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WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Bowling Green, Kentucky.

H.H. Cherry
President

Hon. A. B. Chandler,
Governor of Kentucky,
Frankfort, Ky.

My dear Governor Chandler:

On last Tuesday afternoon I sent you the following telegram:

"Since returning I have had an opportunity to talk with Dr. F. C. Grise, Dean of our institution who has had direction of the graduate work and a large group of educators and citizens. I desire to make unanimous the vote requiring all graduate work to be done at the University of Kentucky"

Since that time I have been thinking a great deal about the history and development of Western Teachers College; how it was established thirty years ago as a Normal School, inheriting the traditions, prestige, and equipment of a well established private college; how, responding to the needs and demands of the times, it has grown from this beginning through the stages of a normal school with a limited program, through a two-year course of study, to a place as the largest teachers college in America with standards and achievements second to none in this country.

I feel, therefore, that there are certain statements which I should make at this time; statements which, on account of the situation prevailing at our conference last Monday, I did not feel free to make at that time, and yet which are necessary, I think, in order that you may understand my attitude and feeling toward the elimination of graduate work from Western Teachers College.

General Statement: Through high standards of scholarship, well organized courses of study, a superior teaching staff, and splendid physical facilities provided by the state this institution has, from its beginning, striven to offer the very best opportunities for young men and women of Kentucky to achieve their educational objectives, and has earnestly sought to live up to its responsibilities in helping to provide a trained leadership for the different types of educational service within the state. Western has at all times been alive and responsive to the changing needs of our public school system, and the exacting demands of an ever increasing educational conscience, and has endeavored to meet these needs and demands by keeping its educational program abreast of the times and in harmony with the best interests and standards of our profession.

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Pres Garrett

It is, therefore, in keeping with the purposes of the college, its policy, its progress, and in response to felt needs and growing demands for graduate work in its service area that the institution decided to organize in 1931 a division of graduate study.

Establishment of the Graduate School: Throughout the vast domain of southern and western Kentucky there were hundreds of young men and women of ambition and ability who were anxious to better equip themselves to meet the constantly increasing requirements of their profession, and yet who for economic and other reasons, were denied this opportunity. Western did not decide to enter the field of graduate work until the demands from these people became most earnest and numerous, until the institution felt that it was a professional duty it owed the state in advancing the standards of the teaching profession, and until the management of the college was sure that a program of graduate instruction could be inaugurated and maintained which would appeal to persons desiring to pursue graduate study and merit the respect and confidence of the public at large.

We did not enter this field of more advanced professional service in a hurried or haphazard manner. For many months before the organization of the graduate division of the college the administrative staff and teaching faculty were earnestly engaged in a study of the needs of our service area and of the desirability and feasibility of graduate work in the institution. It was only after numerous committee and faculty conferences were called, many consultations of alumni and other educators in Kentucky were held, and extensive investigations of graduate work in the best institutions of the country were made that the decision to provide this educational service was reached. (After the management of the college had been convinced that we would be derelict in our obligations to hundreds of our graduates and professional friends, and the needs of Western Kentucky, if we failed to meet this new responsibility the Board of Regents voted unanimously on April 16, 1931, to authorize the president and the faculty to organize a department of graduate study, to assemble the necessary equipment and materials, and to do whatever was necessary to make the work of such quality as would merit the respect of educational leaders and meet the demands of progressive education. Before making the organization and inaugurating the program, however, the matter was submitted to each member of the two Normal Executive Councils of the state, and not a dissenting vote was cast. Early in the summer of 1931 the Normal Executive Council, meeting in joint session at Morehead Teachers College, formally and unanimously approved the establishing of the graduate department at Western.) It should also be pointed out that the graduate division of this institution was organized under a legislative enactment authorizing extension of the courses of study of the teachers college and the granting of appropriate degrees.

Purpose and Scope of the Graduate Work: The Western Kentucky State Teachers College exists for the purpose of training teachers and administrators for the schools of the Commonwealth. The college recognizes as its duty and accepts as its function the training of students to become teachers in every type of school at present supported by the state. It also accepts the responsibility of training supervisors for rural schools, supervisors of special subjects, principals, and superintendents. The establishment of the graduate school was in harmony with these purposes and responsibilities.

Briefly states, the primary objectives of the graduate division of the college are:

- a. To meet the demands for the training of principals, supervisors, and superintendents on the graduate level.
- b. To make, through well organized and effective research, definite contributions toward the solution of teaching and administrative problems in the schools of the state.
- c. To strengthen and improve the undergraduate program of the college, by providing materials and procedures regarded as highly valuable in an efficient program of undergraduate instruction.

I desire to point out that the graduate division of Western Teachers College is entirely professional in nature. The course offerings have been limited to those departments in which there are real demands for graduate work, with educational administration and supervision as the center of our graduate program. Regardless of his fields of concentration and the number of hours he may present in other subjects, no student is permitted to become a candidate for the Master of Arts degree until he has satisfied at least the minimum undergraduate requirements in education.

Western Teachers College is thoroughly conscious of the fact that there exists a multitude of problems affecting education in the territory served by the institution; problems that are crying for solution. The type of investigation and research involved in the solution of these problems calls for graduate work. The data collected are not only indispensable in this connection, but become the basis for and the raw material of effective under-graduate instruction looking toward the training of educational workers for the Commonwealth. The courses offered, and the research work done in the departments in which graduate work is available are planned with a view to contributing definitely toward the solution of the administrative and teaching problems of the schools of Kentucky.

Enrollment in the Graduate Division: The graduate school held its first session in the summer of 1931 with a total enrollment of sixty-one different students. At the beginning of the fall semester of the same year forty students were enrolled. The attendance during the regular year and summer session has steadily increased until last summer there were one hundred forty-nine different graduate students enrolled for graduate study. Of those in attendance, eighty-four were men and sixty-five were women. They held the baccalaureate degree from sixteen different colleges and came from forty-three different counties, located almost entirely in western Kentucky. The distribution of these students, according to their fields of specialization, was as follows: School administration and supervision, seventy-three; English, thirty; Biology, sixteen; History, twelve; Mathematics, six; special, twelve.

The group last summer, and this is also true of other terms, was composed largely of mature men and women who held positions as principals, superintendents, supervisors, college teachers, high school and elementary teachers, and were pursuing courses leading to the Master of Arts degree,

with a view to giving themselves a more thorough and extensive preparation for the positions which they were holding. In this group there were thirty principals and superintendents, eight college teachers, sixty-eight high school teachers, fourteen elementary teachers, four athletic coaches, three attendance officers, and three who expected to continue graduate study during the present year.

On the basis of the information which we now have, we believe that at least two hundred graduate students would attend the summer session of 1936 for the purpose of pursuing courses leading to the Master of Arts degree, if the opportunity should be provided.

A total of four hundred nineteen different students have completed one or more terms of graduate study at Western. Of the total number enrolled seventy-one have received the Master of Arts degree. Several of these have been admitted to some of the best graduate schools of the country for work leading to the doctorate and with full recognition of the credits earned at Western Teachers College. There will be approximately thirty additional candidates for the degree at the close of the regular school year and at the end of the summer session in August.

All of the students, who have begun graduate work at Western, are men and women of such ability and experience as to profit from graduate study. Most of them would return from time to time for the completion of requirements for the Master's degree; for financial, and other reasons, it will not be possible for most of these to go elsewhere for a continuation of their graduate study. We have had a number of good people, holding responsible positions, who have been coming to the college in the afternoons and on Saturdays for part-time graduate work, and who must secure their advanced training in this way, if at all.

The institution acted in good faith when it accepted these students for graduate work and, thereby, entered into an agreement to provide for them opportunities for a continuation of their graduate study. It is very clear that we are at this time confronted with a very serious situation on account of the unfulfilled obligations to those students who have been with us before, to those who are now on the campus, as well as to people of our section of the state. Moreover, if our graduate work is eliminated it will be a constant source of embarrassment to the institution, and to those to whom it has granted the Master of Arts degree, because of the inevitable lowering of the prestige of the degree. Of course, there are also other difficulties involved which might be mentioned.

Cost of Graduate Instruction: Approximately one-half of the credits required for the Master of Arts degree may be earned in advanced senior college courses, which must be offered anyway in order to take care of our under-graduate needs. The permission granted to graduate students to earn credit in senior courses by doing additional research, reading, et cetera, is in keeping with the policy of the best graduate schools of the country. Each semester an average of about thirty-five semester hours of graduate work has been offered in courses open only to graduate students. These additional offerings in the graduate field require, on the average, the equivalent of two and one-half full time teachers; but are distributed among fifteen to eighteen of the best trained members of the teaching staff in order to provide better graduate opportunities, and at the same time, to prevent any reductions in the standards of our undergraduate program. It is apparent, therefore, that through careful organization, and by limiting the graduate work to the

urgent needs of the institution and our service area, we have been able to build a program that has won the confidence and respect of our students and the public, and yet at the same time, has been carried on at a very low cost to the state. As a matter of fact, after deducting the amount which the institution receives in graduate student fees, the total additional cost for graduate instruction is approximately \$4,000.00 per year, an amount too small to finance a good department of research, which would be sorely needed if the graduate school were not maintained; to say nothing of the service rendered, and the opportunities provided hundreds of deserving young men and women in Western Kentucky.

Summarizing Statement: The graduate work at Western Teachers College came into existence in response to definite needs and demands, and was inaugurated with the full knowledge and approval of those governing bodies functioning under the laws of Kentucky and charged with this responsibility. The graduate work at Western is entirely professional in nature, designed exclusively for the training of educational workers, and confined to those fields of study in which there are justifiable needs and demands for advanced training. Every phase of the graduate program has been planned with a view to contributing definitely toward the solution of administrative and teaching problems of the schools of Kentucky. The large number of students that have enrolled for graduate study and the number receiving the Master of Arts degree indicate the confidence and appreciation of the work being done. The recognition given several of our graduates by some of the most outstanding graduate schools of the country attests the quality of the work and the standards maintained. The cost of this graduate instruction to the state is negligible.

I am constrained to believe that if our fellow educators in Kentucky, and those in positions of authority and responsibility, were thoroughly familiar with the service which our graduate school is rendering to the cause of education in the state they would agree that this work should be continued; and that it would be a serious mistake to deprive many capable and deserving young men and women of Western Kentucky of the opportunity for more advanced professional training and attainment.

These statements have been made with a view of giving you a glimpse into the purposes, program, and progress of our graduate school, and a picture of a few of the things that were in my mind during the conference last Monday afternoon, and which made it impossible at that time for me to take any position other than that indicated.

Most respectfully yours,

H. B. CHERRY

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