Hahn won’t let alumni dump Coffey

RICHMOND (AP) — Virginia Tech President T. Marshall Hahn has refused to bow to alumni pressure to fire football coach Charlie Coffey and pay off the $120,000 remaining under Coffey’s unexpired contract, the Richmond Times-Dispatch said Thursday night.

The newspaper quoted an unidentified alumnus as saying, “Dr. Hahn absolutely would not bend in this matter. The result is that Dr. Hahn is now getting as much heat as Coffey. But Hahn is the absolute boss, and what he says apparently goes.”

The alumnus said a large number of Tech alumni met with Hahn on the Blacksburg campus last week and demanded he fire Coffey, whose Gobblers finished 2-9 this season.

Coffey and Hahn met last weekend and the alumnus said, “It is our understanding that Coffey was given one more year to turn it around and if he didn’t he’d resign.”

Coffey said Thursday that “at no time” did Hahn set a deadline for him to engineer an upswing in Tech’s football fortunes.

Hahn, enroute to Antarctica on a scientific mission, was unavailable for comment.

Coffey said Hahn “knows what our problems are...and he’s doing everything he can to help us now in recruiting.”

He said the criticism from alumni is “nothing new to the game or to the profession. Last year (with a 6-4-1 record) we had a lot of back-patting. This year it’s the reverse.”

Coffey, formerly an assistant coach under Frank Broyles at the University of Arkansas, came to Tech three years ago as head coach and had a 4-7 season that first year.

Last year Coffey signed a five-year contract that is automatically renewable for one year at the end of each season. At $30,000 a year, it would take $120,000 to buy his contract and fire him at this point, if Hahn refused the year renewal.