2-20-2008

UA3/9/5 Student Rally at the Capitol

WKU President's Office

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records

Part of the American Politics Commons, Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Higher Education Administration Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Social Influence and Political Communication Commons, and the Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records/4179

This Transcription is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
STUDENT RALLY AT THE CAPITOL – REMARKS
FEBRUARY 20, 2008

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE IN THE CAPITOL WITH YOU TODAY TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF KENTUCKY'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION IN KENTUCKY.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, I AM PLEASED THAT ALL OF YOU HAVE COME TO THE CAPITOL TODAY TO MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS OF GOVERNMENT, AND TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONCERNS YOU HAVE AS STUDENTS AND AS CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT COMMONWEALTH.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO KENTUCKY'S FUTURE. AND I KNOW THAT GOVERNOR BESHEAR AND THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BELIEVE THAT TOO.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO ALL OF YOUR FUTURES, AND THAT IS WHY YOU CHOSE TO PURSUE A DEGREE IN EDUCATION, ENGINEERING, MUSIC, MEDICINE, LAW OR SOME OTHER FIELD.
YOU ARE SEEKING TO IMPROVE YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE. THAT IS THE TRUE PURPOSE OF A UNIVERSITY – TO BE THE CATALYST TO A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OF OUR CITIZENS.

EDUCATION PROVIDES THE SOLUTION TO KENTUCKY'S PROBLEMS; BUT IT SEEMS WE NOW FIND OURSELVES HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN FUNDING KENTUCKY'S PROBLEMS OR FUNDING KENTUCKY'S SOLUTIONS.

UNIVERSITIES TEACH; WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY TO DO RESEARCH; WE HELP STUDENTS GET ENGAGED IN COMMUNITIES; AND WE DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OUR REGIONS OF THE STATE.

A BETTER EDUCATED STATE MEANS A HEALTHIER KENTUCKY, A WEALTHIER KENTUCKY, AND A BETTER KENTUCKY FOR ALL OF US.

FUNDING EDUCATION – A TRUE COMMITMENT TO FUNDING HIGHER EDUCATION – IS THE ONLY WAY WE WILL EVER SEE A BETTER KENTUCKY.

BUT UNIVERSITIES ARE BUSINESSES AND WE HAVE TO MAKE BUSINESS DECISIONS. BUDGET CUTS MEAN TOUGH CHOICES.
IT WAS JUST FOUR YEARS AGO THAT DIFFERENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GATHERED RIGHT HERE AT A RALLY JUST LIKE THIS TO FIGHT A HUGE BUDGET CUT IN 2004 TO HIGHER EDUCATION. MY UNIVERSITY WAS CUT $5.6 MILLION THEN. THAT'S WHEN THE BELT TIGHTENING OCCURRED. THAT'S WHEN ALL POSSIBLE EFFICIENCIES WERE FOUND. NOW IN 2008, THERE ARE NO MORE EFFICIENCIES. THE BELT HAS BEEN TIGHTENED. NOW, WITH THE CUTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION THAT HAVE BEEN PROPOSED, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT JOB LOSS, PROGRAM ELIMINATION, AND REDUCED ACCESS.
Once again, we have already made tough choices (reference mens' soccer), and even tougher choices with broader impact across our campus will come soon if the course of this budget isn’t changed in the next six weeks in the halls of this capitol.

As tough as those decisions will be for our institutions, the real suffering will come from you – the students. You bear the burden of this budget cut. No group of citizens in this commonwealth is being impacted in as many ways or as harshly as you students.

1. You will inevitably pay higher tuition than otherwise would be the case.

2. You will receive less money from Kees – scholarship dollars you were promised you earned, and you counted on.

3. You will have larger classes, fewer course offerings, and some of your programs may even be eliminated.

4. Public higher education will be less accessible. Fewer Kentuckians will find a way into college. Access and student success will be impacted by budget cuts of this magnitude. There will be no way around it.
50 million dollars cut from the University of Kentucky, 25 million dollars cut from the University of Louisville, 12 million dollars cut from WKU, and on and on. In all, 191 million dollars could be cut from higher education – and you, our students, will suffer the most. Right alongside the good and loyal faculty and staff whose jobs will be eliminated, more cost, less money, less learning – that will be the result of these budget cuts to universities.

Our legislators have tough decisions to make too, and they need to hear from you.

My message to legislators is don’t place the burden of Kentucky’s budget woes on the backs of university students. Make the tough choices, so students don’t have to.

Kentucky’s university students are our future – you are our hope – we need you to be successful – and we want you to be successful in Kentucky.

As you leave here today, know that your voice can be heard and that you should have a say in what your government does. This affects you in real ways, and you need to tell that story.
UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS CAN TALK ABOUT FACULTY, WE CAN TALK ABOUT BUILDINGS, BUT YOU, THE STUDENTS, ARE THE REAL STORY.

I'M HERE IN FRANKFORT TODAY TO TELL YOUR STORY TO ALL WHO WILL LISTEN. JOIN ME!

THANK YOU – DON'T GO HOME TODAY WITHOUT TALKING TO YOUR LEGISLATOR!