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Haenicke makes four commitments during his inauguration speech

Dr. Diether H. Haenicke accepted the presidency of Western during an inauguration ceremony December 21 that was held in conjunction with December commencement exercises.

"The selection of a president for Western Michigan University is the most important decision that its Board of Trustees ever makes," Fred W. Adams, chair of the board, said prior to declaring Haenicke Western's new president.

"It is our sincere desire that you will maintain an administrative environment conducive to the building of a faculty dedicated to truth and the service of mankind, a student body equally concerned with knowledge and moral principles, and a University whose light is unfailing."

In accepting the presidency, Haenicke made four commitments to the University.

To the Board of Trustees

"To the board I promise today that I shall do my very best to serve this University well, and that I shall always work to the best of my abilities to promote the interests of all its constituencies," he said.

To the students

"My second commitment goes to our students. Students are the central concern of this University. Providing a solid academic education is the main reason for the existence of a university like ours.

"In addition to academic learning," Haenicke said, "we also want to create an environment in which our students can grow, not only intellectually, but also socially, where they can grow as human beings, sensitive to the needs of others and mindful of their ethical obligations towards the society in which they live."

Classes offered at General Motors plant

WMU administrators saw the opportunity for a joint venture and contacted GM-BOC. "As long as business and industry are indicating a need for training for people, it's logical that colleges and universities develop linkages," Vander Weyden said.

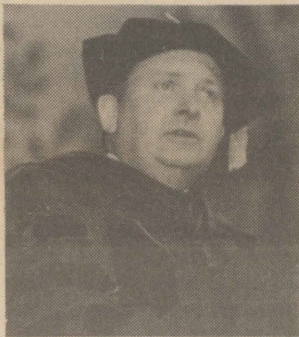
Western is concentrating on offering classes toward a bachelor's degree in General University Studies. "That's our most flexible curriculum," Vander Weyden said. "It offers the widest variety of subjects." Classes and advising sessions are being offered immediately before or after shifts, so employees can easily attend.

Last summer WMU distributed surveys to the 3,500 employees at the plant. About 275 persons responded saying they would like to take WMU courses at the plant toward a bachelor's degree. Now Western is exploring what kind of degrees interest most employees and how they would like to take classes.

Besides Western, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and the Comstock Community Schools offer classes in the plant. However, WMU's is the only program that leads directly to a bachelor's degree.

Western's Division of Continuing Education, of which the Office of Evening and Weekend Programs is a part, is participating in a similar program in Detroit with the UAW-Ford National Development and Training Center.

During a December inauguration ceremony, Board of Trustees chair Fred W. Adams of Grosse Pointe, at podium, charged President Diether H. Haenicke, far right, to maintain "a University whose light is unfailing." Trustees looking on, from left, are: Alfred L. Edwards of Ann Arbor, Barry L. Howard of West Bloomfield, Maury E. Parfet of Kalamazoo, Carol A. Waszkiewicz of Kalamazoo, Winifred D. Fraser of Northville, Charles H. Ludlow of Kalamazoo, and Geneva J. Williams of Detroit.



"... it is always my hope that students leave this University with much more than their transcripts reflect—that they don't leave with just a list of courses successfully passed, but with academic knowledge refined by the ability to apply this knowledge critically on the basis of considered ethical choices."

To the faculty

Haenicke said his third commitment is to the faculty—the most valuable institutional asset.

"The faculty preserve knowledge, they create knowledge, and they transmit it to the coming generations. If done properly, the faculty's work is highly demanding, difficult, and never done," he said. "A society that cherishes learning must hold in high esteem its teachers; a good university must be unwavering in its support of the faculty. And we are."

Haenicke said he will commit himself to helping create an atmosphere that is conducive to excellent teaching and research. To this end he said he will strive to provide conditions that favor intellectual inquiry without undue interference, generate appropriate recognition for unusual accomplishment and effort, and recognize the participatory role of the faculty in the educational and intellectual life of the University.

To the staff

The president's fourth commitment is to staff members.

"No large organization can function well without the men and women whose daily work guarantees that the grounds look attractive, that the mail flows smoothly, that the bills are paid, and that faculty and students receive all the many services necessary for the proper conduct of the University's business," he said.

"The staff, in important ways, contributes to the well-being of Western, and although they may be seldom praised or singled out, the value of their work is clearly recognized and appreciated. I realize that they, too, need to be listened to carefully when we talk about how to make our University an even better place to teach, to study, and to work.

"I know we all want essentially the same thing: a University of which we all can be truly proud. In this task I am counting on the help of all members of the University; I am counting on their trust and good will and their best effort. I am further counting on all those who have helped build this institution: emeriti, alumni, legislators, donors, and other good friends of Western," Haenicke said in conclusion.

"I bring to our joint task great enthusiasm, an appreciation and an expectation of high academic standards, a strong commitment to fairness, and a genuine dedication to hard work. I expect nothing less from those who work with me, and I know that I won't be disappointed."