

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

WKU Archives Records

WKU Archives

12-1991

UA3/8/1 Clippings

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](#), and the [Mass Communication 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.

DN - 12/2/91

WKU budget cuts may leave scars

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Proposed Western Kentucky University budget cuts don't look bad on the surface but could leave deep scars in the university's operating budgets, according to President Thomas Meredith.

"The information will seem like we didn't take much of a hit, but the second part of the story will show we are," he said today.

The university faces a \$2,359,904 budget cut as part of the state's \$31 million cut to the Council on Higher Education.

The proposed plan for dealing with the revenue loss, which the university's budget committee has been working on since the mid-October cut announcement, will be presented to Western's Board of Regents at a 3:30 p.m. meeting today.

An approved plan must be submitted to the CHE by Wednesday, Meredith said.

The committee's plan includes about \$1 million being covered with dollars that went unspent from last year's budget; about \$425,000 being covered by an unexpected revenue windfall; about \$200,000 coming from the institutional reserve; about \$100,000 that has been saved in the incentive grant program; about \$50,000 that was budgeted for the summer school program and not spent; and about \$50,000 that has been saved from salaries for positions vacant since July 1.

With all savings and unexpected revenue taken into consideration, about \$127,000 will have to be cut from the university's operating budgets, Meredith said.

"We're in such bad shape with our operating budgets on campus that the budget committee wanted to make every effort possible to keep from impacting the operating budgets," Meredith said. "We wanted to make sure we protected the classroom and educational budgets at all costs, and wanted to make sure that we tried to maintain as many student workers as possible, because so many of our students depend on being able to work to go to college."

The problem is that the additional revenue being used to protect current operating budgets is the same revenue that the university had hoped to use to boost those budgets in the future, Meredith said.

Plans calling for the additional revenue to provide funding for instructional equipment, the library and operating budgets will not reach fruition.

"Those operating budgets have had no measurable increase for several years, yet our enrollment has increased 40 percent in the last six years," Meredith said.

The cushion used to ease the pain of this year's \$2.4 million cut won't be around if similar cuts are made in the 1992-93 budget, Meredith said.

The budget is the only item for discussion on the meeting agenda.

Western budget plan OK'd

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents will hire an outside firm to audit portions of the university's accounts, including an account for entertainment expenses incurred at President Thomas Meredith's house.

Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd of Burkesville made a motion to hire a firm during a special meeting Monday to discuss a \$2.4 million cut to the university's budget. The budget plan, which called for \$127,000 to be cut from operational budgets, was approved with two regents — Robert Chambliss Jr. of Munfordville and Danny Butler of Greensburg — dissenting.

Mrs. Judd thinks the audit is necessary to make the university accountable and because results of an internal audit of the president's office were leaked to the media in November.

"We must minimize our liability," Mrs. Judd said, adding that the results of the internal audit left a cloud over the board and the university.

Meredith said in November that he ordered an end to a monthly \$2,000 entertainment allowance being paid to his wife, Susan, as soon as the internal audit showed that a better way could be found to handle the his entertainment expenses.

"We've said previously that there are ways of doing things and areas that need to be looked into," Meredith told the board. "I'm more concerned about the tone (of the motion) than the details."

The internal audit showed problems with accounting methodology, but said there were no inappropriate expenditures found.

Regent Steve Catron of Bowling Green tried to pass two amendments to the motion to specifically include Meredith in the process, but his amendments were defeated.

"My feeling is that the president should have specifically been inserted into the motion and into the process because he is the chief ex-

Western budget

From
Page 1

ecutive officer of the university," Catron said. "I do not think the majority of the board intended to leave him out of the process."

Meredith said he saw no reason for the results of such an audit not to come back to him as the head of the university, a statement with which Chairman Joe Iracane agreed.

"He'll definitely be involved in it," Iracane said. "There's no intention to keep him out, nothing secretive about it. The way I perceive it is very similar to what we've been doing with other committees. The results of these questions will come back to the full board," and Meredith.

The wording of Mrs. Judd's motion did not include Meredith, a decision she stood by, saying that to include him in the process would take authority away from the committee that will be formed to handle the audit process.

"I worded it the way I did because I believe it's the board's responsibility," she said. "I think we need to get the audit and, as far as

my choice of words go, I stick with my choice."

Food Services and the Physical Plant also might undergo audits as part of Mrs. Judd's plan, and other board members are free to suggest areas they want to look at, she said.

Iracane said he is looking into the cost of the limited audit and will work on appointing a committee after the cost is determined.

DN
12/3/91

WKU

WKU regents order audit of payments to Meredith's wife

By CYNTHIA CROSSLEY
Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Saying there was a need "to eliminate the clouds on the university," board of regents Vice Chairman Patsy Judd yesterday asked that Western Kentucky University's outside auditors review an internal audit of some university payments to the wife of President Thomas Meredith and money used for repairs and improvements on the Merediths' home.

The request followed the regents' 8-2 approval of a plan to handle a state funding cut of nearly \$2.36 million. Western covered two-thirds of that loss by using most of last year's operating surplus and some reserve funds, plus unanticipated income supplied by enrollment increases over three semesters.

Less than \$128,000 will come from the university's academic and other departments; specific cuts by departments haven't been determined yet.

In making her audit request — which was approved 6-4 — Judd, a Burkesville newspaper publisher, said the internal audit, done in October, made allegations of "improper actions and some irregular activities." She asked for a special committee of regents to be established to set the review's scope, and she excluded Meredith from any role.

In an interview after the meeting, Judd said she didn't know how much such a study would cost, and she declined to comment on why she wanted Meredith excluded. When

See WKU
Page 5, col. 1, this section

Courier

Journal

12-3-91

B1

WKU regents order audit

Continued from Page B 1

asked if she thought Meredith had a conflict of interest in the matter, she said, "I really don't think I should comment on that at all."

The internal audit said Susan Meredith was receiving a \$2,000 monthly entertainment allowance — a practice that began before the Merediths arrived — and that some improvements to the house, which is owned by the College Heights Foundation, may have been improperly paid for by the university instead of by the foundation.

Casting the dissenting votes on the audit were Bobby Bartley and Freddie Travis, both of Glasgow,

Stephen Catron of Bowling Green and Monnie Hankins of Louisville.

Catron, a Bowling Green attorney, disputed Judd's interpretation of the report. "There are some accounting differences, but I don't know that there's a cloud over the institution," Catron said.

Catron then tried to get the regents to accept two amendments to Judd's request. One called for a review of the entire university's accounting practices and procedures; it was defeated 7-3. The second unsuccessful amendment included Meredith in the review process. It called for him to instruct the auditors as directed by the board, and for him to receive a copy of any report stemming from the review.

Bartley and Travis urged Judd to hand the matter over to the established finance committee, which is chaired by Catron and whose mem-

bers are Bartley, Travis, Judd and regent Danny Butler of Greensburg.

"It needs to be done as a regular process, not a special process," Bartley said, "If not, it's going to cost a bundle."

For his part, Meredith told the regents that he was "concerned about the tone" of Judd's request.

"We've said there are problem areas that need to be looked at," Meredith said. "I did not perceive the breadth you have expressed. . . . You have a finance committee already in place, but that's your decision, Mr. Chairman."

Meredith said he had ordered immediate changes in light of the audit, including halting the monthly payments to his wife. The money now will be placed in an account to pay for entertainment expenses Meredith incurs.

By
Staff

FR
move
tucky
ship
hims
The
with
stunn
comm
"He
cratic
was s
Will
pointe
want l
tion in
reform
ondary
He c
in publ
The th
And I t
ation
State
called
believe

DN

12/4/91

Iracane puts 4 WKU regents on audit panel

A Daily News report

Western Kentucky University Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane has appointed four regents to serve on a committee that will oversee an audit of the president's office, including entertainment expenses at the university president's house.

Patsy Judd, Robert Chambliss, Monnie Hankins and Fred Travis have been named to the committee based on time served on the board, Iracane said.

"They were chosen for their longevity and service to the board," Iracane said. "I went straight down the line. It doesn't matter who serves on the committee, all abilities being the same."

Regent Danny Butler was in line to serve on the committee but is unable to because of conflicts of interest with his business, Iracane said.

Mrs. Judd made a motion requesting the audit at a special regents' meeting Monday.

The audit, which will be done by the Bowling Green accounting firm of Baird, Kurtz and Dobson, is to review a recent internal audit of the president's office and other areas of the university that have not undergone audits in recent years.

Iracane said work on the audit will begin immediately.

University President Thomas Meredith will see results of the audit as soon as they are available, Iracane said. Some regents expressed concern Monday that Mrs. Judd's motion might exclude him from the process.

872 - 12/5/91

Business leaders remain uneasy about Western

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Former Western Kentucky University Regent Wendell Strode, spokesman for a group of business leaders who in October expressed concern about perceived conflicts between regents and Western President Thomas Meredith, said today there still is a great deal of concern about those conflicts and that the group probably will meet soon to see what steps to take.

The business leaders apparently are concerned about the call Monday for an audit of some university accounts — including monthly entertainment expenses paid directly to Meredith's wife, Susan.

But large money losses in some Western Kentucky University departments — losses that first raised questions by on-campus administrators and not the Board of Regents — is at the heart of a call for an audit of some university ac-

counts, according to Regent Patsy Judd, who said those who think the audit is purely over expenses being paid Susan Meredith are off-base.

"What prompted the internal audit were people on campus expressing concerns about things they suspected might not be exactly as they should," Mrs. Judd said. "The board felt a responsibility to check it out, and the internal audit has brought to light some things that need to be looked at and fixed."

She declined to say who brought the questions to the board's attention and what those questions are specifically.

Among the things brought to light in the internal audit were monthly \$2,000 payments to Mrs. Meredith for entertainment expenses at the president's house. Meredith halted those payments in late October after the internal audit showed a better way could be found to distribute the money.

Board Chairman Joe Iracane said regents were aware that the payments were being made, but were unaware that they were going directly to Mrs. Meredith as an employee of the university.

Mrs. Judd called for and received the board's approval of a motion to have an external audit on Monday, during a special regents meeting to discuss a \$2.4 million cut to the university's budget.

The entertainment payments rose to the forefront of the issue, despite some board members' denials that they were the target.

Strode, who was chairman of the board's Finance Committee when the entertainment payments were increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 monthly, said the board was aware

Continued Back Page
Column 1, This Section

Western

**From
Page 1**

of the payments at that time.

Regent Steve Catron, who tried Monday to have Meredith specifically included in the audit process, said Tuesday that the expenditures credited to the entertainment account were not improper and that the payment had been made to

the president's wife since Dero Downing's term in that office a decade ago.

Former Regent Ronnie Clark said the board not only knew about the payments, but how they were being made.

"Whether the check was written to Susan or Tom, I don't know," he said, adding that the money had no restrictions placed on it.

But Mrs. Judd said the latest audit

isn't an attempt to blame anyone for the losses, but an attempt to prevent them from continuing.

"We don't want to point a finger at anyone," she said. "We just want to find out why we're having these losses."

Mrs. Judd declined to speculate as to the cause of the losses, saying she would rather wait until the audit report is final.

Daily News

PARK CITY



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 289

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1991

58 PAGES 4 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

Western fight seems headed for Round 2

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

The second round in a battle being waged by a group of business leaders against members of Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents — some of whom the leaders accuse of conducting a witch hunt against President Thomas Meredith — apparently is about to begin.

A call Monday by board Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd for a second audit of some university accounts — including payments made to Meredith's wife, Susan, for entertainment expenses — is not a sign that the board stands behind Meredith, businessman Frank St. Charles said today.

The board "launched an investigation, which in my opinion is a witch hunt," St. Charles said.

Mrs. Judd has said the requested audit — which includes a second look at Meredith's expense accounts — is targeted, not at the president, but at cutting university losses.

But St. Charles and other business leaders said they don't accept that answer.

"If they don't think that (Meredith is doing wrong), why are they excluding him and pointing fingers?" St. Charles asked.

The fact that Gov. Wallace Wilkinson — who on Thursday said the action by the board constitutes nothing more than harassment of Meredith and his family — has involved himself in the situation speaks for its seriousness, businessman Bob Aldridge said.

"Other than expressing our support and continuing to monitor the

Continued Back Page
Column 1, This Section

activities up there, I don't know that there's anything we can do right now," Aldridge said. "But we hope we can have some influence over future appointments to the board."

Regent Steve Catron, a Bowling Green attorney, said he agreed with Wilkinson's statement and expects a reaction to the board's actions soon.

"I'm hearing discussion among some people and fully expect that (a reaction to the situation) to transpire," he said. "The perception is that not only businessmen, but citizens and Western alumni — very distinguished Western alumni —

across Kentucky have heard quite enough" and are going to demand that something be done.

The group of several dozen business leaders, who marshaled forces in October to try to get the board to adopt a statement of support for Meredith — who at the time was being considered for a position at the University of Central Florida — plans to meet again soon and decide what course to take, but has yet to set a meeting date.

The first round of the battle ended when Meredith announced Oct. 31

that he had withdrawn from the race for the UCF position, a race business leaders think Meredith entered because of personal disagreements with board Chairman Joe Iracane.

Meredith and Iracane denied that they had any differences other than normal business disagreements. Iracane and Mrs. Judd were renamed board chairman and vice chairwoman, respectively, at the Oct. 31 regents meeting after no other regents were nominated for the positions.

12-7-91

News in brief

State

Wilkinson says WKU regents harassing school's president

Staff, wire reports

BOWLING GREEN — Gov. Wallace Wilkinson says Western Kentucky University President Thomas Meredith is being harassed by some regents seeking a review of an internal audit of presidential accounts.

Wilkinson made the comment to reporters Thursday while in Bowling Green for a final round of local announcements.

In an interview later, Regent Patsy Judd of Burkesville, who sought the review, denied trying to harass Meredith. In response to Wilkinson's comment, she said, "It's unfortunate he has that perception."

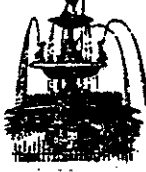
Judd, vice chairwoman of the regents, pushed Monday for a second, outside audit of university payments made to Meredith's wife, Susan, and for repairs and improvements to the president's official residence.

Judd said she was trying to respond to complaints she had received about the amount of money spent on the Merediths' home, which is owned by the university-related College Heights Foundation, and other financial issues.

The regents voted 6-4 to conduct the second audit, with Regent Stephen Catron of Bowling Green objecting to Judd's characterization of the internal audit's findings.

Daily News

PARK CITY



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 292

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1991

30 PAGES 4 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

Audit felt witch hunt

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

Two Western Kentucky University regents labeled as a witch hunt a meeting today of a committee overseeing an audit of some university accounts — an audit apparently targeting almost all financial dealings of President Thomas Meredith since he assumed the presidency.

The list of audit requirements, which was given today to representatives of Baird, Kurtz and Dobson, Certified Public Accountants, includes an itemized list of university employees hired since Aug. 30, 1988, when Meredith took office; a detailed listing of where interest earned on the university's General Fund goes and how it's used; a list of honorariums and other fees authorized by Meredith since August 1988; travel expenses for Meredith and his family since he took office; and entertainment expenses incurred by the president.

"That list leaves no question about it," said Regent Fred Travis, a member of the Board of Regent's audit committee.

Travis stipulated during the meeting that, where some accountings are questionable, it should be included in the auditor's report how long those practices have been in operation.

"It's not going to be a witch hunt as far as I'm concerned," he said after the meeting, adding that if it is an accurate account of accounting procedures that some board members want, including how long those practices have been in place is necessary.

Regent Steve Catron, who attended the meeting even though he is not on the committee, agreed that the audit is aimed at Meredith. He objected, along with reporters, when Regent Patsy Judd asked that the committee go into closed session to discuss the audit.

Travis also objected, saying he was unaware they had planned to go into closed session and was sure committee member Monnie Hankins also was unaware of that plan. Hankins missed the meeting because of traffic problems.

The meeting remained open after Mrs. Judd

**Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section**

Audit

**From
Page 1**

rescinded her request.

Mrs. Judd continued to deny after the meeting that the audit was aimed at Meredith.

"That's not my conclusion at all," she said. "Food Services is losing money and we need to find out why and fix that."

Food Services was mentioned in the audit request, as was the Physical Plant, but they too were mentioned in connection with Meredith.

The committee asked for an itemized list of where food has been served and if that expense should be charged to another university budget unit. It also requested an itemized list of hours spent by Physical

Plant workers making repairs to Meredith's house and the cost involved.

The audit request is the latest in a line of perceived disagreements between some members of the board and Meredith. Regent Robert Chambless is heading the audit committee.

An internal audit of the president's office said in October that some accounting practices were questionable and a better way could be found to handle some accounts in that office, but the audit found no wrongdoings in the way expenditures were made or handled.

Daily News

PARK CITY



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 293

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991

140 PAGES 8 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

Jones issues statement of faith in Meredith

By ANGELA GARRETT

Daily News Staff Writer

Gov. Breton Jones, during his first full day in office today, issued a statement saying recent events at Western Kentucky University should be viewed in a positive light because he has faith in President Thomas Meredith.

Meanwhile, former Western Regent Wendell Strode said today that members of the Board of Regents told Meredith when he took office in August 1988 what they wanted from him and his family and that Meredith has done nothing the board didn't request.

Jones and Strode issued the statements after the parameters of an audit of some university accounts was determined Tuesday by a special committee of the board. The items outlined in the audit request led two regents to refer to the process as a "witch hunt" aimed at Meredith and his family.

"At this point, I have 100 percent confidence in Dr. Meredith," Jones said.

In a letter Strode said he is mailing today to board

Chairman Joe Iracane, Strode asks Iracane to stop the audit process and other bickering with Meredith because actions taken by Meredith not only were known about, but approved by Iracane as chairman.

"It appears to me that course of action is to discredit Dr. Meredith and his family by nit-picking the president's budget to death. ... To use that as a basis for terminating the employment and employment contract with Dr. Meredith and in the process destroying the credibility of this great institution of higher learning," the letter said.

Strode said he wrote the letter in response to comments by Iracane that hinted at wrongdoings between Strode and Meredith.

"I hadn't intended to say anything," Strode said, reiterating that he did nothing that wasn't in his authority as chairman of the board's financial committee. "I was going to take my lumps silently" but Tuesday's meeting changed Strode's mind.

Problems between the board and Meredith have been in the spotlight since speculation began in October that Meredith was in the running for a job with

the University of Central Florida because he was frustrated with the board's attempts to run the university.

Meredith and Iracane denied personal problems and Meredith withdrew from the UCF race minutes before Iracane was renamed board chairman.

At a Dec. 2 board meeting, Regent Patsy Judd called for an audit of some university accounts, but denied that Meredith was the target.

But the audit committee meeting showed that some board members are seeking audits of almost every university account with which Meredith has been involved.

Regents Steve Catron and Fred Travis said after that meeting that the audit is nothing more than a "witch hunt."

Strode, spokesman for a group of business leaders who have voiced concern over the situation, said that group probably will be meeting next week.

Meredith, who was in Frankfort on Tuesday for the gubernatorial inauguration, said he welcomed "any audit of any expenditures."

Journal

GANNETT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1991. 35 CENTS

WKU regents want audit; focus clearly on president

By CYNTHIA CROSSLEY, Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A special board of regents committee gave Western Kentucky University's auditing firm a list yesterday of 11 spending areas to investigate and review — and nearly all of them were expenses incurred by or for Western President Thomas C. Meredith and his wife.

The list prompted Regent Stephen Catron of Bowling Green, who attended the committee's meeting as a spectator, to accuse some of his fellow regents of being on a "witch hunt."

It also renewed anger in Bowling Green and elsewhere over what civic leaders perceive as attacks on Meredith. Some community leaders said yesterday that a group that previously spoke in support of Meredith plans to meet again in the next few days to discuss firing another salvo at the regents.

Ray Preston of Henderson said in an interview yesterday that the regents "seem determined to nitpick (Meredith) to death ... to run off one of the best presidents Western's ever had."

Preston, for whom Western's \$10 million stu-

See WKU REGENTS
Back page, col. 1, this section

WKU regents order audit

Continued from Page One

dent health and activities center will be named, called Meredith "the deciding factor" in his 1990 decision to give the university its single largest donation. (The amount is somewhere between \$750,000 and \$850,000; Preston has declined to allow public release of the actual amount.)

Preston said he thought the ongoing controversy might discourage other possible donors to WKU "because why would you want to step in the middle of this?"

Meanwhile, Meredith, in Frankfort attending Gov. Brereton Jones' inauguration, said that he hadn't received any information from the committee and that he couldn't comment on specifics.

"I have not had any conversations with these board members about any of these items previously," Meredith said. "It's all being announced in the press. That's the way I hear of it."

Meredith also said, "I welcome any audit of any expenditures."

The regents' request to the accounting firm of Baird, Kurtz & Dobson, as handled by Regent Robert Chambliss of Munfordville, chairman of the special audit committee, was labeled "Items to be audited . . . covering the period 8-30-88 to present" — in other words, during Meredith's tenure at Western.

But Regent Fred Travis of Glasgow, a member of the audit committee who said he supports Meredith, objected repeatedly to that limitation. He said many of the practices being questioned began several administrations back and that any review by the auditors should cover those years.

The committee asked for:

- A list of employees who had

been hired by the university but not subsequently approved by the regents.

- A detailed list of "all honorariums, personal-service contracts, stipends, or other funds paid out by Western Kentucky University on behalf of, or at the direction of, Thomas C. Meredith."

- A review of travel expenses incurred by Meredith and his wife, Susan, that were either paid directly by the university or by reimbursement, and a review of their entertainment expenses incurred either at their official residence or elsewhere off campus.

- A review of spending on the official residence, including "home improvements, repairs, janitorial services, maintenance, and all other work" associated with it.

- An audit of all development funds received and spent by WKU.

- An audit of Western's Physical Plant Department, including "a list of man hours and materials used at the President's home, as well as a dollar value," to determine whether some of its expenses should have been charged to other university spending accounts.

Baird Kurtz & Dobson partners Ron Shrewsbury and Spencer Coates told the committee that an audit of the physical plant could be time-consuming and expensive. They said they would come up with an estimate before proceeding.

The committee, referring frequently to a report completed in October by university internal auditor Warren Irons, also asked the accounting firm to audit "interest earned on general fund accounts, and designated and undesignated private contributions, to determine if these funds have been properly accounted for and disbursed in accordance with Board authorization and state law."

This request stems from Irons' finding that Western had established during the 1990-91 fiscal year an account labeled "President's Un-



Thomas C. Meredith

"I welcome any audit of . . . expenditures."

restricted Account." It was funded with some of the interest earned from money Western had on deposit in interest-earning accounts. Irons recommended that the interest be recorded as income, then "properly budgeted and spent."

Coates and Shrewsbury told the committee they could not interpret state law, and at best could suggest that the board seek an attorney general's opinion, if necessary.

The regents' request called for a management letter listing recommendations for correcting any problems, including "any violations of (a) contracts, (b) university policies, (c) state law, and any other exceptions which may not fall in a, b, or c, but which should be reviewed by the board of regents."

A few hours after the meeting, Catron, the Bowling Green regent, called the financial review "an embarrassment to the university and an embarrassment to the board of regents."

"After sitting through that meeting this morning it is clear to me there is nothing more and nothing less than a witch hunt under way, clearly directed toward Dr. Thomas C. Meredith," he said, calling the extensive financial review an effort to neutralize Meredith's support.

But board of regents Vice Chairman Patsy Judd of Burkesville, who asked for the follow-up audit on Dec. 2, repeated her previous comment that she was pursuing the issue because the regents "are trying to spend our dollars so the students get the maximum value from Western."

Daily News



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 294

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1991

44 PAGES 3 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

WKU rift deepens

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

A call for the resignations of some members of Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents is expected to be made after a meeting Monday of business leaders concerned about ongoing events involving regents and Western President Thomas Meredith.

But board Chairman Joe Iracane said today that an audit that targets many of the president's finances — including an unrestricted account that apparently was brought to regents' attention during a preliminary audit and that Iracane maintains was not approved by the board — is not targeting Meredith.

The president's job is safe, Iracane said.

"This has nothing to do with Dr. Meredith's job," Iracane said. "I do not understand why anyone is considering this a threat. Everyone, including Dr.

Meredith, feels it is necessary. He told me there is no problem with having an audit."

Iracane said the audit looks at the president's expenses, but is aimed at cutting losses in fringe areas of the university, such as Food Services.

"It's very difficult with Western's budget the way it is now to measure the value to students of budgets in fringe areas," he said.

The questions began during the board's creation of Western XXI, a master plan for the university that outlines what areas need to be emphasized and de-emphasized, Iracane said.

"Questions were being raised, not by regents, but by people in Bowling Green" at Western, he said.

Accounting practices in Health Services made it appear the area was receiving more university funding than it was and only an audit of the operation showed

Health Services receives much less money than the board thought, Iracane said.

Some board members also are concerned about the unrestricted account, of which Iracane said he and others were unaware until an internal audit of the president's office showed the account exists.

Iracane said allegations that the board has sought to do away with an entertainment allowance for the president are wrong and he hopes to reinstate that allowance. The \$2,000 monthly payment was halted after the internal audit of the president's office showed a better method could be found to distribute the money. The money had been going to Meredith's wife, Susan, under an employment contract with the university.

Former Regent Wendell Strode, who

*Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section*

WKU

From
Page 1

was chairman of the board's Finance Committee when the allowance that had been paid to previous university presidents was continued for Dr. Meredith, said the Merediths' expenses were discussed in closed session with the board and that board members should have been aware of the payment.

Iracane said the board members were aware of the allowance, but were unaware that it was being paid to Mrs. Meredith as an employment contract.

The group of business leaders sent a letter in October demanding

that the board take actions to show its support of Meredith after it was learned the president was in contention for a presidential post at the University of Central Florida.

Business leaders at that time claimed perceived problems between Meredith and the board were at the root of his exploring the position.

Members of the group have said that this audit, which they and Regents Steve Catron and Fred Travis have defined as a witch hunt, shows the board does not support Meredith.

The meeting will be at 3:30 p.m. Monday at the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce office.



"There's no personal gain, no witch hunt in any of this."

Joseph Iracane,
regents chairman

WKU regent chairman defends audit

By CYNTHIA CROSSLEY
Staff Writer

OWENSBORO, Ky. — Western Kentucky University's board of regents is not out to fire President Thomas Meredith, board Chairman Joseph Iracane said yesterday.

They're not even particularly upset that money was going to Meredith's wife, Susan, for entertaining, Iracane said. In fact, Susan Meredith's entertainment budget is something Iracane wants to reinstate.

The real issue for Iracane, and for regents such as Patsy Judd and Robert Chambless, is whether Western is spending money as efficiently as it can.

Iracane and the others think the answer is: Probably not.

Iracane said the controversy now swirling around WKU began with Western 21, the university's evaluation last year of all its programs and spending, and grew with the discovery of some confusing and some unpublicized financial decisions.

Tuesday, a special board of regents com-

Iracane says board not out to fire Meredith

mittee gave WKU's auditing firm a list of 11 spending areas to investigate and review, nearly all of which were expenses incurred by Meredith and his wife.

Iracane also said that Meredith's predecessor, Kern Alexander, raised concerns before he left in 1988.

Alexander questioned the bottom lines of what Iracane called "auxiliaries" — services offered by Western such as its bookstore and its food and health services. The same areas were questioned again last year during Western 21's university-wide spending review.

"The auxiliaries must run in the black," Iracane said. "If one loses a million and a half dollars, and stays in the red, for example, is that an acceptable financial situation? No."

But it's unclear if the auxiliaries are losing

a lot of money, Iracane said, because their funds appear to come from and go to other areas.

Faculty and staff members in program areas designated by Western 21 to be de-emphasized and eventually phased out had also raised questions about university financial matters, Iracane said.

"They were putting up a fight about it, and they were shedding light on some things," Iracane said. "Sure, they're being hurt. So they ask us, 'Did you know about this? Did you know about that?'"

The regents began to look into their claims, said Iracane, but couldn't find clear answers. So they asked for an internal audit.

That audit, completed in October, looked at Meredith's compensation, payments to him for travel and entertainment, and payments on the official residence. That's when Susan Meredith's monthly checks came to light.

See IRACANE
Back page, col. 4, this section

Iracane talks of regent action

Continued from Page One

Iracane, who has been challenged by two former regents, Ronnie Clark of Franklin and Wendell Strode of Bowling Green, for saying publicly that he didn't know about the checks to Susan Meredith, said yesterday he knew that Western was paying for the Merediths' entertainment expenses, "but I didn't know checks were issued directly to Mrs. Meredith and that she was a contract laborer for us."

In a letter urging Iracane to stop the regents from "nit-picking the President's budget to death," Strode, former chairman of the regents' finance committee, acknowledged that when he set up the payment arrangement to Susan Meredith he didn't clearly understand what it entailed, other than that "it was to be done like it was with Dr. (Donald) Zacharias," a previous

Western president.

When questioned later by faculty regent Eugene Evans, Strode said the entire arrangement with the Merediths was discussed in a closed executive session during a board meeting. "I felt to not discuss this in open session was the preferred method to address these type situations," Strode wrote in his letter to Iracane. "If there is any 'dirt,' it is on the Board and our lack of documenting the understanding" with the Merediths.

In an interview yesterday, Strode said he now regretted the decision not to fully disclose the Merediths' compensation arrangement.

"I think it's time to do things out in the open," he said.

Iracane said that he agrees with Strode but thinks he's missing the main issue.

What really jumped out from the audit report, said Iracane, was the discovery of "the President's Unrestricted Account," a fund created with unbudgeted interest income culled from other money deposited in interest-earning accounts.

A spot check by The Courier-

Journal of financial practices at the University of Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky University and Murray State University drew the following response from officials at each of those schools: All unrestricted interest earnings go into the school's general fund and are then budgeted for spending, with the approval of the schools' regents. (None of the three schools paid the president's wife for entertaining.)

Iracane said Western's board is concerned about the propriety — and legality — of the President's Unrestricted Account. But Donald Clapp, vice president for administration at UK, said he knew of no state laws or regulations that would govern the situation in question, at least as he understood it.

University finance officials must follow "generally accepted accounting principles," Clapp said, and when they don't, an audit will usually point that out.

Because Western's regents didn't know about the unrestricted account, said Iracane, and because they can't find it in the budget, they began to wonder what else they didn't know about. That led them to seek the second audit, he said.

Nearly all of the questions in the second audit, discussed on Tuesday with Western's outside auditor, the Bowling Green firm of Baird, Kurtz & Dobson, dealt with expenses incurred by or for Meredith. However, it also asked the auditors to look into one "auxiliary," the food services budget.

"There's no personal gain, no witch hunt in any of this," said Iracane, who said he hoped the second audit wouldn't take very long. "If it's wrong, let's change it. If we need to make changes, let's make them and move forward."

Daily News



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 295

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1991

52 PAGES 3 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

Business leaders weigh suit against regents

By ANGELA GARRETT
Daily News Staff Writer

The spokesman for a group of business leaders labeling an audit of some Western Kentucky University accounts as a witch hunt said today that the group, which meets Monday, might consider a lawsuit against the university's Board of Regents on the grounds it betrayed the public's trust.

Other options, group spokesman and former Regent Wendell Strode said, include asking for the resignations of some regents or asking Gov. Brereton Jones to intervene and continue his show of support for President Thomas Meredith by asking for resignations.

"Several of the members of the community that are concerned about this have expressed some potential options they think should be discussed," Strode said. "Those include asking for resignations, asking the governor to continue to show his support ... by him asking for resignations and, thirdly, reviewing the potential for a lawsuit against members of the board for the betrayal of public trust. I'm sure there are

others that will come up at the meeting."

The audit, meanwhile, is drawing support from Western's Faculty Senate, which Thursday voiced its support of an audit of some university accounts — an audit some people have decried as a witch hunt against Meredith — saying they've been pushing for such a review for a decade.

"Speaking for the chair, I reinforced to (Faculty Regent) Gene Evans and the senate that we are in support of the audit," said Robert Otto, senate vice chairman. "We didn't have a resolution (supporting the audit), but we've had studies for the past 10 years and this is the first time the regents really started looking at university spending. That's what we have continued to ask."

Senators also said they were pleased to learn that a \$2.4 million university budget cut hit athletics harder than academic areas.

The senate has issued for several years athletics spending reports showing what faculty members see as a one-sided picture in favor of athletics. Many

faculty members are hoping this audit leads to a closer look at athletics spending.

Initial findings in a new athletics report, on which a senate committee is working, show a 5-1 ratio in the dollar amount of athletics scholarships and non-athletic scholarships and about a 5-1 ratio in spending on athletics travel and faculty travel, Otto said.

The Faculty Senate is an advisory committee and makes recommendations, but university administrators are not obligated to accept those recommendations.

Otto said he did not know how strong faculty support for Meredith is and the senate's support of the audit is not necessarily a sign of disapproval of the president because faculty members have sought such reviews since before Meredith came to Western in 1988.

The intent of the senate's comments is to "show support of the regents' action," Otto said. "Not who they might target, but their general intent of monitoring spending."

A senate survey of the faculty showed last spring

that only about 40 percent of Western's faculty thought Meredith was doing an adequate job as president, Otto said. In the survey, spending priorities was the top item in a list of 13 items with which the faculty was dissatisfied.

Regents who support the audit, which involves many accounts controlled by Meredith, have said the audit is the result of many questions being asked by people within the university and is an attempt to identify and solve accounting problems and curtail losses in some university accounts.

Otto said the senate is taking a wait-and-see approach to the audit and plans to wait until results are in before making any final decisions about the situation.

A group of business leaders who are dissatisfied with what they see as an attack on Meredith and his family are meeting at 3:30 p.m. Monday at the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce office. The group is expected to ask for the resignations of some regents.

EDITORIALS

Don't interfere

Let WKU controversy run its course, Governor

A word of advice to Gov. Brereton Jones: Back away from the squabble at Western Kentucky University. Don't get caught up — as Wallace Wilkinson did — meddling with the workings of state universities. Don't even give the appearance of playing politics with higher education.

Such advice seems appropriate because Jones was quoted the other day as saying he has "100 percent confidence" in WKU President Thomas Meredith, who has become, rightly or wrongly, the lightning rod for the ongoing debate over financial practices at WKU.

Coming from almost anyone else, Jones' remarks would be just one more opinion on the WKU situation. And Jones himself may have made the comments with the most innocent of intentions.

But Jones is now the governor, and the governor appoints members of university boards. Whatever Jones' intentions, his voiced support of Meredith must plant a seed of doubt in the minds of WKU regents. Some will wonder whether their continued service on the

board will be endangered if they conduct a thorough review of WKU spending.

Don't get us wrong. We are not taking sides between the university's president and the board. But so far, the board's questions seem perfectly appropriate.

Some procedures at WKU — the allocation of interest from various accounts and the \$2,000 monthly allowance for Meredith's wife, for instance — appear to be at odds with the way other state universities handle their financing. Of course, the unique nature of these practices does not make them wrong, but it does invite a review by the board of regents.

Indeed, the regents would be derelict in their duty if they failed to conduct such a review. After all, as the governing body of a public university, they are responsible for ensuring that tax money is spent wisely.

So, the best thing for WKU is to let the regents do their job without interference from anyone — and in particular, without comment one way or the other from the governor's office.

City/State

WKU board chairman defends audit, says it's not witch hunt

Associated Press

OWENSBORO — Western Kentucky's regents aren't conducting a witch hunt against President Thomas Meredith but want to know if the university is spending money efficiently, according to the board chairman.

Chairman Joe Iracane made the comment in defending a second audit authorized Tuesday by a special regents' committee.

The committee gave WKU's auditing firm a list of 11 spending areas to investigate and review, nearly all of which were expenses incurred by Meredith and his wife, Susan.

Iracane said the regents aren't upset that money was going to Meredith's wife for entertaining.

The real issue for Iracane and other regents is whether Western is spending money as efficiently as it can.

Iracane also said that Meredith's predecessor, Kern Alexander, raised concerns before he left in 1988.

Alexander questioned the bottom lines of what Iracane called "auxiliaries" — services offered by Western such as its bookstore and its food and health services. The same areas were questioned again last year during Western 21's university-wide spending review. Western 21 is a long-range planning document that assigns priorities to academic and support programs.

"The auxiliaries must run in the

black," Iracane said. "If one loses a million and a half dollars, and stays in the red, for example, is that an acceptable financial situation? No."

But it's unclear if the auxiliaries are losing a lot of money, Iracane said, because their funds appear to come from and go to other areas.

Faculty and staff members in program areas designated by Western 21 to be de-emphasized and eventually phased out had also raised questions about university financial matters, Iracane said.

"They were putting up a fight about it, and they were shedding light on some things," Iracane said. "Sure, they're being hurt. So they ask us, 'Did you know about this? Did you know about that?'"

Daily News

PARK CITY



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 298

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1991

34 PAGES 4 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

WKU resignations asked

By ANGELA GARRETT
The Daily News

Western Kentucky University Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane said today that he would consider resigning from the board if Gov. Brereton Jones requested the resignation, but Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd has no plans to step down, despite a petition being circulated asking Jones to request the two to leave the board.

A group of business leaders concerned with what they see as continued harassment of university President Thomas Meredith are circulating the petition today for presentation to Jones on Wednesday during an economic development announcement at the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce office.

The decision to circulate copies of the petition came during a meeting of the group Monday.

"I would consider it if the governor asked me to resign," Iracane said today. "But I would be very hurt because it would mean I wasn't serving the public's interest."

Jones has said in a statement released by his

spokesman, Bill Griffin, that he supports Meredith but does not think it would be appropriate for him to involve himself in the conflict.

The petition requests action by Jones, saying that Iracane and Mrs. Judd "have continued to unjustly focus on President Meredith's use of privileges and practices that have existed" since before Meredith took office in August 1988.

Bob Aldridge, a spokesman for the business leaders and mediator of Monday's meeting, said the business leaders chose to specifically name Iracane and Mrs. Judd because members of the board broke an agreement made prior to the Oct. 31 board meeting at which board elections were held.

Aldridge said members of the group were approached prior to that meeting and told that if they objected to Iracane and Mrs. Judd being re-elected, the results of an internal audit of the president's office would be made public.

The leaders agreed to the terms of the deal because Iracane and Mrs. Judd are up for reappointment in July, Aldridge said.

But Iracane and Mrs. Judd denied today that

any such deal was made.

"That is just totally groundless," Mrs. Judd said. "I certainly would not be a party to that. I'm offended by that."

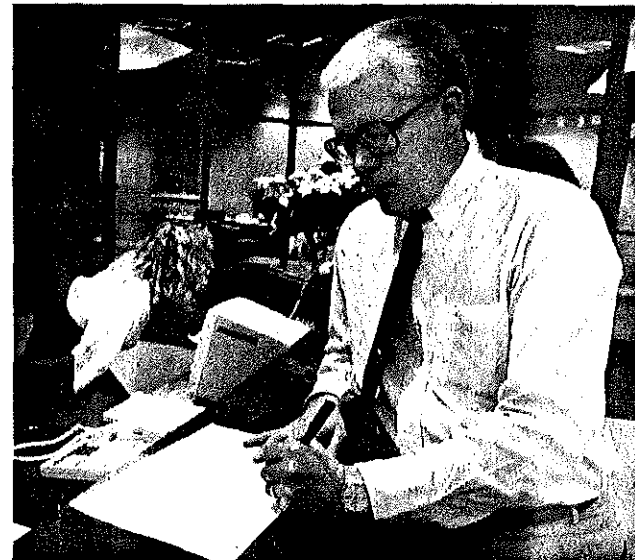
Aldridge said he was not part of that meeting and declined to be more specific about which members of the group were.

Meredith said today that he welcomes the audit and is looking forward to a speedy end to the debate. He declined further comment.

The business leaders also support the audit, but disapprove of the public manner in which it was handled, Aldridge said during the group's meeting, adding that members of the group provide much support for the university.

"There's large support for Western, not only spiritually, but financially," he said, adding that American National Bank, where he is president, granted 188 scholarships to Western students this year.

Members of the group said the petition is only the first step. If Jones doesn't intervene or if Iracane and Mrs. Judd do not resign, the business leaders have said they will consider filing a lawsuit against the board for violation of public trust.



Staff Photo by Tracy Glantz

BILL REYNOLDS signs a petition today that asks Gov. Brereton Jones to seek the resignations of Western Kentucky University's Board of Regents President Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd. The petitions are being circulated by a group of business leaders.

Editorials

Cool heads, audit should prevail over WKU furor

Cool heads should prevail in a matter involving Western Kentucky University's budget, which has focused attention on the Board of Regents and President Thomas C. Meredith.

Some of the regents have requested an audit of the university's Physical Plant, Food Services and the President's Office.

The action has raised the ire of some business and civic leaders who believe the call to be more than a coincidence following Meredith's withdrawal a short time ago from competition for the University of Central Florida presidency.

Tension between board Chairman Joe Iracane and Meredith was denied by both men as the cause for Meredith's brief job search. But the resulting hullabaloo over what some people suspect, again, has caused friction.

Rumors about large money losses in some Western Kentucky University departments — losses that first raised questions by on-campus administrators and not the Board of Regents — is at

the heart of the examination, according to Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd.

Those who think the latest audit is purely over payments of entertainment expenses to Meredith's wife, Susan, are wrong, Mrs. Judd says. An internal audit already has put the Merediths in the clear, and Meredith welcomes the call for the new audit.

Perhaps this audit might give the board a better idea of how to discuss a \$2.4 million cut that is mandated by the state and affects the university's budget.

It is important that any questions about spending be answered, but we hope the findings of such an audit will not be used as a weapon by anyone.

It is essential for Western and those it serves that the furor die down. Then Western administrators and the board can return to the business of higher education.

Once the results of the audit are reviewed, an appropriate response to the findings can be determined.

urray State tonight/1-B ■ Tax rebate idea getting a cool recep

Daily News

PARK CITY



© 1991 News Publishing Co.

YEAR 137—NO. 300

BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1991

40 PAGES 3 SECTIONS 35 CENTS

Western suspicions growing

By ANGELA GARRETT
The Daily News

Members of a group of business leaders say they believe a call for an audit of some parts of Western Kentucky University's budget — an audit the business leaders believe is aimed at discrediting university President Thomas Meredith — is part of a conspiracy involving former President Kern Alexander.

"We think Dr. Kern Alexander is behind this in some manner," said Bob Aldridge, a spokesman for the group that wants Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd off the board.

Aldridge declined to be specific about his claim of Alexander's involvement.

Group members think Regents Danny Butler, Iracane, Mrs. Judd and Robert Chambliss have been in contact with Alexander about operations at Western, Aldridge said today.

Alexander, who left Western in 1988 for a teaching position at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va., said last week that Iracane and Mrs. Judd are "dear friends." But he said he has not been in contact with anyone in this region and is unaware of what is going on at Western.

"Occasionally, I get to talk to someone from around Bowling Green," Alexander said. "But I haven't kept up with Kentucky that

Western

From
Page 1

much. I don't even know what's going on" at Western.

Iracane and Mrs. Judd have denied that a conspiracy against Meredith exists, saying the audit is an attempt to review and correct accounting procedures at the university.

The two regents also have denied knowledge of a deal Aldridge said was worked out before the board elections in October between some of the business leaders and members of the Board of Regents.

Regent Steve Catron has claimed a deal was made. He said he was told before the Oct. 31 meeting that results of an internal audit of the president's office would be made public if Regent Fred Travis continued with his plan to nominate Catron as board chairman.

Iracane and Mrs. Judd were renamed by acclamation to head the board after no other regents were nominated for the positions. Results of the internal audit were leaked to a Bowling Green radio station a few days later.

A petition by the business leaders asking Gov. Brereton Jones to request that Iracane and Mrs. Judd resign from the board was to be presented to Jones during an economic development announcement in Bowling Green on Wednesday but was delayed to prevent detracting from the announcement, Aldridge said.

The group now plans on Friday to either hand deliver the petition to Jones or mail the petition to his press secretary for delivery to him, Aldridge said.

Group members plan to circulate the petition, which this morning had about 200 signatures, at E.A. Diddle Arena during tonight's basketball game between Western and Murray

Meredith backers vow to pressure WKU regents

By KIRSTEN HAUKEBO
Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Having failed to enlist the help of Gov. Brereton Jones, civic and business leaders will seek other ways to remove two regents they say are attacking Western Kentucky University's president.

"The pressure's not going to stop," said Doug Lester, chairman and chief executive officer of Trans Financial Bank.

A petition has circulated since Monday asking Jones to demand the removal of board Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairman Patsy Judd for "harassing" and "intimidating" President Thomas Meredith. About 200 people have signed the petition, which will go to Frankfort next week, said Bob Aldridge,

chairman of the Bowling Green-Warren County Chamber of Commerce.

Meredith's allies see this as a crucial time, with as many as six hostile votes on the 10-member board and the terms of four regents — including three considered hostile to Meredith — expiring next year.

Jones, in Bowling Green to announce a new factory, reiterated yesterday that although he supports Meredith, he would not get involved in the situation.

"I think it would be a big mistake for any governor to begin to micromanage the various universities," he said. "Every trustee has a right to speak their own will, their own feelings about every issue."

Iracane said he would consider resigning if Jones asked him, but he and Judd said they had no plans to

step down.

Iracane said he is only trying in good faith to improve accounting procedures at WKU.

"I'm going to leave a legacy at Western of an improved accounting system and better accountability," he said.

The regents recently initiated a special audit of 11 areas, nearly all of which were expenses incurred by Meredith or his wife, Susan. In particular, they have focused on an entertainment allowance — now suspended — paid to Susan Meredith.

In a recent letter to Iracane, former regent Wendell Strode revealed the worst fear of Meredith's supporters: "It appears to me that the course of action is to search and search until they have found some basis to terminate the employment and the employment contract of Dr.

Meredith."

Iracane and Judd, whose terms end June 30, deny they are trying to oust Meredith.

Danny Butler, who also is seen as a Meredith opponent, finishes his term at the end of March, as does Fred Travis, who says he supports Meredith. A fifth regent — the student representative on the board — is re-elected every year.

Some fear WKU will lose out on funding if the board doesn't present a united front when the legislature convenes next month.

"The sooner we can focus our energy away from having to address this harassment, the better," Strode said. "It's hurting us with fund raising; it's hurting us everywhere we turn."

Carrier
Journal
12-19-91
B4

WKU

Faculty members feel business leaders ill-informed on Western

By ANGELA GARRETT
The Daily News

Some Western Kentucky University faculty members think a group of business leaders concerned with the situation between the university's board of regents and President Thomas Meredith need to know more about the university's operations before continuing with accusations against regents.

"Most of what I hear (from faculty members) is fairly negative about the notion of a downtown group trying to put themselves above the system" and dictate what happens at Western, said Dr. Bill Meadors, a physical education and recreation professor.

Business leaders are circulating a petition they plan to submit today or early next week to Gov. Brereton Jones, who has said he supports Meredith but has no

intention of involving himself in an internal conflict at the university.

The petition requests that Jones ask board Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd to resign because of continued perception of harassment of Meredith.

But those business leaders get many of their ideas about conditions at Western from extracurricular activities and are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the university, Meadors said.

"I'm distressed with the whole notion of an outside group applying political pressure to get whomever they want on the board appointed," Meadors said.

Western's Faculty Senate voiced support during a Dec. 12 senate meeting for a board-requested audit — an audit some business leaders have deemed a witch hunt aimed at Meredith.

The senate's show of support does not mean the senate is against Meredith but that it wants more accountability in university funding, Senate Vice Chairman Robert Otto has said.

Senate Chairman Arvin Vos said community support for Western is appreciated, but possibly misguided.

"I think the general perception is that we're glad the business leaders have an interest in Western, but the way it's being expressed right now — in trying to get political action against the regents — is inappropriate," Vos said.

Meadors agreed that the group's actions might have gone too far.

"I've been at Western some 23 years, and also was a student here in the mid-'50s," he said. "There's always been a good relationship between the com-

munity and Western and it concerns me that the situation now is divisive."

Vos said business leaders should wait until the audit is complete before deciding what action might need to be taken.

"At this point, it's time to wait and see what is found in this audit and see if we can go on from there," Vos said. "Until we have more evidence, it's time to pack it up and enjoy the holidays."

Bob Aldridge and Wendell Strode, spokesmen for the business leaders group, could not be reached for comment early today.

The petition had about 200 signatures Thursday morning and members of the group planned to circulate the petition during Thursday's basketball game between Western and Murray State University.

Accountability said concern of most universities

By ANGELA GARRETT

The Daily News

Two former Western Kentucky University presidents say audits and accountability are concerns at most universities and worries that an audit at Western is aimed at current President Thomas Meredith could be premature.

"We're having painful reviews of our programs as we look at programs and possible cutbacks here," Dr. Donald Zacharias said Thursday from Mississippi State University in Starkville. "It's a sign of the time in most universities across the country."

Zacharias left Western in 1985 to assume the presidency at Mississippi State.

Dr. Kern Alexander, who took over Western's presidency after Zacharias left, left Western in 1988 to accept a teaching position with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Blacksburg, Va.

But while at Western, Alexander often was called upon to respond to questions of accountability, he said.

"Questions of accountability always are before the board," he said. "That is a major question of all public boards — the pure and simple issue of being accountable to the public. There are numerous issues that arise around that question."

Alexander and Zacharias both declined specific

**Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section**

Universities

**From
Page 1**

comment on the situation between the board of regents and Meredith, saying they have not been in contact with anyone in this region and are unaware of details of the issue.

A group of business leaders who are concerned that members of the board are harassing Meredith have circulated petitions requesting Gov. Brereton Jones to ask that board Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd resign.

Iracane and Mrs. Judd have denied that the audit is aimed at Meredith, saying only that they are attempting to make university accounts as efficient as possible and Jones has said he will not intervene in a university matter.

Attempts to improve accountability are good, Alexander said.

"I think those are legitimate kinds of questions a board should ask," he said. "The public has a right to know about the accountability question. Any kind of improvements in the accounting system are good, and

attempts to improve accountability are the goals of a public agency."

Meredith was an administrator at the University of Mississippi when Zacharias became president at Mississippi State, Zacharias said, adding that they became acquainted during the three years before Meredith came to Western.

"Everything I know about him (Meredith) is of the finest character," Zacharias said. "I saw him handle some difficult situations while he was here, and he handled them all with professionalism."

As for the audit procedure and findings, it will have to be resolved within the university, Zacharias said.

"It's something for them to resolve as they see fit," Zacharias said.

Alexander agreed that only the board members involved could be sure of their motivation.

"I would think you would have to take the board at its word and Dr. Meredith at his," Alexander said.

Petition asking WKU resignations mailed to governor

By ANGELA GARRETT
The Daily News

A petition containing 329 signatures has been mailed to Gov. Brereton Jones' acting press secretary, asking that the governor request the resignations of Western Kentucky University Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd.

"It either went out Friday or first thing this morning," said Bob Aldridge, a spokesman for a group of business leaders who circulated the petition. "We had hoped to get 200 to 250 signatures, so getting well over 300 was a nice surprise."

Jones has said he supports Western President Thomas Meredith but will not get involved in the case because he doesn't think it's his place to interfere in the running of the university.

The group is seeking Iracane's and Mrs. Judd's resignations because of what it sees as their continued

Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section

Petition

From
Page 1

harassment of Meredith.

Mrs. Judd recently requested an audit of some university accounts, most of which are under Meredith's control. Members of the group and some members of the board of regents have decried the audit as a witch hunt, saying they don't disapprove of the audit itself but of the public way in which it's being handled.

The business group has been criticized by Western faculty members who think they should stop trying to run the university without being involved in its day-to-day operations.

The business leaders will meet next week to discuss further action against the regents and to respond to the criticism, Aldridge said. The group is trying to let the debate rest during the holidays, he said.

WKU

Petition on WKU regents on its way

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — A petition asking Gov. Brereton Jones to request the resignations of Western Kentucky University board of regents Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd has been sent to the governor's office.

The petition, which was circulated by a group of business leaders, contained 329 signatures, the group's spokesman said.

The group is seeking the resignations because of what it says is the two regents' continued harassment of WKU President Thomas Meredith.

Jones has said he supports Meredith but will not get involved because he doesn't think it is his place to interfere in the running of the university.

Judd recently requested an audit of some university accounts, most of which are under Meredith's control. Members of the group and some members of the board of regents have decried the public way in which the matter is being handled.

Courier Journal

12-24-91

B3

Legislation to reduce the politics in selection of regents to be filed

By ROBYN L. MINOR
The Daily News

Legislation designed to remove some of the politics in selecting university regents will be filed during the 1992 General Assembly, but state Sen. Nick Kafoglis said it is not aimed directly at the ongoing battle over two Western Kentucky University regents but more at tackling long-standing problems in regents' selections.

"I think we will have better boards of regents if less political consideration is given in choosing them," said Kafoglis, a Bowling Green Democrat. "I don't mean to imply that we have not had good board of regents, but I think we could have had some better ones."

This situation goes back to before problems at Western because strife between regents and university presidents has been seen at universities throughout the state, he said.

In Bowling Green, a group of business leaders has asked Gov. Brereton Jones to remove Board of Regents Chairman Joe Iracane and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd.

The business leaders contend the two are harassing President Thomas Meredith and conducting a witch hunt by calling for an audit of many of his financial dealings since he became president in 1988.

Kafoglis said he is finishing a bill that will likely call for a nominating committee appointed by the governor that will select three qualified candidates for a regent opening. The governor would then select someone from the three nominees and the legislature would vote whether to confirm the governor's choice.

Selections now are made by the governor.

"I think this will provide additional accountability on the type of people we have," he said. "Gov. Jones also is interested in changing the process."

Jones wants recognized citizens' groups to choose people for the nominating committee, instead of the governor, Kafoglis said.

If Jones presents a bill similar enough to

**Continued Back Page
Column 4, This Section**

Regents

the one on which Kafoglis is working, it will be introduced instead, Kafoglis said.

"There will be a bill filed early on," he said. "I think there will be substantial support for it."

But that wasn't the case when a similar bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Ernesto Scorsone, D-Lexington, during the 1990 General Assembly. The bill passed the

House, but failed in the Senate.

"I think the 1990 session was just so full that both houses let some things fall to the wayside that should have been passed," said state Rep. Jody Richards, D-Bowling Green. "I don't think there is any problem philosophically with passing the measure."

Richards said he's offered Jones help in writing a bill.

"In the corridors of Frankfort, the selection of regents is one of the top topics of conversations because of the problems around the state," Richards said. "I think we will pass something early on, and there may be some sentiment to have both houses approve the nominees — it has worked well with the state board of education appointments."

**From
Page 1**

WKU audit cost report is expected

A Daily News report

A letter outlining the cost and time frame of an audit of some Western Kentucky University accounts could be given to members of the audit committee within days, but the audit itself is still some time away, according to Western Regent Fred Travis.

The committee requested the estimate from Baird, Kurtz and Dobson Certified Public Accountants when it outlined during a Dec. 10 meeting the areas to be reviewed — mainly accounts controlled by Western President Thomas Meredith.

"They sent us a letter saying they'd have that to us soon, so I'm hoping it will be around the first of the year," said Travis, a member of the audit committee. "They working on it."

The audit stirred debate after some regents and members of the business community labeled it as a witch hunt aimed at Meredith. They said they are not concerned by the audit, which Meredith supports, but with the public manner in which it has been handled.

Business leaders submitted a petition to Gov. Brereton Jones asking that he request the resignations of board Chairman Joe Iracane

and Vice Chairwoman Patsy Judd, citing what they perceive as continued harassment of Meredith.

But Jones, who has said he supports Meredith but does not think the governor should become involved in micromanagement of universities, will continue to take a hands-off policy in the situation, said Bill Griffin, Jones' acting press secretary.

"We received the petition the 23rd or 24th (of December), and I'm in the process of drafting a response saying we're in receipt," Griffin

said today. "Gov. Jones has made his position clear before."

The business leaders, who were considering meeting this week to consider further action, will wait for the audit results before deciding on future steps, spokesman Bob Aldridge said today.

"We're inclined to think our objective has been achieved in terms of focusing on the activities of the board," he said. "I think we're just going to let this thing lie for a while and let things develop from the audit."

WKU

Choosing sides at Western

What do the regents at Western Kentucky University want, and why does turmoil seem the natural state in several of our regional universities?

Regents have been choosing up sides for years at Western and Murray; selecting presidents and, after a short honeymoon, drawing up the lines of battle to "throw the bum out."

Some of the presidents have probably earned their exodus; other have been victims of petty politics. The same is true for regents. Some have been appointed in recognition of their abilities, others in recognition of their partisanship.

Thomas Meredith, current president of WKU and current focus of controversy, came to his position with high credentials. Thus far, regents have not disparaged his competence, only his expenses. A special board committee drew up a list of expenditures, nearly all incurred by Meredith and his wife, to

be reviewed. Meredith backers drew up a resolution asking Gov. Brereton Jones to demand the resignations of the regents' chairman and vice chairman.

The resolution stated that these two regents were "harassing and intimidating" Meredith.

In this case, accusations about Meredith by regents, if not unfounded, are at least premature. Unless and until there is more evidence than has been indicated, the university does not profit from the kind of board bickering and finger-pointing that has been going on.

Regents are risking the creation of a figurehead position that no self-respecting academician would be proud to hold.

— The (Henderson)
Gleaner

Lexington
Herald
12-30-91
AL