RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Whereas:

I. In the memorandum of April 2, 1986, from Academic Vice President Haynes, the faculty of Western Kentucky University were offered an enlarged role in the governance of departments. A fundamental part of this promise was the initiation of a process "by which the administration of departments will be in the hands of a chair rather than a head."

II. The Implementation Committee, consisting of faculty and administrators appointed by Dr. Haynes, carefully defined the concept of a chair as being elected by the faculty of the department, consistent with the traditional and self-evident definition of the term chair.

III. The Implementation Committee unanimously recommended changing to a system of elected chairs.

IV. Consultants participating in the Tom Jones Symposium on Faculty Governance related the positive experience and effect of departmental governance by elected chairs at institutions comparable to Western.

V. The faculty of Western Kentucky University and the Faculty Senate endorsed the recommendation of the Implementation Committee that a system of governance by elected chairs be instituted at Western.

VI. Responding to Vice President Haynes' subsequent proposal (April 1, 1988) that would have the effect of changing the designation to "chairs" without providing for their election by faculty, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, reaffirmed the previous endorsements and requests for election of true department chairs in the full and customary meaning of the term.

VII. Every official recommendation or endorsement from the faculty and its representatives and from the Implementation Committee, responding in good faith to the administration's original invitation and solicitation, has consistently supported and held true to the concept of elected chairs.

VIII. The proposal of September 29, 1989, runs counter to all of the previous recommendations and endorsements, leaves the procedures essentially unchanged from the present system, and is, in effect, a change in name only.

Therefore:

The Faculty Senate continues to recommend and request that the faculty be truly given an enhanced role in departmental governance at Western Kentucky University by implementing a system of true department chairs who are elected by the faculty of the respective departments.

Reasonable procedures for election, and for recall for cause (with adequate safeguards and balances) are carefully and thoroughly detailed in the recommendations of the Implementation Committee (November 11, 1986) and of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate (May 12, 1988).

We especially urge that in the selection process the faculty be given the principal role, subject always to veto for cause at a higher level. When a search is necessary, provision should be made for involvement of faculty at all levels on the search committee in those departments where it is not feasible for the entire faculty to constitute a search committee. We further urge that the decision about whether the search shall be in the hands of the entire department or its committee...
be left to the judgment of the faculty of the department, rather than the dean of the college. Relative to search processes, we ask for clarification of the statement that the majority of the members of the search committee shall be selected by the faculty, since the document gives no indication as to how additional members are to be chosen or who or how many they might be. We urge that the search committee be allowed to rank the recommendations it makes to the dean. We urge further that, if one or two candidates are deemed to have particularly outstanding qualifications, the search committee not be required arbitrarily to submit three names.

We urge that the final procedure re-incorporate the carefully thought-out method for the recall of a chair. To put this function completely in the hands of the dean makes no real change from the current procedure. The procedure outlined in the original proposal offers little justification for the expressed concern that a chair may be removed at any time over a single decision.

We urge that procedures be specified more completely than the statement that "additional details will be prepared after the final decision is made on the above."

These recommendations are consistent with the highest principles of government that have yet been devised by mankind. They are made in the interest of helping Western to become the best possible institution that it can be -- to transcend limitations imposed by an antiquated system of governance that is not characteristic of the best and most progressive universities in America.