

OUR VIEW

Dixon's contract wasted money

Our budget director probably sits in his office counting the University's pennies with the scrutiny of Scrooge. Faculty bite their nails in anticipation of contract renewal during cuts.

Meanwhile, one person has spent the past year raking in the dough.

Yes, that's right, former president Barbara Dixon. And she's getting the last laugh.

The Board of Governors drew up a contract that supplied Dixon with a whopping \$205,050 to take the role as consultant to the Board following her Fall 2008 resignation. In September 2008, Dixon announced

her resignation and she assumed her consulting duties Oct. 15, 2008. Her contract noted she should perform nearly any reasonable task the Board asked of her.

In her year as consultant, Dixon said the only task she performed was drawing up a report that offered administrators advice on how to handle the financial situation at the University (see story, page 1).

In other words, Dixon was paid to suggest to others how to spend money. And guess what? She received a \$10,000 bonus for doing it.

This just doesn't add up. Representatives from the Board won't answer questions that relate to Dixon's specific reasoning for resigning.

Board Chair Cheryl Cozette gives Dixon the benefit of the doubt, saying in an interview with the Index that Dixon's solitary report was well done. Then she said:

"Some of the recommendations

that she made would have been things that the administration was already considering. So her recommendations served to validate that we were all kind of thinking the same."

Cozette might as well have crumpled the report and thrown it in the trash can, deeming it basically useless if the University had thought of it first anyway.

Cozette claims the Board acted in the best interest of the University.

We're not sure Dixon's report warranted dipping into the University's budget to — what? Make

a former president happy? Buy her a sweet life in Michigan?

The report could have been used to pay about 3.5 professors in a given year.

The University could ask students to pass a fee to cover the looming state funding cut.

Can the University expect students to support the fee when so much was, by all appearances, largely wasted on Dixon's consultant contract?

Fess up Board. Tell us deserving students who balance our own yearly budgets why Dixon gets to walk away with so much cash. While you're at it, quell the spiraling rumors about why Dixon resigned. Were the disagreements between Dixon and the Board over major issues, or did our former president not like Board members gulping down Mountain Dew during meetings when she preferred a cold glass of cola?

When more than a quarter of a million is on the line, anything seems possible.

"We're not sure Dixon's report warrants dipping into the University's budget."

CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail index@truman.edu, call us at 660-785-4449, or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo, 63501.

CARTOON

By Alex Boles



Letters to the Editor

Students should support athletes

I was extremely disappointed to read Daniel Heagney's letter in the November 19th edition of the Index. I realize his argument that Truman should cut all athletics was meant to be provocative, which is fine, but it is so short sighted it must be answered.

Truman faces financial shortfalls for a variety of reasons, and declining support from the state is certainly foremost among them. But declining enrollment has also caused critical budget challenges in recent years. Mr. Heagney's solution would be an enrollment and financial disaster for Truman and would lead to draconian cuts in faculty and staff. Does he think those 400-plus students who are athletes here would still be enrolled in a few years if all sports were cut? No, they would not and we can only imagine what a 7 percent drop in our enrollment would mean. Could Truman even keep its doors open? Mr. Heagney may not realize that so many of his classmates are student athletes. Only a small fraction of those individuals receive anything close to a full scholarship for their participation in a sport — many receive no funding whatsoever. Athletics spending by the University is only 3.6 percent of the total budget.

In return for what for most is a very small scholarship, our student athletes put in more hours participating in their sport than non-student athletes can even imagine. They know full well they will not be professional athletes — they do this because they see their athletic participation as a critical part of their education. The liberal arts, after all, are about developing all aspects of our humanity — mind, body, and spirit. As anyone who has dedicated themselves to any endeavor outside the regular classroom (sports, music, theater) knows, the lessons learned include the rewards of commitment, dedication, teamwork, and character development — aspects of one's education that have lifetime benefits. Athletics are not something set apart from the academic mission here at Truman — they are a critical component of their education. Our student athletes thrive in the classroom — their average GPA is as high as the total student body, their graduation rate is significantly higher (87 percent to 69 percent) and Truman is one of the nation's leaders in producing NCAA postgraduate scholarship winners (not to mention recent news of the University's first ever Rhodes Scholar, student athlete Andrew McCall).

And while these student athletes pursue their sports, they represent Truman across the Midwest, all the while maintaining a positive connection with Truman alumni. Alums who participated in sports here at Truman contribute financially to the University at a rate above any other segment of the alumni population. Has Mr. Heagney considered what would happen to alumni support of the University if his proposal became reality?

It is sad that during this time of real financial challenges, some in our

community propose solutions that would devastate the educational experiences of other members of our community. This should be a time for the Truman community to pull together — perhaps we can all do so at the next Bulldog game.

than TJ, perceived it to be an attack on "property" which is all they wanted, negatively, in the bold document. As offensive to their notions of Whiggery, that was what the Kings' friends party in my native U.K. Commons and Lords were solely violative of in taxes imposed et cetera. Jefferson, while ironically agreeing a lot with them, was a truly more enlightened Enlightenment scholar who in his Notes on Virginia did, however, have a 'positive' viewpoint, far-seeing, on society, and supported the state-funded University of Virginia, categorically.

Of the three eminent academic historians I am, literally, the personal tutee of at least three past U.S./U.K. universities in my own career, more independently, now than all would wish, two of them are overt Obama supporters by cash donations and publications, CSPAN TV, Professors Walter Arnstein and Tony Badger. And neither of them would endorse the Fox TV take on 1776 that Gabel serves up so faithfully to real history's actual complexity from either of their respective University of Illinois-Urbana and Cambridge fastnesses in affiliation. Neither, too, alas as I disagree with both of them here, would think "government public health care" (U.K., NHS or even Canadian/Australian free medicare) a political viability or fair characterization of Obama/Reid's plan that merely keeps it in compulsory "reserve" option, if the existing U.S. private options fails in poor peoples' unaffordability. The one of my eminent tutors/mentors who might get closest to Mr. Gabel's contemporary worries thus about "debt," the late Professor Esmond Wright, Lady Thatcher speech writer and a former Conservative MP would, also, have to point out as himself an accomplished Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin scholar, both supported much pro-government legislation in practice.

Jeff Gall
Associate Professor of History
NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative

Resident weighs in on health care

As a left-wing occasional contributor to the paper, who scrupulously endeavors to follow the Editorial Policy guidelines section, can therefore one protest the right-wing local and college establishment breach of such stated fairness/accuracy goals in the lead five paragraph letter by Ethan Gabel against alleged "Government health care has its risks" in the pre-semester Thanksgiving break issue in the Nov. 19 edition of the Index?

The letter is "repetitious," because it repeats an argument against health care by public means of finance as allegedly not "a natural right" and allegedly contrary the 1776 Declaration of Independence that in fact has already this very same semester been precisely in exactly these terms put by College Republican Sean Cooksey, answered by Ryan Campbell, in the Index's same Letters to the Editor venue. By standards thus of 'libelous comment' factually, if not I grant First Amendment legally, the Gabel letter is thus inaccurate to say Cooksey has been silenced, as well as a questionable "space limitation" misuse of your precious, print acreage.

Secondly, original new arguments on such content breach of your own guidelines have so far not been permitted in the Index. Although goodness knows, those of us who are professional qualifications, U.S. and global authorities, on this insurance reform topic have, in vain, tried to give our viewpoint on them to you, but, instead, have been kept censored out to small, admirable presses like Gaddy articles (September issue).

So here are some new arguments for Mr. Gabel and his negationists to consider before they breach your own guidelines again so flagrantly, worthy of Fox TV tactics of the old Joseph Goebbels, Ph.D., namely "a lie constantly repeated" repetitiously will soon be "the masses believed."

One, the belief that the U.S. Declaration of Independence, for all time, prohibits positive human rights action by any future government is baloney — and actually long discredited by anciently the detailed researches and, more recently, the work of historians, Charles Beard and Pauline Maier. To summarize, those who do not have the time to checkout their laborious articles and books, two new points: one, Jefferson fought hard and successfully in the 1776 then U.K. my native rebel Congress draft independent, committees, to successfully get the Declaration to keep his words of "happiness" pursuit as a societal aim within the U.S. objectives. Conservatives tried to have it all phraseologically excised because they, correctly as people even wealthier

Finally, arguably, too a final new thought for the local Right to take on besides such historical complex accuracies non-distortively, might be. To reflect, on the often in this country poverty-dying forgotten founding father "whose best-seller pamphlet Common Sense inspired your actual farmer rebel Whig soldiers to combat against us and our largely native American/ex-slave allies in the U.K. redcoat contrary forces." Tom Paine, thus, not only ended up an elected French revolutionary deputy supporting many pro-government initiatives there at execution threatened peril of his moderate reformer life. But he led too an abortive Pennsylvania group of 'Whig Radicals,' as Beard and Maier detail, that sought state insurance. What they called "pensions and annuities for the poorest" in vain effort in the Penn State more urbanized, "rebel" constitutional convention, way before Frances Perkins in the 1930's FDR New Deal enacted today's social security initiative. Still, intact, despite Mr. Gabel's "debt" 2010 fears; that, themselves omit, the armed forces outrageous over-costs since 1945: Why in biggest, lifeless impost of all, as Republican general-president Dwight Eisenhower Farewell Address forewarned, abortively on Vietnam, his JFK Pentagon-war bound-in successor.

Larry Iles, Kirksville resident

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Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff. The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

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