

MOREHEAD SPORTS PANEL URGES RULES ON POLITICS



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The Morehead State University Athletics Committee, investigating allegations of improprieties by athletes and staff members in university and local elections, has recommended that the school establish guidelines on campus political activities.

The report was presented to the Morehead board of regents last night, and President Herb Reinhard said he would work on the guidelines even though they are not used on other campuses and represent "simple professional behavior and conduct or ethical behavior and conduct."

At issue is the committee's finding that:

"Several football players . . . were encouraged to vote for three Student Association candidates . . . whose names appeared on a chalkboard at a team meeting."

"Football and men's basketball coaching staffs encouraged voter registration by student athletes. It was determined that 55 of 85 football players and 11 of 17 men's basketball players secured absentee ballots for the May primary election."

"Head football coach Bill Baldrige acknowledged that he had recommended a candidate in the city election during a football team meeting."

"Voter-registration forms were made available to student athletes in conjunction with a football team meeting."

"Postage stamps and campaign literature from an unknown source were made available to football players who received absentee ballots. Some of the completed ballots were collected and/or stamped and/or mailed by football co- captains(s)."

"An internal audit of the meal plan operation at Alumni Tower Cafeteria found that 16 individuals apparently received meals on two days without proper authorization."

The report also said that four football players may have received meals in violation of limits established by the Ohio Valley Conference.

The committee called for stricter controls on food service.

On the matter of absentee ballots, the committee recommended that the university "establish a policy or set of guidelines concerning whether and under what circumstances that athletic team meetings or classes are utilized for the expression of political preferences by those in authority."

Circuit Judge James Richardson of Owingsville, a Morehead regent, said the university should have turned over any information about meddling in elections outside the university to the commonwealth's attorney or state police.

He told regents Chairman Mike Duncan that "if you or the president think they (those supervising athletic teams) violated the law, you should report them to the proper authority," and he said that part of the investigation interfered with the students' civil rights.

"In the past we've covered things up at this university," Duncan said. "Part of the problem has been we've kept things under cover."

Earlier, the regents had gone into a two-hour closed session after sharp exchanges about what to pay administrators who were bumped by Reinhard and are being returned to the faculty.

"I want to see some peace on this campus," Richardson said in arguing for less substantial cuts in the salaries than those initially recommended by Reinhard. "I want to be able to drive in this town . . . and be at ease."

But board attorney F.C. Bryan told the regents they risked legal problems by returning the former administrators to the faculty with higher salaries than those of other faculty members.

"I'm taking no sides," he said. "I'm talking about bare legal facts. . . . The minute you put somebody in there that's making more money . . . for the same work, you run the risk of a first-class lawsuit."

At its last meeting on April 26, the board voted 5-4 to table Reinhard's request for a one-year extension of his contract. Reinhard's contract now runs out in June 1986, and the president has indicated he's looking for other work.

Reinhard had said that the regents would have to initiate any further discussion of his contract. The subject was not mentioned last night.