This annual committee report also serves as a report on the year-long project to analyze the athletics component of Western's annual income and expenditures. Time restrictions on the various members of this committee have severely limited the scope of its analysis. The issue of athletics funding, along with questions related to expenditures in various accounts, proved to be extremely complex. Moreover, the committee had no clear direction in terms of the specific fiscal questions to be asked. Members of the committee analyzed the four major sports—women's and men's basketball, football, and baseball—in order to determine if any specific item stood out in need of further investigation. Travel expenditures certainly stand out as one component of the athletics budget that needs rigorous and detailed analysis. However, such an investigation would require a full-scale financial audit of the travel budget. Overall, the committee concludes that the athletics budget is an extremely complex and very elusive issue. Recommendations are presented later in this report.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES - FALL 1996

The committee investigated the issue of tuition increases relative to annual income in Western's service area. This issue developed from a wider concern related to the poorer counties in Western's service area and what impact continued tuition increases might have on the university's ability to provide a first-class education to the widest possible segment of society. A report was submitted in November 1996 (see Appendix A).

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES - SPRING 1997

In Spring 1997, the committee's attention remained focused on the athletic funding issue. Further analysis also was directed to the issue of tuition increases, with a report on this topic submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee in February (see Appendix B). The committee also prepared a brief report analyzing annual changes in the fee component of annual tuition rates (see Appendix C). Finally, some analysis complementary to that conducted by the Academic Affairs Committee focused on the issue of athletic scholarships and who receives what type and size of dollar award.

Scholarship Data. An analysis of scholarship data provided by the administration revealed that scholarship awards in terms of average dollars awarded per student heavily favored category 82000-82999—athletic grants-in-aid. For example, for the 1996-97 award year, the average scholarship in the 82000 category was $4,793 (see attached graphs in appendix D). This compares
unfavorably to the average award of $2197 for academic scholarships. The analysis suggests that a higher proportion of scholarship dollars are directed towards athletics, where overall ACT scores are generally lower. Important questions related to this analysis ought to be directed toward retention rates, average GPAs of the various scholarship recipients, and educational value per dollar awarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continued assessment is needed of the role of the Community College in providing a lower-priced educational opportunity to the Western service area, and of the role of the Community College in preparing students for the university experience.

2. Western's scholarship program needs to be more sensitive to high-performance students from traditionally poorer counties.

3. A detailed review is needed of the dichotomies in scholarship allocation among the various scholarship categories. Of particular concern is the high level of stipends offered to student-athletes compared to other academic-based awards. Is this strategy meeting Western's avowed commitment to academic excellence?

4. This committee urges a university-wide review of athletic budgets and expenditures, particularly in the area of travel and salaries. A specific review is needed of Western's level of intercollegiate athletic participation and its institutional commitments to such participation.

Respectfully Submitted
David J. Keeling, Chair
Tony Norman
Herman Manakyan
Claus Ernst
Steve Boilard
APPENDIX A

Income Inequalities

Social polarization in terms of income and access to higher education is a rapidly growing phenomenon in U.S. society. The popular press, for example, has focused much attention in recent years on income inequalities. Kentucky had one of the highest levels of across-the-board income inequality in 1994 and 1995, with many of the counties in the WKU service area suffering from a widening income gap. The cost of tuition and associated expenses (room, board, books, etc.) for the average Western student thus becomes even more critical with each passing year. Of great concern to Western are the so-called "White Counties," where levels of tertiary education experience are below state and national averages.

A Widening Tuition Gap

Since 1980, at the national level, tuition and fees have increased cumulatively by 256 percent, compared to a cumulative increase in median household incomes (MHI) of 82 percent and in consumer prices (CPI) of 79 percent. The gap between the annual cost of an education and the average household income in WKU service area counties continues to widen. This polarization has, and will continue to have, serious implications for Western over the coming decade.

Tuition Increases at Western Outpace MHI Growth

Tuition versus MHI and CPI statistics suggest that Western is creating a growing tuition gap in its service area. Basic tuition and fees, for example, have risen from $545 per semester for the 1987-88 academic year to $1015 per semester for 1996-97, an average annual increase of 6.85 percent since 1991 (Graph 1). These increases consistently have outpaced both national and regional annual consumer price index changes, which have remained at or below 3 percent (Graphs 2 and 3).

Comparisons of Western tuition costs to Median Household Income (MHI) in surrounding counties also suggest a widening tuition gap (see Tables 1 and 2). In 1995, the MHI in Butler County was approximately $23,800 (before taxes). For the 1995-96 academic year, the average Western student paid $1910 in tuition and fees, $1366 in housing, $1450 in food, and $450 in books and materials, for a total cost of $5,176. This equates to nearly 22 percent of the MHI of Butler county. In Logan County, the average cost of attending Western equaled 26.5 percent of the county’s MHI. For the 1996-97 academic year, average overall tuition costs are $5540, a 7 percent increase over the previous academic year. This increase far outpaces the estimated 1996 inflation rate of 2.5 percent nationally.
Implications, Questions, and Suggestions

Is the University fulfilling its mission -- offering a high-quality education to ALL citizens -- or is it increasingly pricing those that need access to an educational opportunity the most out of the market? Is Western helping to perpetuate the social polarization problem by pricing those that are in the lower echelons of income distribution out of an educational opportunity? Obviously, if state support declines in net dollars, money must be found from other sources if the same level of operation is to be maintained. Frequently, tuition is targeted as the source of additional income to make up for shortfalls in state appropriations. However, if the cost of education for the average South Central Kentucky potential college student continues to spiral out of control, recruitment and retention will prove increasingly more difficult.

Important questions that need to be addressed include:

- What is the effect of the increases in Western’s tuition and fees on families that have incomes at or below the MHI for the Western service area?
- How many potential students are there in such families?
- Can we determine if price is a significant factor in obtaining more education?
- Are special scholarships targeted to this segment of the service area student population?
- What mechanisms exist to assist needy students with fees?
- Are students getting good value for their tuition dollar at Western?

Suggestions for further research:

- The role of the Community College needs to be more thoroughly assessed in terms of providing a lower-priced educational opportunity to the Western service area.
- More creative tuition pricing and perhaps a reevaluation of scholarship strategies could prove helpful in addressing the tuition gap problem.
Table 1. Tuition, Median Household Income (MHI) and Annual Inflation Rate (CPI), 1986-1996

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<tr>
<td>CPI The South %</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>19500</td>
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* Tuition is for the Semester commencing in the year noted; all others are calendar.
** For internal Discussion only.
Table 2. Comparison of Academic Year Costs (Tuition, Room, Full Board) to Median Household Income by County, 1991-1996.

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<td>12.6</td>
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<td>10.8</td>
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Source: Kentucky Economic Statistics/WKU Internal Statistics
Note: Data are for discussion purposes only. Certain assumptions have been made concerning the underlying data. Please consult with Fiscal Affairs, Faculty Senate, for the methodologies and estimates.
Increase in Tuition and Fees Compared to Annual CPI Increase (in Percentages)
Tuition and Fees by Academic Year at Western Kentucky University

- 87-88: 545
- 88-89: 570
- 89-90: 580
- 90-91: 660
- 91-92: 720
- 92-93: 772
- 93-94: 845
- 94-95: 901
- 95-96: 955
- 96-97: 1015

Academic Year
Comparison of the Annual Rate of Tuition and Fees Increase to the National Inflation Rate

Year of Analysis

Source: Annual Statistical Abstracts/WKU Annual Reports
A new millennium fast approaches. Change is in the air, especially at our own institution. At the national level, higher education is under increased scrutiny. Tuition costs, student access, scholarships, tenure, multiculturalism, curriculum reform, and technological change are just a few of the myriad issues that institutions of higher education must address in the immediate future. Changes driven by these issues are having, and will continue to have, a direct impact on faculty. How we face these issues now and in the future will have a profound influence on how we carry out our educational mission. As a starting point for discussion, debate and, I hope, proactive participation by faculty, administrators, and regents alike, I offer this commentary on tuition costs and the economic profile of counties in Western’s service area.

Education and Development

A society’s ability to develop and to participate in the rapidly evolving regional and global economy is shaped directly and indirectly by education. An educated and literate workforce is better able to shape the interactions between capital, labor, and place that are fundamental to community and individual development. My own research in Latin America, specifically in the rural communities of Argentina, Ecuador, and Mexico, has focused on the crucial link between education and socioeconomic development. This link also has received much attention from international and national organizations and governments.

For example, a 1994 study by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean pointed out that completion of secondary school is a prerequisite for opening up major opportunities for social advancement. In other words, 10 or more years of basic education translate into a probability of avoiding poverty that ranges from 82 to 97 percent. When the attainment of a university education is factored in, the development index (measured in GDP per capita) can increase by over 1,000 percent. Moreover, the cultural development of a society in terms of the arts, entertainment, media, information, and literature is enhanced by improvement in the reading and writing skills of the populace.

Within this development context, Western Kentucky University faces problems similar to those experienced by many developing countries. Compared to state, regional, and national benchmarks, many counties in Western’s service area are economically depressed and lack the educational skills necessary for social and economic advancement.

Western’s Service Area
Statistics from the 1990 National Census reveal that most of the counties in Western's service area have very low percentages of the population with a college education. Compared to the state average (13.6%) and to Warren County (19.2%), counties such as Butler (5.1%), Hart (5.2%), Metcalfe (5.0%), and Edmonson (5.4%) clearly have a smaller pool of educated adults. Another useful statistic is the percent of the population aged 18-24 enrolled in college. Percentage enrollment in these depressed counties (for example, Butler 7.9%, Green 11.9%, Metcalfe 9.3%, and Allen 11.3%) compared to the state (30%) and Warren County (54%) percentages clearly suggests that some serious problems exist in recruitment, access, and ability to pay for a college education.

Median and family household incomes also are consistently lower in Western's service area compared to the state level. This has a direct impact on the affordability of an education at Western. Statistics released by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority show that the cost of attending Western for the 1996-97 academic year is approximately $7,260 per student (tuition, room and board, books, and miscellaneous expenses).

When compared to median household income for poorer counties such as Allen, Edmonson, and Butler, the magnitude of the problem becomes apparent. According to the 1990 census, 67 percent of the households in Allen County earned less than $25,000 per year, with the mean income for this group under $15,000 per year. Extrapolating these figures to 1996-97 suggests that over 45 percent of mean household income for this group would be needed to cover the cost of attending Western for an academic year. Table 1 presents a summary of this situation by comparing only tuition, room, and board costs against median household income for selected counties in Western's service area. As the table illustrates, the percent share of median household income required to meet the basic cost of an education at Western has increased beyond the rate of inflation every year since 1991.

Obviously, much more detailed analyses based on the 1990 census could be carried out on each of the counties in Western's service area. Distributions of income by income range per household and per family, levels of poverty by county, and the potential pool of 18-24 year-olds by county all support the contention that Western faces a serious challenge to its mission of providing affordable and meaningful education to residents of South Central Kentucky.

Implications and Strategies

Social polarization is a reality in contemporary U.S. society, as the gap between the upper and lower levels of income continues to widen. Those that have the greatest need for access to higher education often are the least able to afford the access. An important question that needs to be asked, therefore, is whether Western Kentucky University is fulfilling its mission -- offering a high-quality education to ALL citizens -- or whether it is
Table 1. Comparison of Academic Year Costs (Tuition, Room, Full Board) to Median Household Income by County, 1991-1996.

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Source: Kentucky Economic Statistics/WKU Internal Statistics

Note: Data are for discussion purposes only. Certain assumptions have been made concerning the underlying data. Please consult with author for the methodologies and estimates.

Note: Figures show the portion of median household income required to cover the cost of tuition, room, and board for the academic year at Western.

increasingly pricing those that need access to an educational opportunity the most out of the market? Is Western helping to perpetuate the social polarization problem by pricing those that are in the lower echelons of income distribution out of an educational opportunity? What can be done to avoid this problem and to reach out to these students unable to participate in the educational experience?

As a starting point for further discussion and action, here are some general ideas about strategy.

(1) Knowing the Market:
Western needs to develop a thorough understanding of the service area. We need a marketing plan that identifies the potential clientele, stratifies that clientele based on socioeconomic indicators, and proposes strategies for each of the socioeconomic strata. Exactly how many potential students in the 18-25 age range are likely to graduate from high school over the next decade and what is their spatial distribution? What has been the educational profile of graduating seniors in Western’s service area over the past decade? Where have students gone to college if not to Western?
(2) Understanding Both the Students' and the Employers' Needs: Western must work toward satisfying the demands of the economy in Western's service area. However, using the circular argument that there is little demand for higher education in some of these counties because the economy is primarily rural in nature, and therefore we cannot attract students to higher education, makes little sense. An educated, skilled workforce creates economic opportunity, which in turn creates a demand for higher education. I have seen this process at work in dozens of Latin America communities and it can be a successful strategy for diversifying a primarily rural economic base. Higher education is a necessary, although not sufficient, component of the development process.

(3) Use Creative Financing Methods to Attract Students: Western must reexamine its financial and scholarship policies. Who are the recipients of aid today and where do they come from? Are we providing an adequate financial incentive to encourage students from traditionally poorer counties to attend the university? My cursory examination of scholarship distribution suggests that Western has priorities that do not mesh with the needs of the service area clientele. Every student in the Western service area that wishes to attend the university should have the opportunity to do so, and Western should develop strategies and policies to ensure that they can attend.

(4) Create a Community College System that Recognizes the Different Socioeconomic Stratas in the Western Service Area: We need to examine seriously the role of Community College education in our service area. I find little logic in Western's present strategy of pricing the Community College tuition at the same level as tuition for Western students. Statistical and anecdotal evidence from around the country suggest that Community Colleges can play a vital support role to the University. Across the country, community college tuition generally is 50 to 75 percent lower than the tuition at 4-year public, regional universities. In Kentucky, the UK community college system charges $1,080 for annual tuition. Compare this to Western's Community College tuition of $2,030 per year. In Oregon, the Lane County Community College charges $1,580 for annual tuition, compared to $3,540 for the University of Oregon (they are both located in Eugene). These two institutions have a symbiotic relationship. Thousands of students every year transfer from the LCC system into the University of Oregon, well prepared, motivated, and better able financially to complete the final portion of their degrees. Far from affecting enrollment negatively, the LCC has enabled the University of Oregon to recruit higher quality students overall in record numbers.
(5) Recruit, Recruit, Recruit:
Western has not done a very good job in the past of reaching out to schools, teachers, and students across the service area. In fact, you would hardly know in some counties that Western exists at all. Strategies and policies that proved effective in the past are not all that useful in today's society and economy. Education can no longer be like the mass-produced Model T Ford. We need creative strategies that are designed to penetrate market niches, and we need flexibility to address both students' and employees' needs. It is no longer a question of "here's our product and it will cost you X dollars." Western must say "how can we design our product to meet your particular needs (student or employer) and how can we price it to meet your particular financial circumstances."

Conclusion
I'm sure faculty, administrators, and regents can come up with many other ideas and suggestions about how Western can address this serious issue. Think about recruitment strategies and other creative ideas. Faculty especially should get more involved with the Senate to make sure its voice is heard as Western faces some of the most important challenges in its long history.
APPENDIX C

Report to the Faculty Senate on Tuition and Fees.

Since 1985, Western Kentucky University has relied increasingly on both direct and indirect "service and activity fees" in determining student tuition costs. In 1985, direct student fees accounted for 7.3 percent of the total tuition cost. By 1996, this percentage had risen to 14.3 percent (see Table 1). In terms of dollar increase, fees have risen from $35 per semester in 1985 to $145 per semester in 1996 (see Table 2). This current amount is allocated as follows:

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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 145.00</strong></td>
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In addition, students enrolling in an extended campus course are charged an additional $25 fee.

Indirect course-specific activity fees also are on the increase. A plethora of courses now charge "course fees" ranging from $50 per course in the Music Department to $5 per course in several other departments. For example, in a worse-case scenario, if a student enrolled in MUS150, CHEM435, CFS150, GEOG315, NURS224, and ANSC332 (15 credit hours), that student would have to pay $223.00 in additional course fees. This is obviously an extreme situation, but it highlights the growing problem of indirect fee increases. In Spring 1997, a total of 124 college courses had specific and additional course fees required for enrollment. Coupled with the rising and often exorbitant costs of student textbooks, tuition and direct/indirect fees represent a growing financial burden for students.

Recommendation: Tuition and fees should not be the automatic choice for additional revenue. As this committee has pointed out in the past, tuition and fees at Western Kentucky University have been rising faster than inflation for the past decade at least. Western must give serious consideration to the problem of pricing the University beyond the financial means of the community of students it is supposed to serve.
Average Scholarship Award Comparison
1991-92 vs. 1996-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants in Aid</td>
<td>3590</td>
<td>4793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WKU</td>
<td>1480</td>
<td>2197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Scholarship Award Comparison
1991-92 vs. 1996-97
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997
for All Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship Account

$0 $1000 $2000 $3000 $4000 $5000 $6000

82000 83000 84000 87000 88000 89000

4793 1537 2445 796 1912 2197
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997 for All Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship Account

Grants in Aid: $4793
WKU: $2197
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997
for African-American Males

Grants in Aid

WKU

Scholarship Account

6711

2735
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997
for African American Females
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997
for White Females

Scholarship Account

Grants in Aid 1996-1997

WKU

$4739

$2120
Average Scholarship Award 1996-1997
for White Males

Scholarship Account

Grants in Aid: 3810
WKU: 2029
Comparison of Total Scholarship Dollars Awarded 1991-92 vs 1996-97

Source: WKU
Comparison of Total Scholarship Recipients
1991-92 vs 1996-97

Source: WKU