

I do not wish to seem pretentious in delivering a state of the Senate speech, but it is becoming a fine old tradition that a newly elected Senate chair makes some remarks at the first meeting following election. Last year, I made a brief talk in which I quoted from psychiatrist Thomas Szasz concerning the power of definition in human affairs. I suggested that our--the Senate's--early years would be years during which we could allow others to define us, or we could define ourselves, and that the best self-definition comes from action. Well, my esteemed colleagues, it seems to me that the state of this Senate is, it's just fine--we have defined ourselves. Let me elaborate. We were a newborn baby two and one half years ago: conceived as an embryo by a faculty ad hoc committee, nourished perhaps reluctantly by a presidentially appointed committee, and delivered hollering and screaming by a ratifying Board of Regents.

None of us is handed a packet of rules and instructions at birth, titled "How to Get Through Life;" neither was the Faculty Senate handed more than rudimentary--and vague--rules in the form of our Senate constitution. That is, this baby's packet of instructions was an all encompassing preamble which said that, to get through our life, we could advise folk on any matter of university policy. Faculty Senate I took that preamble to imply that we could advise leadership at the top--through evaluation of administrators--that here and there there was an administrator who lacked--and in many cases enjoyed--the full confidence of the faculty--the people--that administrators are employed to lead.

Faculty Senate I--the baby--crawled vigorously and, as I said a year ago, the administrator evaluation was certainly not the only thing achieved by that baby. By no means: there were several reports and resolutions of significance. Then Faculty Senate II--it seems to me--got richly fed from several committee nipples, and the baby became rapidly an adolescent--or at least pubescent--and that adolescent still maintains that it is a proper function of itself to advise about good and bad administrators. But we have done other things. I would not want to single out individual committee chairs--or the work of committees--for praise. But while the full Faculty Senate has begun to find a definition for this body of--now--63 members, it has been able to do so primarily because the activities of our several standing and appointed committees have been everywhere visible to the faculty at large, to the administration and Board of Regents, to the community, and, through the Congress of Senate Faculty Leaders, to the commonwealth itself. We have, in short, been everywhere in action.

This is a period of transition for Western Kentucky University. The university will have a new president. And, if I may speak as an elected member of the Presidential Search Committee, believe me, the faculty has had advisory impact on the selection process. That new president will come to what the Executive Director of the Council of Higher Education has called the "soundest physical plant among regional universities in the Southeast," and he will come to lead a faculty of fine folk, people ready and willing--in my opinion--to be led, as the professionals we are: led to teach, to research, to write, to think, to make Western what it was and can be again: number two in the state.

In conclusion, I said a year ago that it is apparent to me that my fortunes will rise and fall with the fortunes of Western Kentucky University. That still seems true to me. With one difference: then I only hoped that the Faculty Senate could assist WKU in leading the university forward. Now I know it can.

FROM: JIM BOWEN, CHAIR

DATE: APRIL 5, 1979

Thank you.

SUBJECT: APRIL FACULTY SENATE MEETING

This is to notify you that the Faculty Senate will meet on Thursday, April 12, 1979, at 9:15 P.M. in rooms 202, 203, and 204 of the Carroll Conference Center.

At this time, I am aware of the following items that will be on the agenda:

- I. Election of Officers
 - 1. Vice-Chair
 - 2. Secretary-Treasurer
 - 3. Parliamentarian
- II. Standing Committee Status Reports

JBW/IB