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Likins restores Dec. commencement

Ceremony returns after agreement to improve behavior of students

By Natasha Bhuyan
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

President Peter Likins announced the restoration of the December university-wide commencement ceremony yesterday, after reaching an agreement with student body president Alistair Chapman.

But as a condition for restoring

the university-wide commencement, Likins said he expects a change in behavior at the ceremony.

While administration officials said the elimination of the university-wide commencement was intended to create a more intimate commencement ceremony, they admitted that disruptive behavior was also a factor.

"ASUA President Alistair

Chapman and I agreed today on the changes of behavior that will be expected for the restoration of the university-wide Winter Commencement," Likins said in an e-mail sent to employees and students yesterday.

Two weeks ago, university officials announced December's university-wide commencement would be limited to Ph.D and master's students.

The cancellation of the university-wide ceremony prompted an overwhelmingly negative response from the campus community, with

student leaders and alumni groups speaking out against the changes.

Following last week's ASUA Town Hall, which gave students, staff, and alumni the opportunity to voice their opinions on the commencement changes, Chapman wrote a letter to Likins Friday, urging him to restore the university-wide commencement.

Chapman said Likins agreed to meet with him yesterday to discuss commencement concerns — specifically, the role students will have to play in the restoration of commencement.

After receiving feedback from the community, Likins said he learned people value a university-wide commencement, but they do not appreciate disruptive behavior.

"We understand that perfection is not a reasonable early expectation," Likins and Chapman wrote in a memo to the community. "But we expect to see real progress."

Chapman said reaching this goal requires the cooperation of every student, parent, and guest at commencement.

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SHOWING THEIR COLORS



DAVID HARDEN/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Members of the UA Color Guard make their presence easily seen on the east side of the Mall yesterday during a "Pride of Arizona" marching band practice. The band, which entertains crowds at every Wildcat football game, practices four days a week to master its synchrony on the field.

Wall sparks controversy, conversation

By Monica Warren
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

Reactions to the Writing on the Wall Project on the Mall have been as varied as the bricks that support it.

With reactions ranging from sad to angry to understanding, volunteers say UA students have been very responsive to the wall and its goals.

"A lot of people think it's interesting and eye-opening," said Valencia Patterson, a pro-business junior and student volunteer at the wall. "Mostly what I've gotten are stares."

The 37-foot wall was built as a kickoff to the UA's first annual diversity day, which will be held tomorrow. Blocks with words and phrases like "The Holocaust never happened," "Muslims=terrorists" and "White trash" were made to illustrate the stereotypes that build barriers between people.

"There have been people who were riding on their bikes who would stop and get mad," said Paty Gonzalez, bilingual education junior and public relations vice president of the Residence Hall Association who was also volunteering at the wall.

Some students who saw the wall were offended by its strong content.

Chemistry sophomore Dominique Trujillo was upset by the wall and said he would rather see something positive and inspirational while walking across campus.

"I don't think it's necessary," he said of the wall. "It's sort of trashy to have it on campus."

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STEVEN SOLOWAY/Arizona Daily Wildcat

A student gazes at the offensive material written on "The Writing on the Wall Project" yesterday afternoon on the Mall.

Likins defends university's rating

By Joe Ferguson
ARIZONA DAILY WILDCAT

President Peter Likins said a recent report that gave the UA a failing grade in affordability was based on old data and the UA has made strides in the last few years to improve financial aid to its students.

The report by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education gave Arizona's higher education system a grade of F on affordability in its biennial report card. The report was released Sept. 15.

The report, called "Measuring Up 2004," indicated whether students could afford to pay for higher education by comparing tuition levels at state colleges and universities with median income

levels and available financial aid.

Fifty percent of the grade in the report was based on a family's ability to pay for tuition. The report looked at the combined costs of tuition, room and board for students attending four-year institutions in Arizona.

Likins said the data used for the report card was from fiscal year 2003. The data painted the UA in an unfair light, highlighting a period when the UA was not offering much financial aid to students but had one of the lowest tuition rates in the country, Likins said.

"Our tuition was the lowest in America," Likins said. "But our financial aid was really lousy. That is why we got an F. Not because our tuition was high."

During the 2002-2003 school year, tuition for resident undergraduates was

\$2,583. This year's tuition is \$4,062.

While resident tuition at the UA has gone up 63 percent since 2002, Likins said the UA has dramatically increased financial aid to its students.

The state also contributed to the dismal rating of its colleges and universities by not contributing to need-based financial aid, Likins said.

A portion of the report called "Strategies for Affordability" measured funding set aside in-state funds for need-based financial aid. This amount was compared to the federal funding for need-based financial aid. In Arizona, there was no state funding.

Likins said the lack of funding from the state hurt the state's rating, and the

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