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Caboni addresses speculation around WKU's future in C-USA

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Western Kentucky University President Timothy Caboni speaks at a tour of Normal Hall, one of the two new First-Year Village residents halls that will be open to freshmen this fall, on Tuesday, May 4, 2021. The \$48 million project will provide housing for over 600 first-year students through an application and review process. (Grace Ramey/photo@bgdailynews.com)

Grace Ramey/

Amid the departure of six schools from Conference USA and frenzied speculation about Western Kentucky University's place within the league, WKU President Timothy Caboni made the university's current position clear Friday.

"I know individuals in our community would like all the information that we have at hand, but that's not really a helpful position to take when we're in the midst of negotiations and conversations," Caboni said as WKU's Board of Regents met in committee.

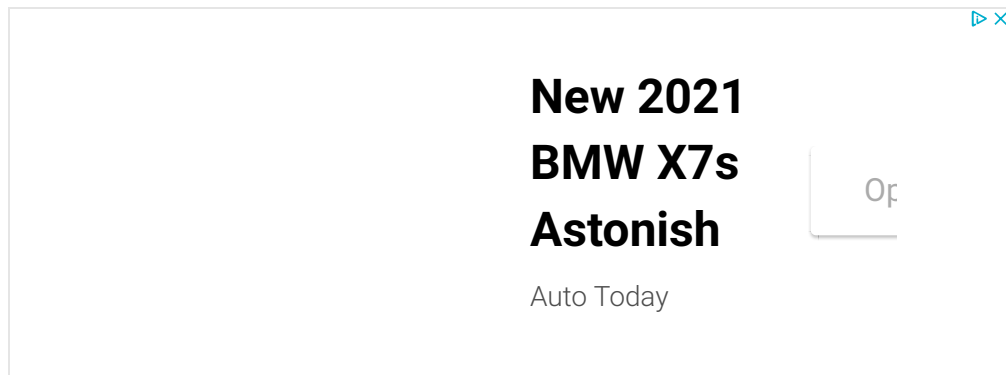


Caboni was responding to the recent news that six schools will jump ship from C-USA for the American Athletic Conference, a development he said WKU knew was a possibility and had been planning for in recent weeks.

Campus leaders haven't said much about WKU's future within the conference. Last week, WKU athletics director Todd Stewart released an optimistic but guarded statement addressing the topic.

"We will continue to be an impactful leader in collegiate athletics, will continue to excel at the highest level and are well-positioned for the future ahead," Stewart's statement said in part.

On Friday, Caboni characterized the radio silence as a negotiating tactic meant to protect the university's position in ongoing talks.



Those behind-the-scenes talks will continue to play out "over the coming days and (the next) week or two," Caboni told the board Friday.



"I will say this: The presidents in the conference have been working hard with their colleagues to talk about the future of Conference USA. There are conversations happening about those that might join, those who enjoy being with us," Caboni added.

Caboni also seemed to address critics on social media who have demanded more information from the university.



“Those of us who are involved in these conversations here and across the country – I can guarantee you are not putting the content of them on Twitter,” he said.

Instead, university representatives will continue to work behind the scenes and secure the best negotiating position for WKU, Caboni said.

Going forward, Caboni added, “We won’t be making public comment about the machinations of those conversations.”

– *Daily News sports reporter Jared MacDonald contributed to this report.*

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