

Introduction/Case Statement
Engineering Development Fund Brochure
The University of Iowa College of Engineering

Comprehending is like walking out of a cave into the light of day. Gradually, with the passing of momentary blindness, the unfamiliar becomes familiar; the unknown known.

This famous analogy is made by Socrates in Plato's Republic. It's just one of the bits of wisdom imparted by the celebrated mentor to his protégé some 1,500 years ago—an era that was a far cry from our own. Today, the realities of higher education—tight budgets, heavy enrollments and space limitations—often rule out one-on-one instruction.

However, at the University of Iowa College of Engineering, some students are receiving individual instruction through an exciting UI venture called the Undergraduate Scholar Assistantship Program, which is enabling them, as Socrates might say, to “walk into the light of day.” This University program supports outstanding students in assisting faculty members with their teaching and research. Students' activities range from data analysis to library research to manuscript editing. One even published a scholarly paper in a professional journal.

But there are other benefits that students realize. An increased appetite for scholarly inquiry. The exquisite satisfaction of discovering an idea. And possibly the most lasting benefit: the fulfillment of working and learning alongside a faculty member, a mentor, a kindred spirit to join in intellectual pursuits—perhaps much like Plato did with Socrates so many centuries ago.

Like the Undergraduate Scholar Assistantship Program, the Engineering Development Fund is elevating the college's quality and moving it into the national and international spotlight. For this fund to continue to ensure progress, though, it needs the support of alumni and friends. Private generosity is critical to strengthening the college's role as a pacesetter in a variety of engineering areas.

By helping to advance the college's initiatives, the Engineering Development Fund is a lot like the daylight in Socrates' analogy. It can help make the unfamiliar of new investigations familiar. It can help create knowledge out of the formidable unknown.

New technologies developed at the college in areas like laser engineering are dazzling almost beyond belief. But ultimately they are no more dazzling than the minds that created them. You're invited to read the following pages about some protégés and mentors who exemplify the ideals of the Undergraduate Scholar

Assistantship Program. Your generosity can help ensure that in the future minds like theirs will be looking out from the cave into the light—the light of ideas.