Announcing the First Symposium in a Series

The Undergraduate Experience:
2006 and Beyond

Richard J. Light, renowned author, professor of education at Harvard University and expert in the area of student engagement, is the featured speaker.

8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 23, 2005
Tivoli Turnhalle

Together, we will continue to create a distinctive undergraduate experience, build a dynamic student community and foster positive change.

With a PhD in statistics, Light’s work explores challenging problems in American higher education. He has published seven books, including Summing Up and By-Design. His most recent book, Making the Most of College, won the Stone Award for the best book on education and society and is free to participants in this inaugural seminar.

Why attend? Great speaker, great book, a great opportunity for dialogue among faculty, advisors, student affairs personnel and administrators in shaping the future of UCDHSC’s undergraduate education.


For more information call Laura Goodwin, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs at 303-566-2550 or the Center for Faculty Development at 303-566-6075 for more information.

Presented by the Office of the Provost, the Center for Faculty Development, and the QUE project as a result of the Academic Master Plan.
The 1st Annual Undergraduate Experiences Symposium was held on Friday, September 23rd, 2005 in the Tivoli Turnhall, it was a natural outreach of the 2004 Academic Master Plan and was co-sponsored by the QUE project, the Office of the Provost and the Center for Faculty Development.

Richard J. Light, Harvard professor, expert in student engagement and retention, and author of *Making the Most of College*, facilitated the full-day seminar, bridging the difference between the two universities with a common element: the passion to reach students.

Attendees broke into groups discussing specific topics relative to the upcoming changes at the campus, then reported back to the larger group. Topics included:

- Building a campus community
- Effective advising (academic and non-academic)
- Racial, ethnic, cultural inclusion and diversity
- Student success and persistence
- Effective instruction for student engagement

Going directly to the source, Light said, is always the best option. To study student satisfaction, Harvard conducted a series of surveys and interviews. Of the many findings – universal to any institution – their research found that students who were engaged in campus activities or groups, students who got to know one faculty member well and students who pursued new areas of interest thrived.

Light and his colleagues found that students who tried to get their core classes or requirements out of the way in the first year by far had the least positive experience of surveyed students. Those who mixed it up, taking classes that intrigued them came away with a far better attitude – promoting better retention.
Having someone to talk to – a mentor to turn to with questions and concerns that might not be on the syllabus – is paramount, Light explained. "It does not come naturally to really make an effort to get to know faculty," Light said. But students who do come away far more satisfied than students who don't. It is up to the university community to establish ways to create these links.

Another factor in student satisfaction and retention was time management. Students who recognized the added responsibility that comes with higher education and adjusted their schedules were more satisfied and successful. Struggling students – who seemingly had similar academic backgrounds as the successful students – had not adjusted to the extra work required at the university level. Most figured their successful study habits from high school would carry over. By having students log their hours over a week, students saw where they could adjust their schedules to better accommodate learning. "When we followed up one year later, 55 percent of students who took part said it was a really, really good lesson," Light stressed. "Some said it may have been the single most valuable lesson in their first year at college."

The symposium concluded as Provost Mark Heckler told the group of about 80 faculty, staff and student representatives. "We are no longer a university, rather a multiversity. We must re-frame and refocus our mission at the University of Colorado Denver and Health Sciences Center's Downtown Denver Campus."