

**Council on Postsecondary Education
November 7, 2008**

**Western Kentucky University Capital Project
Chapel and Columbarium**

The following interim project recommendation will authorize Western Kentucky University to spend private money to construct a chapel and columbarium.

ACTION: The staff recommends that the Council approve the request of Western Kentucky University to use private funds to construct a chapel and columbarium next to the Alumni Building and across the street from and facing the Kentucky Building on the main campus. The estimated project cost is \$1,700,000 and is funded through the WKU Foundation with private gifts.

Western Kentucky University proposes to use private funds raised by the WKU Foundation to construct a chapel and columbarium on the university campus (\$1,700,000). The project requires interim authorization because the private donors have all come forward after the 2008-10 budgetary process was completed. Authorization during the interim will allow the university time to identify the best materials, properly design the facility, go through the project bid process, award a contract, and complete the work in a timely manner. The project will result in an improvement to state-owned property with ownership of the improvements to accrue to the university upon completion.

The Council has the statutory responsibility to approve postsecondary education capital projects costing \$600,000 or more, regardless of fund source, that have been approved by an institution's governing board. During the interim, capital projects are evaluated under the requirements established by KRS 45.760(14) and KRS 45.763. Since the estimated cost of this project exceeds the \$600,000 threshold, the Council and the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee must approve the project before it is initiated. During the interim, capital projects are evaluated under the requirements established by KRS 45.760(14) and KRS 45.763.

This project will erect a chapel totaling 2,145 square feet with a total seating capacity of 72 for students, faculty, staff, and alumni of all faiths as a place of peace, reflection, and meditation. It may be used by campus organizations for special ceremonies and other activities. The chapel is anticipated to occupy approximately one-third of an acre of property. The project is supported by a group of alumni who want to enhance the campus environment and who have spearheaded an effort to raise the necessary funds. A key element of the

chapel will be a WKU columbarium. The columbarium will allow WKU alumni and friends to secure a permanent place on the WKU campus. Up to 300 cremation niches will be built on the grounds adjacent to the chapel and will be sold and reserved for each owner.

The project meets the requirement of KRS 45.760(14) that the source of funds is at least 50 percent federal or private. The university does not anticipate debt financing any portion of this project. The WKU Capital Project Management Division will implement the project, and the university will pay the operations and maintenance from a privately funded endowment created for that specific purpose.

Following Council approval, the staff will forward the Council's recommendation to the secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet and to the Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee.