

WHAT CAN WE DO?

It is no exaggeration to say that higher education in Kentucky in general and at Western in particular is at a crossroads with the current session of the legislature. I have just received a call from Paul Cook, the Executive Vice-President, informing me that if the higher education budget recommended by Governor Wilkinson is approved, there will be no (zero) money for salary increases in 1988-89! Whatever individual difficulties that may pose for us, however, pale in comparison with what this will mean for the future of Kentucky. This state will be taking a giant step backward at a time when neighboring states have already outpaced us.

It will not be easy to reverse the governor's priorities, but one thing is sure, if the universities are silent, nothing will happen. If we speak up, there is at least a chance of success.

What then can we as faculty do? Here are several suggestions:

1. Attend the rally at Frankfort on Tuesday, February 16.
(The administration is placing top priority on this as the immediate action to be taken. The Kentucky Advocates for Higher Education is working hard to establish grass-roots advocacy for higher education. This is something that Kentucky has never really had before. Mr. Tack Cornelius, a spokesman for the Advocates says he is convinced there is room for movement on the governor's budget. Many groups are unhappy about aspects of that budget, and it is the squeaky wheels which are likely to get the grease. We need to make sure that our squeaks are the loudest.

The march and rally quite frankly are media events. If they are going to make an impression, we need large numbers.)

2. Write legislators urging their support for higher education or thanking them when they have expressed such support.
3. Use the toll-free number (1-800-372-7181) to leave messages of support for such defenders of higher education as Reps. Joe Clarke and Ernesto Scorsone and Sen. Mike Maloney, to name a few. Of course, our own area legislators should be included.
4. Urge your students and their parents to write or phone their legislators. (In the past legislators have remarked that they received few or no communications in support of higher education. We need to make sure that that does not happen this time.)

But above all and most immediately, urge other faculty members and plan yourself to ATTEND THE RALLY!! (An exact schedule of events will be made available later. The University has said with regard to classes, that faculty who wish to attend should notify their classes in advance. If possible, arrange for someone else to cover the classes, but if such arrangements cannot be made, it is permissible to cancel them. Students who participate should be given excused absences. They should notify their instructors in advance and arrange for make-up work.

Spouses are welcome to participate in the march and rally as well.)

I hope to see you in Frankfort.

Fred Murphy, Chair
Faculty Senate