

Lexington Campus Town Meeting
Chancellor Robert Hemenway
November 1990

On the subject of sharing information within the University...

“....There are two concepts that are really important to me: sharing perspectives and sharing information...I need you to tell me where the administration’s perspective seems right, where it seems wrong. If it is, tell me where it is wrong-headed... I think administrators are always in a position of public trust...

“But I think there is a particular issue that important for us to think about on the Lexington Campus at the University of Kentucky, and that’s the idea of *shared information*. I have a particular philosophy about information that has been shaped by the last two universities that I’ve worked at over the last four or five years. I think that some of you know that those two institutions are the University of Oklahoma and the University of Kentucky. I want to try to summarize the information philosophy that I’ve observed at those two campuses, without identifying the campus that I’m talking about. One of these campuses I think is very closed, secretive, certainly possessive about information. I think the information philosophy on that campus is that *what you don’t know won’t hurt you*. The other campus is certainly not perfect in this regard, but is generally open, generally forthcoming. The information philosophy on that campus, I think, is that University information is a matter of public record, and consequently is open to all and should be shared by all.

Let me conduct a sort of small, social scientific survey here. How many of you think that the University which is open and forthcoming with information is the University of Kentucky? (no one hand their hand). I think that makes my point. Now that’s an artificial kind of thing, I realize, but I did it because I wanted to stress that from my viewpoint information is a resource. It’s a resource in the same way that money is a resource. It’s a resource in the same way that people working to build a road use the resources of the University and state to do that. At every level of the organization, if information is shared it empowers people to make better decisions. If we can share information at every level it means we are going to make better decisions. The information flow across a large and complex organization like the University of Kentucky is very important to the success of that organization...The University as a whole and the campus will only be able to function at maximum strength if there’s a free flow of information between divisions. The willingness to share ideas and data and opinions, so that we all share the responsibility of making this a better University.”