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Still many challenges ahead for Wright State University



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A while back, I wrote about my thoughts pertaining to Wright State University's plight in dealing with the fiscal woes created by numerous mistakes by the previous top management. The new administration and board of trustees had to make some "tough love" decisions over the last 16 months in an effort to "right the ship." However, it seems to me there is still yet much to do, and officials need the help of everyone who is part of the Wright State family.

In full disclosure, I must share my personal and professional bias about Wright State. My wife graduated from Wright State, as did my daughter, son-in-law and son. They are all proud graduates of our local university. Hundreds of friends, their kids and other family members did, too.

I also support the

university because of its critical mission in providing our community with an educated and motivated workforce. As a metropolitan university, we know that most of the graduates and attendees are local and they stay local.

So much for disclosure. Wright State's former leadership poorly controlled the university's spending to the level that they exhausted \$130 million in reserves and left the university with a \$30 million budget deficit. Big changes had to be made university-wide.

After months of negotiations for the next collective bargaining agreement with the Wright State faculty union, there are still at least half a dozen points of contention.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §4117, a mandated fact-finding report was completed Oct. 29. The university board of trustees approved the findings of the report. Through public documents and meetings, it is my understanding that the issue of layoffs (retrenchment), an appropriate faculty concern, is something the university has indicated it is willing

to forego.

The faculty union did not approve the report as presented by the mutually agreed-upon neutral third party. So now, there are still issues that need to be addressed by both parties to move forward. But the union that represents some of the university faculty has now threatened to strike.

A strike at our leading public institution serves no purpose when we all know what has caused the previous problems. Votes of no confidence, walkouts or bad-faith negotiations must not continue. The university board, management, faculty and union must all work together during these next few weeks and months to hammer out an agreement that supports a plan that will correct not only the fiscal problems, but also the recruitment, morale and public image of an institution that is just too valuable to our community to let slide further from the enrollment of more than 18,000 in 2015 to the current downward-spiraling trend of 15,500 in 2018-19.

In addition, the faculty union is pursuing binding arbitration against the

university for removing the provost involved in the H-1B visa debacle several years ago and asking that his termination as a faculty member be reversed even after the university recently had to agree to a \$1 million payout to the federal government to settle the issue.

This same union has cried out for accountability, but still wants the past provost reinstated as a faculty member.

The hypocrisy of it all is beyond me, as is any logic by the business community, donors and, I would guess, alumni.

This hole that was dug over a period of years before President Cheryl Schrader came aboard just keeps getting deeper and must be fixed.

Further controversy won't help, certainly not by a public strike or the rehiring of former problematic management. The bad news needs to get behind us in the rear-view mirror so the university can drive forward in the right direction.

Our Wright State students deserve better than this. We as Ohio citizens, public taxpayers and supporters deserve better, too.

Soin wants to award Dayton innovation

Contributed

The search is on for the next great idea that could win a local business or individual \$25,000. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce is accepting applications for the 2019 Soin Award for Innovation.

"The Dayton area has a long history of innovation and discovery," said Rajesh Soin, chairman and CEO of Soin International. "We must continue to encourage our local entrepreneurs to build on this and create new enterprises, jobs and additional opportunities for this region. On behalf of the Soin family, I am proud to support this annual award

that recognizes the accomplishments of these individuals and businesses."

The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Soin family have partnered to offer the Soin Award for Innovation since 2007. The winning applicant will best demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit through a recently or soon-to-be introduced product or service.

The unique offering must have the ability to sustain long-term growth for the company, increase local employment and assist in the creation of economic prosperity within the Dayton region.

Last year's winner, Battle Sight Technologies, took

the top spot with the creation of a chemiluminescent writing tool. The tool, called the MARC IR, is essentially a glow stick that writes like a crayon.

The writing it leaves behind is visible with the help of night vision goggles, making it the perfect tool for communication on the battlefield.

"Winning the Soin award opened doors we could have never planned for," said Nick Ripplinger, co-founder, Battle Sight Technologies. "Through the award and the publicity that comes with the Soin award, we were contacted by countless organizations and individuals offering a variety of assistance to

help us grow."

A selection committee made up of representatives of the region's business and academic leaders, along with the chamber's Education and Public Improvement Foundation board members, will choose one applicant to receive a \$25,000 cash award and its accompanying public and community recognition.

Applications are due no later than close of business Feb. 8.

The Soin family will present the Soin Award for Innovation at the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce annual meeting April 16. Visit DaytonChamber.org to learn more and apply.

Military

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tion Act for 2019 included \$265.2 million in appropriations to continue Stryker vehicle upgrades and more than \$1.5 billion for upgrades to I35 Abrams tanks, according to a news release by U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio.

"Today's announcement is good news for workers at the JSMC plant and the Lima community," Brown said.

The medium-weight, large-caliber combat vehicle will support infantry brigades, according to General Dynamic Land Systems. The vehicles must be "highly lethal, survivable and mobile."

Portions of the new vehicles will also be built in Sterling Heights, Mich.; Scranton, Pa.; and Tallahassee, Fla.

The prototype will compete with one being built by BAE Systems, which received a \$376 million contract. The Army will select a final prototype for the Mobile Protected Firepower vehicle in fiscal year 2022 after demonstrations and evaluations by the military.

The contract has options for low rate initial production for a total of up to \$968 million. Ultimately, the Army plans to field 14 vehicles for

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each infantry brigade, Portman said, meaning a total of 504 vehicles for the winning design starting in fiscal year 2025.

"We are excited about this opportunity to provide the U.S. Army a large-caliber, highly mobile combat vehicle to support the infantry brigade combat teams," said Don Kotchman, vice president and general manager of General Dynamics Land Systems U.S. Market, in a news release. "We are especially proud of this new opportunity to serve in the Infantry Brigade Combat Team formation, which we have not done until now."



President Donald Trump signed an executive order to establish the Space Force, an independent and co-equal military branch, as the sixth branch of the U.S. armed forces. ALEX WONG / GETTY IMAGES

Space Force

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"Every bit of critical infrastructure has some reliance on a satellite," Falco said. "The defense of the systems today is pretty weak. They're up and we hope no one shoots them down."

Harvey Sapolsky, a defense expert who formerly ran the MIT Security Studies program, said space security specialists within the government pushed for this move to get out from under the control of the Air Force, which has controlled much of the military's space focus.

"Some people are mad at the Air Force for not building enough stuff fast enough," Sapolsky said.

He said it's unlikely a military space entity will try to subsume the civilian-side space operations of the government. The fact that

NASA isn't part of the military allows scientists from other countries to work with it without running into many problems, and the secretive National Reconnaissance Office intelligence agency is doing just fine as is, Sapolsky said.

"No one wants to mess with that, because it works," he said.

Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies agreed that there's a need to focus on space from a military standpoint, but said he wants to see more of a plan for how the government's going to do so – and how much it's going to cost.

"What you don't have is a specific plan for what its actual functions would be, what its authority would be, what its costs would be or what problems it's intended to solve," Cordesman told the Herald.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Sales Tax Collections

County	Current Rate	Aug 2018	Aug 2017	12 Mos Change	YTD 2018	YTD 2017	YTD Change
Butler	0.75%	\$3,578,977	\$3,313,421	8.01%	\$28,794,704	\$29,622,817	-2.80%
Clark	1.50%	\$1,594,753	\$1,890,678	-15.65%	\$15,586,502	\$17,527,738	-11.08%
Darke	1.50%	\$743,904	\$720,763	3.21%	\$5,838,916	\$6,091,156	-4.14%
Greene	1.00%	\$2,196,484	\$2,067,206	6.25%	\$18,088,068	\$18,383,806	-1.61%
Miami	1.25%	\$1,442,894	\$1,436,862	0.42%	\$12,155,904	\$12,396,390	-1.94%
Montgomery	1.00%	\$6,262,099	\$6,067,052	3.21%	\$51,314,081	\$55,628,352	-7.76%
Preble	1.50%	\$482,744	\$457,716	5.47%	\$3,787,435	\$3,974,151	-4.70%
Warren	1.00%	\$4,638,481	\$3,259,301	42.32%	\$33,041,982	\$26,950,250	22.60%
Region Total		\$ 20,940,337	\$ 19,212,998	8.99%	\$ 168,607,593	\$ 170,574,660	-1.15%

Source: http://www.tax.ohio.gov/tax_analysis/tax_data_series/sales_and_use/publications_tds_sales/S1M0818.aspx

Residential Home Sales

	Aug '18	Aug '17	%Change	YTD '18	YTD '17	%Change
Number of Homes Sold	1647	1606	2.55%	11117	10910	1.90%
Total Home Sales	\$281,606,165	\$260,548,765	8.08%	\$1,846,349,767	\$1,699,577,954	8.64%
Average Sale Price (\$)	\$170,981	\$162,235	5.39%	\$166,083	\$155,782	6.61%

Source: Dayton Area Board of Realtors, Dayton Area Home Sales for August 2018



Acquiring a stake in ExpressJet Airlines furthers United's plan to bolster service to smaller cities. TIM FADEK / BLOOMBERG

United

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Positive step

United's deal for a regional partner is "a step in the right direction toward controlling our United Express product," the carrier's chapter of the Air Line Pilots Association union said in a memo to members. "The best long-term solution is to bring this flying to the mainline, with United pilots at the helm."

United will add 106 Embraer SA ERJ-145 jets to its regional fleet when the deal closes, which is expected early next year. Delivery of an additional 25 Embraer E175 aircraft on order will begin in 2019. Sky-

West also will lease 20 Bombardier Inc. CRJ200 planes to United for as long as five years. The St. George, Utah-based regional carrier additionally has a "priority position" to fly 25 more E175s for United if needed.

The incoming E175s will have 70 seats, below the industry standard 76, because of pilot-contract restrictions on regional flights. United's pilots union wants the carrier to move the E175s from regional carriers into United's mainline fleet and fly them with 80 seats, though management has said that is economically unfeasible.

United has a 40 percent stake of CommutAir, which flies 50-seat E145s.