9-21-1998

UA3/9/5 Somerset Noon Rotary Club Speech

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PLEASED TO BE IN SOMERSET. THIS COMMUNITY AND THE COUNTY HAVE BEEN--AND CONTINUE TO BE--VERY IMPORTANT TO WESTERN. WE'Re PROUD OF THE STUDENTS WE GET FROM PULASKI COUNTY. IT'S AN IMPRESSIVE PROFILE:
BUT LET ME FOCUS FOR A MINUTE ON WESTERN IN 1998.

- CURRENTLY RECEIVE ABOUT 4,000 APPLICANTS
- WE ARE ADMITTING SOME 86% AND ENROLLING 65% OF THOSE WE ACCEPT
- AVERAGE ACT SCORE IS 21.1
- AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL GPA IS 3.07
- 87% IN-STATE
- 11% MINORITY - 8.7% AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND 2.3% INTERNATIONAL
- BY 2003, WE WANT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS BY 3,000.
- RAISE THE ACT AVERAGE TO 22.5. REACH AN IN-STATE/OUT-OF-STATE MIX OF 80-20 AND RAISE THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION TO 10%
- BUT WHAT DO WE OFFER AS AN INSTITUTION TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?
  - SMALL CLASS SIZE
  - HIGH PERCENTAGE OF FULL-TIME FACULTY WHO TEACH
  - CONCERNED AND DEDICATED FACULTY AND STAFF
  - A COMMITMENT TO GRADUATE THOSE WHO ENROLL AND THE RETENTION PROGRAMS TO DELIVER ON THAT COMMITMENT
  - SUCCESSFUL ALUMNI
  - A COHESIVE FAMILY ATMOSPHERE
  - A CAMPUS RICH IN CHARACTER AND TRADITION. FROM ITS UNIQUE LANDSCAPE TO ITS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURE TO THE CHARACTERS WHO BUILT OUR SPECIAL TRADITIONS AND...
VALUES

• **STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY IN OUR ACADEMIC BUILDINGS, RESIDENCE HALLS AND FITNESS CENTER**

• **A GROWING BOWLING GREEN COMMUNITY EASILY ACCESSED AND ONLY 60 MILES FROM NASHVILLE**

• **MOST IMPORTANTLY--WE OFFER, IN A WESTERN EDUCATION, A PROMISE OF: SATISFACTION WITH THE EDUCATION AND STUDENT LIFE EXPERIENCE, MARKETABILITY IN ONE’S CHOSEN FIELD, AND VALUE FOR COST.**

ONE OF THE STRENGTHS OF WESTERN IS OUR CAPACITY TO BE AGGRESSIVE IN RECRUITING GOOD STUDENTS WHILE COMPLETELY FULFILLING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACCESSIBILITY. WESTERN WILL STRATEGICALLY BUILD EACH FRESHMAN CLASS ON THE MAIN CAMPUS--THIS YEAR’S FRESHMAN CLASS IS UP BY ABOUT 150 STUDENTS; AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT IS UP BY SOME 200 STUDENTS. WE WILL ALSO COORDINATE OUR ADMISSIONS PROGRAM TO OPTIMIZE OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN BOWLING GREEN. STUDENTS WHO PURSUE AN ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE OR NEED REMEDIATION CAN ENROLL IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND TRANSFER ON TO THE MAIN CAMPUS AFTER A SEMESTER OR A YEAR OR THE COMPLETION OF A TWO-YEAR DEGREE--ALL THE WHILE STILL BEING AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE WESTERN FAMILY.

WESTERN IS ALSO PLAYING A LEAD ROLE IN THE EMERGING COMMONWEALTH VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY. ALL OF THE STATE UNIVERSITIES
WILL PROVIDE ELECTRONIC COURSES IN A SYNCHRONIZED PORTFOLIO OF COURSE WORK AND DEGREE PROGRAMS. IN ADDITION, WESTERN OFFERS ITS OWN UNIQUE DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS—SOME FROM THE MAIN CAMPUS AND SOME FROM OUR CAMPUSES IN GLASGOW, ELIZABETHTOWN, FT. KNOX, AND OWENSBORO, EACH OF WHICH OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF ON-SITE COURSES AND DEGREES FOR COMMUTING STUDENTS OF ALL AGES WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THOSE CITIES.

EACH YEAR WESTERN PARTICIPATES IN TWO ACCOUNTABILITY SURVEYS COORDINATED BY THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION. THESE SURVEYS TARGET RECENT GRADUATES AND SENIORS.

1998 RESULTS FROM RECENT BACHELOR’S DEGREE GRADUATES SHOW WESTERN TO HAVE A 94% RATING IN ALUMNI RESPONSES OF “GOOD” OR “EXCELLENT” IN OVERALL INSTRUCTION. THIS WAS THE HIGHEST SCORE AMONG ALL EIGHT UNIVERSITIES IN KENTUCKY INSTRUCTION IN ONE’S MAJOR HAD A 93% SCORE FOR WESTERN—94% WAS THE HIGHEST IN KENTUCKY.

IN THE SURVEY OF SENIORS, WESTERN STUDENTS GAVE A RATING OF 89% IN OVERALL INSTRUCTION COMPARED TO THE HIGHEST IN STATE RATING OF 91%. THE LOWEST RATING WAS 72%. THE WKU SENIORS PRODUCED THE HIGHEST STATE RATING—91%—FOR THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION IN ONE’S MAJOR. THE LOW WAS 79%.

MY POINT IS THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENTS WE SERVE ARE NOT IDLE OBJECTIVES—THEY ARE ABSOLUTE INTENTIONS WHICH GUIDE
DECISIONS AND ACTIONS AND ARE MEASURABLE AND DOCUMENTED ON AN
ANNUAL BASIS.

THE WESTERN FACULTY AND STAFF HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK OVER
THE LAST TEN MONTHS CREATING A FIVE-YEAR PLAN CALLED CHALLENGING
THE SPIRIT. THE PLAN IS A PRECISE ROAD MAP WITH ABSOLUTE AND
MEASURABLE OUTCOMES WHICH WE INTEND TO ACHIEVE BY 2003. THE PLAN
DRAWS ON THE DIRECTIONS OUTLINED IN RECENT LEGISLATION IN FRANKFORT
WHICH STATES PRIORITIES FOR KENTUCKY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.
PRIORITIES FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH, FOR PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION ON
OUR CAMPUSES, FOR MAINTAINING OUR CAMPUSES, FOR IMPROVED QUALITY,
AND FOR ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY. HOUSE BILL 1 COULD NOT BE MORE
TIMELY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND FOR WESTERN. HIGHER EDUCATION IS A
PRIORITY FOR GOVERNOR PATTON AND FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE
STATE HAS RECOGNIZED THE STRONG LINKAGE BETWEEN AN EDUCATED
POPULATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKFORCE, AND ECONOMIC
PROSPERITY IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE SECOND MAJOR FACTOR WHICH SHAPED WESTERN’S PLAN IS AN
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMISSIONED BY OUR BOARD OF REGENTS LAST
FALL. A TEAM OF INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS SPENT SEVERAL
DAYS ON THE CAMPUS AND STUDIED WESTERN CURRICULUM, DATA, SYSTEMS,
EXPENDITURES, ALL OF ITS STRENGTHS AND ITS WEAKNESSES--EVERYTHING
POSSIBLE. THE REVIEW TEAM SUBMITTED A VERY CANDID AND OBJECTIVE
REPORT WITH 37 STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE. IT TOOK A
CONSTRUCTIVELY CRITICAL VIEW OF MANY OF WESTERN’S PROCEDURES AND
HABITS AND OUTLINED LOGICAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN THE
UNIVERSITY--TOP TO BOTTOM.

THE RESULT OF THESE TWO ACTIONS BY THE STATE AND BY THE
WESTERN BOARD LED TO OUR STRATEGIC PLAN--CHALLENGING THE SPIRIT.

SINCE MY APPOINTMENT ON SEPTEMBER 12 AND MY FIRST DAY ON
NOVEMBER 1, I HAVE BEEN CONSUMED WITH IDENTIFYING THOSE THINGS
WHICH DEFINE OUR CHARACTER AND MAKE WESTERN DISTINCTIVE AND
FINDING WAYS TO NOURISH THEM, AND I’VE BEEN CONSUMED WITH BRINGING
ABOUT THE CHANGES OUTLINED IN THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW AND SOME
THINGS I’VE DISCOVERED ON MY OWN SINCE MY RETURN TO THE “HILL.” WE
ARE CHANGING SOME HABITS--EVEN SOME TRADITIONS WHICH MAY HAVE
BEEN HOLDING US BACK IN RECENT YEARS. WE’VE CHANGED OUR BUDGET
PHILOSOPHY WE HAVE EMPOWERED OUR FACULTY AND STAFF TO USE AND
CARRY OVER BUDGET BALANCES FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT. WE’VE
ADOPTED A SERVICE CULTURE, WE’VE OPENED THE CAMPUS MORE TO THE
COMMUNITY AND REGION, BUT WE’VE REFRAINED FROM USING THAT WORD
“REGIONAL.”

THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN HAS A CLEAR VISION. WESTERN KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITYaspireS TO BE THE BEST COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC INSTITUTION IN
KENTUCKY AND AMONG THE BEST IN THE NATION. STRAIGHTFORWARD.
SIMPLE. NOTHING REGIONAL ABOUT IT. NATIONAL IN SCOPE AND AMBITION.
WE’RE NOT THE LAND GRANT, GRADUATE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY IN
KENTUCKY WE’RE NOT THE URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTION. WE ARE A
COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY FOCUSED ON UNDERGRADUATE INSTRUCTION
AND COMPLEMENTED BY RELEVANT MASTER’S AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF
JOINT DOCTORAL PROGRAMS WITH UK AND U OF L.

OUR MISSION IS EQUALLY SIMPLE. WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
SHALL PRODUCE GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE GRADUATES AND PROVIDE OptIMUM
SERVICE AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO ITS CONSTITUENTS.
THAT’S OUR MISSION.

THE CHALLENGING THE SPIRIT PLAN IS DESIGNED TO ALLOW WESTERN TO
ACHIEVE A NATIONALLY PROMINENT POSITION, TO BE THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHOICE FOR FACULTY AND STUDENTS DEDICATED TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.
THE PLAN HAS FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS RELATING TO INCREASED STUDENT
LEARNING, DEVELOPING THE STUDENT BODY, ASSURING HIGH QUALITY
FACULTY AND STAFF, ENHANCING RESPONSIVENESS TO CONSTITUENTS, AND
IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS. THERE ARE 27 THOROUGHLY
RESEARCHED OBJECTIVES SPREAD THROUGH THESE FIVE GOALS AND 44
ABSOLUTE OUTCOMES WHICH WE ARE PUBLICLY ON RECORD TO ACHIEVE BY
JUNE 30, 2003. THEY RANGE FROM ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TO QUALITY OF
INCOMING STUDENTS, TO RETENTION OF STUDENTS, TO FACULTY
COMPENSATION, TO INVESTMENTS IN PHYSICAL PLANT, TO NEW LEVELS OF
SPONSORED RESEARCH, TO ALUMNI FINANCIAL SUPPORT, TO THE SIZE OF OUR ENDOWMENT, TO THE CONVERSION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS. THIS PLAN CALLS FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION--A TRANSFORMATION WHICH WILL REQUIRE THE BEST EFFORTS OF EVERYONE IN THE WESTERN FAMILY AND ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WESTERN.

ONE OF THE WAYS WE INTEND TO MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IS TO COMPARE OUR PERFORMANCE AGAINST A GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS WHICH PERFORM WELL IN VARIOUS AREAS WHERE WE NEED TO IMPROVE. LAST SPRING HUNDREDS OF FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND ALUMNI PARTICIPATED IN AN EXERCISE TO IDENTIFY A GROUP OF PEER INSTITUTIONS WITH WHICH WE COULD DRAW SUCH COMPARISONS. PARRING DOWN A GROUP OF 36 UNIVERSITIES, SUGGESTED BY THE CPE AND OUR OWN FACULTY, THE WESTERN FAMILY HAS SETTLED ON A GROUP OF TEN. THEY ARE, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER: APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY IN NORTH CAROLINA, BALL STATE UNIVERSITY IN INDIANA, EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY IN NORTH CAROLINA, INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY IN VIRGINIA, MARSHALL UNIVERSITY IN WEST VIRGINIA, MIAMI UNIVERSITY IN OHIO, MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY IN MISSOURI, AND WESTERN FOR A PEER GROUP OF 11 UNIVERSITIES.

WE WILL MEASURE NEARLY EVERYTHING WE DO IN AN EFFORT TO MOVE TO THE UPPER LEVEL OF THIS GROUP--ACCEPTANCE RATES, ADMISSION
STANDARDS, ACT SCORES, FACULTY-STUDENT RATIO, COMPENSATION
PATTERNS, GRADUATION RATES, RETENTION RATES, ALUMNI GIVING, UTILITY
EFFICIENCY, PARKING PLACES PER STUDENT/PER FACULTY/PER STAFF, GENDER,
RACIAL, ETHNIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY--
THE LIST IS LIMITLESS.

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW WESTERN CURRENTLY
COMPARES TO THIS PEER GROUP. A GOOD COMPARISON IS FACULTY STUDENT
RATIOS. WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY HAS THE LOWEST FACULTY-
STUDENT RATIO AMONG THE GROUP NOW AT 16-1. MARSHALL UNIVERSITY HAS
THE HIGHEST AT 20-1. WE HAVE 46 UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES WITH 19 OR
FEWER STUDENTS. THAT TIES EAST CAROLINA FOR THE MOST SUCH CLASSES.
MIAMI UNIVERSITY IN OHIO HAS ONLY 26 UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES WITH
FEWER THAN 19 STUDENTS. WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS PEER IN TERMS OF
FRESHMEN IN THE TOP 25% OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS. 26%
OF WESTERN’S FRESHMEN WERE IN THE TOP 25% OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS
WHEREAS THE RANGE OF THIS GROUP WAS 76% AT TRUMAN STATE AND ONLY
31% AT BALL STATE. A CATEGORY WHERE WE HAVE TO IMPROVE
DRAMATICALLY IS GRADUATION RATES. JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY AND
MIAMI UNIVERSITY GRADUATE 82% OF THEIR STUDENTS IN SIX YEARS OR LESS.
WESTERN IS ONLY GRADUATING 42%. WHILE THAT IS SECOND ONLY TO UK’S
48% IN KENTUCKY, IT IS CLOSE TO THE BOTTOM OF OUR PEER GROUP WHICH
HAS MTSU AT 38%.
EARLIER I MENTIONED VALUE FOR COST AS A PRIORITY FOR WESTERN. WHEN WE COMPARE OUR COSTS TO THIS PEER GROUP, WE GET A MIXED PERSPECTIVE. OUR RESIDENT TUITION AND FEES RANKS 9TH OF THE GROUP OF 11. AT $2,140 WE EXCEED ONLY THE TWO NORTH CAROLINA UNIVERSITIES--APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY AND EAST CAROLINA. THE HIGH IS MIAMI OF OHIO AT $5,406. WE ARE SOME $600 BELOW THE AVERAGE. WE ARE #11, THE LOWEST IN NONRESIDENT TUITION AND FEES AT $5,740 WITH THE AVERAGE BEING OVER $8,000. OUR ROOM AND BOARD, AT $3,517, IS 9TH IN THE GROUP. ONLY APPALACHIAN STATE AND MTSU ARE LOWER WHILE JAMES MADISON IS THE HIGHEST AT $4,846. THESE COMPARISONS CLEARLY SHOW THE VALUE FOR COST IN A WESTERN EDUCATION. IT ALSO SHOWS HOW DIFFICULT IT MAY BE TO CATCH SOME OF THESE UNIVERSITIES WHEN THEY ARE OPERATING WITH CONSIDERABLY LARGER TUITION REVENUE FLOW.

ALL THIS IS TO SAY WE KNOW WHERE WE WANT TO GO, WE’VE CHARTED THE COURSE TO GET THERE, WE’RE MEASURING OUR PROGRESS EACH STEP OF THE WAY, AND WE INTEND TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES IN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME. MY MESSAGE TO YOU IN SOMERSET IS TO ASSURE THAT WE WANT AS MANY OF YOUR STUDENTS AS POSSIBLE TO HELP LEAD THE WAY!

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME. I’M LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING THE AFTERNOON WITH YOUR COMMUNITY LEADERS AND WITH OUR ALUMNI THIS EVENING. COME TO CAMPUS OFTEN. SUPPORT THE HILLTOPPERS. WE WANT YOU AND STUDENTS AT WESTERN. IT’S YOUR CAMPUS. SO COME BE A PART OF
COLLEGE LIFE AT ITS BEST! THANK YOU.