

TRANSCRIPT FROM TAPE OF A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HELD BEGINNING AT c.10:10, MARCH 3, 1980, IN THE FACULTY HOUSE. CALLED BY TOM JONES, CHAIRMAN, THE CONGRESS OF SENATE FACULTY LEADERS. HE IS THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER, WITH REPORTERS FROM CHANNEL 13, SEVERAL RADIO STATIONS & NEWSPAPERS.

I have called this conference to indicate that I have requested as of Friday all the members of the Congress of Senate Faculty Leaders which now includes Morehead--that is, it includes all the universities in the state with the exception of the University of Kentucky--that the leadership of the Faculty Senates should request all faculty members immediately to write letters to the governor and the secretary of finance saying that 7.5 or anything under 9.5 is simply not enough because the governor's budget will be out, we now know, Thursday, and it will not include 9.5 which is what the Council on Higher Education recommended. I spoke with Don Mills about 30 minutes ago, and he said it would be less than 9.5. I am trying to get faculty members to suggest that since a duly constituted Council on Higher Education requested that, that is what we should get. And then the second item is the recommended salary appropriation language. This language will be the most controversial part of what the Congress of Senate Faculty Leaders has done. In the sense that it reads as follows:

All funds appropriated for "cost of living" faculty salary increases shall be distributed to individual faculty members with each receiving a percentage not less than that designated as the "cost of living" faculty salary percentage in the budget approved by the Kentucky General Assembly and the Governor of Kentucky.

All other funds appropriated in the Commonwealth budget for faculty salary increases shall be distributed to faculty.

Now, implied in this language which we are told Don Mills said would be in some form attached to the budget--to the actual line items appropriations for higher education--implied in this is some distrust for some boards of regents and for some presidents, but I want to emphasize that this is based on past experience. We are not . . . the Congress of Senate Faculty Leaders does not currently distrust any president, any board of regents, any Council on Higher Education. The past experience has been that appropriation for faculty salaries was not always given in the full percentage to the faculty members.

Anybody have any questions?

Question: Who did you meet with in Frankfort? Specifically.

Answer: With Don Mills and George Atkins. It was the second time we had met with them, and as a matter of fact, this appropriation language is an outgrowth of three people's suggestions--Howard Snyder, Executive Director of the Council, George Atkins and Don Mills. There is nothing bizarre about the request in our opinion, because for years capital construction funds have been by law mandated to be used for capital construction. If they were not used for that, then they reverted to the state. We are suggesting that appropriations for faculty salaries do the same thing. Faculty and staff, because we are also concerned, although the staff is not represented in our group, we are also concerned with the low income.

Question: You are asking the faculties across the state to put the pressure on the Brown administration?

Answer: Yes, sir. And in three or four days I will be requesting that they write--and staff members, if they will--that they write to the members of their legislative delegation doing the same thing--saying, "We must have it! You don't know how we are hurting!"

Question: Presumably the governor has already heard from the faculties that they are hurting. Is he going to listen to faculty members when he has not listened to reports . . . (unintelligible).

Answer: I don't know. I have been told that the governor was overheard to say if he had a massive mailing from any group he would have to respond to it. And that is why we are trying to get a massive mailing although we are as you notice from the letter--I am suggesting that we not use university material, and that we write personal letters. If I may quote, "We are not suggesting a mass, impersonal mailing; rather, we want these men to know that we are individual human beings who are being inadequately rewarded for what we profess to do."

Question: Have you talked to any of the non-faculty members here at Western about joining in on this?

Answer: I had a rather touching note slipped to me by a mute member of the staff saying, "I want you to know that we appreciate what you are doing because we think we will benefit as well."

Question: Do you think there is a chance that the two of you could sort of merge and work jointly in an effort to try to get legislation passed to where besides faculty university staff also might be included in something like this?

Answer: If the legislation--I have forgotten the bill number-- passes as it apparently may regarding a staff regent then there certainly would be. The only reason that I personally as Chair of Western's Faculty Senate have not gotten out mailings to the staff is because we are truly faculty. Of course that needs to change.

Question: If no one has a more pertinent question, maybe you could help me out. I am too new to Kentucky. Did you say a moment ago that there had been raises appropriated that had not been passed down?

Answer: Yes, sir. That is what I am told.

Question: Has that been an issue or controversy in the past?

Answer: Yes, it has, except that there has not been a state-wide organization that could respond to the controversy.

Question: Has that happened at Western?

Answer: Since I cannot be absolutely specific, I would prefer not to answer that.

Question: Will you also ask the Council on Higher Education to help, say a little more than they have, as far as this is concerned? As far as trying to get the pay increase that you want, the 9%. They have recommended it, but apparently haven't gone any farther . . . .

Answer: They have not pushed as hard as they should have, yes. I want to say that I very much appreciate the fact that the Council has worked hard for us to recommend good increases, but I have not seen--since I have been in Frankfort--I have not seen efforts greatly being made on the part of the Council.

Question: Have you talked to Mr. Snyder about this?

Answer: Yes, I have. He has said--I think I am correct about this--he has said that he thinks we will have to be happy with 7.5. And the message that I want the faculties across the state to send--the message is, "We are not happy; we are not grateful for 7 or 7.5 in an era of nearly 14% inflation, and in January of 20%."

Question: Did Mr. Snyder have any reason for backing down from 9 to 7.5?

Answer: I haven't talked to him specifically on that.

Question: Everybody has an axe to grind these days, it seems. President Carter wants us all to limit our raises to whatever his latest guideline is. . . .

Comment: His latest guideline is 9%. That is one reason why we are not happy with 7 or 7.5.

Question: And you are asking for . . . ?

Answer: We are asking for what the Council recommended--9.5 across the board, and for some institutions up to 5% catch-up. It is absurd in the opinion of Senate Faculty Leaders that society should reward the teachers of the teachers--us--university personnel--the teachers of the teachers--with less money than the teachers, and the many, many faculty members who, if they taught in the Jefferson County System would make up to \$5,000 a year more than they make teaching at Western--or at Murray or at any of the other institutions. I don't want to single out Western.

Question: Do you have any idea of what kind of range you are talking about as far as increase is concerned. When you say 9% more money, would that mean at the different . . . ?

Answer: Do you mean actual millions of dollars?

Question: No just for the individuals. In other words from one end of the scale to the other, about how much are we talking about when we say 9%.

Answer: That is a tremendous range of faculty salaries. I, for example, make approximately \$16,000, but if I were a full professor--I'm an assistant--I might be making \$27,000, so there is a huge range in there. And there are people who are trying to live on a single income at Western and Murray and Morehead and all the others of \$12,000 and \$13,000. And it can't be done. If society values higher education, society has got to pay to have it or it is not going to have it. Professors across the state are not leaving Kentucky, necessarily, but the profession of professing; and when General Motors opens in Bowling Green, it is absurd to suppose that someone who could make \$25,000 or \$35,000 at General Motors is not going to move there. And what will be left on all the teaching faculties of the state are the people who are so inadequate that they could not go anywhere else. That seems self-evident to me that that will destroy any possibility of an educated electorate which is what any democracy must depend on.

Question: There is talk that when Governor Brown announces his budget, the legislature may come back and provide their own budget.

Comment: The House will provide one, yes.

Question: Now, if the governor doesn't appropriate the faculty raise that you feel is deserving of the teachers, will you--Jody Richards is Chairman of the Education Committee--

Answer: I think that Representative Richards is quite sympathetic with our dilemma. That doesn't mean that he can swing the weight with all the members of the General Assembly.