

STATEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION

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Last week it was suggested that I might prepare brief remarks on these three subjects: (1) my philosophy of education, (2) my philosophy of administration, and (3) the basis of my desire to be considered for the presidency of Western Kentucky. In a sense it is difficult to distinguish among the three subjects, but I shall address them in that order.

My Philosophy of Education

I am a native of rural East Tennessee. Like many Americans from similar backgrounds, I saw in public higher education an avenue to my life's goals; thus I am a product of public higher education, and I believe in it. I believe further that public higher education can ideally serve the individual, the region, the state, the nation. Let me elaborate on that service by posing certain goals—certain values—that seem appropriate for public higher education.

(1) I believe in growth and in the dynamics of growth. When a chancellor makes this assertion, he is frequently accused of "selling out" to quantity, to formula funding, to the lowest common denominator. I don't accept this view. Since I have been Chancellor at UT-Chattanooga, enrollment has almost doubled; yet I take pride in the quality that has accompanied that growth. Since 1973 UT-Chattanooga has experienced no decrease in ACT scores for entering students, no decrease in the average high school class rank of entering freshmen, and no grade inflation at the University. At the same time the institution has committed itself to upgrading faculty and faculty development, to seeking accreditation for all appropriate programs from disciplinary associations, and to developing an honors program of exceptionally high quality. Institutions grow because the quality they project makes them attractive to potential students; thus I believe in growth, in expanded service and influence. In my judgment, an institution's reputation should be based on how it serves its students and the quality of those whom it graduates. It should not rest on how many students it can exclude from admission. At UT-Chattanooga I have sought growth, have committed the institution to serving new clienteles, and have encouraged a strong marketing concept.

- (2) I do not believe that career education and liberal education are mutually exclusive. Since I have been Chancellor at UT-Chattanooga, there has been no decrease in credit hours generated by the arts and sciences, the general education distribution requirements have been increased, and enrollments in foreign languages—ancient and modern—have increased. At the same time, enrollments have increased dramatically and accreditation has been received in such areas as engineering, nursing and social work. Why should liberal arts and career education be at war? After all, English and history majors are going to need a job. At the same time, business and engineering majors need to communicate clearly and both orally and in writing, to employ skills in mathematics and logic and to know where they are in place, in time and in values. When I was an 18-year-old East Tennessean, I had no idea that the future would find me as a government agent speaking Spanish on the streets of New York City. Education—whether liberal or career education—should prepare the student for the unknown future and mysteries it may hold.
- (3) I believe higher education should maintain high quality in fulfilling all its goals—teaching, public and community service, and research. To do this requires a committed administration and faculty, a clear mechanism for planning and institutional evaluation, and adequate financial resources. I believe a strong university with a clear vision of what it can and cannot be is likely to fulfill its goals with greatest success.

My Philosophy of Administration

I believe in a strong, goal-oriented, accountable administration. The etymology of the word administration suggests service, and in my view the purpose of the administration is to serve its various constituencies by managing planned achievement of institutional goals. That service takes several forms:

- (1) The Gathering of Resources. At a state institution a president should be forceful, politically astute, and committed to attaining state tax support. At the same time, I believe the 1980's will require state institutions to seek aggressively private sources of financial support. At UT-Chattanooga I have been particularly pleased that we have improved our state-funding profile relative to other state institutions. At the same time I am proud of our improved private funding—including agency and foundation, alumni and corporate support, and especially funds generated for our campus in an aggressive capital campaign. To acquire funds successfully from both state

and private sources requires a broad vision, an ability to encourage institutional pride and ambition in many constituencies, and commitment to a comprehensive development program.

In the 1980's the successful college president will spend major efforts articulating needs, defining potential sources of support, and building support programs. As other interests lay claim to state dollars, the president will be required to defend his need; and I consider one of my abilities to be mobilizing the entire university—supporters, faculty, administration, students—to develop financial support.

- (2) The Managing of Resources. The 1980's will be characterized by increased competition for money, students, and sources of political support. In my judgment, the institutions that survive and flourish will be those that engage in broad-based planning and goals formulation. Likewise, institutions will have to manage their resources—both fiscal and human—in a thorough and collegial fashion. At UT-Chattanooga we have adopted a formal management by objectives system. Five years ago—with broad campus participation and the use of a goals inventory—we adopted a campus mission statement. Each year both individuals and units develop goals and objectives which seek to enhance the institution's fulfillment of that mission. A modified zero-based budgeting approach undergirds the overall MBO system, and campus-wide surveys recently administered suggest that we have high morale resulting in large part from a sense of accomplishment.

A formal management system based on adequate long-range planning provides better control, better sense of purpose, and clearer communication. I do not believe any particular management system is perfect, but I believe MBO can—with appropriate administrative sensitivity—be applied to the University setting.

- (3) The Achievement of Collegial Support. A University is a unique institution. Decisions can be made without participation and attempts at consensus, but they will seldom be good decisions. I have always taken pride in faculty-administrative relations at UT-Chattanooga. In that regard communication is the key. I believe in openness, maximum providing of information, and full discussion of serious issues. A University is a community in which all citizens should have a voice that will be heard. The 1980's are going to be trying times for higher education. In my judgment, an introverted, secretive administration will not survive those times.

- (4) The Ability to Delegate. A chancellor is only as good as the staff around him. I believe in a strong staff which has the delegated authority to carry out its responsibilities. In all my administrative career I have tried to employ a hard-working, creative staff that recognizes it is accountable for results, not just good intentions.
- (5) The Commitment to Excellence. One of the great dangers the 1980's will bring is a failure of nerve. Many institutions will be tempted to concentrate on survival, not excellence. The temptation to seek monetary gains through compromise with institutional integrity will be great. I do not accept the "warm body" theory of student recruitment. At UT-Chattanooga I am proud that we recruited enough excellent football players to win the Southern Conference each of the last two years. I am proud that we recruited enough National Merit Semifinalists to support a rigorous scholars program. I am proud that we recruited more chemistry majors to our campus than did UT-Knoxville. I am proud that we have increased music majors by over 100% while developing high quality performance ensembles. I am proud that our nursing students cumulatively excelled on state boards. I believe the commitment to excellence is the surest avenue to institutional survival, and I believe a systematic marketing plan can identify ample students for an institution that will maintain high standards in which students can take pride. And that brings me to the final subject I was requested to discuss.

My Desire to be Considered for the
Presidency of Western Kentucky University

The two days that I am spending in Bowling Green will permit each of us to assess whether my talents coincide with your vision for the future of Western Kentucky University. When I was notified of my nomination for the Western presidency, I was quite surprised. I am quite happy at UT-Chattanooga. I had not sought the nomination. I didn't know whether or not I was interested. As I have read about Western, talked to your trustees and others about the opportunities here, I note much that is of interest to me.

Western Kentucky is a much larger school than my present institution. I am certain both its problems and opportunities are different. But I have long been aware of the outstanding reputation Western has. I am aware that you have a long heritage of strong leadership, regional service, alumni support, academic and athletic excellence. To assume the presidency will certainly be a heavy responsibility for whomever you may choose.

To an extent my experience in higher education has been a rather clear indication of my values both in education and administration. That is, my years as Chancellor at UT-Chattanooga rather clearly illustrate the principles to which I am committed. They are these:

- (1) An institution should define its purpose (a mission statement) and plan well.
- (2) A president should commit himself (in roughly equal parts) to gathering resources and managing the institution.
- (3) A president should have a strong staff that is capable of accepting both authority and responsibility.
- (4) Compromise with standards or principles of institutional integrity constitutes the greatest threat-and temptation-to institutions as they face the 1980's.
- (5) Liberal arts and career education provide an opportunity for creative synthesis, not an inevitable battleground.
- (6) Public funding sources alone cannot support public higher education in the decade ahead. Institutions that aspire to excellence will also require private support.
- (7) A University is not a business; it is a unique institution in which good decisions require collegial participation. On the other hand, management systems (e.g., MBO) offer opportunities for creative assimilation into a collegial mode of governance and management.