

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF REGENTS
NEW LEVEL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

December 12, 1996

AGENDA ITEM 1 - Call to Order

Required statutory notice having been given, a meeting of the New Level Oversight Committee of the Board of Regents of Western Kentucky University was held via interactive television from Room 212 of the Academic Complex on the Western campus and Room 207 of the Owensboro Campus. The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m., CST, by Mr. Earl Fischer, Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - Roll call

The following members were present:

Mr. Earl Fischer (Owensboro Campus)
Dr. Raymond Mendel (Bowling Green Campus)
Ms. Kristen Miller (Bowling Green Campus)
Mr. Raymond Preston (arrived approximately 3:30 p.m. at the Owensboro Campus)

Also present were Mrs. Liz Esters, Staff Assistant and Secretary to the Board of Regents; Dr. Charles Anderson, Vice President for Information Technology; Dr. Barbara Burch, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. James R. Ramsey, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Jerry Wilder, Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. Fred Hensley, Vice President for Institutional Advancement and Director of University Relations, and Ms. Deborah Wilkins, University Counsel.

Dr. Barbara Burch, Vice President for Academic Affairs, reviewed the goals of Moving to a New Level that were broken into the following four focus areas:

- 1. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS**
(Recruitment-Retention-Diversity-Performance)
 1. Academic qualifications of new students
 2. Advising for freshmen and preparation for major study
 3. Involvement in student recruitment/retention
 4. Effectiveness of advising
 5. Knowledge of general education/readiness to pursue major
 6. Senior assessment
 7. Graduate marketability quality assurance to employers

Dr. Burch noted that some modest increase has been realized in the ACT scores and the GPA levels of the entering students saying, "It's not enough to say that it's a significant increase, but it's something that we're attending to and looking at closely." Plans for recruiting are targeted toward increasingly getting more of the best students.

It has been determined that there has not been a systematic plan for recruiting Governor's Scholars to our campus. From approximately 700 in the state, each year we get about 50. Some of these kinds of things have already been turned around by

determining to go after Governor's Scholars next year as a way of increasing the overall qualification of our student body. Recruitment and retention are underway on so many fronts, it is hard to know where to begin. The University College is now being operationalized. This semester there were five classes with an enrollment of 107 students. Of those 107 students, only 4 of them, have left the University. Further review is under way. A handful of them, about 21, did not stay in the class, but at this point, it is strictly voluntary. University College is one of the best examples of taking what is being learned along the way and putting it into the plan so that it gets better. Twelve faculty members have been trained who are currently working in University College or are on the planning committee. Fifty to seventy faculty will participate in training to enhance their skills in addressing retention of beginning freshmen in January. A full day's retreat was spent with department heads on recruitment and retention to develop plans. Dr. Burch stated, "I think you will find in every single plan developed as part of our operating goals for next year, that every department has specific targets for recruitment and retention, and they are expressed in quantitative and measurable terms, and we will reach our goal. We have tentatively identified that retention goals will be such that, within the next five years, we are looking at a one-and-a-half percent increase over the previous mark every year. That's not one-and-a-half percent of the previous year--that's one-and-a-half percent more students every year. On recruitment, we anticipate by the fall of '98 to be successful enough to increase by 8.5% of beginning full-time freshmen and get back to the base of 1995. We have set very specific targets, and we are positioned to measure them along the way. Our proposal for the University College is today in its second reading before the Academic Council."

There has been a lot of very positive departmental buy-in to the University College structure; as a result, many of the departments themselves are participating in the freshmen experience in more significant and extensive ways than earlier was anticipated.

Every single department is either administering, completing the development of, or beginning to look at the validation and reliability of the senior assessment piece. It's taking different forms; there is still a way to go, but it is up and running, and more can now be said about the quality of our graduates.

In addition to the former measures, the College of Education is the one school that has given a quality assurance; although, many of the departments have done curriculum revisions. In fact, in one college, every single department has done curriculum revisions to include new assessment mechanisms, new technology use, and setting higher expectations for students.

In terms of measures of student quality of graduates, work is being done to collect data that shows success of graduates in very definitive terms: where they are, what they are doing, and getting their feedback.

II. ENHANCE FACULTY AND STAFF CAPACITY/QUALITY

8. a. Use of technology for instruction
- b. Increase class expectations
9. Recruit and retain best faculty
10. Reduce class sizes where necessary
11. Environment of excellence in teaching
12. Improved system of evaluating faculty and staff
13. Unit productivity evaluation system

14. Delivery systems and class sizes match instructional needs/
 purposes
15. Equitable system for evaluating service
16. Opportunities for staff development

It is safe to say that major initiative is coming in looking at the role of technology as a way of helping our students learn. Last year \$100,000 was awarded to faculty who would agree to do innovative uses of technology in ways that were going to enhance student learning. That will be reported on in January. Another round of competition with faculty will soon be under way with the added expectation that the best of what faculty develop and apply which shows differences in student learning, those faculty members will work in mentoring and assisting other faculty members.

History just graduated its first couple of master's degree students who took almost all of their work through our interactive distance learning. The department was extremely pleased with the results and found those students to be competent and in every way equal to students on campus, and maybe in some ways, even greater than.

Lots of professional development things are being done--five workshops this semester have focused on helping faculty incorporate technology applications. Websites have been created; and on many parts of the campus, you will see faculty members whose syllabi are on the internet and who communicate on a daily basis with their students and increase their accessibility; faculty video taping classes to do assessment of their teaching effectiveness, etc. Ten other workshops have been done on different kinds of strategies to focus on assessment of learning and improvement of teaching. A lot of things are happening through the Center for Teaching and Learning and through the help of some of our other very capable faculty.

In the hiring process (currently 32 faculty positions to be filled) expectations of this University are being laid out in ways that selections are made of really good people who are going to help us get where we need to go.

Orientation induction - Mentoring of experienced faculty with five new faculty members has been set up this year, so that some kind of assistance is provided to support new faculty members. We need to be competitive in terms of the kinds of salaries and the kinds of work conditions that we offer faculty with the hope that we will be able to reflect those recommendations in some of what comes in our operating plan are under current review.

Evaluation instruments of faculty are being used in some slightly different ways which hopefully will be helpful. A lot of time is being spent in identifying criteria for unit productivity; these will be put in the plan for next year some way that will allow departments and other units to set goals that exceed the normal expectations with the opportunity for the unit to be rewarded in achieving some of those priority goals as opposed to just individual awards. The service evaluation piece on this plan is under way and will be addressed in the spring. The staff development component also is being addressed in the spring semester by Human Resources.

III. INCREASE OUTREACH, ACCESS, AND SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

17. Increase access/provide developmental courses
18. Increase nonacademic credit, continuing education opportunities
19. Establish unit advisory councils
20. Enhance role of institutional advancement

The Community College is up and running. A new Dean was hired this year. They have completed strategic planning and redefining of mission and goal priorities for both the Community College as well as the Continuing Education and Training Divisions. They've set a fairly ambitious goal of about 20% increase in enrollments next year, which is dependent on whether or not the new facilities are available. Those are targeted for completion for the fall semester. Also, a system is proposed that will make the fee structure a little more competitive for the community college student. Right now, the fee is no different than the entire university; this is felt to be a barrier in enabling the Community College to realize its full potential. Student withdrawal rate from the Community College this fall was a little under 4%.

Articulation agreements are being increased, all of which again goes back to efforts to recruit students that ought to be coming to the University.

The other thing under outreach is advisory councils; just about every unit is now where it needs to be in terms of having created or creating an advisory council. Several of them have been having meetings with those councils. It is our expectation that by the end of the year advisory councils will be involved in all of the different areas.

Institutional Advancement - Virtually every unit on campus has been involved in identifying priorities for funding and the kinds of things that will advance the mission of the institution. Wish lists totaled approximately \$200 million, and these have to be trimmed back a good bit.

IV. ENHANCE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY CULTURE AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY (Dispositions - Commitments -

Experiences)

21. Encourage foreign study and presence of international scholars
22. Learn more from foreign students
23. Increase diversity
24. Enhance student commitment to public service/helping others
25. Increase student responsibility
26. Enhance intellectual atmosphere
27. Enhance administrator service and mission commitments

The target is to reflect the distribution type of the population of Kentucky, we already do represent that, but we are not settling for that.

There is movement on expanding the multi-cultural dimensions of our programs and our campus. Three new agreements have been signed this past year for exchanges with Austria, Russia, and China, all of which offer some faculty or student exchange opportunities. The first three students are on campus from Vienna this fall; we sent two students to Vienna. Ways to make it possible for our students to get this kind of experience are being worked on. Our first international archeological digs were conducted last summer in Honduras in which 25 students participated. This past year, faculty-led groups with students traveled not only to Honduras but to Guatemala, Ecuador, Quebec. The number of visiting scholars increased by about 25% to 21 on our campus this past year enabling additional kinds of opportunities for students and faculties.

The International Student Affairs and International Programs Offices have been brought together in one building which again is going to increase the opportunity for our native students and our international students to interact. Residence Life has been incredibly involved in everything from cosponsoring potlucks to offering cooperative programming in the dorms to try to increase the experience base of the students. The Herald will attempt to give some more focus to articles that deal with international student life.

The intellectual atmosphere of the campus was particularly targeted to be addressed through a committee that President Meredith is chairing in which they are doing some planning that probably won't fall in place until the next year. It will bring outstanding people to campus and create opportunities for our students to connect with folks who represent some of the kind of interactions that they need to get the fullest type of educational experience.

Two other things that are happening that directly relate to New Level and that affect every element of the campus: 1) There is much cross-divisional kinds of planning--lots of work is being done on setting targets and goals in measurable outcomes that show where we are now, where we expect to be: 2) We are also finding that it takes more than the resources of a single unit to make these things happen, and it is a way of bringing together the synergy of all the resources of the campus and also enhancing the communication piece.

Mr. Fischer asked about the organization that has been put together to address the mass amount of information gathering and program development; how extensive is this across campus as far as involvement and what type of formal structure is set up to feed this information back.

Dr. Burch addressed this question. Working through the deans and subsequently the department heads, expectations are set out on which ones of these goals it was legitimate to expect every unit to participate. Essentially each of the deans and their colleges have worked with their departments to identify departmental targets plus what the department is going to do and put them together in a college plan. The college plans have been incorporated into the division and then fed that back into the other divisions of the university. There is not a department or college on campus that cannot tell you what their goals are in each of these areas and from whom we have not collected information to see where we are. It is fine tuned as it is looked at. Some units have made a decision that sizewise; they don't need to be any bigger. Other units are making other kinds of decisions. Out of all of this is growing a set of criteria that again are feeding back into those units. All of this information is being collected unit by unit and fed into the bigger picture.

Dr. Wilder commented that Student Affairs has been assigned the responsibility for leading the public service learning component initiative of New Level. Very good progress has been made thus far this semester. A staff of six young professionals has been assembled, each of whom gives about 15 hours a week to this effort. They have as a team gathered a great deal of information and data about service learning from various

constituent groups and will be positioned in early spring semester to submit to the President and Board a comprehensive implementation plan for service learning.

Dr. Burch pointed out that the President, in a May retreat, set out the goals in New Level along with implementation dates and primary responsibility. One of the divisions or units on campus has been assigned the primary responsibility for each of the goals or action plans in New Level.

Ms. Miller stated that SGA has always wanted to have a system where faculty evaluations could be available to students. It's done on other campuses. Some have them on the internet; some have them published; it's just a resource whereby students will be able to see teaching styles, or get a grasp of what the course would be like before they actually get in the class. She felt it would cut back on students drop-adding, etc. SGA has been told they can do it as long as they do it; however, they don't have money budgeted for that purpose. Ms. Miller asked if this could be incorporated into Goal No. 12 of New Level in the future.

Dr. Burch indicated that it's a cost factor no matter who does it. Typically, this kind of thing does flow from the student government doing. Dr. Burch indicated no intention of doing this from her office. It normally would be a student-initiated thing.

Dr. Wilder stated he had been an advocate of this for many, many years, but had not been able to pull it off. He felt that the type of evaluation the students would like to have would be, as Kristen mentioned, something about the number of examinations, the type of examinations, something about the attendance policy, does the instructor give extra-credit work for students--these kinds of things. This would be very helpful to students in determining if they want to select a particular instructor or not.

Dr. Burch stated that the kinds of things that Dr. Wilder mentioned could very realistically happen. A number of faculty already are putting syllabi on the network. Dr. Ramsey has his on there--you can dig it up and find out what the requirements are; what the attendance policy is; what the grading structure is; expectations, etc."

Dr. Addington is working with the pilot of the University College freshmen experience, and that freshmen experience may very well become a point of contact for students to get a better feel about which courses are for them and what professorial styles are somehow going to be ones they want to move toward.

Dr. Burch commented that most faculties in every department and college would work hard with students to help them know about the expectations and the styles and the basic conduct of class. The faculty themselves are very committed to wanting to help students understand ahead of time as well.

Dr. Mendel commended that when the New Level issue was initially debated, and the students made this request then, his personal position was then and is now, "that information should be disseminated provided that its descriptive rather than evaluative."

Mr. Fischer stated, "As we approach the time when the Governor will be requesting a legislative review and changes in postsecondary education, one of the questions that keeps coming up is the transferability of credits between universities; between community colleges and the universities, etc. It seems to me that a rough spot with the Governor in some discussions we've had is that credit cannot be transferred among state universities. Are we addressing that in any way through New Level?"

Dr. Burch responded that this issue is being addressed at Western Kentucky University and added that on a recent State report, Western had more articulation agreements in place to address this than any other university in the State, and additional ones are being worked on.

Dr. Rice stated that in any community college there are two types of degree programs--one type is called a university parallel program which is designed to transfer fully to most any university. Currently, a couple of new programs are being looked at under this program. One is a business administration transfer which would transfer to Western and other major universities with full credit. The major issue is focused upon the career-oriented associate of applied science degrees where there is more of a technical or occupational content that may not necessarily be fully transferrable to a university degree. Western currently has an articulation agreement with Advanced Technology Institute in Bowling Green, a non-credit agency for the State and for their automated industrial systems technology degree. Forty-five credit hours will apply toward a university degree--the industrial technology degree for an associate of applied science degree.

Dr. Burch reported that a number of discussions are going on that would increase those linkages, and the question is addressed inside of goal 17. One of the things that is being discovered is that these action plans are taken quite seriously and some criteria is being set above and beyond what was already in the New Level's plan.

Mr. Fischer felt it would be good for the Committee to have the implementation dates for each goal with all of the detail to familiarize them with that information and an overview comment about the percentage of goals that are underway.

Dr. Burch stated that there is not a single goal listed into which there is not some effort going. Things are happening in each of the goals; but the more formal approach called for in the action plan is being planned, but won't officially be implemented for another semester, probably. Two or three goals have probably gotten less attention than others; largely because they tend to become part of what's happening when you address another goal. Dr. Burch stated, "My belief is that at the end of this year when we do an annual report on where we are, that we will have addressed every single goal; many of them we will have accomplished to the point that we're writing the next expectation level for implementation. I trust there might be a couple of goals that we may come to you and suggest that perhaps the criteria we wrote originally for measurement is not necessarily the best criteria that we might have used. A quick case in point is on our retention efforts, if we focus our measure on sophomore-junior retention, we're going to be missing the best opportunity for significant increases in retention. So, we're addressing every one of them. Some of them are more important than others in terms of our priorities right now.

Mr. Fischer requested that the Committee members be mailed information regarding the status of goals and also asked about the criteria being developed on the effectiveness of advising.

Dr. Hughes indicated that the University College is being looked at as a place where, at the freshmen level, there will be much better one-on-one advising on a regular basis, understanding that Freshmen tend to drop out in the first few weeks of the semester.

Dr. Burch noted that some criteria is clearly emerging--retention is obvious. The question will be the degree to which the different advising approaches we take result in increased retention. Another one is some reduction or some expediency in terms of students moving toward becoming enrolled in a major. Another thing would be trying to increase the extent to which freshmen have a successful experience. Dr. Burch stated, "We've already had a good illustration of that this year when we learned that our success rates in Mathematics were not quite what we'd hoped and realized that that was attributable in large part to allowing students to take courses they wanted to take whether they were ready for them or not. Now with a different assessment and placement system, we've increased the likelihood, through our advising, that they are going to be successful in that experience. I think there is no question that we're going to be able to track the degree of success. One of the things that I am very pleased about is that largely, through the initiative of the deans and department heads, that we now have an opportunity for the departments themselves to set criteria and become directly engaged in the advising and be a part of that freshman experience with students who think they might be pre-majors in that field and who have committed themselves to standing accountable for the same kinds of measures.

Mr. Preston asked if there "is a special effort being made to enable students to get their required courses in an orderly way so that if everything fell into place, they'd be able to graduate in four years instead of what now seems to be the standard five."

Dr. Burch stated, "The freshman experience tries to create the kind of advising and the kind of safety net to make that happen. The University College concept is based on the fact that the student has to complete 12 semester hours in core coursework that's part of general education; and those are specified, so everybody's going to know the student has done it. In addition to which, department's can designate other kinds of courses, up to 12 hours or more, that the student also needs to complete during that period of time. So there is a good deal more structure applied. It doesn't eliminate student choice, but it creates a lot of incentive to move the student through toward completion in a more systematic way. The answer to the question is yes. Everything we're doing says that if you can get a student moving in a positive direction so they can see that they are building toward something and not just collecting credits without knowing where they fit and then find out they are almost starting over, that you're going to increase the likelihood of holding on to them. Everything about University College is designed to do that."

Referring to Goal 1, Mr. Preston asked, "For students who have the ability but lack the preparation, do you feel that that shortfall could be made up more appropriately

in the community college; could it be covered in an intensive four-week summertime course on basics, mainly math and English; or is there some other system that you would recommend that remediation take place?"

Dr. Burch responded, "There is no single one answer because the nature of the deficiency, or the nature of the need, the lack of readiness, or whatever it is that varies greatly among the students. For some students the Freshman Experience will provide whatever it is that's going to enable them to make the transition into college and get off on the right foot and be successful. Sometimes it's a matter of study skills; sometimes it's a matter of not understanding the culture of college and the expectations; sometimes it's a matter of being enrolled in courses for which they simply don't have the prerequisite knowledge or skills in which case it may be a remedial situation; sometimes it's a matter of advising them into a different area to prepare them to be successful. Some students have other kinds of issues that we're still struggling with--the fact of going home every day and spending half their time on the road and holding forty-hour-a-week jobs and trying to carry a full load, so, it's complicated. The Community College will be the answer for some of our students; intensive summer may be the answer for others; the Master Plan has been an incredible help for students; it may be that we can take some pieces of it and eventually extend them. It may be partnership programs with high schools. Changes in the high school graduation requirements that are being implemented offer the possibility for this university to create some contractual agreements with students that meet certain success measures in completing those in high school of almost insuring their likelihood of being successful. I think, in short, it's going to take a combination of the strategies that you mentioned; and hopefully, the Freshman Experience plus quality advising when students are getting ready to select their college are going to help us get an up-front handle on that for students."

Dr. Burch noted that "The sooner we get hold of students for advising is important. The students we get earlier for advising and who get enrolled earlier are in a different situation than those who come in at the last minute. The ones coming in at the last minute are more likely to end up also in some of the courses that are the most difficult, the most challenging and perhaps the ones they should least likely be in. Students who come at the last minute, not totally but generally, tend to be maybe not quite as well prepared. If we can get to the students earlier, if we can get the students to do advising, we greatly increase the chances of their success. Again, that's what the Freshmen Experience is going to give us the opportunity to do that up until now, we have not had."

Dr. Carl Martray, Dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, stated, "We have a group that has been working together this week looking at some of the software that we have from the Josten's Corporation that provides the diagnostic prescriptive program for students, and we're looking at the very thing that Mr. Preston is talking about--an intensive summer experience with high-risk students. A proposal is being developed right now. That, in addition to all of the other things that have been put into place, may serve as an excellent intervention--it's something that will need study. If we can demonstrate that an intervention of that sort works, then we are more likely to be able to entice students who are at risk to come in during the summer for that type of an experience."

Mr. Preston, "I understand you to say that there will be a greater emphasis on advising and that there will be better qualified, better structured advising; and there'll be a specific program that could even start at the high school level."

Dr. Burch: "There isn't any question that plans are being developed for linking with high schools to build on what already has been a fairly substantial contact base. We will be doing more of that. The thing that we're targeting in that Freshman Experience is we're giving time to faculty to get involved in this legitimate role of conducting the Freshman Experience. We're building in time for advising and recognizing the importance and priority of it to the institution and providing special development training for all of our folks who do that. In fact, our goal is that every one of us will eventually participate in that training--administrators and faculty alike whether in a teaching role in the University College or not because it's that good for us. There's no question that we're going to be looking for new strategies to get us somehow increasingly linked with high schools so that we're all working on common purpose. They want the kids ready to come to college as well as we want those young people ready."

There were no further questions to come before the committee. Mr. Fischer stated, "This has been very exciting. It's been very exciting to get into this kind of detail; and as I mentioned before, we have not had an opportunity from a Board perspective,

certainly, to have almost face-to-face discussions with those people who are directly involved with the New Level process. I want to congratulate all of you at the University who are involved in this process--what you are doing is just a tremendous project. I think you are out ahead of the curve. I truly believe in my heart that, if each university across the Commonwealth had taken the approach that Western Kentucky University has with this New Level, we may not be having the drive from the general public that is demanding change in postsecondary education. It does give Western Kentucky University an opportunity to lead instead of follow even in that process of revamping any programs that they might want to do. Certainly we want to do this program of Moving to a New Level for ourselves, for our University, and for our students and all can recognize the impact that that's having as we go along.

The Committee determined they should meet again in approximately six months.

With no further discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:25 p.m.