The Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence

The Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence affords students and faculty unique opportunities to enrich the undergraduate experience at the University of Kentucky. Every top-twenty university has, as a fundamental component, an outstanding undergraduate program. At the University of Kentucky, The Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence is not only the symbol, but the embodiment, of its commitment to the finest undergraduate education. The Chellgren Center embraces a comprehensive array of teaching and research programs, professors, and services designed to enhance, develop, foster, and deliver the exceptional undergraduate experience that is one of the major components of the University’s mission.

Mission

The purpose of the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence is to advance and represent the University’s commitment to excellence and diversity in undergraduate education, as stated in the University’s mission statement and reiterated in its Top 20 Business Plan. The Chellgren Center acts as a catalyst for improvements in undergraduate education and, as such, inspires and guides creative and progressive reform to provide the finest academic experience possible for all students at UK.

Goals

• support the creation and dissemination of best educational practices and teaching innovation for engaged learning
• support an endowed Chellgren Chair and five endowed Professorships that are filled by outstanding faculty members who contribute substantially to the mission of the Chellgren Center
• foster the integration of research-based learning into the undergraduate experience
• attract excellent students to UK from across the nation and the world
• provide students with exceptional learning, mentoring, and research opportunities, thus increasing their competitiveness in their professional and scholarly careers in the global arena
• create a formal collaboration among some of the University’s most successful and prestigious programs, centers, and offices

Foundation

Based on the recommendations contained in the Boyer Commission report, Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research Universities, the Chellgren Center seeks to make research-based learning the standard, to foster inquiry-based experiences, to enable faculty members to deliver curricula that build creatively on each successive course and include a capstone experience, to integrate communication skills with subject matter, and to use technology effectively where appropriate.

Specifically, the Chellgren Center accomplishes its mission in several ways. By supporting an endowed Chair and several endowed Professorships, the Chellgren Center provides an opportunity for dedicated faculty members to devote their efforts
to the development, dissemination, and delivery of innovative undergraduate programs. By offering student fellowships, the Chellgren Center enhances the education of a number of outstanding undergraduates through mentorship and various other enrichment opportunities. By facilitating a formal collaboration among outstanding, prestigious undergraduate programs, the Chellgren Center provides an opportunity for significantly enhancing the impact of each of the programs throughout the undergraduate career of all students. By including a wide range of practical faculty development and instructional support services, the Chellgren Center has a broad impact on all undergraduate instruction.

**Paul W. Chellgren**

The benefactors of the Chellgren Center for Undergraduate Excellence are Paul W. Chellgren and his family. A UK graduate, Mr. Chellgren was an Honors Program student and star intercollegiate debater. He subsequently earned a Harvard MBA and a D.D.E. from Oxford University, where he has been named an Honorary Fellow. In addition to a celebrated career in business, one that included service as the CEO of Ashland Inc., Mr. Chellgren has been a very active UK alumnus, having served for eleven years on the UK Board of Trustees. The generous gift from Mr. Chellgren and his family has helped establish the Chellgren Endowed Chair and five named professorships.

**Chellgren Center Highlights from 2005-2006**

On the following pages, several of the highlights of Chellgren Center-associated programs during the previous academic year are described. First, two students who served as Undergraduate Instructional Assistants (UIAs) in the Discovery Seminar Program discuss their experiences. Then students from several of the programs that are part of eUreKa! relate their research. These include the Beckman Scholars Program, the summer research and creativity awards, the UKURP (UK Undergraduate Research Program), support for undergraduate travel to scholarly conferences, and the Oswald Research and Creativity Program. Finally, there is a gallery of images from the first annual UK Showcase of Scholars, sponsored by the UK student Society for the Promotion of Undergraduate Research (S.P.U.R.)
The Discovery Seminar Program

The Discovery Seminar Program (DSP) is an optional program open only to all incoming first term students (including transfers) that offers:

- 3-credit hour courses
- Small seminars with no more than 25 students in each
- Greater flexibility in meeting one of the University Studies Program’s Disciplinary Requirements
- Engaged experiences, inside and outside of class, with some of UK’s most famous professors
- Detailed exploration of a fascinating problem at the core of diverse fields of knowledge

Fall 2006 will mark the eleventh year of the Discovery Seminar Program for first-year students. From the moment a first year student steps onto campus, we believe that her or his educational experience should include the most satisfying, exciting version of higher learning and this is what a Discovery Seminar offers: small classes with engaging, challenging discussions with outstanding professors who are teaching about their work at the frontiers of knowledge. Our faculty are excited to offer diverse seminars on subjects such as racial identity; horses in Kentucky; Vietnam; democracy; environmental problems; civil liberties; technology; jazz; and reproduction, just to mention a few.

All Discovery seminars have a budget to enable the provision of special enhancements to the educational experience, such as field trips, guest lectures, additional films and videos, and special class-related events such as performances. Furthermore, a number of the seminars are linked to special sections of UK 101, UK’s Academic Orientation class. Every student in those seminars is also enrolled in the corresponding section of UK 101. Each of these dual classes has an Undergraduate Instructional Assistant (UIA) who serves as the peer instructor in UK 101 and as the instructional assistant in the Discovery seminar. Here, two UIAs from fall, 2005, describe their experiences.