XX NUMBER 3, APRIL 1997

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Western Kentucky University.
FROM THE CHAIR

Since our last newsletter, President Meredith has announced his resignation in order to take a position in Alabama. We are pleased for him and wish him and Susan well as they look forward to this new opportunity in their lives.

Meanwhile, on the state level Governor Patton is showing how serious he is about reforming higher education in Kentucky. While the news media has been focussing on whether UK will continue to maintain control of the community college system, for us here at Western the issues raised by the call for reform center mostly about the claim that there is duplication among programs across the state. In this context there is a strategy that we should consider as an institution. If we are going to follow such a strategy, then we will have to have a new president who will share this vision.

The issue of duplication is not new, nor confined to our own state. One institution in particular stands, in my opinion, as an example of how to meet this challenge. Twelve years ago the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education recommended that Northeast Missouri University become "a relatively small, select, residential public liberal arts institution." It already had a reputation as a provider of quality undergraduate education, but located in a small town, Kirksville, and in a region with declining population and a declining pool of 18-year olds to draw from, its future was bleak. But all that was turned around by an aggressive restructuring of the institution. The success of Northeast Missouri in becoming a truly outstanding undergraduate institution has been recognized recently when it was named, the Harry S. Truman University.

A few facts will document their success. First, in the decade after 1985 their enrollment has remained stable, but they now draw from the entire state instead of their own region. The number of programs offered was reduced from 140 to 41. The number of full-time equivalent faculty has grown from 286 to 370; the student faculty ratio declined from 21:1 to 16:1; the number of students participating in research has grown from 96 to 575. In addition, they have doubled the number of "students of color"; the average ACT scores of first-time freshmen has risen from 21.2 to 26; and now 93% of their students ranked in the top 40% of their high school classes. Their freshman-to-sophomore retention has gone up from 68.5% to 83%; their five-year graduation rate from 43% to 60%.

The figures speak for themselves. The sweeping changes at Harry S. Truman University have produced an institution where excellence in education is taken seriously. The HST change shows that with visionary leadership a university can move forward and significant change occur.

As a faculty member, I am hoping for a new president with a vision for this kind of change for Western, so that we will have an important and unique role in Kentucky's system of higher education.

-- Arvin Vos

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NEW FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

This is the first in a series of articles about the experiences of new faculty in their first few months or years at Western. If there is a topic that you would like to see addressed in a later article, please contact Lyn Miller at miller@pulsar.es.wku.edu.

Of course, one hopes that all our recent hires accepted Western's offer of employment because this is the kind of university at which they wanted to work. Therefore, both new and "veteran" faculty would expect the number and type of "surprises" encountered during the initial adjustment period to be minimal. My conversations with a small number of faculty hired in the past 3 years brought the following (unrelated) topics to light:

- **The adjustment to a larger number of class preparations is more difficult than anticipated.** As graduate students, most recent hires had only 1 preparation per semester and often far fewer than 12 contact hours with students. Of course, variety in our teaching loads is one "spice" of our professional lives, yet preparing for 3-4 different courses a semester takes some getting used to, especially when many are new "preps." Some departments help to ease this adjustment by encouraging new hires to teach one or two familiar courses each semester of the first year or two.

- **Parking was a bad as expected.** My contacts agreed that they had been adequately forewarned about the difficulties of non-reserved parking. Problems in that area came as no surprise.

Next time: Surprises with reserved parking and other perquisites.

-- Lyn Miller

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SUMMER TEACHING STIPENDS
by Joel Philhours

The summer stipend for a six-hour teaching load is 15% of the academic year salary with a maximum of $5,000. figures that have not changed since its original in 1983. The Office of the Vice-President of Academic Affairs is performing a study of summer school and has surveyed summer stipend methods at our benchmark institutions. The Faculty Senate requested and received a summary of those responses.

Of the 17 institutions responding to the question of a cap, only three had a cap (with a median of $9,750). The other 14 respondents had no cap. The median percentage figure of academic year salary for a six-hour teaching load was 18.36% at our benchmark institutions.

A Faculty Senate report (of which I was a co-author) estimated that the WKU average summer stipend would have to be increased 71% to reach the benchmark median. I was startled by the results of this comparison. I have taught in summer school and my reaction was that I have been taken advantage of.

So, should my next step be that I not do it if I do not agree with it? And WKU's next step be to find someone else do it (and they probably could; after all, they found me). I believe that would be short-sighted for both of us.

An issue is whether I think I am being treated fairly—in this case, in an economic sense. If I am an isolated case, there is no problem. If there are others, there might be a problem. Employer/employee relationship depends on fair treatment. If fair treatment is perceived to be lacking, at what point could morale, loyalty, and performance be affected?

I estimate that WKU's payment for summer teaching stipends was 87% of revenue from summer tuition in Summer 1983. That cost factor dropped to 44% in Summer 1996. When less money is spent on summer stipends, more money is available in the General Fund for other purposes. Has it been dedicated to academic year salaries? I do not think so; we are also below benchmark in that measure.

The Senate passed a resolution that the percentage be increased to 18.36% with no cap. The Vice-president of Academic Affairs stated that changes are expected as a result of the study that is ongoing. I trust that fair treatment will be a consideration in that study.

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Faculty Position Papers

Submitted to the
Governor's Task Force on Post-Secondary Education

by
the Faculty Advisory Committee of the Task Force
and
the Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leaders (COSFL)

Papers on the following topics:

1. GOVERNANCE
2. FUNDING
3. DISTANCE LEARNING
4. TECHNOLOGY
5. LIBRARIES
6. ATHLETIC FUNDING

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Governance and Change: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issues. Many leaders in our government, like many citizens of Kentucky, believe that higher education is out of date, inefficient, and in need of drastic restructuring. The task force is right to look closely into any and every aspect of higher education; however, it's members should also keep a broad perspective and be willing to conclude that in some areas drastic change may not be necessary. Faculty input in these discussions can help identify both strengths and weaknesses in the current system. Because faculty are responsible for educating the students of Kentucky's universities and community colleges, they should have an active role in helping bring about statewide changes that will improve the educational system across the Commonwealth.

II. Concerns.

- Being directly engaged in the educational process, professors have a unique perspective and should therefore be included in discussions which analyze that process. Because they deal directly with the impact of changes that are made, faculty should participate in decision making efforts undertaken at higher levels. University faculty know a great deal about the various problems their students face and also understand the larger issues confronting institutions of higher education. They are willing to contribute their expertise; their experience qualifies them to do so. The Task Force should thus continue to seek the advice of university faculty in their proceedings. Clearly some of the difficulties with KERA might have been avoided with more input from public school teachers. Faculty can contribute substantively to broader statewide considerations of changes that are necessary and desirable—and help determine what changes are unneeded and which would be wasteful.

- Individual university governing boards both create and solve problems in a variety of ways. By responding to institution-specific needs, separate governing boards are able to maintain the diversity that is so important to the unique character of each institution. While the problems that result from competition among institutions must be addressed retaining, separate, individual governing boards is the best way to ensure effective responses to the differing needs of each institution and its service area. The diversity exhibited in the mission statement of each university suggests that independent governing boards are a logical means of maintaining and improving the quality of instruction throughout the state.

III. Recommendations

- Faculty should be included in the continuing proceedings of the Task Force.

- Most important, faculty should have a formally established, ongoing voice in deliberations of change and governance. To establish a permanent channel for faculty input in statewide discussions of higher education policy, we recommend that a faculty member be added to the Council on Higher Education.

- University Governing Boards should be allowed to continue to operate independently, but they should be strongly encouraged to cooperate more effectively. The pressure to improve cooperation should be brought about by the Council on Higher Education and, especially, by the office of the Governor and, especially, by the officer of the Governor.

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Funding for Higher Education in Kentucky: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issues

- During the past decade, resulting largely from disproportionate reductions in state budget cuts, higher education's share of state appropriations has slipped from 17 percent to 14 percent. Thus, the portion of the universities' budgets provided by the state has been reduced from 47 to 39 percent, while tuition and fees have increased from 12 to 17 percent. Total funds to higher education rose 23 percent in the SREB states but only 8 percent in Kentucky."

- Also during the past ten years, when the state's support of higher education has declined, total institutional enrollments have increased by 31 percent compared to an average of 24 percent in the SREB states. In addition, total funding per student FTE fell 1 percent in the SREB states but dropped 17 percent in Kentucky, the largest decline in the region (SREB).

- "Higher education is inextricably linked to economic development. It is estimated that more that 60 percent of new jobs require post-secondary education. Kentucky ranks 48th among the states in the percentage of its adult population with college degrees."

- "Kentucky continues to spend less on higher education than the average of its neighboring states. Despite fiscal situations, those states have somehow managed to find the money to support their systems at a higher level than Kentucky."

II. Concerns.

- Adequate funding is crucial if Kentucky's universities are to provide the best educational opportunities for the Commonwealth's most gifted students and improve the economy and the quality of life.

- Attracting and retaining qualified faculty is the lifeline of any university. This becomes a matter of particular concern if funding continues to fall behind benchmark averages.

- If Kentucky is to have an improved economy, it must have an educated workforce. A high level of educational attainment, the clearest indicator to prospective employers of a high quality workforce, requires adequate funding of institutions of higher learning. Kentucky is currently failing to achieve this level of adequate funding.

- "If Kentucky fails to respond to the SREB call for a higher priority for higher education, and its neighboring states do respond, then the relative position of Kentucky will be further eroded."

III. Recommendation.

- The Task Force on Post-Secondary Education should endorse the higher education funding proposals put forth by the Kentucky Advocates for Higher Education and the Council on Higher Education during 1995 and 1996 to fund higher education at least to the average of benchmark institutions.

"Statistical information used in this paper is taken from the following: "The Kentucky Advocates for Higher Education Position Paper" and the Southern Region Education Board Factbook"
Distance Learning: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issue. Distance learning, while innovative, beneficial and responsive to a specific segment of the potential student population, is not a primary solution to higher education problems in Kentucky. It is not a cure-all.

Two perspectives on Residential Education: “The residential version of the American college may have no equal. Its emphasis on socialization and peer interaction make the college environment…a formative and formidable experience that is valued in its own right.”

Gerhard Casper, President, Stanford University

“The basic conception of residential education has remained the strongest expression of an institution’s commitment to educating the whole person rather than only the intellect.”

Neil Rudenstine, President, Harvard.

II. Background

- Teaching involves much more than conveying information; it includes primarily the stimulation and generation of learning and in so doing involves assessment, grading, and the insight and willingness to modify the teaching approach to meet the learning styles of a given group or the subject matter to be taught and learned. Quality teaching also involves faculty-student contact both inside and outside the classroom.

- Residential learning holds a distinct advantage for many traditional students, especially those who may not be as mature, motivated, or as focused on their career paths as some non-traditional students. One of the greatest learning influences on college students is the influence of their fellow students. Further, students who study together (in groups or teams) generally perform better academically.

- Distance learning may be well suited for a market niche such as the highly motivated, focused student, especially adult learners (while at the same time being less well suited for many traditional undergraduate students) and the geographically isolated or bound.

- Distance learning may not be new to Kentucky’s public universities, although the technology changes continually. Faculty have been in the forefront in developing new learning delivery approaches involving distance learning.

- Distance learning is a very expensive approach to the educational process. It involves high start up costs in addition to substantial ongoing maintenance costs for support staff, hardware and software acquisition, upkeep, and replacement.

- The costs and effectiveness of existing distance learning in Kentucky have not been adequately assessed.

III. Concerns.

- Distance learning has some distinct advantages for some segments of the student population and should be seen as a supplement (rather than a replacement) to more traditional delivery models such as a residential education.
* Faculty should be given adequate preparation time to learn and develop new teaching methods for distance learning.

* Technology must serve the teaching/learning function and be recognized as only a part of that process.

* To be successful and effective, distance learning must involve faculty as primary designers and implementors.

IV. Recommendations.

* A special state-wide task force should be formed to study the issues, costs, potential opportunities and benefits, effectiveness, and future role of distance learning. It should also address the options for institutional cooperation to avoid unnecessary duplication.

* Faculty—who are ultimately responsible for the learning environment—should be included in campus and statewide committees or decision making groups which establish institutional and statewide policy related to distance learning.

* Costs of distance learning (e.g., technology updating, faxing, computer hook-up charges) should be fully funded at state and institutional levels; these funds should not be transferred to departments or to individual faculty budget lines.

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Technology: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issues.

Because faculty in higher education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky must be able to utilize the newest technology applicable to their students' education, and because students need to be able to move into employment prepared to use the current technology their employers are using, state appropriations for higher education need to be increased appropriately to provide not only state-of-the-art technology at our institutions now, but also to provide for the expense of continuously updating needs of both hardware and software equipment.

II. Concerns.

- The technology is "out there", but it is currently not at our institutions of higher education; thus, students often experience significant downgrading from the computer (and other) technology that their high schools provided.

- It is the faculty who actually use the new technology a) to access the resources it makes available to upgrade teaching content and methodology and b) to teach students how to use it. Unfortunately, faculty often are not consulted before institutions acquire expensive hardware and software; they are not asked which resources would be most useful to providing the best possible technology-assisted education for their students.

- Decision-makers (the governor, legislators and administrators in higher education) often do not realize that the enormous initial investment in technology does not solve the problem. New faculty and staff will have to be hired to train both faculty and students how to use the technology, updating the equipment (which has a very short half-life) must be budgeted continuously.

III. Recommendations.

- Realistic and adequate appropriations must be available at the statewide and institutional levels--there is little point in talking about minor improvements in access to current technology in higher education.

- Faculty members who use current technology must be involved in making the budget estimates and decisions about which technology to acquire at every level: in Frankfort, in the making of each institutional budget, and in the making of each departmental budget.
Libraries: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issues. At the center of academic institutions is the library—historically the repository for knowledge. With advances in technology and telecommunications, almost the entire world of information is available in the contemporary library, but only if the library is equipped to receive and deliver the information to its users—to faculty and students.

Each institution of higher learning in the Commonwealth of Kentucky has a library. Many of these, especially at the eight state-assisted universities, currently have cooperative agreements for the borrowing and loaning of library materials through Interlibrary Loan. In a time of perceived institutional rivalry, perhaps the most successful example of cooperation is within the community of academic libraries. Beyond the statewide strategies, there are regional, national and international shared resources: SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network) and OCLC (Online Computer Library Center), an international provider of bibliographic records, interlibrary loan, indexing and abstracting, and full text retrieval services.

Today, the geometric increase in information is accessible singularly through the Internet, which must be at the center of comprehensive library services. Every academic library in the Commonwealth must be connected to the Internet and also to every other academic library.

II. Concerns.

- Despite the proliferation of electronic resources, the traditional paper format will not be displaced in the foreseeable future. Consequently, continued expansion and improvement of existing facilities and the planning and erection of new libraries will need to continue. At the same time, it is impossible for libraries to collect all the burgeoning resources that are available today. High costs and budget restraints lead to continued cuts in monies spent for books and periodical subscriptions.

- Physical space limitation is an issue on every campus, this problem is especially pressing in the libraries of each campus.

- Meaningful cooperation among libraries requires strong leadership. Library ventures must be centrally coordinated. Statewide agreements would be far more efficient in purchasing modern library technology: databases (e.g., OCLC's "First Search"), journal subscriptions, equipment for Internet access and for electronic interlibrary loans. The bargaining power of statewide contracting should reduce costs and foster greater collaborative efforts among librarians—and students and faculty—across the commonwealth.

I. Recommendations.

- All library facilities should be wired and equipped with the most current technological capabilities for the exchange of information electronically. Available technology will allow users statewide to search all Kentucky academic libraries' databases instantaneously. Ideally, users should be able to request and have delivered any information resources they need. Through existing protocols, such as Z39.50, this statewide access service is now available. Such a system has already been implemented in Illinois and Ohio.

- A centralized, commonly shared library storage facility for little used but important materials should be established. Such a facility would decrease the need for major library expansion efforts and help solve the space limitation problem within existing libraries.

- A position, with statutory authority, in either the Council on Higher Education or some other
governing body should be established to mandate and coordinate inter-institutional library cooperative efforts, including all of the activities discussed above.

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Athletic Funding: A Faculty Perspective

I. Issue.

According to data by the Council on Higher Education, Kentucky's regional universities spent over $14.5 million in the 1994-95 fiscal year in support of intercollegiate athletics. Unfortunately, the regional universities generated only $3.5 million in athletic revenue from outside sources. The remaining deficit was funded by state appropriations ($7.8 million, or 54%) and student fees ($3.4 million, or 23%). The projected deficit for 1995-96 was over $8 million.

I. Background.

The current CHE funding formula, which was implemented in 1981, provides for the funding of academic programs, but not for intercollegiate athletics programs. Consequently, the regional universities use state appropriations earmarked for academic programs to fund a substantial portion of the deficit. Although student tuition is regulated by the CHE, student activity fees are determined by each university's board of regents. Consequently, student activity fees have been dramatically increased over the past 10 years to help reduce the athletic budget deficit. As noted above, for the 1994-95 fiscal year, student fees and state appropriations accounted for approximately 77% of the universities' athletic revenues. This taxpayer subsidy of athletic programs with state appropriations and student fees directly conflicts with the ultimate goals of enhancing the quality of academic programs and controlling the rising costs of higher education. Indeed, the Pritchard Committee stated in 1981 that "the use of institutional general funds for intercollegiate athletics should be phased out over a four-year period."

III. Recommendations.

Athletic programs clearly play an important role at many of Kentucky's state-supported institutions. However, the value of athletic programs must be evaluated within the context of their total effect on institutional budgeting—specifically, on academic quality and the rising costs of higher education. Therefore, we urge the task force to evaluate the role of intercollegiate athletics in higher education and to consider the following recommendations:

- The CHE should establish limits on the use of state appropriations to fund athletics.
- The CHE should establish limits on the use of student activity fees to fund athletics.
- The CHE should require universities to be more accountable for their athletics funding, including those coming from public and private (i.e., university foundation) sources.

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