

*Statement of President
Zacharias
Board of Regents Meeting
13/1/79*

*#11
12/1/79*

During the past several months there has been continuous discussion of salaries on campus. I was not here to be a part of those early discussions but after my appointment, I have not spent a single day that has not included some consideration of our budget and its importance to our people. I have to deal with realities and recommendations that will permit us to pay our bills and meet our payroll until Frankfort gives us a new budget effective July 1, 1980. I cannot indulge in wild statements about what I wish were in the budget. If I could merely wish, I would wish big and would certainly wish for more than has been available in the past.

The decision to give priority to salary and wage increases was made prior to my arrival on campus. It was a priority which I have heartily endorsed and one which has received a majority of my time in practically every part of this state since I arrived on campus.

There are many successes to report and I expect more. We have made obvious progress in our relationship with the Council on Higher Education. The Council recommendations for Western for the 1980-82 biennium recognizes the need we have expressed for improvements in compensation for university employees. I have been pleased with my working relationship with the Council and my recent appointment to the Executive Committee of the Council is an example of their confidence in us.

A few days ago, the Council budget recommendations were forwarded to the Department of Finance and the Governor for preparation of the 1980-82 Executive Budget. I am asking in every way I know how that the executive and legislative branches provide the support necessary to continue to

improve salaries and wages.

In a recent letter to all university employees, I outlined improvements in compensation and benefits which have been made during the past year:

1. Increases in salaries and wages were effective beginning July 1, 1979, and generally ranged from 5.5 percent for those at the minimum wage.
2. Most hourly employees were working from 38 3/4 to 40 hours per week prior to July 1 when the workweek was standardized at 37 1/2 hours. Wage rates were adjusted so that the same amount of wages were earned in the 37 1/2 hour workweek that were previously earned in the longer workweek.
3. Under the initial (and partial) implementation of the Position Classification and Compensation Plan, adjustments ranged from 10 cents per hour (\$16 per month) to 62 cents per hour (\$100 per month) for 703 employees.

Our continued interest in the welfare of the university employees is not confined to compensation, and I want to stress this point. I am concerned with fostering an atmosphere which will allow all employees to feel comfortable in discussing their role in the university.

We all know that the job market is not strong today. Many companies are facing mass layoffs. Jobs are hard to find. I recognize a need to make this campus the best possible place to work. That is a goal I have for every employee of the university.

I want outstanding leadership from our supervisors and have begun training programs to improve leadership skills. For all our people I want growth with the opportunity to improve their positions and their

benefits.

Regular organizational channels provide opportunities for employee input, and staff employees have a procedure available in case of grievances. That process is outlined in the Staff Handbook. I am looking for ways to make the process even better.

I continue to believe that if all university personnel work together we can be successful in our efforts in working with officials in Frankfort and in improving employee morale and welfare.