

Meeting of the Board of Regents  
April 7, 1979

REMARKS TO THE FACULTY & STUDENTS

APRIL 6, 1979

DONALD W. ZACHARIAS

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK IN KENTUCKY FOR SPRINGTIME. I MAY BE A LITTLE EARLY FOR REDBUD AND DOGWOOD, BUT I CAN EASILY RECALL THE BEAUTY OF THESE HILLS FROM THE MANY PLEASANT YEARS I SPENT IN KENTUCKY. YOU HAVE GIVEN TOMMIE AND ME A TYPICAL COMMONWEALTH WELCOME. WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT BEING HERE AND APPRECIATE THE WARMTH OF YOUR WELCOME.

WHAT I HAVE FELT SINCE COMING TO CAMPUS IS TYPICAL OF THE ENTIRE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH AS DIRECTED BY YOUR SCREENING COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF REGENTS. EVERYONE HAS BEEN HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL IN EACH STAGE OF THE PROCESS. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME I HAVE SEEN THE "SPIRIT OF WESTERN" UP CLOSE. YOU CALL IT "THAT OTHER THING." I UNDERSTAND NOW WHAT PRESIDENT CHERRY HAD IN MIND.

ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT REPORTERS HAVE ASKED ME IN RECENT DAYS IS: "WHY DID YOU APPLY FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY?" THE PEOPLE ASKING THAT QUESTION OBVIOUSLY DON'T KNOW ME. I HAVE TOO MUCH RESPECT FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF A MAJOR UNIVERSITY AND AM TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE PRESIDENT'S NEED FOR SUPPORT FROM ALL ASPECTS OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY TO THINK THAT I AM CAPABLE OF JUDGING WHO NEEDS MY TALENTS. MY CANDIDACY FOR THAT HIGH OFFICE AT THIS INSTITUTION OR ANY FUTURE CAMPUS WILL RESULT FROM THE ACTIONS OF MY COLLEAGUES. IF YOU WHO KNOW THIS CAMPUS BEST THINK I CAN PROVIDE THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP, THEN I AM AVAILABLE TO USE EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY AND EVERY YEAR OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE I POSSESS TO SHARE IN SHAPING THE KIND OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM THIS UNIVERSITY WANTS FOR ITS STUDENTS. I AM DEEPLY HONORED TO BE AMONG THE FINALISTS IN YOUR CURRENT SEARCH AND WOULD CONSIDER IT A DISTINCT HONOR TO BE PRESIDENT OF WESTERN.

AND NOW, YOU DESERVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT MY PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGING A UNIVERSITY. I AM ASSUMING THAT WE ARE ALL COMMITTED TO SOME COMMON GOALS. WE WANT TO:

- SUSTAIN QUALITY IN INSTRUCTION
- ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE WHERE IT MAY BE LACKING
- MAKE HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO THE ECONOMICALLY AND CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED
- RETAIN COMPETENT FACULTY AND GIVE THEM ADEQUATE SALARIES.

IF WE AGREE ON THESE, I CAN PROCEED WITH MY OWN VIEWS. THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TENET IS THIS: THE PRESIDENT AT A STATE INSTITUTION MUST OPERATE IN A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CAMPUS AND THE STATE LEADERSHIP. AS PRESIDENT OF WESTERN, I CAN DO VERY LITTLE. WITH YOUR COMMITMENT, WE CAN DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING. I AM NOT A SELF-MADE MAN AND SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT MANY EXIST. MY SUCCESSES AS A TEACHER COME FROM HAVING OUTSTANDING STUDENTS. MY SUCCESSES IN ADMINISTRATION COME FROM EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS AND TUTORS. MY SUCCESSES IN LIFE COME FROM A LOVING FAMILY AND A GROUP OF EXCITING FRIENDS. WITH THAT POINT OF VIEW, I EXPECT TO CONFER ON A REGULAR BASIS WITH FACULTY MEMBERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENTS BECAUSE IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO SHARE INFORMATION AND GOALS. WE MAY NOT AGREE ON EVERYTHING, BUT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTION.

HIGHER EDUCATION HAS BECOME SO COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE THAT THE COMMITMENT TO NEW PROGRAMS AND IMPROVEMENTS HAS TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS, THE ALUMNI, THE REGENTS, THE FACULTY, AND THE STUDENTS. THAT LEADS ME TO MY SECOND TENET. THE PRESIDENT HAS TO BE THE LEADING ADVOCATE FOR THE UNIVERSITY. I AM CONVINCED THAT THERE IS A GREAT STORY TO BE TOLD ABOUT THIS UNIVERSITY. IF THAT IS NOT TRUE, TELL ME WHILE I AM HERE SO I CAN REDUCE THE FIELD OF CANDIDATES. YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH PRESIDENTS WHO LOVE THE CAMPUS AND OBVIOUSLY THE FEELING HAS BEEN MUTUAL. THEY HAVE BUILT A REPUTATION OF STEWARDSHIP THAT WILL MAKE THE NEXT PRESIDENT'S JOB MUCH EASIER. I HAVE NOTED THE ACADEMIC BACKGROUND OF EVERY FACULTY MEMBER AND ADMINISTRATOR. YOU HAVE RECRUITED WIDELY AND WELL. ALL THAT IS TO THE CREDIT OF THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE CARRIED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DECISION MAKING OVER THE YEARS. IF WE ARE TO MAKE THE CASE FOR SUPPORT THAT THIS UNIVERSITY DESERVES, WE WILL HAVE TO DO IT TOGETHER.

THAT CASE TO THE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TO THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR, TO THE FORMER STUDENTS, AND TO THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH WILL BE BASED UPON A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY. TODAY, I CAN ONLY INITIATE THAT DIALOGUE BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THE INFORMATION OR AUTHORITY THAT I NEED TO FORM A COMPLETE PLAN OF ACTION.

MY THIRD PRINCIPLE, THEN, IS THAT THE CASE FOR THIS UNIVERSITY SHOULD BE BASED UPON EXCELLENCE IN INSTRUCTION, QUALITY IN CURRICULUM DESIGN, AND INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE STATE. FROM WHAT I HAVE OBSERVED AND READ ABOUT THIS FACULTY, I KNOW YOU ARE ALREADY COMMITTED TO DOING YOUR JOB WELL. BUT, LET'S FACE IT, GOOD TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ADVISING ARE DEMANDING, GRUELING TASKS. THE PREPARATION OF FIRST-CLASS LECTURES, CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS, AND QUALITY EXAMINATIONS REQUIRE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF A FACULTY MEMBER'S ENERGY. IF THE

INFORMATION THAT WESTERN STUDENTS RECEIVE IS TO BE CURRENT, THIS FACULTY HAS ALSO TO BE ENGAGED IN RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND NATIONAL ACADEMIC ASSOCIATIONS. ALL THAT WILL REQUIRE INCREASED STAFF SUPPORT FOR THE FACULTY AND MORE MONEY THAN I SEE IN YOUR PRESENT BUDGET.

WHERE WILL IT COME FROM? FIRST, WE WILL NEED TO DO THE FINEST BUDGET PLANNING POSSIBLE TO BE CERTAIN THAT STATE OFFICIALS WILL RECOGNIZE HOW WE INTEND TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION. SECOND, EVERY DEAN, DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON, AND FACULTY MEMBER WILL HAVE TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT GRANT PROPOSALS AND SOLICIT FUNDS FROM FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY. THIRD, I WILL REQUEST THE BOARD OF REGENTS TO AUTHORIZE SEVEN GRANTS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE IN 1979-80 (ONE FOR EACH COLLEGE). THE AMOUNTS WILL BE MODEST THE FIRST YEAR, BUT I FULLY EXPECT TO HAVE THEM SUPPORTED BY FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY AFTER THE FIRST YEAR. SINCE WE ALL RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF GOOD TEACHING, WE MUST HONOR THOSE WHO EXCEL. IN ADDITION, I WILL ASK EACH DEAN TO WORK WITH ME IN DEVISING A PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH ENDOWED LECTURESHIPS AND CHAIRS TO RECOGNIZE THOSE FACULTY MEMBERS WHO BRING SPECIAL DISTINCTION TO THE UNIVERSITY. MEANWHILE, WE WILL KEEP EXPLORING FOR FUNDS FROM PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT THE KIND OF ACADEMIC WORK BEING OFFERED AT WESTERN. THIS WILL NOT BE A ONE-PERSON SHOW AND THE JOB OF FINDING SPECIAL FUNDING WILL NOT BE EASY. IF WE ACT WISELY AND IF YOU WILL HELP ME, I BELIEVE WE CAN CONVINCE OUR CONSTITUENTS OF THE VALUE OF OUR CASE.

SEVERAL OF YOU ARE ALREADY AT WORK ON SPECIAL PROJECTS. I READ RECENTLY THAT TWO FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN AWARDED \$50,000 FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES TO CONDUCT AN INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE IN ENGLISH AND HISTORY. I CONGRATULATE YOU UPON YOUR SUCCESSES AND HOPE YOUR EXAMPLE WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO TRY SIMILAR PROJECTS.

MUCH OF OUR SUCCESS WILL DEPEND UPON THE STRENGTH OF WESTERN'S CURRICULUM. I WOULD EXPECT TO GIVE THAT A THOROUGH REVIEW. I AM SURE YOU ALREADY HAVE COMMITTEES AT WORK ON THAT PROJECT. I WANT TO SEE THEIR REPORTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE AS MANY OF OUR PROGRAMS ACCREDITED AS THE RESOURCES WILL ALLOW. THIS IS THE TIME TO RECRUIT THE BEST PERSON WE CAN FIND FOR EVERY VACANCY AND TO STRENGTHEN THE CURRICULUM BY SETTING PRIORITIES FOR EACH ACADEMIC UNIT. LET ME STRESS AGAIN THAT THIS IS A JOB FOR THE ENTIRE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY, BUT THE PRESIDENT SETS THE PROCESS IN MOTION AND SEES THAT IT IS FINISHED.

IN THE UNIVERSITIES THAT I KNOW BEST THERE IS A MAJOR REVIEW OF CURRICULUM TAKING PLACE BECAUSE OF SHIFTING ENROLLMENTS. I HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN ENROLLMENT

FIGURES FOR THIS CAMPUS, BUT I PRESUME YOU HAVE SEEN THE SAME MIGRATION FROM THE LIBERAL ARTS AND YOU ARE PROBABLY DEBATING SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT SURROUND THE QUESTION OF WHAT IS AN EDUCATED PERSON. LET ME GIVE YOU A BRIEF VERSION OF MY RESPONSE TO THAT QUESTION. FIRST, WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES WHAT KIND OF WORK WILL OUR GRADUATES BE PERFORMING? THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SAYS WE HAVE BECOME AN INFORMATION ECONOMY. FROM PAPER PRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS TO SATELLITES TO THE MEDIA, MUCH OF OUR GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT IS DEPENDENT UPON PROCESSING AND TRANSMITTING DATA. OUR GRADUATES SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH MATHEMATICAL SOPHISTICATION TO BE ABLE TO INTERPRET THE FLOOD OF DATA THAT IS AT THEIR FINGER TIPS. EVERY PERSON WHO CLAIMS A UNIVERSITY DEGREE SHOULD HAVE A COMMAND OF THE LANGUAGE AND BE ABLE TO EXPRESS HIMSELF OR HERSELF EFFECTIVELY AND PRECISELY. SCIENCE IS SO MUCH A PART OF OUR LIVES THAT I BELIEVE ANY EDUCATED CITIZEN MUST KNOW THE FUNDAMENTALS OF AT LEAST ONE SCIENCE. THE HOLDER OF A UNIVERSITY DEGREE MUST UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS OF INQUIRY AND HOW KNOWLEDGE HAS EVOLVED. GRADUATES SHOULD HAVE A SENSE OF KINSHIP WITH THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED OUT THEIR LIVES AND WITH THE PERILS AND JOYS THAT BROUGHT MEANING TO THEIR EXISTENCE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE BASICS OF OTHER CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS. THEY SHOULD DISCOVER WHY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IT IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVE ETHICAL AND MORAL STANDARDS. FOR THOSE WITH CREATIVE TALENTS, THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD ASSIST THEM IN DEVELOPING AND DISPLAYING THEIR CREATIVITY. WITH THAT AS MY PREFACE, I AM NOW READY TO SAY THAT THE UNIVERSITY SHOULD PROVIDE ITS GRADUATES WITH THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE WELL-BEING OF SOCIETY AND FOR FINDING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.

THIS BRINGS ME TO MY THIRD POINT ABOUT THE CASE FOR THE UNIVERSITY. WE HAVE TO OFFER INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE STATE. I WILL TAKE TIME TO GIVE A FEW EXAMPLES OF WHAT I HAVE IN MIND.

FIRST, THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR OUR UNIVERSITIES TO ACT AS THOUGH ENROLLMENT IN COLLEGE IS A FULL-TIME ACTIVITY THAT ONLY EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FIVE YEAR OLDS HAVE THE ABILITY TO HANDLE. WHETHER FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES OR LEARNING NEW SKILLS, MANY ADULTS WITH FULL-TIME JOBS WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN UNIVERSITY COURSES ON SOMETHING MORE THAN A CASUAL BASIS. I THINK THAT IS A GROUP WE HAVE TO BE CREATIVE IN SERVING.

A FEW YEARS AGO WHILE VISITING OKLAHOMA CITY I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE INNOVATION THAT WAS TAKING PLACE AT SOUTH OKLAHOMA CITY JUNIOR COLLEGE. IN TWO HOURS THERE I SAW MORE INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING THAN I HAD SEEN ON MANY UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. WE HAVE TO HELP OTHER FACULTIES REDISCOVER THE EXCITEMENT OF DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE. AS FUNDING BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT, WE CAN WALLOW IN OUR OWN SELF-PITY AND FEELINGS OF REJECTION. MOST OF US SHOULD REALIZE, HOWEVER,

THAT WE ARE PLACING THE BURDEN AT THE WRONG LEVEL IF WE EXPECT THE LEGISLATURE AND REGULATORY BOARDS TO TELL US HOW TO DO A BETTER JOB OF TEACHING.

SECOND, AS WE EXAMINE ALL THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH FINDING NEW CLIENTS AND PROVIDING THEM WITH PROPER ADVISING, I HOPE UNIVERSITIES RETURN TO ANOTHER BASIC COMPONENT OF EACH CAMPUS. I HOPE THEY REDISCOVER THEIR STUDENTS. IT MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE WHETHER WE ACCEPT RUTH WEINSTOCK'S PROPOSAL ON THE GRAYING OF THE CAMPUS AND AIM PROGRAMS AT THE ELDERLY OR FOLLOW HARVARD'S EXAMPLE AND DESIGN A NEW CORE CURRICULUM. THE HEART OF ALL OUR CAMPUSES IS THE STUDENT. WITH A GROUP LIKE YOU, I ASSUME THAT POINT NEEDS NO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT.

ONE OF MY FRIENDS WHO UNDERSTANDS ADMINISTRATIVE WORK GAVE ME A SLOGAN FOR MY DESK. IT READS: "EAT A BULLFROG FIRST THING IN THE MORNING AND NOTHING WORSE WILL HAPPEN TO YOU THE REST OF THE DAY." IN THE COMING YEARS BULLFROGS MAY BE A STAPLE IN ALL OUR DIETS, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO USE THE REMAINDER OF MY TIME TO DESCRIBE ONE FINAL PREMISE. AS ACADEMIC ADVISERS, WE ALL GET THE QUESTION FROM STUDENTS, "WHAT ARE THE JOB POSSIBILITIES IF I MAJOR IN SUBJECT X?" MY WIFE TOLD ME RECENTLY ABOUT THE MOTHER OF A UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN GRADUATE WHO IS STILL SEARCHING FOR WORK IN HIS FIELD. THE PARENTS AND THE GRADUATE BLAME THE JOB PLACEMENT OFFICE IN HIS DEPARTMENT FOR HIS LACK OF SUCCESS. MY WIFE BECAME A LISTENER TO SOMEONE WHO SEES THE CAMPUS AS BEING AT FAULT FOR LETTING A STUDENT GET A DEGREE IN A CROWDED FIELD. I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT INTERPRETATION OF THE PROBLEM. IF THE STUDENT CHOSE THAT FIELD WITHOUT REALIZING THE PROFESSIONAL SITUATION, HE MUST HAVE SLEPT THROUGH HIS CLASSES AND HAD UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS. THE APPROACH TO SOLVING THIS KIND OF PROBLEM HAS ALREADY BEEN SUGGESTED BY MARVIN FELDMAN, PRESIDENT OF THE FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY. IN A RECENT CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARTICLE, HE CALLED FOR MORE INSTRUCTION ABOUT THE NATURE OF WORK. INCREASINGLY, IT APPEARS OUR STUDENTS' FIRST SERIOUS EXPOSURE TO THE "REAL WEATHER OF FREE SOCIETY IS A FAILURE TO FIND A JOB THEY FEEL IS SUITABLE," MR. FELDMAN SAYS. I THINK HE IS RIGHT. THE QUESTION IS: HOW CAN WE DO THAT? IN MY OWN DEPARTMENT WE DEVELOPED AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE STUDENTS WHO PASS THE INITIAL SCREENING. THOUGH IT IS ONLY THREE YEARS OLD, THE PROGRAM HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN PLACEMENT, UNDERSTANDING OF WORK, AND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF OUR GRADUATES. HELPING STUDENTS FIND PLACEMENTS FOR THIS INTERNSHIP ALSO REMINDS US THAT WE HAVE TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN GIVING STUDENTS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WORK IS. IF YOU TALK TO EMPLOYERS, YOU KNOW THEY COMPLAIN ABOUT THE EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS OF MANY COLLEGE GRADUATES. WHAT MORE CAN WE DO? IT HAS BEEN INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT SOME OF OUR MORE IMAGINATIVE GRADUATES HAVE DONE.

WHEN THEY FIND THE DOOR TO EMPLOYMENT CLOSED, THEY LOOK FOR WAYS TO BECOME ENTREPRENEURS. INSTEAD OF LETTING THE ORGANIZATION BECOME THEIR NEW RELIGION, THEY USE THEIR CREATIVE ABILITY TO DEVELOP NEW MARKETS FOR THEIR SKILLS. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, THEN, CAN FUNCTION MORE TO TEACH THOSE SKILLS AND TO SERVE AS A LINK BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WORK.

I REALIZE THAT I HAVE GIVEN YOU NO PANACEA FOR HANDLING OUR CLIENTS OF THE 80's. BUT, THE POPULATION OF THE PEOPLE WE HAVE RELIED UPON TO FILL OUR CLASSES IS DECLINING. IN THE COMING DECADE OUR STUDENTS WILL BE MORE DIVERGENT IN AGE, ABILITY, AND AMBITION. OUR SOURCES OF FUNDING ARE BEING ERODED BY SOME DISSATISFACTION WITH OUR PAST PERFORMANCE, MUCH COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES, AND HIGH INFLATION. I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE HAVE THE INGENUITY LEFT ON CAMPUSES LIKE WESTERN TO ENACT THE CHANGES THAT WILL BRING A NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TAXPAYERS. I WANT TO PROPOSE A COUNTERBALANCE TO PROPOSITION 13. PROPOSITION 1 IS "OUR SOCIETY HAS PROFITED FROM THE LABOR AND DISCOVERIES OF OTHER PEOPLE; MOST OF THOSE PEOPLE LEARNED THEIR APPROACH TO LIFE AND WORK ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS."

YOU HAVE LISTENED PATIENTLY AND I WANT YOU TO ASK ME SOME QUESTIONS. YOU HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE DRAMA BEING ENACTED AT WESTERN. A CHARACTER IN ONE OF AGATHA CHRISTIE'S STORIES (THE MYSTERIOUS MR. QUINN) SAID: "YOU SAY YOUR LIFE IS YOUR OWN BUT CAN YOU DARE TO IGNORE THE CHANCES THAT YOU ARE TAKING PART IN A GIGANTIC DRAMA UNDER THE ORDERS OF A DIVINE PRODUCER? YOUR CUE MAY NOT COME UNTIL THE END OF THE PLAY—IT MAY BE TOTALLY UNIMPORTANT, A MERE WALK-ON PART, BUT UPON IT MAY HANG THE ISSUE OF THE PLAY. IF YOU DO NOT GIVE THE CUE TO ANOTHER PLAYER, THE WHOLE EDIFICE MAY CRUMBLE. YOU, AS YOU, MAY NOT MATTER TO ANYONE IN THE WORLD BUT YOU AS A PERSON IN A PARTICULAR PLACE MAY MATTER UNIMAGINABLY."