INITIATIVE ONE:

Continue to elevate the quality of undergraduate education in order to provide all students an enriched and challenging educational experience.

Aggressive pursuit of the goals of the 1996 Strategic Plan to enhance undergraduate education and engage undergraduates more fully in the research experience has produced nationally-recognized programs of the highest academic quality in our Honors and College Park Scholars programs. It is time to apply and extend the value of these lessons to all of our undergraduates. Four years ago the Plan called for major efforts to create a university that "provides a nurturing campus community, a stimulating intellectual environment, effective advising and job-placement programs, along with an array of special enrichment activities." Our efforts to achieve that goal have continued with support for innovative programs, and much has been done to improve many areas of student life. The increasing number of outstanding students who choose Maryland as their academic home is bringing a new level of intellectual excitement and vigor to the University.

Our emphasis on faculty who excel as researchers and who can share their excitement and expertise in the classroom and laboratory results in an enriched educational environment in which undergraduates as well as graduate students have the opportunity to participate in cutting edge research, scholarship, and creative projects. Moreover, outstanding faculty help recruit to the University graduate students of high caliber, who make significant contributions to undergraduate education as teaching assistants. However, much remains to be done to achieve the quality of educational experience we envision and extend it to all undergraduates. The following steps are intended to move us closer to our goal of offering the most outstanding education possible to our students.

Specific steps:

1. Provide enriched educational opportunities and personally fulfilling and challenging academic curricula that prepare all our graduates for productive roles in this increasingly complex world.

   - Support and encourage innovative course design that stresses student participation, team-based problem solving, and technology enhancement and ensure that high academic standards are maintained in all our courses.
   - Seek additional ways for students to take advantage of the special opportunities that are available at a world-class research university and increase substantially the opportunities for students to be involved in research with a faculty member.
   - Encourage academic units to increase the number of academically-based internship and fellowship opportunities that leverage our locational advantage in the Baltimore-Washington region.
   - Increase the number of courses in the curriculum that possess a significant experiential-learning component.
● Increase the opportunities for students to have a significant international experience, including an expansion in study abroad opportunities, especially in Winter Term and Summer Sessions.
● Increase the opportunities for students in their freshman year to participate in a low enrollment (<25) academic course taught by a full-time faculty member.
● Evaluate the effectiveness of our CORE curriculum and redesign it as needed to ensure that all undergraduate students obtain the best general educational preparation possible.
● Encourage faculty to make greater use of the Center for Teaching Excellence and its resources and introduce faculty members early in their academic career to best practices in pedagogy.
● Elevate the importance of preparing students for teaching careers and engage faculty in the arts and sciences disciplines with those in education to ensure high quality education of future teachers.
  o Provide undergraduates with increased opportunities to acquire Teacher Certification either as part of their BA or BS degree or as part of a fast-track master's in education.
● Increase the emphasis on academic integrity and ethical development among our students.
● Seek additional ways to recognize and celebrate the academic achievements of undergraduate students.

2. Remain the school of choice for the most talented students in Maryland and for outstanding out-of-state students by strengthening efforts to recruit students who contribute to and benefit from an enriched educational environment and by improving the conditions for their enrollment and success.

● Refine criteria for admission to the University and our special programs, recognizing the competitive advantages of students with different interests, backgrounds, and life experiences.
● Establish criteria for the admission of transfer students that are equivalent to those used in the admission of entering freshmen.
● Increase the number of entering freshmen to 4500 while holding constant the total number of undergraduate students on the College Park campus.
● Increase the residence hall space by 2000 beds to allow all entering freshmen guaranteed residential space.
● Raise an endowment for undergraduate scholarships sufficient to ensure that no student admitted to the University of Maryland has to leave solely for economic reasons or has to work to an extent that hinders academic progress.
● Offer more information and assistance to help students compete successfully for prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and awards in every discipline.
● Significantly enhance academic advising for all students by making greater use of peer mentoring, improving the availability of both faculty and professional advisors, and increasing the use of technology in advising.
● Adjust as necessary the time distribution of our course offerings and the number of sections offered to assure that students are able to register for the courses required for graduation in a timely manner.
● Expand the new student orientation period and support innovative orientation programs that highlight the special value of a diverse and complex academic community.
● Maintain a campus environment that promotes community involvement, enhances the total educational experience, and fosters a lifelong affiliation with the University.

3. Systematically integrate the use of information technology into our instructional programs, so that all faculty and students can fully exploit new technology as an essential tool in teaching and learning.

● Expand training and support services to help faculty with curricular redesign, educationally sound pedagogical practices, and the development and deployment of information technology based courseware.
● Set expectations that every academic course will have an online syllabus and an established protocol for remote communication between student and instructor.
● Bring all students to a level of information technology proficiency appropriate to their disciplinary needs. Establish information technology fluency and information literacy requirements for all undergraduates.
● Strongly encourage all students to have access to a networked personal computer, and require computer ownership for students in selected disciplines.
● Bring every classroom up to an established minimum standard for information technology capability and create special purpose information technology enhanced classrooms and laboratories as required.

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