

FACULTY SENATE XV  
Committee on Professional Responsibilities and Concerns

Report on

PROGRESSION OF THE COSTS OF ATTENDING

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS 1980 - 1991

The Committee on Professional Responsibilities and Concerns undertook an inquiry into the relationship of the increase of expenditures incurred at attending professional meetings, and the increase of the funds allocated to the academic departments for the reimbursement of those expenses to the faculty.

Attendance of professional conventions is an old tradition of the academic faculty, nourished by the scientists' and scholars' intellectual curiosities about their disciplines' advancing frontiers. Yet, the greatest value of attending those conventions for the teacher is the break in the routine, the recharging of their energies from the exchanges with the colleagues in their special fields of the discipline - a "Home Coming". This is what benefits, more than anything else, the teaching and, thus, the students.

It is also rightly required by the University's expectation of her members' professional growth (conf. Faculty Handbook XIII, pp 39/40, 58 ).

The Committee's inquiry was directed to the academic and professional departments, and pertained to:

- (1) the current levels of convention related expenses for: fees, actual total cost of attendance at professional conventions to the faculty (travel, lodging, meals) , and budgeted amount of reimbursement; and
- (2) the 1980 levels of fees and of the reimbursement budget.

To the Committee's inquiry responded:

of the Potter College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences 7 (out of 11) departments: Communication and Broadcasting, English, Government, History, Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies, Philosophy and Religion, Theatre and Dance;

of the Ogden College of Science, Technology and Health 7 (out of 12) departments: Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry, Geography and Geology, Health and Safety, Mathematics, Nursing;

of the College of Business Administration 2 (out of 5) departments: Accounting, Finance and Management Information Systems;

of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences 3 (out of 6) departments: Home Economics and Family Living, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership;

and of the Library the Special Collections branch.

The following tablet summarizes the current (1991) fees, the actual travel and attendance expenses per person, and the University's budgeted reimbursement allowance, - compared with the levels of fees and of reimbursement allowance in 1980. These data are the average of the colleges' totals in each category.

College	1991 levels			1980 levels	
	Fees in \$\$	T/L/M*	reimb.	Fees	reimb.
Potter	102	718	235	49	175
Ogden	141	674	208	66	175
Education	118	692	227	74	175
Bus. Adm.	144	1200	235	37	175
Library	140	490	235	49	175
University Average	129	755	235	55	175

\* i.e.: Travel/Lodging/Meals

The most revealing ratio in this report exists between the university's current per capita travel allowance (\$ 235) and the average real attendance cost (fees not included) at our professional meetings, as reported (\$ 755) : The budget allocation for the faculty's travel to such meetings amounts to 31 % of the real expenses (minus fees).

To describe this same situation in another way: If everyone of the faculty would want to attend a professional meeting and claim one's share of the department's allocation, hardly anyone of us could afford to go.

This dire situation is mitigated in some departments only by senior members' generous abstention from professional travels, and the Department Head's imaginative and fair distribution of the thus unclaimed funds. It is known that in exigent situations, also the Deans rendered succour from some disposition fund.

Yet, a much more serious problem is hidden in this situation than just the current faculty's convenience, comfort and Fahrvergnügen - or the lack thereof:

According to the Faculty Senate Salary Survey for the 1991/92 Academic Year, the teaching faculty in the four Colleges, not counting administrators -except department heads- are 544 persons, of which at the end of this decade in December 2000, 162 would have worked at Western 30 or more years. That means, 28.8 % of the present faculty will then have retired, or are very close to it. This situation is simply alarming in six departments whose retirement rate will by far exceed 50 %, i.e., Biology: 14 out of 22, (Chemistry: 10 / 22), Geography and Geology: 7 / 13; and Government: 8 / 11, English: 22 / 38, History: 12 / 19.

Western's future will then depend on getting a great number of new, young faculty who are required under our rules to demonstrate professional growth in publication of their work, in presentation of research results, in active participation at professional meetings. The proven inadequacy of the University's financial support of such undertakings, as evident in the here presented statistics, must severely diminish our attraction for new faculty; thus it will jeopardize the future quality of this fine institution of higher learning.

This is not a minor problem; it has direct bearing on Western's future and quality in the first half of the XXI century. A major adjustment of our University's resource allocation toward financial support for undertakings in professional growth, including travel money is needed and ought to be completed before the contracts with new young faculty are to be negotiated.

Again, Faculty and Administration have to determine the real, rational priorities in our mission - and in our budget. Not sometime in some future, but immediately, once the current budget crisis is overcome !

And for the Finish :

THE W K U TRAVEL BUDGET 1991 - 92

ACADEMIC		\$375,103
COLLEGES	195,859	
EXT. CAMPUS	155,300	
OTHER	23,944	
STUDENT SERVICES		64,267
FOOD SERVICE	6,300	
HOUSING	2,000	
OTHER	55,967	
ATHLETICS		629,866
MEN'S SPORTS	470,134	
WOMEN'S SPORTS	159,732	
ADMINISTRATION		104,297
PRESIDENT	25,455	
OTHER	78,842	
FUND RAISING		14,150
PHYSICAL PLANT		30,530
OTHER		5,300
		<u>\$1,223,513</u>

(Source: W K U Budget Committee)