MOREHEAD - Herb Reinhard Jr., the new president of Morehead State University, introduced himself at a recent meeting of state higher education officials as the man representing "the most publicized campus in Kentucky."

Reinhard, a forceful, energetic man who sports a Morehead Eagle lapel pin, keeps an eagle statuette on his desk and has a Morehead license plate on his car, doesn't mind the attention - but he wants the college to start attracting more of the respect that he thinks it deserves.

"Even if we don't accomplish anything else in the near future, we will indeed be an open, honest administration," Reinhard, 53, said in an interview Friday.

"I don't know of anything we've got to hide," he said. "I want us to tell it how it is."

But the new president is hoping for a great deal more. He wants to streamline the administration of the troubled university, upgrade admissions criteria, spiff up the college's physical appearance and improve morale among faculty and students.

Reinhard - who came to Morehead from the presidency of Slippery Rock State University in Pennsylvania - said that during the first year of his administration, he hoped to install "a far more responsible and rational administrative structure."

"It could mean eliminating or combining positions, it could be combining departments," he said.

At an orientation session for new students, he gave parents his home and office phone numbers for use whenever their children had problems that couldn't be solved elsewhere. Such personalized service will bring greater numbers of students to Morehead, which now enrolls more than 6,000 students, Reinhard said.

"I told the parents that any time their children had a problem and were unable to resolve it they can call me at my home, at my office - anytime, weekends, weekdays," he said.

But good relations with Morehead's constituents don't stop there. Reinhard said that Morehead also needed
to focus on what it did best: teaching undergraduate students.

"That does not mean that we will delete or dilute graduate programs" or scale down public service for Eastern Kentucky, he said. "But we may not be able to be all things to all people."

The campus has suffered recently for various reasons: the embarrassment-ridden, seven-year administration of Morris Norfleet, plagued by allegations of fund misuse and misplacement; the lush contract that Norfleet received when he decided to leave the presidency, giving him almost as much money as his successor while on a paid one-year leave; and the financial restrictions shared by Kentucky's public colleges and universities as a result of higher education's not-most-favored status with the state legislature.

"I am a far different individual than Dr. Norfleet," Reinhard said. "It's a different era, and I will look at things far differently."

Reinhard describes his leadership style as "informal, humorous, sometimes autocratic and very often democratic."

"I am one who simply becomes a total part of a place," he said. "I should be interested in every single thing Morehead does. I can't do it all myself, but I can give some leadership."

The environment for higher education in Kentucky is far different from that in Pennsylvania, he said.

Pennsylvania contains 182 four-year schools, the overwhelming majority of them private, according to Reinhard. Kentucky is far more dependent on its public higher education system, he said, and that provides more opportunities.

Reinhard also has developed opinions on the current hot potato of higher education discussions in Kentucky: unnecessary duplication of program offerings at the state's eight public universities and whether any money could be saved by rooting it out.

"Kentucky is getting a tremendous return on every (higher education) dollar," he said. "It sounds good to say, 'I think we'll save some money.' In the long run, it could cost you some spin-off qualities.

"We have got to reach more and more of the citizens of Kentucky and say, 'Do you really want a quality education?' When they say, 'Yes,' you've got to say, 'Well, it's not cheap.' "

Reinhard, a professed workaholic noted for his 7:30 a.m. coffees with faculty members, said the president's job is "not an 8-to-5 kind of a job, not a job where you go away on weekends."

He says his life revolves around the university, the surrounding community and his family. Although
Reinhard plays golf "two or three times a year" and is a former Little League coach, he now says that even his reading material is on academic topics.

"The university is my hobby," he said.

Reinhard's family includes his wife, Nancy, 50, whom he met as an undergraduate at Florida State University, and their four children: Herb III, 27, assistant athletic director at Florida A&M University; Don, 23, who will graduate next month from Florida State; Mark, 22, who will be a senior a Slippery Rock this year; and Ann, 21, who will be a senior at Pennsylvania State University.

Reinhard received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Florida State, and his doctorate from Indiana University. Before becoming president at Slippery Rock, he was assistant to the president at Florida A&M, assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Tennessee, vice president for student development at Western Carolina University and dean of student services at Florida State.

How long will he stay at Morehead?

"I don't want to move again," Reinhard said. "I would hope I would retire at Morehead. And I think there's enough of a challenge."

Caption: MUG Herb Reinhard Jr.

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