



Office of the President

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY 42101

February 27, 1985



Dr. Tom Coohill
Chair, Faculty Senate
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Dear Tom:

The flurry of media activities on football and salaries has generated some impressions and misunderstandings that I wish to correct. My purpose in writing is not to comment directly upon the substance of the Senate's report on football, because I have already expressed my views on that complicated topic in a report that I distributed in October, 1984. The funding of athletics will be a continuing concern of administrators in athletics and at the vice presidential and presidential levels.

I think you and I recognize the hazards of trying to communicate through reporters. Intentionally or not, the results often seem to highlight differences and not common goals of my office and the Senate. The issues are too complex with too little time to discuss them for a reporter to be able to understand fully the important distinctions that you and I might be drawing in brief comments.

I appreciate the rapport that we have established as we try to keep the lines of communication open. There is no substitute for face-to-face discussion. Since I cannot speak personally with each faculty member and administrator, I will state my views briefly in writing.

On the football report I will say simply that this office cooperated in every way possible to provide the writers with the information they requested. I am very sensitive to the complexity of that issue and know that the writers wanted to prepare a good report.

Unfortunately, the Senate's timing on the report put our football recruiting efforts in a very difficult situation. The general public does not understand that the Senate is an advisory and not a governing body. In trying to explain that point and to protect the splendid effort Coach Roberts is making to strengthen Western's program, I had to stress the role that the Board plays in establishing policy.

I believe the Senate made the situation more difficult for Western by failing to review the expenditures for athletics at other Kentucky universities as a background for focusing on Western. Virtually all discussions of planning in higher education today emphasize external comparisons and competitive factors. Since every other university wants to be better than Western,

the report may be smugly used by our competitors to discourage athletes from coming here. I know that was not your intent, but I had to counteract that possibility by stressing the current policy.

While I welcome Senate advice on other university matters, I particularly encourage the Senate's help on the most important mission we have, academics. There is much to be done in that area, and I invite the Senate to continue its efforts to give me advice on how to make Western stronger academically. I will have more to say on that point later.

My true views on the salary issue are expressed in the statements attributed to me in the Park City Daily News, February 26, 1985. I should also explain that in an earlier telephone conversation with a Herald reporter I had asked him to talk with Vice President Haynes because he made recommendations for the faculty. Regrettably, the story gives a different slant to my comments. I recognize the right of the Senate to speak as a faculty voice. I also recognize the right of other faculty committees, departments, or individuals to present their views whenever they wish.

I believe I can best express my attitude on the importance of the Senate by inviting you to consider undertaking all or some of the projects outlined below. I think they are related to the welfare of this university and merit as much attention as we can give them. Other groups will also have an opportunity to make recommendations on these areas of concern, but I look forward to receiving the advice of the Senate.

In addition to the other items that the Senate might wish to place on its agenda, I see the following areas as very important to higher education and hope that the Senate will consider studying them.

1. Suggest ways Western can use its resources to improve its assistance to elementary and secondary schools in Kentucky.
2. Conduct a major study to show how a college education benefits Western's students.
3. Outline a comprehensive plan for making improvement of classroom instruction a top priority at Western. Identify the specific skills which need to be improved to achieve new levels of excellence in the classroom. Suggested references: Joseph Lowman. Mastering the Techniques of Teaching. San Francisco, 1984; Stanford C. Erickson. The Essence of Good Teaching. San Francisco, 1984.
4. Suggest possible ways for Western to improve its recruiting, retention, and placement of students.
5. Identify some possible ways to prevent faculty burnout. Suggested reference: Winifred Melendez and Rafael M. de Guzman. Burnout: The New Academic Disease. Washington, D.C., 1983.

6. Suggest a way to demonstrate how much time and effort Western's faculty members give to their university responsibilities.
7. President Kala Stroup and I have expressed our views about the desirability of Western and Murray State's cooperating on our efforts in several areas of public service. A list of our current activities is attached. I would be interested in receiving the Faculty Senate's suggestions for other areas for cooperation.
8. Prepare an outline of some actions that I should consider for improving the operations of Western.
9. Study funding models used by other states to demonstrate their financial need and recommend possible new approaches for Kentucky.

Sincerely,



Donald W. Zacharias
President

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Enclosure