

MOREHEAD CHOOSES NEW PRESIDENT REGENTS' VOTE UNANIMOUS FOR S.C. CANDIDATE



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MOREHEAD -- Morehead State University's next president said he was not too interested in the job at first.

"But the more I learned about the institution, it became more fascinating. I thought it was a good fit," said Ronald G. Eaglin, who will leave a job as chancellor of the University of South Carolina's Coastal Carolina College to come to Kentucky.

Morehead's Board of Regents yesterday voted unanimously to hire him after meeting 90 minutes in closed session. He replaces C. Nelson Grote, who retires June 30.

Eaglin, 51, was considered the leading candidate because neither of the other two finalists had experience running a university.

Before the board went into closed session to discuss the candidates, Wayne Martin, the vice chairman, said the regents probably would make a decision in "a few minutes."

Martin said it took longer because they had trouble reaching all three finalists to inform them of their decision.

The other candidates were Oklahoma State University veterinary college dean Joseph W. Alexander and University of New Orleans business college dean J. Ronnie Davis. Nearly 175 people applied or were nominated.

The final decision was easy, said Regent T.T. Colley, who made the motion in open session to hire Eaglin.

Colley, of Pikeville, once said he had enough support to block the hiring

because none of the finalists was from Kentucky.

But yesterday he said, "Dr. Eaglin was my choice right from the beginning. He's the kind of fellow I'd hire to run a business, if I needed one. He's the only one of the finalists who's had experience as president. No one from

Kentucky had that."

In South Carolina, Eaglin is considered a good administrator, said Morehead Faculty Regent Alban Wheeler.

Coastal Carolina College has 4,000 students. Morehead has 8,300.

Although it has a record enrollment, Morehead, like the state's other public universities, faces a possible 5 percent budget cut in 1992-93.

"We're in a budget crunch, and we need someone who'll take control and maybe ruffle some feathers," said Regent Walter Carr of Morehead.

Eaglin said yesterday he was ready for the task.

A tight budget gives the school the chance to decide what is important and what is not, he said from his office in Conway, S.C.

Eaglin said one of his goals is for Morehead to have the No. 1 teacher education program in Kentucky.

"It just makes sense," he said. "Teaching cuts across all disciplines. It's in the school's historical roots. It fits exactly into the overall mission of the institution.

"When people think of teacher education in Kentucky, they should think of Morehead."

"There are other good quality programs," Eaglin said. Deciding what to fund "is going to take a lot of prioritizing."

He said he will involve the faculty and administrators in that process.

Eaglin said he had been nominated for other jobs, but none had appealed to him as much as Morehead.

He said Morehead reminds him of the school he attended, Southeast Missouri State University.

"Southeast Missouri is not a haven of rich people by any stretch of the imagination," he said.

Morehead draws most of its students from a 22-county region that includes some of the poorest in Eastern Kentucky. Many of its students are the first in their families to attend college.

Morehead's challenge is working with local schools and getting those disadvantaged students despite budget cuts, Eaglin said.

Morehead's regents offered Eaglin a four-year contract, but the terms of the deal have not been worked out.

Regents Chairman William Seaton said the board would probably offer him more than the \$102,600 a year they pay Grote. Eaglin gets \$110,000 at the branch campus in Conway.

Ronald G. Eaglin

Born: April 12, 1940

Family: Wife, Bonnie Eaglin; four children, Ron, 28; Lori, 26; Mike, 25; Jeff, 21.

Education: Bachelor's degrees in biology and mathematics, Southeast Missouri State University, 1962; master's degree in college student personnel administration with a concentration in psychology, Southern Illinois University, 1965; doctorate in educational psychology, University of Utah, 1970.

Career highlights: Regional director, American College Testing program, southeast office, 1970-1974; associate professor of psychology and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, 1974-85; chancellor, USC Coastal Carolina College, 1985-present.

Caption: Color Ronald G. Eaglin

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