

MOREHEAD STATE: A HISTORY OF TURMOIL REINHARD HAS NO INTENTION OF CHANGING HIS APPROACH



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Morehead State University, no stranger to internal political turmoil, is in the midst of its second presidential contract dispute in as many years.

The situation again raises the issue of whether the college can shed its image as a political battleground. And it raises questions that go beyond Morehead to other regional universities, three of which also have new presidents brought in from other states.

The immediate problem at Morehead is whether to grant president Herb Reinhard a one-year extension of his contract, which now runs out in June 1986. Reinhard has said that without such an extension, he'll begin looking for another job.

On April 26, the Morehead board of regents voted 5 to 4 to table Reinhard's request for the extension, thus signaling a war of words between university factions that has yet to let up.

Rumblings about Reinhard's performance began surprisingly soon after he took office last July, with regent Walter Carr criticizing Reinhard's "doing things in such haste . . . without giving people a chance to prove whether they were right or wrong."

The regents' attention was temporarily diverted by a threatened lawsuit by former president Morris Norfleet, who resigned under speculation that the regents wouldn't renew his contract. Norfleet and the regents were at odds throughout last summer over salary, perks and job title for the former president when he returns to work at Morehead this summer.

Nevertheless, Reinhard had his own cheering section - including the chairman of trustees at Pennsylvania's Slippery Rock University, where he presided before coming to Morehead - in attendance at his inauguration on April 11. "I challenge you go give him the help he needs," Jack Arthurs told the inaugural crowd.

The April 26 vote on Reinhard's contract extension polarized the campus further into pro- and anti-Reinhard factions. After the vote, an estimated 200 students marched in support of Reinhard. The alumni association's executive council unanimously endorsed Reinhard's leadership, citing "significant positive change in direction in this institution" under the new president.

Faculty members last week voted 123 to 118 against endorsing Reinhard's request. Staff members, however, voted 227-159 in favor of such an extension.

Reinhard's problems stem from a series of organizational and personnel changes he has made at the university since taking over last July. These changes have affected the entire university, from academic structure to building upkeep. Among other things, Reinhard has:

Consolidated Morehead's 25 academic departments into 17. He also has reorganized the university's six schools into three colleges.

Appointed many new administrators, exiling four former vice presidents and eliminating the positions of three deans. Most of the vacancies have been filled with people from outside the university, selected through national searches. Among them is Roberta Anderson, a senior scholar in residence with the U.S. Department of Education, as vice president for academic affairs.

Instituted tougher admissions standards for in-state students and nearly doubled the amount of money available for academic scholarships.

Reinhard has shaken up the university as much with his abrupt leadership style as with the changes he's instituted. But in an interview last week he indicated he had no intention of changing either the style or substance of his administration.

"If I had it to do over again, I would do the same things that I've done in the eight and a half months," he said. "The whole thing has become a popularity contest. If it (Morehead) wants to continue to wallow in the mud, I'm sorry for it and I think the students and people of Kentucky suffer for it.

"I've been in Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Indiana and Pennsylvania," Reinhard added. "There is to some extent some politics in higher education in every state. But there are more politics in higher education in Kentucky than I've experienced in any other state and by far more regional politics."

In the view of Dan Lacy, president of the Morehead State University Foundation, the present controversy was inevitable, given the need for change at Morehead.

"Any time you have changes occurring, it gives rise to lots of personal and political viewpoints that come into sharp public focus," Lacy said, adding that Reinhard has done "a first-rate job."

"The thing that has caused some people to be upset is that these changes had to occur and they would have had to occur no matter who was leader of the institution," Lacy said. "I don't think changing leadership now will solve that at all. As a matter of fact, it will exacerbate it."

Robert M. Duncan, chairman of Morehead's regents, sees a larger issue in Morehead's troubles. He said in an interview last week that Morehead and the other regional universities may be particularly susceptible to

crisis in times of change.

And that could be a portent for trouble at other regional universities. Eastern, Murray, Northern and Kentucky State also have new presidents; Kala Stroup of Murray, Hanly Funderburk of Eastern and Leon Boothe of Northern all came to their jobs from out of state with no prior ties to the institutions they now head.

"The (regional) university probably has a much larger impact on the community - economic, social and cultural - and that intensifies the way people feel about it," Duncan said. "There are probably a higher proportion of people who care about it than in the cities."

That may be particularly true in Morehead, a school of 6,200 students in a town of 8,000 residents. With 1,092 employees and a \$1.5 million payroll, the university dominates the local economy.

For whatever reason, political squabbling has long been a trademark at Morehead. Since it opened as a state normal school in 1923, the institution has never been entirely free of political wrangling, whether between regents, political parties, or factions within the institution.

In 1951, when Charles Spain was named Morehead's sixth president, newspapers reported that one of the first questions asked of the board that hired him was, "Is he a Democrat or a Republican?"

Spain was followed by Adron Doran, a former speaker of the state House of Representatives. Doran ran the university until his retirement in 1976. His tenure was marked by numerous squabbles with faculty and student groups, who charged that Doran ran the university in dictatorial style.

Doran was succeeded by Norfleet, a longtime assistant. Norfleet's tenure, too, was marked by controversy. He resigned his post early in 1984 amid rumors that the regents would not renew his contract. Before that, he had attracted considerable criticism over his handling of a case involving football coaches' use of athletic department travel funds.

Morehead hardly has a monopoly on such political upheaval, though. University of Kentucky political scientist Malcolm Jewell, a longtime observer of the state's educational politics, noted last week that several former

Kentucky public university presidents - most notably John Oswald at the University of Kentucky and Constantine Curris at Murray State University - also had controversial tenures in which their attempts at change led them into conflicts with the university establishment.

Oswald served from 1963 to 1968 and later headed Pennsylvania State University. Curris was Murray's president from 1973 to 1983 and now is president of the University of Northern Iowa.

"It's inevitable that you're going to have conflicts when you have someone who makes radical changes in a university," Jewell said. "There was that feeling when John Oswald came in. This university has never been

the same since he was here."

Oswald's term was associated with leaps in enrollment both on the main campus and in the community colleges, creation of new academic programs and increases in faculty salaries and research grants. But Oswald's then- unpopular lenient attitude toward student protests and his lack of popularity with Gov. Louie Nunn dogged his administration.

Curriss, who early in his administration refused to recommend tenure for a number of faculty members, was involved in a long and heated battle with his own regents as he tried to hold on to his job. Like Reinhard, he was criticized for his management style.

On the way out, Curriss attributed his troubles to "my unbending position to keep the university out of the political decision-making processes and cutting out external patronage for employment."

Caption:

PHOTO Herald-Leader/Ron Garrison Herb Reinhard on **Morehead State University** campus; Adron Doran University Center is behind him. Adron Doran, right, at his inauguration in 1954; with him is Gov. Lawrence Wetherby.