



News Release

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LOCAL LEGISLATORS PRAISED FOR THEIR ROLE IN WESTERN'S UNIVERSITY DESIGNATION

St. Joseph, Mo. —Aug. 15, 2005—Gov. Matt Blunt signed Senate Bill 98 into law March 17 for Western to officially become a university Aug. 28.

Dr. James Scanlon, Western's president, said Western's name change to a university was one of his priorities when he became president in 2001, but said it came faster than he expected. He credited Sen. Charlie Shields, who served as Senate majority floor leader and chair of the rules, joint rules and ethics committee; for the passage of the bill. "We thank him for his commitment to us and his leadership on this issue, and for the support of the local house legislators."

In December 2004, local legislators Sen. Shields and Reps. Ed Wildberger, Martin Rucker and Rob Schaaf, prefiled bills in the legislature for the 2005 session. The bill also received letters of support from several hundred Western students, the Western Alumni Association Board of Directors and the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce.

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Students and alumni had planned a visit to Jefferson City in April to encourage passage of the bill, but the visit turned into a “Thank You Day” since the legislation had passed by then.

“When Western moved from a Junior College to a four-year college, its impact was not felt on day one,” said Dr. Scanlon. “Now we are developing another phase to meet the needs of students and the region, and it is a tremendously exciting prospect.”

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.