Dear Colleagues:

Allow me to share with you some good news. The Task Force to Revise the University’s General Education Curriculum has taken the first steps toward the creation of a signature for the new program. It speaks, we believe, to the highest intellectual and pedagogical aspirations of our campus, suggesting new ways we can challenge our students and ourselves and, in the process, expand the life of the mind at College Park.

The Provost shares our enthusiasm and has not only urged us to pilot the signature program this upcoming spring semester, but has also provided substantial financial support to assure the program’s success. I invite you to read the RFP carefully as it provides a full description of the signature and how the pilot will be implemented. (http://www.provost.umd.edu/GenEd2009/RFP-I-series.pdf) I urge you to propose a course that will begin the process of establishing a Gen Ed program that represents the best of our University.

This, of course, is just the first step in revamping General Education. The Task Force will soon announce plans for Distributive and Fundamental studies, but first steps are often the most important.

In the past, I -- along with other members of the Task Force -- have solicited your ideas for rethinking General Education. You have been extremely generous in sharing your thoughts, and many of you will see some of them incorporated in the new program. Now, I urge you to join the Task Force by putting your own stamp on the program. My sense is that, like myself, you will find it both extremely satisfying and -- as with all intellectual work -- a good deal of fun.

Ira Berlin

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This note was authorized for distribution to
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