Tribune watchdog

Ikenberry scraps plan for sculpture at U. of I.

Deal for \$98,000 art of school's president out amid budget crisis

By Jodi S. Cohen TRIBUNE REPORTER

The University of Illinois has nixed plans for a nearly \$100,000 sculpture of President Stanley Ikenberry after the Tribune asked questions about the work.

The sculpture, which was to hang in the dining hall in the new Ikenberry Commons opening this fall, was to be paid for with student housing fees.

While no contract had been signed, U. of I. officials filed required paperwork with the state last month to justify the no-bid purchase, saying the university "intends to award" the contract to Urbana-based sculptor Peter Fagan.

The \$98,000 work, requested by the board of trustees and "created to honor President and Mrs. Ikenberry," was to be installed by Oct. 1, according to a notice in the Illinois Public Higher Education Procurement Bulletin.

U. of I. spokesman Thomas Hardy said Thursday that Ikenberry called off the project Monday shortly after the Tribune started asking questions. The artist was informed Thursday.

"(Ikenberry) didn't want to generate any ill will toward the university or put the university



Stanley Ikenberry was president from 1979 to 1995 and returned to serve in the interim post.

LANE CHRISTIANSEN/TRIBUNE PHOTO

in an embarrassing situation," Hardy said.

Earlier, Hardy said: "I think that certainly the cost of doing a plaque like this entered the equation."

The spending would have come amid a budget crisis that has led U of I. to furlough employees, raise tuition and support legislation that would allow the institution to borrow money to ease its cash flow. The state is more than \$300 million behind in payments to U. of I., and officials have repeatedly said that all expenses are being scrutinized.

U. of I. junior David Wall said he supports honoring the nationally renowned Ikenberry, but concluded that "right now is not the best timing."

"The university is showing up a little late to the fiscally conservative party," said Wall, an officer with the student senate. He said the sculpture "is one of those things that doesn't necessarily pass the common-sense test."

Fagan, reached at his studio Wednesday as he was working on the piece, said he had been discussing the artwork with university officials since mid-March. He took photographs of the Ikenberrys in his studio about a month ago and had been using one of those portraits to design the sculpture. He said he was about 85 percent done with the clay model.

The final piece, a bronze bas relief portrait sculpture shaped like a coin and designed to be mounted on a wall, would have been about 30 inches wide — "slightly over life size," he said.

Fagan, whose work is showcased in the state Capitol and other public buildings, said he started on the project without a contract because of the short time period until university officials hoped to have it installed.

But when reached Thursday morning, he said he had just received an e-mail canceling a scheduled meeting next week at Ikenberry Commons to decide where to hang the work.

Asked whether he would be disappointed if it is called off, he said: "Sure, wouldn't you be?" He added, however: "I don't want anybody feeling sorry for me."

The former U. of I. board decided to name the new \$75.7 million residential complex — which will eventually replace many campus dorms — after Ikenberry, one of the university's

longest-serving presidents and one if its most beloved. He was president from 1979 to 1995 and then returned this year to serve in the interim post. The new U. of I. president, Michael Hogan, is to start next month.

U. of I. Trustee Carlos Tortolero, president of the National Museum of Mexican Art, said Wednesday that \$98,000 is "not expensive at all" for a piece of good public art.

He said it is appropriate to spend funds to honor Ikenberry, who helped U. of I. through several tough times during the last year. He suggested that perhaps a private donor could pay for the work and hopes that it eventually gets done.

"When you consider how much he has done for the university, I just think the price tag is so small compared to what he has done," Tortolero said. Fagan, a retired U. of I. profes-

Fagan, a retired U. of I. professor, said the university suggested paying \$98,000.

Documents show U. of I. officials consulted the state's art-inarchitecture coordinator, Michael Dunbar, about "reasonable and customary prices."

Fagan's sculptures are in other U. of I. buildings, including the Grainger Engineering Library and the Beckman Institute. There's a bas relief sculpture of former President David Henry in the administration building.

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Team sees no savings from merging units

By JULIE WURTH jwurth@news-gazette.com

URBANA — Merging or consolidating several freestanding academic units wouldn't result in significant administrative savings for the University of Illinois, a budget review team has concluded.

The committee, headed by law Professor Tom Ulen, was asked to look at four units with 40 or fewer full-time equivalent faculty — the College of Media, the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, the School of Labor and Employee Relations, and the School of Social Work.

"We did not find empirical evidence that confirmed the intuition that there would be significant administrative efficiencies from consolidation or merger among these four units," said the committee's report, released Thursday.

In fact, "there could be significant harm to their program quality, professional identities, and competitive standing if consolidation or merger resulted from anything other than 'bottom-up,' in-depth planning and examination of intellectual and academic synergies from among faculty."

The review panel was one of more than a dozen appointed in a campuswide effort studying how to use dwindling resources more efficiently,

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, dean of the School of Labor and Employment Relations, said the report is "consistent with what we would have expected. I think it was a fair finding based on a careful analysis. ... There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer on efficiency."

In its data analysis, the com-

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(cont.)

UI REVIEW

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mittee focused on two studies that compared costs and productivity from the four units against other campus units. Neither found a strong relationship between size and efficiency, and both concluded any savings from consolidation would likely be modest.

The report noted the College of Media is already "very lean," with one person each in development, communications and the budget office.

"It's heartening to see that committee's studied. the deliberative and independent review of the College of Media and the three other small colleges concludes that Media is staffed efficiently and that there is no evidence that merging any of the programs with other units on campus would result in significant financial savings," said Professor Walt Harrington, interim dean of the College of Media.

All four units have already absorbed state funding cuts by leaving faculty and staff positions vacant or through employee buyouts, the report said. Several also have tried to boost income by accepting more students, adding graduate programs, or sharing activities such as online education or budget services.

Social Work, for example, is adding an undergraduate major this fall. The graduate library school is planning larger enrollments in its online masters program and introducing an undergraduate major.

Cutcher-Gershenfeld said his school had studied possible consolidations with other units and found no single college or academic unit where the school's varied programs would fit. The committee reached the same conclusion.

Similarly, faculty in social work collaborate with many other colleges, "but no units align with all or most of their activities," the report said. All but one of the country's topranked social work programs are freestanding.

The master's program in library science is ranked No. 1 in the country, and a merger could hurt the program's national reputation, it said.

The committee said it would be worthwhile to explore possible mergers based on academic goals and offered steps for how to do that in the future.

College of Media faculty remain open to "wide-ranging discussions about the best way to organize media education on campus," as long as it preserves or enhances the missions of the college's four units, Harrington said.

Hundreds take tour of National Petascale Computing Facility

By PAUL WOOD pwood@news-gazette.com

CHAMPAIGN — Blue Waters, the University of Illinois' state-of-theart 88,000-square-foot facility that could revolutionize supercomputing, is up and running on a temporary, smaller scale.

For now, the hardware installed is an IBM Power 780, said spokeswoman Trish Barker. Power7 processors enable more performance than comparable IBM Power6-based systems on campus, in one-fourth the space, NCSA says. The IBM Power 780 hardware is very close to the hardware that will be used in Blue Waters.

When new IBM hardware comes, the water-cooled supercomputer will operate at a sustained petaflop — 1,000 trillion calculations per second — range.

Hence its formal name, National Petascale Computing Facility. The building at 1725 S. Oak St. had its formal opening Thursday, and visitors could see the 6-foot raised floors and enormous power handlers meant

for a world leader — at a price tag of more than \$200 million.

Hundreds of visitors backed up Oak Street for the tour, probably the most people who will ever be in the building at one time, since the computers will be accessed remotely by scientists.

"It's incomprehensible to me," an awed Helen Wikoff of Champaign said.

Bill Bell of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, which is based on the UI campus, said the plant has 24 megawatts of service on redundant lines, with no need for major generators as backups.

Three 10,000-gallon cooling towers feed water into 24-inch pipes that gradually branch out to provide cooling for the computers. For 70 percent of the year, the ambient temperature in central Illinois is sufficient to cool the water by itself, Bell said.

The Blue Waters machine will probably reign for about five years before new technology will cause it to be replaced, he said. In 2007; The National Science Foundation Board recommended that the system be built at the UI, under the direction of the NCSA, with an online date of 2011.

"The building is ready," Barker said. "We're moving in limited hardware. You can see the 6-foot floor and the cooling system."

The IBM processors are being used "on a pretty limited basis" for applications relating to the development of Blue Waters, Barker said.

The building will also house the Arctic Region Supercomputing Center, a Department of Defense project to be operated remotely from Alaska, she said.

The 20,000-square-foot raised-floor data center will house the Blue Waters sustained-petaflop supercomputer and other computing, networking and data systems; the remainder of the building provides space for 40 staff members, the UI said.

The building is gold LEED certified, Bell noted, thanks in large part to the efficiency of water cooling.

The News-Gazette June 18, 2010

Student vote bill simply not necessary

My son had no problem voting while he was serving in Kosovo or Iraq, and he expects no problem voting while he is in Afghanistan this fall

I had no problem voting while I was in serving in Vietnam or West Germany. This being the case, why do we need special voting arrangements for people who live a free bus ride from the Champaign County clerk's office and within easy walking distance of their assigned polling place?

ERNIE MCCLURG Urbana Article from: www.thenewspaper.com/news/31/3175.asp

6/18/2010

Illinois: Study Finds No Benefit To Chicago Red Light Cameras

Analysis examining Chicago, Illinois red light cameras finds no clear safety benefit.

A new study of the country's largest red light camera program found no significant benefit to the use of photo enforcement. Rajiv Shah, an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago released the final version of his exploratory analysis into Chicago's photo ticketing program, which boasts 188 cameras.

Shah's analyzed Illinois Department of Transportation data obtained by the Chicago Tribune which showed that although accidents dropped seven percent at intersections citywide, fifty camera-monitored intersections saw a five-percent increase in accidents. The city used its own, much narrower dataset to claim a significant decrease in accidents. The city used to purely had ton uself intersections and

Traffic Accidents in Chicago

% Traffic Signals

2001 2602 2803 2004 2005 2006 2007

significant decrease in accidents. The city only had ten usable intersections and defined "accident" in a way that limits reporting of rear end collisions that take place farther from the intersection. Shah recrunched the numbers and found a net safety benefit of just 1.5 percent.

"The goal was not to do a comprehensive study of red light cameras, but only to ask whether the benefits of red light cameras are obvious," the study concluded. "A more comprehensive study would include control groups. In sum, our findings show that red light cameras have, at best, a marginal positive impact on accidents. It's clear that the benefits claimed by the city are hyperbole and that there is no evidence that the red light camera have had a significant safety benefit."

Because of the limitations of the available data, Shah examined the so-called "halo effect" that insurance industry first postulated in its 2001 Oxnard study and has since become the primary talking point in favor of using automated ticketing machines. According to the theory, drivers afraid of receiving tickets will improve their habits. As a result, accidents will fall at intersections throughout the city -- not just where cameras are located. In Chicago, this has demonstrably not taken place. Shah showed that from 2001 to 2008, the percentage of accidents that took place at intersections did not decrease, rather it remained steady at about 25 percent of collisions.

"This also suggests the red light cameras are not having a halo effect because accidents are not dropping throughout the city at traffic signals," the report found.

In an email to TheNewspaper, Shah explained that he became interested in looking more closely at the red light camera issue while studying the city's general surveillance camera network. The city has apparently exaggerated the effectiveness of these devices in solving and deterring crime, so Shah decided to see whether the same was true of intersection cameras.

View the study in a 250k PDF file at the source link below.

Source: Effectiveness of Red Light Cameras in Chicago: An Exploratory Analysis (University of Illinois at Chicago, 6/17/2010)

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Knight Commission: Athletics vs. academic spending too unbalanced

By Jack Carey USA TODAY

Today's Sections

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WASHINGTON — Calling the ever-increasing funding of college sports unsustainable, the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics issued a report Thursday that it hopes will "restore balance" between academic and athletics expenditures across the nation.

The 21-year-old reform-minded commission undertook an 18-month study of athletics finances, and its report outlines recommendations it hopes will lead to more fiscal responsibility.

In a survey of 97 public schools that have major football programs, the commission found that athletics spending between 2005 and 2008 increased at a rate that's an average of four to 11 times greater than spending on academics.

Commission co-chairman Gerald Turner, president of Southern Methodist, said recent attempts to expand several conferences point to the need for a new approach to spending. "The direction where major programs are headed will result in further escalation of athletic spending and even greater imbalances in fiscal priorities," he said.

While presidents and chancellors of schools typically already have access to such information in o rder to compare their schools' expenditures, the general public does not.

"Academic reform in intercollegiate athletics began in earnest when graduation rates were shared publicly," said commission co-chairman William Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland. "We believe the same will be true for financial reform when there is far greater transparency on athletic expenditures."

The recommendations also called for consideration of a reduction in scholarships, including reducing

the current Football Bowl Subdivision maximum of 85 by eight to 10, a move coaches have fought over the years.

The report called for the creation of an Academic-Athletics Balance Fund, which would be set up by reallocating payouts from the NCAA basketball tournament and appearances in bowl games. Half the money distributed by the NCAA to schools from the basketball tournament (amounting to about \$83.5 million this year) and at least 20% of the annual revenue distributed from Bowl Championship Series contracts would be distributed through the proposed balance fund to schools that have at least 50% of their athletes on track to graduate.

NCAA interim President Jim Isch, who was at Thursday's presentation, said that since the NCAA did not control revenue from postseason bowls, its board of directors would have no say in reallocating the football money.

"The presidents of the BCS schools would have to determine that," he said.

The report also recommended that eligibility for postseason championships should be determined at the start of each academic year, based upon academic progress rates that would translate into a 50% graduation rate.

"As simple as it sounds," Isch said, "we don't think establishing a specific postseason penalty trigger for all teams is fair, especially to those teams that are improving."

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June 17, 2010

Ohio State U. May Put the Brakes on New Academic Space

By Scott Carlson

When the Board of Trustees at Ohio State University meets today, it will consider a proposal that would have been radical even five years ago but now may seem entirely sensible: adding no net new academic space to the Columbus campus. In other words, if the university wants to put up a new research facility or classroom building, something else will have to come down.

Administrators emphasize that this should not be interpreted as "no growth."

"We can accommodate a lot of growth," says Jeff Kaplan, senior vice president for administration and planning. "But we think that if we take care of our space and replace what needs to be replaced because of deferred maintenance or the cost of renovation ... we can accommodate significant growth in what we already have."

The policy would be a major step to control the burgeoning campus space among major research universities. According to Sightlines, a company that tracks and analyzes campus facilities, square footage at research universities grew by 17 percent between the years 1998 and 2008. Any new space adds to the already heavy burdens of energy and maintenance costs, which have reached a crisis point at many major public institutions.

Those burdens, along with a slowdown in construction and a rising awareness of sustainability, might make the "no net new space" idea an appealing one.

"The climate has changed so dramatically in the past 18 months," says Philip Parsons, a campus planner with the architectural firm Sasaki, which helped conceive the plan. What colleges need is "better space, not more space," he says.

Giving Space—and Taking It Away

Mr. Parsons gets an enthusiastic response from various college clients when he tells them about this idea. "I don't know of another campus that has written this into their planning, but I could see more of it in the future."

He notes that the word "academic" in "no net new academic space" is important. The policy would not stop Ohio State from building, say, student housing—which might be an appropriate space addition, given that it might take students out of surrounding neighborhoods or reduce commuting.

The space proposal is part of a larger plan to break down boundaries between departments, assess the university's facilities, and promote sustainable practices—a plan dubbed "One Ohio State Framework." Mr. Kaplan says that building proposals on the campus will be considered from a "transinstitutional" perspective—how the proposed building might benefit multiple departments. Over time, he says, this could help change academic programs at the university. "There will be a lot of hybrids based on common needs," he says. "Hopefully that will leverage funding and leverage research advancement."

He cites an example now under way at Ohio State: Chemistry and molecular biology each proposed a new building in a different part of the campus, but now the university will put both departments under one roof.

Mr. Kaplan says that the university has held dozens of meetings about the plan and that most faculty members understand it. "Some people have a change of heart when you start talking about how their office or their research lab will be shared," he says. "But if you sit down and explain the reasons we're doing it, the economic climate that we're in, and the savings we could get, not only financially but programmatically, people change their minds."

Richard W. Hall, associate dean of natural and mathematical sciences, says the plan will lead to a lot more scrutiny in planning space—and in allowing researchers to keep it. He says Ohio State is already awarding space on its campus to the most productive researchers, pulling some square footage away from some faculty members.

"That's really hard," he says. "There is this primal thing about space and territory and all that stuff. When you move money, people can understand. But when you move space around, people don't forget."

The no-net-new-space program could also pose some dilemmas down the road. Although Ohio State has a lot of poor-quality space that could be torn down and replaced, Mr. Hall says, there might come a time when the university would face the prospect of tearing down or radically altering a notable or historic building on its campus. He says the university has done a survey of its significant buildings, and has also evaluated facilities to determine if they are

being used optimally.

But even the most common buildings on a college campus inspire nostalgia from alumni, as Mr. Hall is well aware.

"Some buildings that I thought were absolutely worthless, there is a tremendous amount of sentimental value around them," he says.

"And when they come down, I have heard from alums about how terrible it was and that they should have been kept."

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