in the university community that make this work possible, especially to interim Provost Tim Tracy and interim Sr. Vice-Provost Dan O’Hair for the opportunity they provided to me to lead this impressive group of people. I am sure that they will bring the same commitment and consistency to assist Provost Riordan.

Topping the list of things to share is some sad, yet happy news: Karin Lewis, who has worked so diligently over the last nine years to build Academic Enhancement, has recently informed us that she has accepted a faculty position at the University of Texas, Brownsville. I have been in the division only a short time, but I understand the impact that Karin’s work has had at the university. Her departure will leave big hole for us to fill; though it is hard to remain sad because this is such a wonderful opportunity for her.

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NEW AWARDS SEARCH TOOL

The Office for External Scholarships, part of the newly established Academy for Undergraduate Excellence, is pleased to announce the launch of a new online database of awards. This searchable and browsable database features more than 100 awards, including direct application awards, internships, & university endorsed awards. Students may search these awards by keyword, or browse the database by award category, area, & citizenship. Visit uky.edu/academy/opportunities to search or browse the database. Read the article on page 8 to learn more about the Academy for Undergraduate Excellence.

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UNIVERSITY SENATE APPROVES PROPOSAL TO REPLACE GRADUATION WRITING REQUIREMENT

At its final meeting in May, the University Senate approved new Senate Rules to replace the outdated Graduation Writing Requirement. The new requirement, the Graduation Composition and Communication Requirement (GCCR), builds on the composition and communication requirements of UK Core. It mandates that faculty in all undergraduate majors identify courses and assignments where students achieve specified learning outcomes in writing as well as oral or visual communication.

The Senate Rule established basic parameters for the new requirement, yet allows flexibility for unit faculty to determine how the requirements are met within the standards and practices of the discipline. Specifically, the GCCR in all areas must include one or more written assignments in English that total to at least 4,500 words (the equivalent of 15 pages of double-spaced, typewritten text). Faculty can choose to add to this either a requirement in oral or in visual communication. Oral communication can be fulfilled through an assignment in which students must give a formal presentation while an appropriate visual assignment will require students to create at least one significant visual/electronic artifact (e.g., a web site or video presentation). It is expected that the GCCR also includes an assignment that requires the student to demonstrate information literacy in the discipline.

The GCCR may be satisfied via either a single GCCR intensive course or a series of GCCR intensive assignments in a series of courses. Faculty may specify that a course offered by another undergraduate program fulfills the GCCR if the faculty in the second undergraduate program so agree.

Along with the new Rule establishing the requirement, the Senate approved the creation of a faculty committee to oversee its implementation. The committee is charged with vetting and approving proposals for each major and working with faculty to improve the proposals as necessary to develop requirements and assessments.

The Advisory Committee will approach its work with an eye toward maintaining rigor within a flexible framework. That means all units will be given the opportunity to identify the particular needs of its students and demonstrate how particular modes of communication are most appropriate for the major. The working procedure for the Advisory Committee should be to work with the units to achieve its writing, oral communication/visual goals rather than merely approve or disapprove based on a rigid, campus-wide standard.

The provision for the GCCR passed with the expectation that final approval will be given next year following a report by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education about the feasibility of implementation.

INCOMING HONORS COHORT, UK’S LARGEST

Thanks to changes in the Honors curriculum and a fruitful partnership between Honors and Enrollment Management, the Fall 2013 cohort of Honors students is set to provide UK with not only its largest group of incoming students but also its most academically well-prepared.

With 420 confirmed acceptances, the 2013 cohort tops the 310 students who entered the program in 2012 and is double the size of the Fall 2011 incoming class. Even as the number of students has grown over the last two years, so has their overall readiness for college work. The last two entering classes have a median ACT (composite) score of 32 to go with a HS GPA of entering students of 3.93, compared to a median ACT of 30 and HS GPA of 3.9 for the previous five years (2007-2011). Students in the Fall 2013 cohort represent 22 states, also a new record for the program.

The Honors Program has always supported many of UK’s best scholars. Recent changes to the curriculum have heightened the ability of Honors students to link the program’s requirements to those of any major, minor, or undergraduate certificate at UK. This curricular flexibility, combined with the university’s investment in a new dorm to house incoming students, have been key to interest in the program by top students. In this last cycle over 2400 applicants sought entry into the program, compared to 600 applications in 2011.

“As attractive as the new curriculum and the new dorm are to prospective students, we wouldn’t see the numbers of applications we are seeing without the strong partnerships we’ve forged between our Honors staff, particularly our Honors recruiter, with the recruiters in Admissions and in other programs,” says Benjamin C. Withers, Director of Honors. “Our mission in Honors is to help the colleges and departments recruit and attract the kinds of students who are ready, willing, and able to complete top-level work in any and every undergraduate discipline”.

— Dr. Benjamin Withers, Director of The UK Honors Program
Accepting his B.A. in Economics this past May, Anthony Cadle became the first student from UK’s First Scholar Program—and the first in his family—to receive a college degree. What is particularly impressive is that Cadle, a native of Dayton, KY, managed to achieve this milestone in three years, while also earning minors in business and history and serving as equipment manager for the football Wildcats.

UK’s First Scholars Program was intentionally designed to assist “first generation” students like Cadle, who come from families where no one in their immediate household, parent or guardian, has completed a baccalaureate degree. Nationally, 24% of first generation students graduate from college in six years or less as compared to 68% of continuing generation students. In 2009 the University of Kentucky was one of two universities awarded a grant from The Suder Foundation to create a national model for first generation student success. In 2009 the University of Kentucky was one of two universities awarded a grant from The Suder Foundation to create a national model for first generation student success. Nationally, 24% of first generation students graduate from college in six years or less as compared to 68% of continuing generation students. In 2009 the University of Kentucky was one of two universities awarded a grant from The Suder Foundation to create a national model for first generation student success.

UK’s program addresses the holistic development of first generation students. Students apply as high school seniors for admission to the selective program and admission is determined using the Student Strengths Inventory (SSI), an assessment which measures non-cognitive indicators of student success. Scholars receive a $5,000 scholarship over four years for a total of $20,000, in addition to the social, academic and leadership activities designed to guide scholars through key transitions pivotal to their success. The twenty scholars are selected each year and to be eligible they must be Kentucky residents, possess at least a 3.0 high school GPA, achieve a 22-26 composite ACT score, and be eligible for financial aid.

With one in five of our incoming students each year self-identifying as first generation, there is an opportunity to expand the Kentucky promise and ensure more first generation students envision the University of Kentucky as a school of choice. For this reason, the Division of Undergraduate Education helped sponsor the creation of a living learning community in 2011 to provide resources and support for any incoming first generation students beyond the First Scholars Program. The “IGLLC” houses students from the Robinson Scholars program, William Parker fellows and others. It includes connected courses, residential peer mentors and a dedicated program advisor.

Providing students with many resources and mentors dedicated to smoothing their transitions to and through college, it is only a matter of time before many more students like Cadle will walk across the Rupp Arena Stage. Says Cadle, who has secured summer internship in Washington, DC. with Senator Mitch McConnell, “I owe everything that I am and am going to be to the First Scholars Program. It was hands down the greatest thing that ever happened to me.”

— First Scholars Graduate

Anthony Cadle
THE STUDY REACHES RECORD, EXPANDS SERVICES TO NORTH CAMPUS

In an effort to extend its impact, The Study has created a pilot program on the underserved North Campus complex of dorms. Temporarily located in the Hamilton House, near Keeneland Hall, The Annex will offer Peer Academic Coaching for students who want to develop learning and study strategies targeted to complement individual efforts in specific high-stakes courses.

The Study, which is part of the Academic Enhancement programming of the Division of Undergraduate Education, has established its home in the Commons on South Campus as the “go-to” location for peer-to-peer tutoring and other academic support. This last academic year, The Study’s staff reached a new service milestone by providing over 22,000 sessions for UK undergraduates. These services have a clear impact on student success; students who take advantage of peer-to-peer tutoring have higher GPAs and increased retention by providing over 22,000 sessions for UK undergraduates. These services have a clear impact on student success; students who take advantage of peer-to-peer tutoring have higher GPAs and increased retention compared to students with similar academic backgrounds and preparation. Students living on the north side of campus, however, have often pointed out that the south-side location of The Study was an impediment.

With support from interim Provost Tim Tracy, the Hamilton House was identified as a temporary home for academic enrichment programming until more suitable space becomes available in the new Champions Court dorm. Karin Lewis, Director of the Study, and her staff developed a new type of enrichment programming, Peer Academic Coaching, that takes advantage of the domestic spaces that the nineteenth-century Victorian house preserves.

In Peer Academic Coaching, trained undergraduate coaches work with students in a small group setting on topics ranging from time management to exam prep, while focusing strategies for particular courses and encouraging students to work together to master course content. The Peer Academic Coaching Program approach provides regular sessions outside of class in which students work collaboratively by discussing class lectures, comparing notes, practicing study strategies, working together to predict test items, and preparing for exams.

Peer Academic Coaching will continue at the Hamilton House through the 2013-14 academic year. Students interested in taking advantage of this unique opportunity should visit The Study’s website for instructions. http://www.uky.edu/AE.

PARTING MESSAGE FROM DR. KARIN LEWIS

As many of you know, I am a teacher at heart. In addition to serving in my leadership role in the department of Academic Enhancement and the Division of Undergraduate Education, for more than a decade I have worked towards my dream of becoming a professor in my field by earning my PhD in Educational Psychology, engaging in scholarly work, serving in an adjunct faculty teaching appointment in the College of Education and the College of Health Sciences, and maintaining graduate faculty status in order to teach at the graduate level and serve on masters and doctoral advisory committees."

From the early days of me working from a single cubicle in the Writing Center on the 5th floor of WT Young Library to the robust department that now serves tens of thousands of student visits to more than a dozen highly effective programs and services, it has been an honor and a privilege to lead and work with such dedicated and passionate colleagues, and I will miss the unique and wildly successful enterprise we created together.

NOTE FROM DR. BEN WITHERS, continued from page 1

Fortunately for us, Karin leaves us with a trained and skilled staff who can keep the shop going. Jim Breslin will step in as acting Director of Academic Enhancement. Jim, who has recently competed his Qualifying Exams, has the experience and knowledge it will take to lead the unit through this transition. This experience will come in handy in the coming year as we continue to develop programming in The Annex (Hamilton House), a new initiative to provide services on the north campus, funded through the Provost Office. We’ve recently learned that, because of impending construction on the north side, The Annex will move to new space, specially designed for our programming in the Champions Court Residence Hall. Jim will play a major role in helping design this space.

This new fiscal year also brings changes to another UGE program, AMSTEMM. The brainchild of Sue Scheff, AMSTEMM has had an impressive run helping students succeed in demanding science, technology, and mathematical fields. Last year’s budget cuts required that we make some painful choices and, unfortunately, AMSTEMM was one of the areas that we had to cut in order to spare other programs. We’ll continue to support students who’ve been recruited to UK through this program and I’m pleased to say that Sue has graciously accepted this continuing responsibility even as she accepts a new role in the Honors Program. I’m personally happy that we could keep her and Hannah Trusty, who is moving to Academic Enhancement, here at UK.

Other News from the Division:

As if leading a successful summer program for first generation students to London wasn’t enough, Matthew Deffendall has managed to secure a $100,000 grant from the Gheens Foundation in Louisville. This grant will help UK create a program to recruit promising first generation students from Louisville and provide funds to defray the expenses of a coordinator for First Generation Living Learning Community. Jeff Spradling and the Robinson Scholars program will also chip in to fund this position, with additional support from UGE. The LLC has been shown to have a major impact on retention; this collaboration illustrates what we can do when we work together to support mutual goals.

The staff in the Stuckert Career Center have also been busy this summer as they have recently undertaken their regular external review. The External Review Committee was on Campus in mid-July and met with staff, campus partners, students, and representatives of the business community. The Committee’s report is due on August 12 after which we will continue with the process of sharing the results and generating the unit response.

July 1st marked the beginning of Lisa Broome’s role as Interim Director of the Gaines Center. I’m pleased to have someone of her talent and experience (this is her second stint as acting director) in this leadership position; we’ll start the process of the search for a full-time faculty director once classes begin.

The Honor’s Program is moving to our new home in Central II. These new digs will be quite impressive; we are planning on at least two events this fall semester to share them with the campus community.

We have also recently posted the description for our vacant budget officer position. Linda has done a wonderful job—especially given that she was supposed to only work 20 hours a week—in getting us through this period.
NEW PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS
ESTABLISHED THROUGH NEW WEB SITE

The Division of UGE has established a new web space that connects six previously existing web sites in UGE, forming the Academy for Undergraduate Excellence. The programs and departments included in the new Academy include: The Chellgren Center, The Office of External Scholarships, The Gaines Center, the Honors Program, and Undergraduate Research.

The mission of the Academy is to establish meaningful collaborations among UK’s premier academic enrichment programs to use efficiently university resources and talents for the benefit of all undergraduates. The beneficiaries of the Academy are highly motivated students seeking a rich educational experience. UK is proud to feature opportunities for excellence through which deeply committed students can extend and enrich learning within academic majors, minors, living learning programs, and the UK Core.

To learn more, visit us online: www.uky.edu/academy.

CONGRATULATIONS TO UK’S FIRST UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE COMPLETERS!

In the spring of 2012, the University of Kentucky Senate approved a new kind of program of study for our undergraduates: the undergraduate certificate. The first certificate approved by the Senate is the Certificate of Global Studies, with Dr. Doug Slaymaker taking the lead as faculty director. The inaugural “faculty of record” coming from nearly every UK college offering undergraduate curriculum. Housed in Undergraduate Education and certified by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, this certificate program represents the University’s new emphasis on reaching across colleges and offering flexibility for all students seeking alternative pathways to success. This certificate is designed to show collaboration across all the undergraduate colleges in creating a focus for students’ scholarly work in international settings. There are four components: globally focused coursework, second language coursework, credit-bearing education abroad experience, and co-curricular programming. So far there are four completers of the University’s first undergraduate certificate. Several more are in the pipeline for completion in time for August 2013 graduation.