

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

---

Student/Alumni Personal Papers

WKU Archives Records

---

Spring 1984

## UA94/6/1 Folklore 566: Oral History Materials & Methods

Makiuti Tongia

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu\\_alum\\_papers](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu_alum_papers)



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), [International and Area Studies Commons](#), and the [Oral History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Tongia, Makiuti, "UA94/6/1 Folklore 566: Oral History Materials & Methods" (1984). *Student/Alumni Personal Papers*. Paper 178.

[https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu\\_alum\\_papers/178](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu_alum_papers/178)

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student/Alumni Personal Papers by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).

Folklore 566: Oral History Materials and Methods

Spring Term, 1984

Professor : Dr L. Montell.

from Makiuti Tongia

Content

1. Thirty minutes transcript of interview with Robert Wurster on the History of the International Students' Office.
2. Summary of Tape One, Side Two.
3. Index of whole interview's contents.
4. Interpretative Essay.

PAGE ONE.

Tongia: You said something in the cafeteria that you were the first Director...

Wurster: Yes. Actually, when I came here in 1961, there was no one here, who actually was taking care of foreign students. We had only one or two foreign students on the campus.

Tongia: What country did they come from?

Wurster: Saudi Arabia I think, they both, one from Saudi Arabia I know for sure, and the other one from Lebanon. There was a business college downtown that attracted, had attracted foreign students for a number of years. And so, the foreign students there sort of associated with us here on the hill, and, <sup>what did</sup> ~~but~~, we, actually, since I was no' foreign student advisor, we organized a little club, and this club <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ to be made up of both American and foreign students, - ~~that~~ sort of international club just mainly for fellowship. From that grew an interest among the American students and so, the American students outnumbered the foreign students for a while, until we started attracting more foreign students. We started getting foreign students from Iran and from China. We had <sup>very few students -- we had</sup> ~~had~~ one or two from Nigeria not, not like today. And I was not Foreign Student Advisor. Actually, I just got the name all over campus that if any foreign student had a problem, "Go see Bob Wurster!" And I took

Tongia: sort of the father...

Wurster: Yes.

Tongia: became the father.

Wurster: Yes. And I sort of took it as a kind of compliment because having lived abroad and having taught ~~at~~ <sup>in</sup> Saudi Arabia, I developed quite an empathy for students or anybody outside his own country. So we actually operated just as a club, until the university decided that I would have to have some reduced time <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ my English, teaching English. And so they reduced my teaching load by one class. But still, did not make me Foreign Student Advisor. Officially I was not Foreign Student Advisor. As the number of foreign students grew, my problem, ← the biggest problem was, what to do with these foreign students during vacation time. I was very concerned that they have some place to stay. So we developed the host family program, not a sponsored program, but a host family program in which we tried to relate one student with a family here in Bowling Green.

Tongia: Did that work?

Wurster: It worked at that time because we had <sup>and actually our foreign students were so few</sup> so few, that we were like a family. Even when we had our international club meeting, it was like a family getting together. Later, much later, I saw divisions among foreign students. Actually, they were fragmented by cause the Latin Americans related to each other; the Africans related to each

each other; the Middle East related to each other, And it upset me because I knew they had lost their family concept. Now all of this time, I was trying so hard to, I guess internationalise the university. This university was a college and was very provincial. The administration felt it was actually created to take care of the local Kentuckians. And I think they would have been happy if <sup>had</sup> no one ~~had~~ even come from any other states. So attracting students from other states and foreign countries became sort of one of my great projects.

Tongia: Why did you--?

Wurster: I just felt that you don't have, if you don't have a mixture of cultures and people from outside the state, you have narrow thinking in your class. You can't get universal thoughts in your class, and the thinking process, students were just not exposed to new ideas. So I was very happy when we, when we really started attracting from out of state. And we got them mainly because our tuition rates were so low.

Tongia: Was the university sympathetic to your--?

Wurster: No not really. They put up with me. It was sort of, 'if Bob Wurster does it, you know it's okay'. But no money available. We had projects. We had faculty talent nights. We had faculty who had never performed before as faculty, actually come together

and do things like singing or reciting or juggling to make money for our foreign students. Then we realized that our foreign students had no loan fund. They had nothing to borrow from because all of the money was pretty much tied up for American students, federal government money and state money. So we started our own little loan system. Had our own loan fund and it pulled some of our students through very difficult times. Now, they weren't big loans but sometimes our students would run out of money at the end of the month. And whereas an American student could <sup>call and</sup> say, "Daddy, put some money in the bank for me!" these students needed fifty dollars or a hundred dollars just to survive until their cheque comes from a foreign country.

I remember one student from Syria, outstanding young man whose father was an outstanding lawyer <sup>in</sup> Syria. And his father was put under house arrest, because he ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> against the government of the time. This young man's money was cut off completely. And he had a part time <sup>job</sup> here. He was a, one of the finest scholars we've ever had. And I used to call him Mr. Prime Minister. He carried with him an air of being a Prime Minister. And he became, became President of our International Club at one time. He was an outstanding President. I will tell you a little bit more about the club in a few minutes because it became, ~~became~~ <sup>became</sup> actually,

the centre of international affairs. We operated out of that club when we needed something. We, would sort of let it the voice of the club be heard.

But this young fellow <sup>W</sup> Zuhair ran out of money and he came to me and he said, "I need ~~sum of~~ <sup>enough</sup> money to live on for about a week." I said, "Zuhair if I had it, I'd get it out of the bank." But at the time I was very low, too. So I decided to over to the financial office and I asked for about fifty or sixty dollars and was told that they didn't have any for foreign students. And I said we have a student who may not eat for a week. And I knew that our administration was very sympathetic to students who are from poor families. And this administration <sup>or</sup> said, "if its a foreign student we dont have any. Foreign students are more trouble than they're worth." Well you can imagine how that hit me in the face because I had sort of dedicated my life to to bringing foreign students here and having their voice heard.

Tongla: You mean, he meant financial problems?

Wurster: He meant just all around ~~social~~ and financial and academic, that they were not, they really weren't wanted here. Now that's what we get from people who have not travelled. This person had never travelled much further than Horse Cave. And he admitted it one time to one



of the students. He said, I've never travelled further than Horse Cave and I'm happy. Well that's the kind of mentality that I felt I was hitting against. And even the President of the university he put up with me. I was quite a rebel, not just with foreign students but with the Vietnam situation and all of it. And so I had to watch very carefully that I didn't lose my credibility because I was fighting for the foreign students but at the same time I was fighting for my own identity. And even the President of the university Dr Thompson was not pro foreign students until someone, Federal government I think gave him a some type of project to go with the group around the world, at the government expense. Dr Thompson came back a whole different person. He started attending some of our meetings. Everything we ask for he would find for us. It just meant he had never travelled before. He was brought up through Western. Culti... you know, cultivated at Western with a sort of narrow concept. Then all of a sudden he saw the world and he saw that we need foreign students here. And so he started having a coffee or tea every year and bring all the foreign students together.

Tongia: So your initial problems with the administrative were basically just the lack of travel that

Wurster: Yes, narrow concept of what universality means when it comes to education.

Tongia: And it wasn't really. Now, you. I wouldn't call it as negative in the sense that they were against it, but they didn't know any better.

Wurster: N. They just didn't know. That was the problem. See, I'm trying to educate them and make them aware of the fact that our Kentucky students needed to rub elbows with these people--to learn about other cultures systems. I have felt for years for a comparative education course in which our foreign students are used as teachers in education department. We have, we have among our foreign students, authorities and experts. But we don't recognise them or use them you see. I remember a Nigerian student who left his government job in Nigeria, came over here and that's--he gave up a good job. Came over here to get a bachelor's degree. While he was here, the Biafra situation came about and all of his money was stopped. And this young man had no money. Well, he was Black. Well, at that time, the Black man in this area just got no recognition. And he ends up working as an orderly at the hospital because he had to have money to live on. One of the churches took him over and clothed him and paid for his rent. But he worked at the hospital as an orderly, doing you know, emptying bed pans. Never, never, never griped. Never, I never heard a, a negative thing from this young man about the what conditions he had been put in. He's now an outstanding pharmacist now, in Boston. And so, I've watched these people go through some ordeals

and wondered how the end, how they did it. And I was just happy that I was on the side line helping them. It was a twenty four hour day job. I mean when, when one gets picked up by a policeman, if its two o'clock he needed somebody. I had to go down to the police station to, speak for him. And sometimes, it was no more than the policemen couldn't understand them. We've had police pick some of our foreign students up and not recognising that they are having difficulties with the language. they Think, they're drunk because their language isn't clear. And, its its almost like trying to internationalise a community. Not until I would say the last etn years or fifteen years has this community even recognised that foreign students are an asset to the whole community and not just the university. We developed a club. In fact the club as I said was our voice when we needed things. It was sort of a goodwill. We had an international food tasting we offered our, our young people as speakers at any club--any organisation that needed them for a speaker. We had a Speakers' Bureau and that was another way of just trying to internationalise. I never forget taking three young people over to Glasgow and there was a Women's Organisation--a group of secretaries who wanted to become a new speaker. I took two Iranians, one was an outstanding young man who became the President of our club. By the way the club being made up of Americans and foreign students, now we call them

international students which I think is not quite as derogatory as foreign. So international students

Tongia: Why.. .

Wurster: Why.. .

Tongia: Why do you think its

Wurster: The word foreign has a negative connotation.

Something is foreign, a foreign object in your eye

or something of that nature has a negative connotation

so international is what is really is what we're talking

about, international. We've had a lot of good friends

here in town. There is one club here, the Altrusa club

that is just, because, we sent one young man from Iran

to speak to them one time. They took on the International

club as their project. Any time we needed cookies or

or for socialising or any time we needed transportation

they would furnish it. We made some good friends through

our speaker. What I was talking about these, these

three I took over to Glasgow, one was a young beautiful

young lady and one was this young man who was outstanding

speaker and personality and Zuhab who also was ~~not~~

a fine speaker. But that night I was not going to

let each one say a little bit about soccer. So I introduced

them and I said that this is interesting all three of

these young people are Moslem and but that will not

affect what they have to say I don't think. And I said

are there any questions? And one young lady said, 'how

do you celebrate christmas? And I said, I think you

must have misunderstood me or you didn't hear me

I said these are all Moslems. They practise Islamic.  
"I know!", she said "but I wanna know how they celebrate  
christmas" Its that type of unawareness you see from  
you get from these people. And we educated them

Tongia: So when did you become the official

Wurster: Oh, I was official. I was foreign student advisor  
They did not call it international student advisor. It was  
foreign student advisor. About ten years, no, I guess  
seven years. I spent about seven years as just the  
unofficial advisor to foreign students. I was foreign  
student advisor for eight years. Part of that time I had  
reduced teaching load

Tongia: Teaching load. (spoken at same time as he did)

Wurster: And I was, I was never offered the full time  
foreign advisorship and I dont know why. I would have  
been torn between being full time foreign advisor  
and English teacher. I loved both very much and I  
knew I could not divide my time because English  
requires so much paper work and I was giving even  
though I had only one class release for work for foreign  
students. But the problem was, is, you know you  
see a foreign student when he has a problem, its  
urgent. English students you know you say I'll see  
you tomorrow you know, lets make an appointment  
the day after tomorrow, But most international  
students dont come to you until the thing is pretty bad  
I mean they dont have any money. Its not they dont have  
a dollar, they dont have any money or their visa is  
run out or they got bad news from home or their car's

broke down or they been picked up by for shoplifting.  
~~It's emergency~~  
It's emergency.

Tongia: That's true. I didn't realise that because I do that.

Wurster: It's an emergency. Everything the foreign student use is an emergency. So I was on call twenty four hours a day and didn't realise it was doing something to me physically.

Tongia: Sapping your strength?

Wurster: Well yes, but putting a stress on me that I think caused me to have a heart problem. A year after I gave up being foreign student advisor, I had to have a by-pass operation and I don't smoke and my cholesterol is not high and I don't have diabetes and all of these things lead to a blockage in the artery. But stress is one main ones. I'm not, I'm not accusing it of that but I'm saying I keep trying to think back what I have I done to cause me to have a blocked artery.

Tongia: Must be the emergency.

Wurster: Emergency. I was always ready. I felt I was and even I couldn't leave town, Christmas, until I was sure every foreign student had a place to stay. And sometimes I get to calling American students and say, "Are you leaving your apartment? Do you mind if a foreign student stays in your apartment during the holidays because many of them couldn't afford to, to go to a motel. Wouldn't take a thing for it. Most wonderful friends and companionship as I told people. I've always told people I've never spent a dull moment with a foreign student.

But I spent a lot of dull moments with American students  
American students bore me a lot.

Tongia: Why do you say that? Are you just being defensive?

Wurster: Its just, no, no, its just that maybe because if I'm interested, if I cant talk if I cant talk about their academic work, I get involved in their food or their family. And its a sort of my desire on enrichment in knowing more about, just the world you see since I teach literature. I guess the main contact I have with international students now is through my Introduction Lit class. I find that the word is still around. Get in Bob Wurster's 238 class possibly because I understand them better. I have an awful lot of empathy of where foreign students are coming from. And even though I am not easy and they find that out. I ask them sometimes oh, you're taking my class because you heard I'm easy. They sat, no, we heard you're not easy but you're fair and you're empathetic. You understand us. So that, that pleases me, pleases me very much. But as I say as soon as I left being foreign student advisor, thats part time, they put on a person who was full time and he had his hands full. This was Raymond Louie. Raymond Louie was from China--Hong Kong actually. Hong Kong. And he did a very fine job. Now he was international and he certainly had a feeling for international students. When he left, Susan Tesseneer was hired as full time. Now Raymond happened to be here doing graduate work so thats how and

hen was doing graduate work in personnel--student personnel. So he just automatically went right into that as part of his internship type of thing.

Tongia: Where does Dr Hatcher come in?

Wurster: Dr Hatcher has been an advisory. He was the he was my supervisor when I was foreign student advisor. He was my advisor and he was sort of the university's liason between the administration and if it any international programme. Now its much bigger than that now. John, Dr Petersen has abbig programme you know with with our Latin America programme and our travel abroad and study abroad. That is all coming under his office

Tongia: his office

Wurster: Yes Dr Petersen's office but you see Dr Hatcher all we had was a little programme with Laspo--Latin American agency that gives money to Latin American countries. And Dr Hatcher being Spanish speaking was sort of worked in that fine. But Dr Hatcher was a great boost to me. I mean he really was a greater supporter. Not much I did he would not approve of and so it was nice to have a supervisor that you know you can go to. He knows what you're doing is what you think is best.

Tongia: He was supervisor to you in your post as the English ?

Wurster: He's not. He was in Foreign Language, so it was not that he was my supervisor academically. He was my supervisor of foreign, foreign affairs or foreign

Tongia: What was the attitude of the International



students of the office, of the International students office at the time when you started off and what you think their attitude was

Wurster: I think I think the foreign students, international students have always supported anyone who shows them any concern and interest. You see that's the great thing about foreign students. They respect teachers so much. I mean you're almost next to god and it puts you in such a position of responsibility. It frightens me sometimes. They could not do too much for me. They knew that I was concerned about them. If anything had happened to me I think all of a hundred percent would have rallied around me. I always felt that kind of support. Now, sometimes there will be a little clash among But that's that's just international. You're dealing with cultural differences. I think that is one of the thing that concerned me the most is it kept me busy trying to learn different cultures because you see there's certain cultures they don't like you to be close to them. There are others that you, you

Tongia: Space

Wurster: Yeah put your hand on your shoulder or they will walk right into your face. And there's one culture that if you show the sole of your foot its an insult I was changing all the time because within, within two hours in my office I could walk a Chinese girl a Japanese boy, a Arab and it kept me moving.

Tongia: I can see the stress coming in

Wurster: Yeah.

Tongia: because you're playing so many roles.

Wurster: But I could not afford to turn them against me  
Because that was all some of them had

Tongia: What do you think is some of the office's  
weaknesses when it started off.

Wurster: No...

Tongia: Did you have any weaknesses?

Wurster: Well we didn't have any money no money whatsoever  
which, oh supplies. You see I come over to the English  
Department to get all my supplies. But there was no  
money for international student affairs. Occasionally  
when I became foreign student advisor, they would give  
me money to go to the national meetings and the state  
meetings of NAFSA--National Association of Foreign  
Students Affairs. And I went nearly to all of them  
because I had to learn. You see I went in this thing  
blindly. I had never had any training whatsoever. Sure  
I had taught abroad in Saudi Arabia for two years  
and I had a great feeling. But I knew nothing about  
immigration problems. I knew nothing about the financial  
problems, economic problems of countries and the exchange  
of money. I knew nothing about admission. Oh that was a  
problem. Admission. Our university was very hesitant  
about admitting international students until I came.  
And then if I approved, they approved automatically.  
Now I always felt that all international applications  
to come into Western should be run through the Foreign  
Student Advisor. The Foreign Student Advisor can read

those applications with much more clarity than an admissions officer who has not been trained. A foreign student advisor can watch the economics because they can see. They can watch the, see, some schools abroad are not really accredited. The TOEFEL score is very important. I never could quite convince the Admissions Office that they, they either had to go off and learn how to evaluate the colleges and, and schools these students were coming from to see whether they were qualified or they had to, accept my training that I would get when I go to the international meetings. Finally we had the Admissions Officer go and realised that he should have been, he, he found out that what he didn't have to know was all about these schools. But he did know where he can send the applications to be reviewed and sent back to us. So, it was a growing process--a growing process. I think our administration was very leary of foreign students. They just were afraid they'd get over here and be more problems and they were. I will admit, international students have problems. But I'm not sure they're any different from our American students.

Tongia: Do you think that was because it was due to the Vietnam years--that was part of it?

Wurster: No, no I don't believe. I don't think the Vietnam situation had anything to do with international. It probably would have if we were, had, a slur of South East Asians who would apply. But at that time, most of our

students were...

students were from the Middle East. The Middle East was the big, and of course they had money. See, when the Middle East students came over their sort of problems wasn't a money problem. Only of late when the Khomeini do we now have a problem. Their money is stopped. And getting money out of Iran is just a big problem. But Saudi Arabs could come over here hardly, unless they had some sort of scholarship. The government would not let them out to see. So we knew when a Saudi Arab applied, his federal government's giving him a fairly good scholarship or assistantship. The Chinese would come. We got many requests from Chinese. And we probably would have more Chinese if we have had scholarships. And every time a Chinese applied for a scholarship and had as competition an American student most of our Chinese students would win. Chinese students background in chemistry especially, especially is superior to ours--all of our young people come out of our High School. So the Chinese now are fewer here because we we don't have any scholarships for science.

Tongia: When did the university first, do they have an international scholarship system?

Wurster: No, no if an international student student competed for an Assistantship--now an assistantship is just you know what that is. They get only the benefits that our American students. Sometimes they will get out-of-state- benefits such as tuition lowered to state tuition because they are out of state tuition.

Tongia: Okay

Wurster: That will be the only thing they will get.

Tongia: I was really thinking about the Latin American dinner that we had, that we're raising funds, so I thought

Wurster: Okay. There are some Latin American, private Latin American scholarships but that is, that's Federal and State money which is coming in and we may have to match it. It may be something of us matching it. The only thing I know that is given to an international student outright is that, this money that we had as international students loan fund was put in the regular College Heights Foundation and they administer it. And we found out that our money that we had that was increasing and not, amount. So we now give an award that comes out of the international student programme to the international student who during the year has done the most in furthering international relationships on the campus and in the community. Speaking engagements, working on the international food tasting, tutoring students or running the international club or something. And this year, Vitos, the young man who is the soccer coach, is getting the award. And the award it started out as fifty dollars. It's over two hundred a year.

Tongia: What's your opinion about this young man from South Africa who is Western Kentucky's.

Summary of Tape One, side two

International students have a different philosophy regards getting a degree here. For them the degree is not only to be achieved for themselves but also for their families back home. I think the message here is that, a failure here is also regarded as a failure back home not only for the student but also for the family.

International students are very proud of their cultures. But they would not ordinarily come out and talk about it unless and until other peoples or cultures start talking about theirs.

Students whose countries have undergone governmental changes experience financial and immigration problems. Many of them have their money cut out. And many do not want to go back to their countries because of the political climate. Students in this category often try to disappear in this country or try to get married not only for love but also for convenience sake.

Interviewer's tape no.: Tape One, side One WKU FL, FL & OHA Accession no.:  
Interviewer: Makiuti Tongia Address: 318 PFT, WKU  
Interviewee: Robert Wurster Address: 109 Cherry Hall, WKU  
Place of interview: 109 Cherry Hall Date: 27th March 1984  
Other people present: None

Equipment used: AC/DC Cassette Recorder

Reel-to-reel tape: Brand: Size reel: Tape Mil: Speed:

Cassette: Brand: C-60 C-30/C-60/C-90/C-120 (circle size)

Amount of tape used: (Side 1) X (Side 2): X

Brief description of interview context and tape contents:

Side One, of tape one traces the history of the international students here, the countries they are from, the first international students, the first foreign students' officer or advisor, his duties and frustrations. It also looks at some of the achievements that the office made as also the students from overseas, the views of the administration in the beginning and today etc.

---

History of International  
Office.

0 -5 minutes: In the beginning there was no office or person appointed to deal with the international students on campus. But international students from the Business College downtown formed a club, from which the International Students Office and club grew from.

Attitude of the administration: 6-15 minutes: International students were first considered as worth more problems than of any good. But changes in attitude and travelling experiences of some administration people in later years changed all of this.

Index	Footage	Description/Summary
attitude of the community	16-20 min.	Most students were willing to go out into the community and share their knowledge of their country, to act as good ambassadors of their people. The community at first did not warm up to the students. But increased contact between the two groups not only led to increased reinforcement of prejudices between the two groups but also to increased awareness of cultural and religious differences.
attitude of some University staff	21-25 min.	Some members of the university had a very narrow concept of what universality meant when it came to education. Most had not travelled beyond Kentucky and therefore had a rather provincial view of the universe.
the word foreign has a derogatory connotation.	26-27 min.	The word foreign has a derogatory connotation. It has a negative meaning.
emergency	28 min	International students seek help at the last moment. Their problems are more emergency oriented in terms of money for food and a place to stay.
Dr Hatcher	28 min	Dr Hatcher was liason between the university and the international office. He was supervisor to Mir Wurster the first International Student Advisor. Other advisors include Raymond Louie from Hong Kong who was later succeeded by Susan Tesseeneer.
weaknesses	29 min.	The programme did not have any money to start off with.



Interviewer's tape no.: Tape One, side two WKU FL, FL & OHA Accession no.:

Interviewer: Makiuti Tongia Address: 318 P.F.T, WKU.

Interviewee: Robert Wurster Address: 109 Cherry Hall, WKU

Place of interview: Cherry Hall, WKU. Date: 27th March 1984

Other people present: None

Equipment used: AC/DC Cassette Recorder

Reel-to-reel tape: Brand: Size reel: Tape Mil: Speed:

Cassette: Brand: 60 minutes C-30/C-60/C-90/C-120 (circle size)

Amount of tape used: (Side 1) all (Side 2): 20 minutes.

Brief description of interview context and tape contents:

The international students club has since the last few semesters broken up. The problem of apathy is created by the lack of time to get out and work on a cause and the philosophy of getting that degree here and return home with pride in knowing that the family is secured as also the individual in terms of social, work and economic roles in looking after the family for the rest of their lives.

Root of International

Students' apathy

0-5 minutes

An international student is hounded by the problem of having time to go out and organise group projects. His main aim in studying is to get a degree not for himself but for his family, and to go back home and be respected, earn enough money to take care of the family when they get old. Thus his apathy is a defence mechanism against the fear of failing to get a degree for himself and his family back home. American students on the other hand get a degree for themselves and not for the family. They the

Index	Footage	Description/Summary
Pride <del>the</del> <del>the</del> <del>the</del>	6-10minutes	the host students have a different goal. Pride often creates problems as in the case of the two Middle East students involved in a fight. At the same time it offers an outlet for cultural entertainment or for dialogue. As has been discovered people from the various countries often speak out at meetings because the others have voiced their opinion. They therefore feel obliged to do the same.
nationality	11- 20minutes	Like pride, nationality has its own problems and good points to consider.

Interpretative Essay

Since the International Student Office's modest beginning in the early 1960s, there has been ~~more~~ international students from all over the world. At first, most students were from the Middle East area and Latin America. These students came on private scholarships, met by their parents. But in recent years, most international students are here on government scholarships. They are sponsored by their own government or by educational institutions in this country.

Today, there are a total of two hundred international students, <sup>at WKU</sup> This is according to the figures released for the 1984 spring enrolment. Of that number, 172 are undergraduates and twenty eight are graduates. The international students make up two per cent of the total student population here.

A large proportion of the international students are married, though most are still singles. The gender gap is biased towards the male sex with a total of 147 .

Thirty-five international countries are represented at this university. Venezuela boasts the most students. She has thirty-eight altogether, followed by Malaysia with twenty-eight students and Nigeria with eighteen students.

Countries from outside America that are represented at this university are Bangladesh (1), Canada (4), Cook Islands (1), Colombia (7), Cyprus (3), Dominican Republic (2), Ecuador (8), El Savador (2), England (4), Finland (1), Greece (1), Iran (11), Israel (1), Jamaica (2), Japan (2), Jordan (7), Korea (8), Lebanon (1), Liberia (1), Libya (5), Malaysia (28), Nigeria (18), Pakistan (2), Panama (1), Peoples Republic of China (5), Peru (1), Quatar (2), Saudi Arabia (9), South Africa (3), Sweden (1), Taiwan (2), Thailand (10), Trinidad (1), Turkey (7), Venezuela (38).

When the International Office was first conceived there was unity amongst the students. Today, apathy seems to be the key characteristic. This attitude may well be the result of the increase in the number of students

But Mr. Wurster does not think so. He reasons that the main reason for student apathy is the philosophy of the students. They come here with a common goal, which is to graduate with a degree. They are disinterested in extra curricula matters. The growth of the International Office and international students since the early years not only shows a change in the views of the university board, but also shows their vision and willingness to expand from a provincial minded approach to one of a more universal nature.

Granted that Western Kentucky University is still geared largely to meeting the needs of Kentuckians, the fact that it has opened its doors to the outside world shows progressive thinking.

The interview conducted shows only the views of the administration or those dealing with the international students. But it does not show the views of the students, the problems they are experiencing in terms of money, a place to stay and culture shock. That most international students have a language problem does not necessarily mean that they are disadvantaged. Most students I have spoken to does not feel that language is a problem because much of their classroom work and requirements is written work rather than speech. If it was the latter then they would have the difficulty of saying things the way they are supposed to be said.

My interviews with Bob Wurster, Susan Tesseneer and Dr. Hatcher compliments the administration viewpoint and their justifications for establishing an International Students Office. They trace the history of the office from the 1970s to today and the problems they received from the administration and the community to a limited extent.

Now that the office is established, a new kind of problem is developing-- student apathy.

I often feel that the Office has done enough in ensuring the continuity of the programme they have set up. However, what it needs to do now is to meet the basic needs of the students like a roof over their heads during the semester or spring breaks.

Presently, international students are scattered all over campus. Perhaps a dorm can be set aside for them. This will also include the host students. Indeed it should, since that was the way the International Students' office <sup>originally</sup> was set up. It included Americans too---especially those from outside Kentucky who are as foreign or international to this campus as I am.