

# Third withdrawal clouds WKU dilemma

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The dilemma of selecting the fifth president of Western Kentucky University became more complex Wednesday with the withdrawal of a third of the five final candidates for the position.

Dr. Todd H. Bullard, provost and vice president for academic affairs at the Rochester, N. Y. Institute of Technology, issued a one-sentence statement saying he withdrew as a candidate because of indecision by the

Western board of regents.

There are now two candidates for the position. They are Dr. Donald W. Zacharias, assistant to the chancellor of the University of Texas system, and Dr. Norman A. Baxter, president of California State University at Fresno.

The regents voted 6-4 last Sunday to delay the presidential selection for at least one week to permit a six-member committee to meet with Dr. Samuel Kern Alexander. The regents are scheduled to meet at 3 p.m. Sunday to either name a president or evaluate the

future of the Western presidency.

Regents Chairman J. David Cole, voting with the minority last Sunday, said at least one of the candidates would probably withdraw because of the delay in selecting a new president. Cole was out of town and unavailable for comment this morning.

Zacharias said earlier this week he also will withdraw his name from consideration if the selection is not made this Sunday.

The regents had voted 8-2 on April 28 to name a president at last Sunday's

meeting and stipulated that the person be selected from the three remaining candidates. But the six regents voted for the delay so they could investigate Alexander's reasons for withdrawing as a candidate.

Alexander, director of the Institute for Educational Finance at the University of Florida, withdrew April 19 because of personal attacks against him and political intervention by persons at Western.

The committee, which consists of five regents voting for the delay, met with

Alexander for more than two hours Wednesday at the Airport Hilton motel in Nashville, Tenn. The committee met for an additional 45 minutes after Alexander left for a return flight to Florida.

"We gained an insight into the selection process and the methods we have employed as a board in selecting a president," Tom Emberton, chairman of the committee, said after the meeting. "The various tactics em-

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## Dilemma

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ployed by lobbyists are known to us now in somewhat greater detail."

Emberton said a report on Wednesday's closed meeting and Alexander's reasons for withdrawing will be presented to the board on Sunday. He said Cole will determine which, if any, part of the report to release publicly.

Emberton reiterated that Alexander does not plan to reconsider his decision to withdraw. "Alexander's position all along has been that his decision is final. I take him at his word that he won't reconsider," he said.

The other committee members refused comment as they emerged from the meeting Wednesday.

Regent Ron Sheffer, who was a member of the committee and who voted to delay the selection, said today the selection process has been a "fiasco and a failure" and explained he favors postponement of the selection for at least six months.

"I'm not going to vote for either of the two candidates. I'd rather just call a halt to the whole thing, wait six months from now, and look at it. I think we are all too involved right now in defending the selection process," he said.

Sheffer said the selection has been too democratic and open permitting "too many people to get involved."

Faculty Regent William Buckman said it is possible to name the new president Sunday. "I'm hoping we can select a president with a 10-0 vote. But it is improbable, although not impossible, to get a unanimous vote for either of the two candidates," he said.

And Regent Hugh Poland, who was the only regent to vote for the delay who did not meet with Alexander, said he will vote for one of the candidates Sunday.

"I'm ready to select a president. I think it's time we got something done on this," Poland said today.

One of the remaining candidates, Baxter, has been controversial during

his 10-year tenure at Fresno. The Fresno faculty were polled last September and 77.8 percent of those responding rated Baxter's administration as unacceptable.

When he visited Western's campus last month, Baxter said his problems could be attributed to remnants of Vietnam War protests in the early 1970s and a new collective bargaining law in California.

Baxter, 53, was awarded a doctorate degree from Harvard University in 1954 and he has studied at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

He is a former professor, dean and acting president of the New York Theological Seminary in New York City and he served as vice president for academic affairs at Little Rock University before joining Fresno in 1969.

The other candidate, Zacharias, graduated *magna cum laude* from Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky., in 1957 and received his doctorate from Indiana University in 1963.

He has served as a professor at Indiana University and the University of Texas at Austin. Zacharias was named to his present position in June 1978.

The presidential selection began last fall after Dero Downing announced his resignation for health reasons. He resigned Jan. 8 and Dr. John D. Minton, vice president for administrative affairs, has been serving as interim president.

A presidential search committee reviewed more than 170 applicants and nominees for the position, narrowing that list to 20 in February.

The regents visited the top 14 candidates and four of the top five candidates visited Western's campus for interviews with faculty students and administrators. Alexander withdrew on the day he was scheduled to arrive in Bowling Green.