1991


WKU President's Office - Meredith

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records

Part of the Higher Education Administration Commons, Journalism Studies Commons, Mass Communication Commons, and the Public Relations and Advertising Commons

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
Good judgment prevailed when Western Kentucky University's regents chose Thomas C. Meredith to be the institution's next president.

It's especially gratifying since he's an Owensboro native and Kentucky Wesleyan College graduate. But his credentials — a proven administrative record and leadership ability — make him eminently qualified for his new job.

As a former WKU student — he earned his master's degree in education administration from the university — he is also aware of the balkanization of the Kentucky's university system, that unfortunate condition where the broader interest of the commonwealth is buried.

In a meeting with faculty members and students Thursday, Meredith said he intends to be a highly visible president on and off campus, whose style is "aggressive and high energy." We hope those aggressive efforts will be directed toward improving the programs already in place at WKU rather than pushing for dramatic increases in enrollment or instituting new programs at the cost of existing disciplines.

Due to an increasing enrollment, WKU plans to enact stricter academic and registration guidelines this fall without placing a limit on enrollment. Although the goal of strengthening the university in this way is laudable, the new president should take a second look at how the enrollment increase has come about. As is the case with other Kentucky colleges near state borders, WKU allows prospective out-of-state students who meet residency and grade-point requirements to attend at in-state fees.

A review of WKU's plans for new programs, including doctorate degrees, is in order. Meredith has said he intends to stay at the university until "the regents run me off," so he has time to plan for orderly growth.

The appointment of a man with an understanding of Kentucky's university system and an intent to settle in and stay bodes well for the university's future. Meredith's comment that he would pursue enrollment as long as it didn't lower educational quality indicates he may indeed choose a path of growth with excellence.

The regents did well in choosing this fine academic and administrator. In choosing such a qualified man, they sent a message that universities everywhere would do well to heed.

Politicians without academic credentials don't belong in a university president's chair.
Interview

"I am distressed at the lack of money committed to higher education," he said of the previous general assembly's funding priorities.

"I have taken a surface look at the budget... we will make some changes," he said of discussions on realigning Western's financial resources during the current year. But he pointed out the changes would be minor ones.

"There is not enough money in the current budget to make significant enough adjustments to provide additional funds for salary increases. We do not look at any other incentives," he said, but failed to elaborate.

Meredith has hit the ground running at Western.

"I have had a talk with the governor, and met several legislators at the football game at Morehead on Saturday," he said of his efforts to promote Western since arriving on campus two weeks ago.

"I will be inviting legislators from various house and senate committees and state officials to visit Western as they will understand Western personally," he said.

The selling job he wants to do at Western will take help from the students, faculty, alumni and the community, he says, underscoring the role Bowling Green plays in the future of the university.

"We already have a strong relationship," he said of the university and city, "that must be a strong partnership. When parents bring their children here to go to school and they see all the signs welcoming Western students back, that makes them feel secure about bringing them here."
President and family move in

Susan Meredith and her family moved into the new residence halls on Monday, completing the move-in process for the Westem State University Class of 2000.

Meredith, a senior education administration major, said she was excited to be back on campus after spending last summer in Spain.

"It's going to be funny going down there because I won't know anyone," White said. "I'm trying to just forget about that."

"One of the girls I'd like to have is to walk out of Spain Rehabilitation," he said. "A lot of the doctors and nurses don't have that faith in me - I just want to prove everyone wrong."

"Coming back to Westem, when White was a sophomore, before withdrawing after his accident, is another of his goals. That's what I'm shooting for," he said. "It's going to be a long road, but I hope to get it there."

"Western's Greeks have also supported White. They were very supportive," White said. "Mom and Dad were really open at first because it happened at a fraternity function. But the way they (the Greeks) supported us, Dad was thankful he was a member."

The week after the accident, the Kappa Sigma fraternity held a dance to raise money for White. White said he was deeply touched by the support from the fraternity.

"I want to thank everyone thanks for all their support," White said. "Some people thought it really didn't matter - their writing to me."

The accident also led to a break in Kappa Sigma fraternity's relationship with the school, as the fraternity was suspended for a year. However, White said he was thankful for the support from the fraternity members.

"It's going to be pretty easy going down there because I won't know anyone," White said. "I'm trying to just forget about that."

"One of the girls I'd like to have is to walk out of Spain Rehabilitation," he said. "A lot of the doctors and nurses don't have that faith in me - I just want to prove everyone wrong."

"Coming back to Westem, when White was a sophomore, before withdrawing after his accident, is another of his goals. That's what I'm shooting for," he said. "It's going to be a long road, but I hope to get it there."

"Western's Greeks have also supported White. They were very supportive," White said. "Mom and Dad were really open at first because it happened at a fraternity function. But the way they (the Greeks) supported us, Dad was thankful he was a member."

The week after the accident, the Kappa Sigma fraternity held a dance to raise money for White. White said he was deeply touched by the support from the fraternity.

"I want to thank everyone thanks for all their support," White said. "Some people thought it really didn't matter - their writing to me."

The accident also led to a break in Kappa Sigma fraternity's relationship with the school, as the fraternity was suspended for a year. However, White said he was thankful for the support from the fraternity members.
President Reagan onstage with WKU President Thomas Meredith and student body President Scott Whitehouse.

Reagan stumps for Bush at WKU

By Cindy Rugeley
BOWLING GREEN — Ronald Reagan made what will probably be his last presidential visit to Kentucky yesterday, this time to campaign for the man he said would continue the change begun eight years ago.

Before 15,000 loud admirers packed into Diddle Arena at Western Kentucky University, Reagan listed the reason "why the man I want to be the next president of the United States is George Bush."

"We've come a long way in the last eight years," Reagan said. "But, my friends, everything that you and I and George Bush have worked for these last eight years, everything, could be lost faster than you can say gun control," Reagan said.

"Eight years ago, the last liberal administration turned the lights out on Main Street America. We've turned them back on, and with George Bush in the White House, they'll be on to stay," he said.

As he left the stage, the arena was flooded with red, white and blue balloons. The crowd waved signs and small American flags. Most of the signs said, "It's been a great 8 years."
President performs in Kentucky

Cheering WKU crowd makes Reagan's day

LADY DAUGHERTY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — President Reagan, cheered by a solid partisan crowd, yesterday urged voters who like his eight years in office to continue the course with Republican presidential candidate George Bush.

The President bashed back and forth with a crowd of more than 13,000 in Western Kentucky University's Diddle arena as he urged support for his vice president and blasted the Democratic ticket for being out of step with the country.

"I guess what I'm making you do is you want the liberals in control in Washington?" he asked.

As the crowd roared its answer, Reagan paused and smiled.

"You just made my day.

"It was a vintage Reagan performance — striking the crowd, bearing off one-liners, tugging at sentiment and avoiding Democrats.

"\n
In one of the few departures from his campaign routine for the GOP ticket, the former football player accepted a red, white and blue basketball from the student body president at the end of his speech.

"\n
Bush supporter reactor Ben McClenning said Reagan's drive twice before sinking a basket that sent the crowd into another frenzy.

"\n
While he did not mention Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis by name, Reagan used the word liberal seven times in sixteen opposition attitudes. Neither did he mention Republican vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle.

"\n
He did have high praise for Bush.

"I have worked more closely with George Bush these two terms than..."

President Reagan, flanked by Dr. Thomas C. Meredith, president of Western Kentucky University, entertains about 13,000 Republicans by taking jabs at Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis.

President performs for cheering Kentucky crowd

with any other member of the administration. I have seen him keep cool hundreds of times.

"I have seen him keep cool hundreds of times. I have seen his leadership and vision, and I still have the same. I have seen him lead us to our goals and I am confident that we will win, and I'm not even half way there.

Reagan went on to praise Bush as "A man of faith, a man dedicated to peace and freedom."

"But if you want to know how dedicated he is, you can ask the people of the Diddle area."

The crowd roared its answer, waving red, white and blue balloons floating in the rafters.

"\n
After urging younger voters to participate, Reagan gave a history lesson in some eyes as he said: "Just think of what you have done."

"\n
"You missed me." Reagan deadpanned.

"\n
Bush's favorite machine rested in the rafters, thousands of red, white and blue balloons floating in the rafters.

"\n
As Reagan paused at one point during his speech, one of the balloons popped, giving him an opening for a familiar line.

"\n
"I cam back."

The crowd roared it and still did later as he opened another balloon popped.

"\n
"In my time, I cam back."

The crowd roared again. It was the second time Reagan opened another balloon popped.

"\n
With the total Republican organization controlling the event, the crowd was gathered in the student center to hear about the Democratic desk. The crowd packed into the gymnasium more than two hours before Reagan's 10-minute speech and listened to high school bands thunder patriotic music. Singer Glen Campbell also entertained with a selection of Kentucky-flavored tunes. Thousands of red, white and blue balloons floated in the rafters.

As Reagan paused at one point during his speech, one of the balloons popped, giving him an opening for a familiar line.

"\n
"You missed me."

The crowd roared it and still did later as he opened another balloon popped.

"\n
"In my time, I cam back."

The crowd roared again. It was the second time Reagan opened another balloon popped.

"\n
With the total Republican organization controlling the event, the crowd was gathered in the student center to hear about the Democratic desk. The crowd packed into the gymnasium more than two hours before Reagan's 10-minute speech and listened to high school bands thunder patriotic music. Singer Glen Campbell also entertained with a selection of Kentucky-flavored tunes. Thousands of red, white and blue balloons floated in the rafters.

As Reagan paused at one point during his speech, one of the balloons popped, giving him an opening for a familiar line.

"\n
"You missed me."

The crowd roared it and still did later as he opened another balloon popped.

"\n
"In my time, I cam back."

The crowd roared again. It was the second time Reagan opened another balloon popped.

"\n
With the total Republican organization controlling the event, the crowd was gathered in the student center to hear about the Democratic desk. The crowd packed into the gymnasium more than two hours before Reagan's 10-minute speech and listened to high school bands thunder patriotic music. Singer Glen Campbell also entertained with a selection of Kentucky-flavored tunes. Thousands of red, white and blue balloons floated in the rafters.

As Reagan paused at one point during his speech, one of the balloons popped, giving him an opening for a familiar line.

"\n
"You missed me."

The crowd roared it and still did later as he opened another balloon popped.

"\n
"In my time, I cam back."

The crowd roared again. It was the second time Reagan opened another balloon popped.

"\n
With the total Republican organization controlling the event, the crowd was gathered in the student center to hear about the Democratic desk. The crowd packed into the gymnasium more than two hours before Reagan's 10-minute speech and listened to high school bands thunder patriotic music. Singer Glen Campbell also entertained with a selection of Kentucky-flavored tunes. Thousands of red, white and blue balloons floated in the rafters.

As Reagan paused at one point during his speech, one of the balloons popped, giving him an opening for a familiar line.

"\n
"You missed me."

The crowd roared it and still did later as he opened another balloon popped.

"\n
"In my time, I cam back."

The crowd roared again. It was the second time Reagan opened another balloon popped.
DR. THOMAS MEREDITH will be inaugurated as Western Kentucky University's eighth president at 2 p.m. Friday in Van Meter Auditorium. Meredith speaks as he stands before a picture of Western’s first president Henry Hardin Cherry.
Babbage pitches to keep Meredith

By ROBYN L. MINOR
Daily News Staff Writer

State Auditor Bob Babbage, a Democratic candidate for secretary of state, campaigned in Bowling Green today for himself and to keep Thomas Meredith as Western Kentucky University's president.

Babbage, who has a background in education as a visiting journalism professor at Eastern Kentucky University and as assistant to the president at the University of Kentucky, said Meredith is an outstanding president.

"He is perfectly suited for president. You can make an international search and find no better president," Babbage said before a group gathered at the Warren County Courthouse. "He is highly respected in Frankfort and across the state. He has the temperament, vision and commitment to be a great president for years to come."

The community should pull together and continue to do everything possible to keep Meredith,

Continued Back Page Column 4, This Section

Babbage said, and he is willing to join that effort.

Meredith interviewed Friday for the presidency of the University of Central Florida. A group of community business leaders plans to have representatives speak to Western's Board of Regents on Thursday about increasing its efforts to keep Meredith.

"I know him and respect him, that's why I wanted to speak out," Babbage said. "Anyone who can get a guy from Eastern Kentucky to give to the Western athletic fund is a tremendous salesman."

Babbage said he's not sure what can be done on the state level to retain Meredith, but many legislators and leaders respect the job Meredith is doing.

Babbage's Warren County visit also was used to boost his own election efforts as secretary of state. He is running against Republican candidate Dexter Wright.

State Rep. Jody Richards said Babbage is the quintessential politician — the kind everyone wants.

"He will represent us well," Richards said. "I admire his ability, intelligence and devotion to duty.

"He has been the best auditor the state has had," he said. "I think he will take those talents and be the best secretary of state we've had as well."

Babbage said he plans to increase voter registration by having forms available in every public building and phone books.

"I want to sell the notion of civic duty," Babbage said.

He also wants to help improve survival chances of the more than 7,000 small businesses registering with the office each year.

Babbage also plugged the rest of the Democratic ticket, saying it is time to send a message — that "the slimy, scummy politics being practiced now in Kentucky is wrong."
ASG wants
Iracane out as chairman

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Western Kentucky University's Associated Student Government has passed a resolution requesting that members of the university's Board of Regents not vote to re-elect Joe Iracane as chairman during board elections on Thursday.

"I think the overall opinion (of ASG members) is that he is not the best person to serve as chairman," ASG President Heather Falmlen said.

ASG also approved during its regular meeting on Tuesday a resolution to sponsor a picket line outside the regents meeting, which begins at 12:30 p.m. at the university's Agricultural Exposition Center.

Iracane said today he doesn't know what ASG hopes to accomplish.

"I don't know what their logic for the resolution is," Iracane said; "If I'm not board chairman, what will that change? Who benefits?"

Some community business leaders have said that Western President Thomas Meredith agreed to be considered for the presidency of the University of Central Florida because of disagreements with Iracane about how the university should be run. Community leaders have appointed two people to speak to the regents at their meeting about making every effort to keep Meredith at Western.

Iracane and Meredith deny any personal problems between them.

"Mr. Iracane and I are not enemies," Meredith said. "We've been friends for many, many years. Certainly there will be differences about university operations. But all the conversation about a personal rift, that is not the case."

Meredith and Iracane had a meeting Tuesday in Owensboro, during which they discussed "board business and getting ready" for the regents meeting, Meredith said.

Meredith declined comment about the ASG resolution, saying he has not seen copies of the action.

Miss Falmlen, who serves as the university's student regent because of her position as ASG president, also declined to voice an opinion about the resolution.

"I have opinions on them, but as chairman, I am not allowed to voice that opinion without passing the gavel (during the discussion and vote), and I chose not to do that," Miss Falmlen said.

As a regent, she will vote during Thursday's
From Page 1

ASG elections, something that also has raised questions. ASG’s executive council met last week to discuss rumors that Miss Falmlen had received a diamond bracelet from Incase as a gift and because of concerns that, if true, that might compromise her vote on board officers. But the ASG executive council agreed to continue support for its president, saying no evidence has been presented to confirm the allegations. Miss Falmlen and Incase deny the allegations.

Miss Falmlen said that episode, and the ASG resolutions will not sway her vote for regent chairman because she does not know who will be nominated as chairman.

“I want to know what the students think, and that influences my opinion,” she said. “But I also want the students to realize that I have a lot of information they don’t that also influences my opinions.”

The University of Central Florida’s search committee also will meet Thursday to narrow a field of 12 candidates to five or six. If Meredith is on that list, he will be asked back for a formal two-day interview with university officials.

Meredith was in Florida on Friday for a 1½-hour interview.

“It went very well,” he said.

“The people were really nice.”

Meredith said he has not made up his mind about whether he will accept the position if it is offered.
Western regents yet to respond

By STAN REAGAN and DAVID C.L. BAUER

Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents — the members of which were mailed copies Tuesday of a letter sent by business and community leaders with ties to Western who want a public show of support for President Thomas Meredith — have yet to respond to the group's requested Saturday afternoon meeting.

Meredith was scheduled to leave today for Orlando, Fla., to interview with the University of Central Florida. Meredith is one of 12 people being considered for the president's post at the school.

Some, including some of the 39 who signed the letter to Western's board, have said they think there is the perception of tension between Meredith and some of the members of the Board of Regents.

Meredith and board Chairman Joe Iracane, who has been targeted by some as the source of the tension, have denied that had any bearing on Meredith's decision to interview with the 23,500-student university.

But a majority of the business and community leaders who attended a meeting Monday that spawned the letter to regents think Iracane's either leaving the board, on which he has been a member since 1980, or leaving the post as chairman, which he has maintained since 1984, is the ultimate goal, according to at least four business leaders who attended the meeting.

Iracane, who is out of the country on business and could not be
Continued On Page 2
Column 1, This Section
reached today for comment, is expected to return Friday.

The letter mailed to board members asked regents to publicly show their support for Meredith and ask him to withdraw his name from the UCF opening. Failing that, the letter said, the group is seeking a "change (in) the leadership of the Board of Regents."

The spokesmen for the group and co-authors of the letter to the board, former regents Wendell Strode, a vice president at Trans Financial Bank, and J. David Cole, a Bowling Green attorney, have said the group is not targeting any specific individuals on the Board of Regents.

Many of those who attended the meeting Monday, however, privately maintain the goal is to remove Iracane from the board or from chairmanship of the board.

Apparently, the reason for such a move is the perception by some of Iracane's views on how the university should be run and Meredith's role in overseeing university matters.

"I have personally witnessed one such event," said businessman B.J. Booth, one of those who signed the letter. "There have been other incidents, from what I hear, that have happened where President Meredith's authority, not ability, was interfered with" by Iracane.

Others contacted today said they were not necessarily aware of the board or any of its members involving themselves in Western's day-to-day operations but pointed out that Western having had three presidents in little more than 10 years, with Meredith having been here since mid-1988, is part of the reason there is a perception of discord between the board and past presidents.

"I want to be very careful in saying that I have no direct knowledge that the board is involving itself in the day-to-day operations of the university, I hope not, that should be the chief administrative duty of the president," said Bob Aldridge, who signed the letter to regents. "We've had three presidents here in the recent few years and there is some perception that there is some dissonance among the regents and these presidents."

South Central Bank President Bob Fitch, who also signed the letter, agreed.

"We seem to have a revolving door, not only on presidents, but on coaches," he said.

Although board members who were called Wednesday and today declined to comment on whether they perceive problems between the president and other board members, several did express their desire to see Meredith stay at Western.

Others could not be reached for comment or did not return calls.

"I think he's good for the university and for the state of Kentucky," regent Fred Travis of Glasgow said.

"I do back Tom Meredith and I do want him to stay," Regent Danny Butler of Greensburg said he thinks the letter spoke strongly of the community reaction to Meredith.

The letter highlights Meredith's accomplishments at Western since he took over at the helm of the school three years ago.

"This letter is written in support of Western Kentucky University, and specifically in support of President Thomas Meredith, whose continued leadership we believe to be in the best interest of the university. We are distressed by the thought that President Meredith may choose to leave to assume the leadership of another institution," the letter said in part. "The tenure of President Meredith is one of accomplishments and vision, with strong state and national relationships. . . ."

The letter sought a meeting between the business and community leaders Saturday afternoon. As of early today, none of the regents had requested such a meeting be arranged through board secretary Liz Estes, according to Meredith's office.

The board will meet in regular session Oct. 31.
The executive officers of Western Kentucky University's Associated Student Government said Thursday they will continue to support President Heather Falmlen, despite allegations that she received a diamond bracelet from Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane.

"The allegations were discussed and no action needs to be taken," the executive council said in a prepared statement after a closed meeting to discuss the allegations. "The Executive Council of the ASG has no reason to doubt the honesty and innocence of President Heather E. Falmlen on this issue."

Reporters for the Daily News and the College Heights Herald protested the meeting being closed, citing Kentucky's open meetings law, but were told to leave anyway.

An article in Thursday's Herald, Western's student newspaper, presents allegations that Miss Falmlen received a diamond bracelet from Iracane in exchange for her vote to retain him as regent chairman during the board's elections on Oct. 31. The article does not say who is making the allegations.

ASG Administrative Vice President John Seiber, who called the meeting, said he had heard rumors about the bracelet before calling the

"That's utterly ridiculous, and I feel sorry for Heather," he said. "I really have no comment for that fictional ... It's nothing."

Miss Falmlen said she does not know how the rumor got started.

"I wish I did," she said. "I wish they'd tell me where I was" when it allegedly happened.

Iracane, who has been out of the country until today, also denies the allegations.

"I'm a senior," she said. "I'm going to be out of here in May. I'm not going to be swayed (by people trying to influence my vote). I'm not going to make the decision that is best for the freshman who will be here another four years."

(Miss Falmlen said this will not cause her to change her vote during the regents' elections because she has made no decisions.

"I didn't do anything wrong, so I'm not going to change my actions or non-actions," she said. "We don't even know who will be nominated."

"I'm a senior," she said. "I'm going to be out of here in May. I'm not going to be swayed (by people trying to influence my vote). I'm not going to make the decision that is best for the freshman who will be here another four years."

(Daily News Staff Writer David Bauer also contributed information to this story.)
Iracane denies any rift with Western president

By DAVID C.L. BAUER and ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writers

Western Kentucky University Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane denies there is any rift between him and President Thomas Meredith and said today the speculation of such a rift will not prompt him to leave the chairman's post he has held for nearly eight years.

If nominated for the chairmanship when the board meets Thursday to reorganize its leadership, Iracane said he will pursue the position.

Speculation of growing tension between Iracane, a regent since 1980, and Meredith, who is in Florida today interviewing for a presidential post at the University of Central Florida, has prompted some business and community leaders to write to the board, requesting it adopt a public show of support for Meredith and urge him to remain at Western.

A meeting requested by the group for Saturday will not be held, ac-
The perception of the board being entrenched in day-to-day operations of the university, Iracane thinks, stems from when Kem Alexander was president and the board asked for a review of admissions policies and enrollment capping.

"We knew we were living off a false sense of security financially and we needed to be as cost-effective as we could, recognizing there could be a shortfall in the budget, which has now become reality," Iracane said. "I think the historic situation related to where we are today was inherited a long time ago."

Iracane, who worked with Meredith in Owensboro years ago when both were teachers there, said he supports the president and what he has accomplished.

"As far as supporting Dr. Meredith, I am supporting him," Iracane said. "There is no personal rift."

"I've known him longer than anyone else and I like to think I had a hand in getting him here," Iracane said. "Tom was nominated for a job, as was Don Zacharias and as were other good people."

Iracane also said anything he has done regarding the board has come through the board and not through one person's line of thinking.

"It's all based on policy, not personality," he said. "I am a single individual supporting the president and what he has accomplished."

Iracane attributes reports of a rift to comments made by regent Bobby Bartley of Glasgow, who said there was nit-picking between Meredith and several board members. Bartley could not be reached for comment.

In response, a position paper was released last week after being drafted by Iracane, Ms. Judd, the letter co-author J. David Cole, a Bowling Green attorney and a former regent, said he accepts the response. "If they say they can't make a quorum, and he doesn't view it as negative, that's the responsibility of a chairperson."
Leaders to plan next WKU moves
By DAVID C.L. BAUER
Daily News Staff Writer
Business and community leaders will meet at 8 a.m. Tuesday at the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce on State Street to discuss their next move in getting Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents to express its support for President Thomas Meredith.

A group of 39 met last week and wrote to the board, requesting a meeting with regents and the adoption of a public show of support for Meredith, who is one of 12 candidates for the president's post at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

The group's letter also asked that regents request Meredith withdraw his name from consideration for the Florida position.

Failing that, the letter said, the group seeks a change in the leadership of Western's board.

Board Vice Chairman Patsy Judd of Burkesville on Thursday issued a statement in which she said the board could not schedule the meeting, which had been requested for Saturday, because of the short notice given and prior commitments on the parts of some regents. The letter was mailed late Tuesday, according to co-author Wendell Strode.

Board Chairman Joe Iracane said today that he has contacted some of those who signed the letter. He said he is not sure he was able to change any minds about the situation but understands their position and was able to relay his views on the matter.

The board meets Thursday to elect officers for the coming year, and business leaders are requesting to be able to address the board during that meeting.

Other business and community leaders are welcome at Tuesday's meeting, Strode said. Meredith returned Saturday from Orlando, where he went through an initial interview Friday. He was not in his office today and could not be reached for comment.
Leaders cite WKU reception incident

Incident

Several members of the group, the letter said, a change in the leadership of Western's board this week. Failing adoption of such a resolution for Meredith and asking for the president's post at the 23,500-student university.

A group of 39 business and community leaders last week had requested a meeting with Western's Board of Regents, during which the group wanted a resolution adopted showing the board's public support for Meredith and asking him to withdraw his name from consideration. That meeting, sought for Saturday, was not held because of prior commitments by some regents, and the group hopes to meet with the board this week.

Failing adoption of such a resolution, the letter said, a change in the leadership of Western's board is in order. Several members of the group said the ultimate goal for many of those attending a meeting last week, during which the decision was made to send the letter, was the removal of Meredith, who has been on the board since 1980 and its chairman since 1984, either from the chairmanship of the board or from the board itself.

The regents meet Thursday to name new officers for the coming year, and Iracane has said he will pursue the chairmanship if nominated.

Some have maintained that a sour ed relationship between Iracane and Meredith played heavily in Meredith's decision to explore the UCF opening. Meredith and Iracane have maintained that is not the case, and Iracane on Friday said there is no personal rift between him and the president.

Iracane did acknowledge, though, two public confrontations between him and Meredith. He declined to discuss details of one of those exchanges or when it occurred, but he did talk about a July reception for new athletics director Lou Marciani during which Iracane and Meredith had a disagreement about Western's role in the Sun Belt Conference.

Bowling Green businessman B.J. Booth, who was in attendance at the reception and who also signed the letter sent to regents, said the exchange "had to do with the changing of the conference in which Western agreed to participate in."

"Dr. Meredith had made a commitment on that, and Mr. Iracane disagreed with him on it — and not in a respective manner," Booth said.

Ken Wallace, a Bowling Green car dealer and a member of the Hilltopper Athletic Foundation's board of directors, said he saw the discussion, but it amounted to little.

"Joe got up and said a few things and Tom said a few things," Wallace said. "I didn't think that much about it."

Several others in attendance declined to comment about the incident, saying Western needs to maintain a united and positive outlook to move beyond this situation.

Wallace agreed, saying: "There are some things going on behind the scenes right now that I hope will get all this resolved. I think things are going to be all right."

Iracane said he thinks mistakes were made in the exchange.

"I think Dr. Meredith made a mistake that he talked of policy that had not been addressed by the board, and I think I just should have kept my mouth shut," Iracane said.

He denied, however, it was any indication of a power struggle between the two.

"It was basically on policy," Iracane said. "There's one other misunderstanding we had, and that was more significant than the first one. The first one was insignificant as far as I'm concerned."

"I apologize for that first one," he said. "Maybe I made a mistake at that time, and I think Dr. Meredith did, too."

He maintains that any disagreements between him and the president are the result of policy and not personality and certainly are not signs of a bad working relationship between the two.

"The rift is ridiculous," Iracane has said. "There is none."

Iracane — who worked with Meredith from August 1963 to May 1969 while both taught in the Owensboro school system — said he strongly supports Meredith, who could not be reached for comment. Any perception of disagreements between the two, Iracane said, comes from his role as chairman of the board and acting in the interests of all regents.
Leaders ask to speak with Western's regents

By STAN REAGAN
Daily News Staff Writer

Representatives of a community group trying to keep Western Kentucky University President Thomas Meredith from leaving the school have asked to speak to the Board of Regents on Thursday, and members said they want to make their remarks before the board elects new officers at that meeting.

About 60 prominent people, mostly from Bowling Green's business and professional community, met today at the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce to prepare for the regents' regularly scheduled monthly meeting.

"A few of us talked Friday and decided to put our Board of Regents on notice," said Wendell Strode, a former Western regent and senior vice president of Trans Financial Bank.

Strode, who moderated today's gathering, said a letter was sent to Meredith's office on Monday asking that two members of the group be allowed to address the regents at their meeting, which begins at 12:30 p.m. at the school's Agriculture Exposition Center.

No one at today's meeting mentioned Chairman Joe Iracane, but state Rep. Billy Ray Smith of Bowling Green stressed the need for the group's representatives to speak before the regents hold their annual election of officers.

Iracane said he is interested in remaining chairman.

"Are they going to hear our questions before or after they have their election?" Smith said. "I think that is critical."

Some members of the group have said Meredith decided to interview for the presidency of the University of Central Florida in Orlando last week because friction between he and Iracane was interfering with Meredith's ability to run the university.

Iracane and Meredith have denied the allegations of interference, and Iracane said from his Owensboro office that Meredith was coming there today to talk to him.

The request to speak to the board, which was required to be addressed to Meredith, is a procedural step for someone wanting to speak at a regents meeting, Strode said.

"Specifically, the sense of the group is that it is in the best interest of Western Kentucky University that you continue as president and that you withdraw your name from consideration by other schools," the letter says. "It is our firm belief that institutional stability is necessary, and your leadership and vision are necessary for the continued growth of the university."

The lone signature on the letter was that of William B. "Chip" Van Meter, president of Van Meter Insurance.

The letter follows a previous letter sent Oct. 23.
22 to the Board of Regents. That letter was signed by 39 Bowling Green business leaders.

It asked the regents to author a resolution in support of Meredith and to "change the leadership of the Board of Regents should they fail to adopt this resolution."

That letter also asked for a special meeting of the regents, but board Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd informed the group in a letter two days later that the meeting was not possible on such short notice.

Two members of the community group were elected today to speak at Thursday's regularly scheduled meeting of the regents. They will be limited to five minutes each.

J. David Cole will represent the group as a former regent and chairman of the board. The Bowling-Green Warren County Chamber of Commerce will be represented by either Chairman Bob Aldridge or Chairwoman-elect Peggy Loafman.

Others attending the meeting today included Ray Thomas, Frank St. Charles, George Shaw, B.J. Booth, Gary Dillard, Mike Manship, J. David Francis, Pete Mahurin, Joe Bill Campbell, Joe Cook, David Broderick, David Garvin, Harold Brantley, Johnny Webb, Rick DuBose and Bowling Green Mayor Patsy Sloan.

The group assembled approved of getting at least five more people to attend the regents meeting with the speakers.

"I think we should rent a Greyhound bus and get the numbers out," said Jim Scott, president of Scotty's Contracting. "I'm serious."

Strode said numbers would show the regents of community and regional support.

Supporters from Glasgow, Franklin, Russellville, Scottsville and Louisville have been in contact with members of the Bowling Green group and at least one, the Glasgow group, has sent a letter to the regents seconding actions here, Smith said.

Strode told the group it should work to convince Meredith and his family to stay at the university should a position be offered to him as president of the University of Central Florida.

"Let's remember to express our feelings to the Meredith family as well," Strode said. "It's important that we let them know we want them to stay as well. It's up to them to withdraw from the search."

Meredith, who interviewed for the job Friday, is one of 12 finalists for the position.
Western Kentucky University President Thomas Meredith pulled his name today from the list of contenders for the presidency of the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

A written statement from Meredith about his withdrawal was presented to the media at 12:15 p.m., but a formal announcement was not scheduled until today’s meeting of Western’s Board of Regents. That meeting began at 12:30 p.m. at the Agricultural Exposition Center.

A group of business and community leaders planned to ask the board at the meeting to adopt a statement of support for Meredith and to urge him to remain at Western.

Meredith said in the written statement that community support was the deciding factor in his decision to stay at Western.

“During this time, my family and I have been honored and humbled by the strong demonstration of support we have received from the people of Bowling Green and Warren County, Glasgow, the faculty, staff and students at Western and from
people across our state," Meredith said. "Because of my love for this university, and because of the commitment my family and I made to come to Western and to the commonwealth to make a difference, I have notified the University of Central Florida that I am withdrawing my name from consideration," he said.

Meredith, who has been president since August 1988, made the announcement just hours before a UCF committee was to name the five remaining finalists in the presidential search.

Meredith was among 12 people from 30 applicants invited to the university for interviews.

Meredith and his wife, Susan, visited Orlando last week and Meredith underwent the first round of face-to-face interviews with school leaders.

Meredith said in today's letter that he liked the campus and its people.

The five finalists will be invited back to the campus for two-day visits and batteries of interviews. Final recommendation for the president's post is expected to be made to the school's Board of Regents in mid-November.

The announcement that Meredith was exploring the position, for which he was nominated, was met with disapproval by student, civic and business groups.

A group of about 39 business and community leaders expressed their desire for Meredith to stay in a letter given last week to Western's Board of Regents. The group sought a public statement of support for Meredith, backed with a request that he withdraw his name from consideration. Failing that, the group's letter said, regents should consider a change in the leadership of the board.

That leadership includes Joe Iracane, who has been its chairman since 1984 and a member of the board since 1980. Some of the business leaders involved in sending the letter said they thought personal rifts between Iracane and Meredith were the reasons Meredith considered the UCF post.

Both have denied the existence of any such problems and said any disagreements have been over policies and not because of personality clashes.

"There have been many concerns expressed during recent times pertaining to the relationship between members of the Board of Regents and the president," Meredith said in his statement. "It is time for these complaints to be put behind us, and all of our energies directed toward making this university an even better place for our students to achieve their educational goals."
focus of attention at Western and in the community since Meredith announced his candidacy for the UCF job in early October. Regional business and civic leaders voiced concern that Meredith was looking into the Florida job because of disagreements with Iracane about how the university should be run.

Bob Aldridge, chairman of the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce, said Meredith's announcement should calm some fears about the board's actions, and the group of business leaders is willing to be patient.

"I think that whole situation was diffused by Dr. Meredith's announcement he was going to stay on," Aldridge said. "We'll be interested to see how that relationship between the Board of Regents and the administration continues. I think we'll have to adopt a wait-and-see attitude."

Despite Iracane's uncontested nomination, regents said the election results were not an organized attempt to present a united front to the public.

"I didn't know how things would happen," Iracane said. "I certainly didn't solicit votes. They fell where they fell and, naturally, I was pleased."

Wendell Strode, a former regent and an organizer of the community group, said he cannot accept the results of the meeting at face value.

"At this point, I think the appropriate thing to say is all groups are speaking in terms of unity in terms of moving Western Kentucky University forward," he said. "I, as one member of the Bowling Green community, will be willing to accept that but also be cautiously observing that that is actually taking place."

Regent Steve Catron said speculation of an organized attempt to keep Iracane as chairman is unfounded.

"I cannot speak for the other regents, but I had not planned to nominate anyone going in," he said. "If it was (an organized plan), I certainly did not know anything about it. As a board, collectively, that issue was not discussed."

Catron and other regents said they hope Meredith's decision to stay will allow the board to proceed with leading the university into the future.

Meredith also said he hopes the furor will die.

"I remain optimistic that we'll be able to move ahead," he said.

He declined comment about Iracane's re-election, saying that, as university president, he does not involve himself in the elections.

Meredith, who interviewed for the UCF job a week ago, told that school's officials on Wednesday that he was withdrawing from the race. UCF's Board of Regents was to meet Thursday to narrow its list to five or six candidates who will be asked back for formal, two-day interviews.

"I decided after we were there last Friday that I needed to make a decision by today (Thursday) to be fair to UCF and to try to diffuse the situation here, Meredith said.

—Daily News Staff Writer Stan Reagan contributed to this story.
WKU budget cuts to be almost $2.4 million

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Western Kentucky University will see almost $2.4 million in budget cuts as its share of the $155 million reduction in the state budget, the state Council on Higher Education announced Monday.

The announcement came as no surprise to Western President Thomas Meredith, who asked the council to delay a decision about a proposed doctorate in education degree at Western because of the budget situation and a lack of support by council members.

"That's about what we thought it would be," but university officials are continuing to decide where the cuts will be made, Meredith said.

The only thing we know so far is that Western XXI will play a key role in the budget reductions and that we'll try not to cut from the educational program," he said.

Western XXI, an outline of where the university wants to be as it enters the 21st century, calls for reviewing university programs like food services, health services and athletics in an attempt to be as cost efficient as possible.

A freeze has been placed on hiring and capital expenditures of more than $300 at Western, and state universities have until Nov. 30 to present a plan to the council with ideas for budget reductions and the effects of such losses, Meredith said.

Western's budget committee has been meeting to decide where to make those cuts and was to meet again today, Meredith said.

The $2,359,900 cut from Western's budget was among $31.6 million that higher education lost. The decrease was equitably divided among the state's eight universities and the University of Kentucky's community college system, said Norman Snider, director of the council's communications services.

CHE Chairman Joe Bill Campbell, a Bowling Green attorney, said higher education has taken more than its fair share of cuts and should not have to suffer any more this biennium, though he fears more cuts are coming before the end of the fiscal year.

"I don't think there's anything we can do about the current budget cuts," he said. "We've accepted them. But I'm concerned and dismayed that higher education took a disproportionate part of the budget cut and don't think we should have to have any more."

All state-funded education should be

Continued Back Page

Columns 4, This Section

WKU budget

weighed together when cuts are made, Campbell said. Elementary and secondary education funding was not touched in the cuts.

Capital expenditures for the 1992-94 funding period, which were to be discussed during Monday's meeting in Louisville, also were put on hold after council members decided higher education needs to have a better idea of what cuts will mean before asking for new projects.

"The council felt we need to look at realistic budget proposals to send to the legislature for approval," Campbell said. "It's hard to ask for improvement projects when you don't have enough funding for your operating budget." The doctorate in education program, which if approved would make Western the third state university along with the universities of Louisville and Kentucky to have a doctorate program, is aimed at training educators for leadership positions.

The council staff had recommended the program not be approved. The requested delay doesn't mean the program is dead. It can be brought up for a vote at a later date, when council support might be stronger.

Instead, emphasis Monday was on establishing a joint doctorate program that could be established between any of the universities, Meredith said.

In a joint program, Western could join with another state university and share the responsibility of offering the program.

Tuition rate hikes also approved by the council are not a reaction to the budget tightening but were being studied long before the state cuts were announced, Campbell said.

Western's tuition will rise from $650 a semester this year to $670 next year and to $700 in 1993-94, increases of 3.1 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. The same increase also will be seen at Kentucky State, Northern Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky, Morehead State and Murray State. The University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, where tuition now is $810 a semester, will see tuition hikes of 3.7 percent next year and 4.8 percent the following year.
Iracane retains his post as WKU regents chairman

By ANGELA GARRETT  
Daily News Staff Writer  
Western Kentucky University Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane, who some people think was the impetus for President Thomas Meredith’s candidacy for another job, was re-elected Thursday as chairman by acclamation for 1992 after no one else was nominated.

J. David Cole, a leader of a group of 39 business and civic leaders who signed a letter requesting that the board give a public show of support for Meredith or remove Iracane as chairman, said today that Iracane’s re-election was anticlimactic.

Regent Danny Butler nominated Iracane, after which the remaining nine regents declined to name someone. Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd also was re-elected by acclamation after a nomination from Butler.

Meredith’s announcement received a standing ovation from a crowd of more than 150 people who gathered at the meeting to show support for Meredith. The crowd remained quiet during the board elections.

Meredith and Iracane have been the

Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section