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FACULTY MEETING
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
AUGUST 19, 1986 - 3 P.M.
KERN ALEXANDER, PRESIDENT
PROFESSORS

UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS ARE AND SHOULD BE TEACHER-SCHOLARS.

CANNOT BE MERELY ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER.

TEACHER -

- (1) AN INTELLECTUAL GUIDE AND COUNSELOR.
- (2) ONE WHO ENCOURAGES AND INSTILLS AN ASPIRATION AND DESIRE FOR
LEARNING.
- (3) FOSTERS HONEST ACADEMIC CONDUCT.
- (4) DEMONSTRATES INTEGRITY AND ACCURACY IN EVALUATION OF
STUDENTS.
- (5) AVOIDS EXPLOITATION OF STUDENTS FOR PERSONAL ADVANTAGE.
- (6) AVOIDS INDOCTRINATION WHILE EXPANDING LEARNING.
- (7) PROTECTS ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

SCHOLAR

- (1) HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY TO SEEK AND STATE THE TRUTH.
- (2) THE SCHOLAR DEVOTES ENERGIES TO DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING HIS/HER SCHOLARLY COMPETENCE.
- (3) ACCEPTS THE OBLIGATION OF SELF-DISCIPLINE IN PURSUIT OF NEW KNOWLEDGE.
- (4) PRACTICES INTELLECTUAL HONESTY.

ALL PROFESSORS MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THEY, AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF A UNIVERSITY, PARTICULARLY A STATE UNIVERSITY, HAVE A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY--TO SERVE AS A FOCAL POINT OF THE STATE AND COMMUNITY'S EDUCATIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONSCIENCE.

IN THIS PURSUIT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE AN APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE ROLES OF TEACHER AND SCHOLAR.

WILLIAM ARROWSMITH HAS WRITTEN THAT:

AMERICAN PROFESSORS (SCHOLARS) "HAVE BEEN EAGERLY DISQUALIFYING THEMSELVES, AS EDUCATORS, FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY. THE SCHOLAR HAS DISOWNED THE STUDENT--THAT IS, THE STUDENT WHO IS NOT A POTENTIAL SCHOLAR--AND THE STUDENT HAS REASONABLY RETALIATED BY ABANDONING THE SCHOLAR."

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION WILL ULTIMATELY BE DECIDED ON HOW WELL THE PROFESSOR FULFILLS THE ROLE OF BOTH TEACHER AND SCHOLAR.

WHILE PRESTIGE AMONG ONE'S FELLOW SCHOLARS IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS MAY LIE IN RESEARCH AND WRITING, THE UNIVERSITY'S (AND THEREBY THE PROFESSOR'S) SUCCESS OR FAILURE MAY BE MEASURED IN PERFORMANCE AS A TEACHER.

OUR REWARD SYSTEM, THUS, MUST ENCOURAGE TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP.
INTERTWINED THEREWITH MUST BE RECOGNITION AND EXERCISE OF SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY AS AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER.

HAVING SAID ALL THIS, THOUGH, ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE FACULTY,
LET ME HASTEN TO ADD THAT I AM NOT ACTUALLY WORRIED ABOUT THE QUALITY
OF OUR FACULTY. OF COURSE, WE NEED TO IMPROVE, AND WE SHOULD BE VERY
CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF OUR FACULTY; BUT, GENERALLY, I
BELIEVE THAT OUR FACULTY POSSESSES ALL THE ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL
QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO HAVE AN OUTSTANDING UNIVERSITY.

WHAT I AM MOST CONCERNED ABOUT IS OUR COLLECTIVE ABILITY TO
PROVIDE THE TYPE OF ACADEMIC "ENVIRONMENT" WHERE SCHOLARSHIP AND
LEARNING CAN FLOURISH.

WE MUST HAVE:

- (1) AGREEABLE WORKING CONDITIONS, LABORATORY EQUIPMENT, TEACHING MATERIALS, LIBRARY BOOKS. THE ADMINISTRATION MUST SEE THAT THIS IS DONE.

- (2) SALARIES AND BENEFITS AT SUCH A LEVEL THAT FACULTY CAN BE COMFORTABLE IN THEIR LIVES AND HOMES.

- (3) AN INSTITUTIONAL VALUE SYSTEM THAT HOLDS THE FACULTY IN HIGH ESTEEM AND CONSISTENTLY REINFORCES THE OBVIOUS-- THAT THE FACULTY IS THE ESSENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY.

PROFESSORS' SALARIES

PRESIDENT ELIOT IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT HARVARD IN 1869 MAINTAINED THAT SCHOLARSHIP AND AFFLUENCE WERE BASICALLY INCOMPATIBLE. HE SAID THAT

THE POVERTY OF SCHOLARS IS OF INESTIMABLE WORTH IN THIS MONEY-GETTING NATION. IT MAINTAINS THE TRUE STANDARDS OF VIRTUE AND HONOR."

SOME OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION HAVE FOUND PRESIDENT ELIOT'S RATIONALE TO BE MOST AGREEABLE WHEN THEY HAVE SOUGHT TO REDUCE THE FUNDING OF EDUCATION. THE SAME PEOPLE WOULD LIKE US TO BELIEVE MORE MONEY DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

IN SPITE OF ELIOT, I WILL PERSIST IN MY BELIEF THAT A LITTLE MONEY IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL; IT IS ALSO GOOD FOR HOUSE PAYMENTS, CAR PAYMENTS, FOOD FOR THE FAMILY, AND FOR SENDING THE CHILDREN TO COLLEGE.

J. K. GALBRAITH HAS RESPONDED TO THOSE WHO MAINTAIN THAT MONEY DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE, SAYING:

"MONEY (WEALTH) IS NOT WITHOUT ITS ADVANTAGES AND THE CASE TO THE CONTRARY, ALTHOUGH IT HAS OFTEN BEEN MADE, HAS NEVER PROVED WIDELY PERSUASIVE."

I, THEREFORE, BELIEVE THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP CREATE A FINANCIAL STRUCTURE WHERE THE PROFESSOR CAN OBTAIN A LIVING WAGE AND BE COMFORTABLE IN HIS OR HER WORK.

"BLAMING THE VICTIM"

AS YOU KNOW, WE DO NOT HAVE THE BEST PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN KENTUCKY.

KENTUCKY CONSISTENTLY RANKS NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE STATES IN FUNDING, AND WE HAVE SUBSTANTIAL INEQUALITY OF PROGRAMS AMONG OUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THE RESULT IS THAT WE HAVE, IN OUR STATE, A FEW VERY WELL-PREPARED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, BUT WE ALSO HAVE MANY POORLY PREPARED.

MANY HIGH SCHOOLS DO NOT OFFER ADVANCED MATHEMATICS; COLLEGE-PREP SCIENCES; 2ND- AND 3RD-YEAR FOREIGN LANGUAGES, AND OTHER NECESSARY COURSES, EXCEPT POSSIBLY ON A SPORADIC OR PIECEMEAL BASIS.

PARENTS OF MANY OF OUR STUDENTS HAVE NOT ATTENDED COLLEGE AND THUS HAVE FAIRLY LOW EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

IN SUCH A CIRCUMSTANCE, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WE AS A STATE UNIVERSITY CAN IGNORE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH MANY OF OUR STUDENTS SUFFER.

WE CANNOT PLACE OURSELVES IN THE POSTURE OF ESTABLISHING STATE-FUNDED PROGRAMS WHICH TEND TO EXCLUDE SUCH STUDENTS, CERTAINLY WHERE THE FAULT DOESN'T REST WITH THE STUDENTS THEMSELVES.

FOR US TO TELL EACH OTHER ON A DAILY BASIS THAT THE STUDENTS COMING TO WESTERN ARE ILL PREPARED BECAUSE THEY ARE INDOLENT OR LAZY AND ARE, THEREFORE, INCAPABLE OF DOING COLLEGE WORK SUGGESTS A "COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUSNESS" OF THE REALITY OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS WHICH SURROUND US.

I GRANT YOU THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER FOR US, AS EDUCATORS, TO BELIEVE THAT THE STUDENTS, ("THE PROBLEMATIC ONES") BROUGHT THIS ON THEMSELVES.

IF WE TAKE THIS APPROACH, WE WILL, EACH YEAR, ALLOW THOSE WHO ENROLL AT WESTERN TO SLIP ASIDE, TO DROP OUT, AND DISAPPEAR FROM OUR THOUGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY. THIS, I FEAR, WE MAY BE TENDING TO DO. I UNDERSTAND THAT OUR FIRST YEAR DROP-OUT RATE HERE AT WESTERN IS 35% TO 40% AND EXCEEDS MOST OTHER STATE SCHOOLS.

WE, OF COURSE, SHOULD ALL STRIVE FOR "EXCELLENCE" AND "QUALITY"; YET, SUCH PURSUITS MAY BE, AND OFTEN ARE, USED AS JUSTIFICATION FOR AN APPARENT RATIONALE END GENERATED BY IRRATIONAL MEANS.

IN THIS REGARD, WE MAY UNWITTINGLY ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND PREDETERMINED NORMS WITH NO EFFORT TO EXAMINE THEIR VALIDITY OR EVEN THEIR RELIABILITY.

DEVIATION FROM THESE STANDARDS OR NORMS MAY BECOME A SEEMINGLY LOGICAL RATIONALE IN ASSUMING THAT A STUDENT IS UNWORTHY OR IS UNABLE INTELLECTUALLY TO ADAPT TO OUR ACADEMIC WORLD.

WE MAY, IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL, SHIFT TOO MUCH OF THE BURDEN OF PROOF TO THE SHOULDERS OF THE UNPREPARED STUDENT. IF THE STUDENT BEARS ALL THE BURDEN, THEN WE AS EDUCATORS ARE RELIEVED OF RESPONSIBILITY TO CHANGE OR ADAPT OUR SYSTEMS AND ROUTINES TO ASSIST THOSE STUDENTS. THIS IS, OF COURSE, MUCH EASIER, BECAUSE WE CAN CONTINUE TO PURSUE OUR ACADEMIC INTERESTS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION.

EFFECTIVELY, WHAT MAY TRANSPIRE IS THAT WE QUICKEN THE PROCESS OF "NATURAL SELECTION" OR "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST." WE USE THE STATE FUNDS OF A PUBLIC INSTITUTION TO SPEED UP AND INTENSIFY THE PROCESSES OF WHAT SOME HAVE CALLED, "SOCIAL DARWINISM."

I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT WHERE THIS HAPPENS WE TEND TO PERVERT THE ROLE OF A STATE UNIVERSITY. A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY, SUCH AS WESTERN, SHOULD BE A DEVICE TO RETARD "SOCIAL DARWINISM," SLOW AND RESTRAIN THE SOCIAL PROCESSES OF THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, AND TO CIRCUMSCRIBE MORE CLEARLY AND REASONABLY THE DEFINITION OF FITNESS.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY MUST NOT, I BELIEVE, BE USED AS A GREAT CULLING OR CREDENTIALING MECHANISM WHOSE GOAL IS TO MAXIMIZE THE NUMBERS TO BE REJECTED IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE POSITION OF A LIMITED FEW.

NEITHER DO I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ESTABLISH IMMUTABLE AND UNFORGIVING BARRIERS WHICH WILL TEND TO CREATE UNINTENDED RESTRAINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS OF KENTUCKIANS.

ONE OF THE GREAT VIRTUES OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THAT IT HAS BEEN HUMANE, OBLIGING, AND EVEN COMPASSIONATE, AS OPPOSED TO THE EUROPEAN SYSTEMS WHICH HAVE, GENERALLY, BEEN RESTRICTIVE AND, RELATIVELY, INTOLERANT.

WHAT MUST WE DO HERE AT WESTERN TO PREVENT US FROM SLIPPING INTO THIS UNDESIRABLE MODE OF EDUCATION.

FIRST, I BELIEVE WE MUST REEXAMINE THE NORMS WITHIN OUR CURRICULUM IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE VALID, REALISTIC, AND IN KEEPING WITH THE PRE-COLLEGE PREPARATION OF OUR STUDENTS. THIS, OF COURSE, REQUIRES A CAREFUL BALANCE. THE STANDARDS CANNOT BE UNREASONABLY RIGOROUS; YET, THEY MUST BE CALIBRATED TO MOVE STUDENTS FORWARD AT A VIGOROUS ACADEMIC RATE.

SECOND, WE MUST COORDINATE CLOSELY WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS TO BE SURE THAT THE ACADEMIC PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS IN COLLEGE IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

AND

THAT WE COLLEGE PROFESSORS HAVE A FIRM UNDERSTANDING OF THE REALITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN KENTUCKY.

THIS, OF COURSE, MEANS THAT WE MUST SEEK MEASURES AND MEANS TO WORK WITH TEACHERS IN OUR RESPECTIVE DISCIPLINES IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF KENTUCKY.

THIRD. WE MUST CONVEY TO THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND EDUCATORS THE STRENGTHS OF OUR RESPECTIVE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES HERE AT WESTERN. SOME OF OUR DEPARTMENTS HAVE DONE EXEMPLARY JOBS IN THIS REGARD, BUT WE NEED TO EXPAND AND REDOUBLE OUR EFFORTS.

FOURTH. WE MUST EACH OF US ASSUME A RESPONSIBILITY FOR STUDENT ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT. OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE AND ASSERTIVE; QUESTIONING, SEEKING, AND INQUIRING AS TO WAYS WE CAN HELP STUDENTS. MANY TIMES STUDENTS DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO ASK QUESTIONS. HELP THEM!

FIFTH. I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ASSERT OUR IN LOCO PARENTIS ROLE TO THE BENEFIT OF THE STUDENT. WE COULD, POSSIBLY, IDENTIFY THREE OR FOUR FRESHMEN FOR EACH FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATOR AND COUNSEL AND ASSIST THEM PERSONALLY. "ADOPT-A-STUDENT."

SIXTH, WE CAN ELEVATE TO A NEW LEVEL OF AWARENESS THE PROBLEMS OF STUDENT "RETENTION" HERE AT WESTERN.

COGNIZANCE OF POSSIBLE STUDENT DISENCHANTMENT AND THE MANY WAYS THAT OUR DAILY ACTIONS MAY TEND TO DISCOURAGE STUDENTS SHOULD BE FOREMOST AMONG OUR CONCERNS.

EXPANSION OF EDUCATION
AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH

WE HAVE A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN KENTUCKY. WE CAN FULFILL THIS OBLIGATION BY STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING WESTERN AS INSTITUTION. MORE AND BETTER PREPARED STUDENTS, LARGER AND MORE LEARNED FACULTY, AND EXPANDED PROGRAMS AND COURSES ARE ALL NECESSARY.

SUCH IMPROVEMENTS ARE BASED TO A LARGE DEGREE ON APPROPRIATE FINANCING, AND FINANCING IS LARGELY DEPENDENT ON ENROLLMENT. "ECONOMICS OF SCALE" ALLOWED BY GREATER ENROLLMENTS WILL PROVIDE BOTH FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC FLEXIBILITY.

TODAY, WESTERN'S INSTITUTIONAL ASPIRATIONS ARE BEING CHALLENGED AND HER CAPACITIES ERODED BY TERRITORIAL EXPANSION OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN THE STATE. NEXT TO KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, WESTERN HAS HAD THE GREATEST STUDENT DECLINE OF ANY OF HER SISTER INSTITUTIONS.

AS I HAVE OBSERVED MANY TIMES BEFORE, FOR WESTERN TO REMAIN VIABLE IN THE CURRENT "MARKET," WE MUST BE WILLING TO BE

(1) FLEXIBLE

(2) ACTION ORIENTED

AND

(3) ADAPTABLE

WE DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF MAINTAINING A SMALL, QUIET, SLEEPY, SHADY "RESIDENTIAL" STATE COLLEGE.

WE MUST MOVE AGGRESSIVELY TO ATTRACT BOTH FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDENTS. WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, OUR FUTURE WILL BE LARGELY DEPENDENT ON PART-TIME, NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS.

WE MUST:

(1) EXPAND OUR OUT-REACH TO THE ADULT OLDER CITIZEN. EXTENDED
CAMPUS PROGRAMS

(2) EXTEND OUR SCHOOL YEAR (SUMMER) AND MAKE IT MORE FLEXIBLE.

(3) UTILIZE MORE OF THE SCHOOL DAY -- AFTERNOON AND EVENING PROGRAMS.

(4) EXTEND THE SCHOOL WEEK -- WEEKENDS.

ALL THIS WILL REQUIRE A REORIENTATION OF OUR SCHEDULES AND A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THE INSTITUTION.

I KNOW THAT WE CAN MEET THE CHALLENGE, TOGETHER.

WITHOUT THE FACULTY'S LEADERSHIP AND FULL COOPERATION, WE CAN DO NOTHING.