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UA3/6/7 Update - February

WKU President's Office

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Last week I joined Al Smith, Warren Hammack, and several other supporters of the arts in Kentucky in suggesting ways to expand and promote the Kentucky Center for the Arts in its statewide role. Kristi Van Howe, Director of Communications for the Center, interviewed me about my views on the importance of the arts and the contributions that universities make in encouraging creativity and support for artistic excellence. The conversations with various Kentuckians will be used to promote the new Center.

I will be meeting with representatives of Western's alumni in Louisville on Monday, February 28, to hear an explanation of Western's development program. Organized by John Sweeney, Director of Development, the group will begin planning fund-raising activities in the Louisville area. Mike Abell, former president of Louisville's Alumni Association and administrator for Saint Anthony's Hospital, will chair the meeting. This activity is a part of Western's continuing effort to bring additional resources to the University.

Donald W. Zacharias

For more than nine months representatives of Kentucky's public universities and the Council on Higher Education staff have been at work on a formula for funding higher education in Kentucky. This intensive effort has culminated in an eighty-one page document designed to show what Kentucky's universities need in total dollars to do their work properly. It is not a budget for allocating funds to universities or to departments within a university but a method for determining how much total money each university needs to compete nationally in the quality and scope of its instructional, research, and public service activities. Based upon current programs at each university, the formula's national funding figures show the extent to which a university is by this method of calculation under funded. This information indicates that Kentucky's universities need a total of $93,182,754 more funds for their operating budgets to meet basic needs for 1983-84. Under this approach Western Kentucky University is under funded by a total of $5,628,927 for 1983-84. We have no way of knowing at this time what the formula will indicate in the way of need for Western during the 1984-86 biennium, but we expect to see figures that show a substantial gap between need and current funding.

The formula is not a precise scientific tool for determining need for funding. It reflects value judgments that are handled in different ways in other states. Like other presidents, I do not consider this formula the final answer, but it represents the best efforts of numerous people highly dedicated to helping this state and its educational system. I believe it can launch us into a new era of cooperation.

With these conditions in mind, let me outline some of the major differences in approach between this formula and the formula used by the Council in recommending support for 1982-84.

The new formula offers the following improvements over the previous formula:

1. Provides a statement of need based upon common levels of funding of common activities as well as provisions for funding of special activities.
2. Bases the calculations of need in the academic programs and academic support upon information about comparable institutions and national averages.

3. Calls for a base level of funding for each institution to recognize minimum operational needs.

4. Assures a buffer against the impact of enrollment fluctuations upon funding.

5. Contains a fairer method for calculating research need by permitting all institutions to show twenty percent of federal and private gifts, grants and contracts for sponsored research as a part of their total funding need.

6. Emphasizes the importance of all institutions as an essential part of Kentucky's program for higher education.

7. Presents a more accurate picture of funding needs at Western by showing our under-funding level at fifteen percent rather than the four percent included in the 1982-84 formula.

8. Includes a provision for implementing the formula that is fair to all universities if the state is unable to provide one hundred percent funding the first year.

9. Provides a basis for institutional agreement that can be refined after further study and review.

Like all documents on formula funding, this one can be improved. I believe the following elements need further analysis. They are:

1. Refine the principles involved in computing complexity factors assigned to each university.

2. Include additional incentives for institutions to acquire challenge grants; cooperative agreements with education, industry, and government; private fund raising; and other similar activities.

3. Provide additional funds for carrying out each institution's commitment to the Commonwealth's desegregation plan.

4. Review the scope and level of special funding for cooperative extension, hospitals, community service, and experiment stations.

5. Standardize the categories for determining the base for calculating research funding as a common percentage of federal and private gifts, grants, and contracts for sponsored research.

6. Review the credit hour rates at the doctoral levels.

I believe the current Council and Council staff are committed to further refinement of the formula and want the best possible system of higher education in Kentucky. They have recently initiated a study of the professional schools by employing consultants to determine what changes, if any, need to be made. I see a determination on the part of the Council and the presidents to enhance the quality of higher education in this state and to make whatever changes are necessary to achieve this goal. As our citizens are to keep pace with the changing economic and technological conditions, a strong educational system is essential. A plan for improving every Kentuckian's ability to compete in the labor market and to experience a more fulfilling life is more likely with the level of funding generated by the proposed formula. I hope every citizen, private industry, and government will be willing to accept the appropriate role in funding higher education.

**FORMULA HEARINGS**

The Council on Higher Education has scheduled hearings on the proposed formula in three locations:

- March 7, 10 a.m. (EST), Carroll Building, Kentucky State University
- March 9, 10 a.m. (CST), Auditorium, Madisonville Community College
- March 11, 10 a.m. (EST), Perkins Building, Eastern Kentucky University

Since Madisonville is closer to Bowling Green than the other sites, we are arranging transportation for faculty and staff who are interested in attending. Those interested in riding with the group should contact Mrs. Diane Lawson (745-4493). The vehicle will depart from Wetherby Administration Building at 8 a.m. on March 9. The Council hearings are to provide interested individuals an opportunity to express their views on the proposed formula.

We have planned an informational session on the proposed formula for February 28, 1983, at 3:10 p.m. in the Regents Conference Room of the Wetherby Administration Building. Faculty, staff, and students are invited to attend.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

We will initiate strategic planning activities in the next few weeks. I am engaging in discussions with individuals and groups on the planning process. I anticipate launching the formal program in April.

The process will be a part of the normal administrative organization and operation of the University.