

Letter to the Editor: Big Event neglected our neighborhood

Dear Editor,

March 25, 2017 was the Big Event which, as you know, is a major community service day at the university. It is my understanding that, in theory, this event aims to get students to assist in improving their personal living environments. Apparently, this year's gathering boasted approximately 1,500 volunteers.

When contacted, we requested a mere 16 volunteers. During a series of email correspondence with Mattie, an organizer from the Big Event, we asked that these volunteers meet at 1622 Roosevelt between 11 and 11:30 on Saturday morning. I was the neighborhood contact on site to give instructions and assign tasks. In addition to the Big Event volunteers, I organized a number of homeowners and had them meet there to help as well. In appreciation of the students' contribution of time and energy, we put together a potluck luncheon at the meeting point. No students appeared at the scheduled time.

Sometime later, we received a voicemail advising that the student volunteers would be there around noon. Not one student ever put in an appearance. The Big Event was initially formed to act as a social liaison between students and residents in their respective neighborhoods. Unfortunately, this original concept seems to have gone by the wayside.

As a neighborhood, we host an annual cleanup, which is comprised primarily of homeowners and St. Francis high school students. Although flyers are hand-delivered door-to-door well in advance, no college students ever attend.

Of course, we realize waking up early on Saturday morning to walk around picking up greasy fast food bags, red Solo Cups, used condoms and broken beer bottles isn't everyone's idea of a good time. And we are well aware that the college students in our neighborhood are there primarily to "enjoy the college experience." However, littering and property damage seems to blur that line of enjoyment for ALL parties involved.

The university wonders why residents might harbor a certain resentment toward students in general and the college in particular. We are, arguably, the most negatively affected by the students and the university – but the last to be considered for cleanup events or involvement in neighborhood civic planning.

A little "give back" by the college students would go a long way in fostering a more harmonious environment for all involved. After all, those are not our used condoms, red Solo Cups and broken beer bottles littering the streets of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Dana Schreiner,

Resident of the Bancroft Hills Neighborhood

Rejoinder: Unreported sexual assault is still sexual

assault

Dear Editor,

On behalf of Jeff Newton, UT's chief of police, and Donald Kamm, director of our Title IX office, I want to express our deep concern about the views expressed in the letter that appeared in last week's edition of your paper about unreported sexual assaults at UT.

As I have stated in a previous communication to our students, sexual assault is never acceptable. We found the stories reported to be terribly disturbing, both because of the impact the assaults had on the women who told their stories, and also because of the perception of the University's response to some of the incidents.

We take every report of sexual assault very seriously at the University. Members of our UT police department are trained to be sensitive to victims of assault and to provide as much support as possible to someone reporting a sexual assault. After reading the letter, our police chief personally reviewed all records to see if he could determine what may have transpired to have left the victim feeling so disillusioned. He could not find anything in his records that indicated a victim was treated improperly, but we realize that if a victim remembers her experience with the police in a negative way, perception is reality. We are so very sorry that she had that experience.

Our Title IX office also reviewed the case in which the victim felt the University failed to listen when she indicated she did not want to be contacted. The role of our Title IX office is to protect the rights of all students. We have policies in place that attempt to ensure all reported cases are investigated, even when a victim no longer wants to participate. This is done in the interest of protecting the

safety of the victim, as well as others at the University. We are sorry that the student felt further violated by our attempts to learn the truth.

We feel strongly that the information you provided warrants more than a letter from us. In the next weeks, I will be convening a discussion with my senior leaders to discuss additional ways to address this problem. The safety of our students is my very first priority, and we want to do all we can to help eliminate these occurrences.

UT created the Center for Student Advocacy and Wellness last year to strengthen our efforts to prevent sexual violence and help survivors. We have hired a full-time, dedicated counselor and victim advocate funded by the center. These efforts complement the support services provided by the Sexual Assault Education and Prevention Program already happening at the counseling center and through our partner, the Hope Center. We are making progress, but it's never fast enough. Any student, faculty or staff member can receive immediate assistance or have questions answered by calling 419-530-3431 (24 hours a day).

If anyone has ideas as to what else we can do to address this very serious problem, please encourage them to reach out to me at UTpresident@utoledo.edu.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Gaber, Ph.D.

President.

Letter to the Editor: Unreported sexual assault is still sexual assault

Per national statistics, one out of 10 women will be sexually assaulted at some point in her lifetime. Some studies even suggest that the number is as small as one in four women on college campuses.

The University of Toledo has approximately 7,000 undergraduate female students, so this means that 1,750 will likely be victims of assault. The average student will attend school for four years, or 48 months. 1,750 divided by 48 gives us the number of 36.46.

This suggests nearly one or more rapes or sexual assaults takes place every day on the University of Toledo's campus. How can the numbers be so different? The following are four narratives from young women at the University of Toledo who, for different reasons, did not report their assaults. The names in these narratives have been changed to protect those who were involved.

Paige was 19 in the spring of 2013 when she was raped in a stairwell of Memorial Field House on campus. Her attacker was her classmate, whom she would spent time with in the building before class.

He told Paige they were going down a stairwell to sit outside. This is when her attack happened.

"I felt powerless; I told him no. He physically silenced me," Paige said.

Paige sought out help from the counseling center. A counselor told her that, if she reported, Paige would need to drop the

class. She felt embarrassed and as if no one would believe her if she reported because her attacker was so well-liked and gave tours to incoming freshmen.

Gillian was a freshman in fall of 2013, and her first assault happened the first week of classes by somebody she did not know. Gillian reported this assault to the UTPD, and she said they treated her like a criminal.

She was placed in the back of a police car and questioned for hours without bathroom or water breaks. Gillian says she has a learning disability which makes it difficult to write and was given no help when filing a written report.

After moving to a new dorm, she was raped in October of 2013 by the young man she was dating at the time. Her reasoning for not reporting this rape was due to her previous treatment by the on-campus police.

"I knew I couldn't put myself through that again, even though what he had done was wrong," Gillian said. Her assailant was a well-liked member of his fraternity and has since graduated.

Zoe was hanging out with a male friend in his on-campus fraternity house in spring 2015 when she was raped. She said that they were fooling around and he had his pants off, but she was still clothed.

"Without warning and without asking, he flipped me on my back, pulled my pants down and began having sex with me. I never consented," Zoe said.

Afterward, as he left the room and reunited with his friends, he told Zoe to leave so he could go drink with his fraternity brothers.

It was not until a few days later that she realized she had been raped. He held her down and she had not consented. She did not report because she was afraid she would be told she

shouldn't have been alone with him if she had not planned to have sex.

In November of 2016, Imogene was walking alone to her boyfriend's off-campus house after her sorority's chapter meeting for a movie night with him and a few mutual friends. The most direct route to her boyfriend's house meant walking through an alley between Bowman-Oddy and the west parking garage.

Imogene said she caught the glimpse of a man out of the corner of her eye, but she did not pay attention to him. Suddenly, he was very close to her. She was then pushed against the building and assaulted.

"I was so scared I couldn't even move, and I felt like I just let it happen. The faster he did it, the faster it would be over I thought," Imogene said.

Imogene did not report because she didn't know her assailant and said she would most likely be unable to pick him out of a lineup. She said she feared being asked intrusive questions, or, worse, be accused of lying or told she deserved it because she was wearing a nice dress.

Imogene said she disclosed this to a close friend, who reported her assault without Imogene's consent. The following weeks, Imogene says she was contacted by the Title IX office, which led her to email the Title IX office saying she did not want to be contacted by them any longer.

After this, Title IX told her they could still investigate even without her complying. Her consent had not been taken into consideration even after surviving her assault.

These stories are only a small example of what takes place on the University of Toledo's campus – just think what happens on a larger scale. Sexual assault is a real problem, one that often goes unseen. Just because it is not being reported does

not mean that it is not happening.

Sincerely, four women and gender studies students.

Letter to the editor: What's the point of a zero on a late assignment?

We all know the saying "better late than never" so why then do some teachers believe it's better not to accept late work whatsoever?

Being a student, I completely understand the trials and tribulations one encounters on a daily basis. That being said, sometimes students are just unable to complete that ever-so-important homework or they were just a little too late to class to be able to turn in assignments on time.

There are multiple reasons as to why students may need to turn work in late, such as the student having to work or maybe the student being sick. Don't get me wrong, I believe late work should be penalized, but for a teacher to give the student a zero because he or she was a minute late in returning an assignment is irrational.

I believe that giving students a zero for not turning in assignments early is harming students rather than helping them.

Contrary to what some professors believe, this does not prepare students for the real world at all. It tells them that it doesn't matter what you do in life so long as you don't do it the way the rules want you to do.

A zero out of 10 alone, depending on that teacher's specific grading scale, can be detrimental to a student's grade. It's

not always easy making up for these lost marks and pushing up the grades.

It would be more productive to accept late assignments and then knock some points off of the final grade. That'll still be punitive and teach students that it pays to return assignments on time.

It may not be the teacher's fault that the student was unable to complete their homework on time, yet how they go about grading late work takes a big toll on the student. While some may say that the teacher's intent may not be to hurt the student, we can also agree that this strategy could also inadvertently harm him or her.

I'm not saying the student is a victim. Of course the student is at fault, but giving that student a zero and not allowing them to gain any points is an overstretch of how far teachers can go to instill discipline.

I understand that submitting assignments late can make the work of the teacher cumbersome, but when they take this position, it's the student that suffers. So before you turn away a student for submitting assignments late next time and giving them a zero on that homework, just remember to put yourself in the shoes of that student and see if you'll like that treatment for yourself. Well, maybe you were the smartest, most well-disciplined student in your class so you didn't have to worry about how submitting your work late may well affect your grade, and maybe your life.

The writer, Brandon Walker, is a first-year mechanical engineering student.

Letter to the Editor: Hillary

is bad for America

I believe Hillary Clinton is bad news for America, and I'll briefly tell you why in this short letter. Hillary promises free college, but free college would cost taxpayers \$350 billion over 10 years and increase our national debt. That is the same scam as Obamacare. Hillary would give the federal government control over our higher education and ruin it too.

Obama established federal government's control over businesses, banks and investment firms through bailouts. Then the government took over healthcare and next they took over the energy sector through EPA and regulations. The federal government has taken over much of our lives!

Hillary wants to control everything, just like she wanted to control the State Department emails. She wants to control our country's wealth and power. We should show our disapproval of the current trend towards "big government." We need change with control going back to the PEOPLE.

From Paul Ellis, a freshman majoring in English.

Letter to the Editor: Response to "Forgiveness sets us free and gives us peace"

This letter is a response to your article of September 14 on the topic, "Forgiveness sets us free and gives us peace." We discussed your article here on campus, at the Speech Language Pathology Clinic, where I regularly attend the group therapy

sessions of a University of Toledo-sponsored support group called DaZy Aphasia Centre. This is a group founded by a retired licensed nurse and stroke survivor, Jacquelyn Davis-Zychowicz, and now supervised by a UT Speech Language Pathology Clinic faculty member, Adrienna Lange.

Two graduate student-clinicians, both in charge of group therapy, chose your article for discussion; it helped us focus on the memories of the great tragedy of 9/11. You chose to write about a topic that has been the matter of intense arguments for centuries; this is the problem of evil, and how to respond to it.

As each of the group members took turns to read a couple of paragraphs, and the student clinicians then asked for our comments about it, we realized that indeed it is a complex topic, a true philosophical matter.

Firstly, a group member pointed out that the 9/11 casualty number is far above 2,996; other victims survived temporarily but later on died of complications caused by the terror attack; still others were left crippled, physically and otherwise, hundreds of them if not thousands.

Then a student-clinician, Jordan, asked us to report where we were on 9/11. When her turn came, she made the most relevant point about it: She was at school, in second grade, when it all happened. "I remember where I was very well –she said –because I could understand what was happening. But my younger sibling could not understand it," she added.

One might call the matter the "cohort effect": Those below age 21 were not as acutely marked by the tragedy as those above that age.

We all agreed with your analysis; it was concluded that from the response to the same evil endless, ongoing wars have resulted. But it was also pointed out that no nation is supposed to be a martyr by not defending itself: The Roman Catholic doctrine of "just war" was mentioned as the justification of what our nation did against al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

It was not the latter that caused what you called a

“counterproductive” approach to responding to 9/11: There was a worldwide consensus, even among Islamic nations, that the United States had a right to wipe al-Qaida out, at least in Afghanistan. But then our nation did the worst that true democracies can do: To make a hasty decision and invade Iraq, which as you pointed out has done more damage than good.

To forgive is always difficult because so to speak automatic forgiveness can hide great resentment and even hatred for the enemy; it is a slow process; it can take a lifetime.

The United States indeed acted hastily and now the consequences are here. But there is something else about 9/11 that we did not discuss during group therapy; it has to do with the origin of Islamic terrorism. From the beginning Islam was a warring religion, as it was Christianity during the Crusades; but the kind of terror methods used by current Islamic extremist groups were unknown to Islam.

There is a little-known book that sheds light on the origin of Islamic terrorism, “The Beast Reawakens,” by the journalist Martin A. Lee. It is shocking: Islamic terrorism was single-handedly crafted by World War Two, fugitive German Nazis; they taught the Palestinian Liberation Organization, PLO, how to make explosives and how to use terror against Israel.

Eventually, Israel and the PLO made peace, as the PLO was never as bloody, genocidal as, for example, today’s ISIS.

There lies the difference. After WWII, indeed, European thinkers, even those who were atheists, concluded that Nazism was no ordinary evil, but absolute evil, as it was the case. Absolute evil not born of German, or Austrian, minds, as Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently pointed out, causing an outcry among Palestinians and even liberal Israelis: It was a Palestinian Muslim radical who, after meeting Adolf Hitler, masterminded the Nazis’ idea of a “final solution” to a problem that did not exist, this is the integration of Jews into mainstream European societies.

Back to your point, now we in the United States have a self-avowed Christian who in real life is a prophet of hatred, Donald Trump, sowing the seeds of what has the potential of

turning out to be the Holocaust of Muslims, or, in your words, “proxies here at home in our search for retributions and revenge.”

Trump, whom another Republican leader involved in the unfortunate response to 9/11, former State Secretary Colin Powell, in e-mails then hacked and published over the internet called a “national disgrace and an international pariah.”

Using your words, I can’t think of a more hateful, bitter and vengeful political leader than Trump, who then, nonchalantly, claims to be a Christian and proposes going after not only the Muslim terrorists; but also killing their families!

So, from the moral viewpoint you brandish, a sound moral analysis, as a predominantly Christian nation we are not any better than the worst of Islam. How come the Christian fools deluded by Trump’s Machiavellian political discourse did not collectively react, “Hey, wait a minute, this guy cannot possibly be a Christian”?

No, they did not; President Trump might as well organize a genocidal Crusade against Muslims: these Christians would still support him. But, wait until November: if (God forbid) Trump wins, then over the next years all Americans travelling abroad will have to hide their national identity and call themselves Canadians: the hatred Trump would pour to the world would return to us like a boomerang.

From Oscar Martínez, UT alumnus

[Letter to the Editor: The promise of a Trump presidency](#)

I am a UT alumnus; as recently as 2003 I was a Master’s-level student majoring in Counseling Psychology. In 2000 I graduated Magna cum Laude with a degree in Psychology from one of the

nation's best Psychology departments, UT's.

I am addressing current UT students about a candidate to the Presidency who would ruin your future and our future as a nation, Donald Trump. Trump is a sick individual whom even a Republican leader, Senator Ted Cruz, characterized as a "pathological liar," "serial philanderer" and "very narcissistic," plus a "maniac." Indeed, risking trouble with the State Boards, the licensing government agencies, clinical psychologists that never treated Trump have diagnosed him with Narcissistic Personality Disorder; the latter bringing echoes of Adolf Hitler's diagnosis, according to Carl G. Jung, just after WWII: hysterical neurosis, which a former UT faculty member, Dr. John Lewton, said can be diagnosed using several of the DSM-IV, now DSM-V, axis. So 'hysterical neurosis' is rather a compound of mental health diseases.

In fact, back in 2002 Dr. Lewton told his graduate students that mental health diagnosis are tentative sketches, not diagnoses in the sense of allopathic medicine. So to reduce the sickness of Trump to textbook narcissism is an oversimplification. Trump's obvious mania, his obsession with always being on the offensive even at the cost of losses in polls, tells of a far more complex diagnosis. Nonetheless, Trump's sadism is a quintessential symptom of sociopaths, like the German Nazis, and hard-wired psychopaths.

I can't help it seeing Trump as a Nazi. A faux populist, Trump promises to his WASP and WASC followers that he would never be able to deliver. Find someone who was a working class man in Toledo, forty-five years ago or so, when the city was full of factories. One of them told me, "When I did not like a factory job, I just quit and found another one across the street, that easy." In short, the high-paying factory jobs that Trump promises will not come back; except for highly skilled workers in the high-tech industry and the like.

Yet, from last year to date, Trump has kept fooling the gullible into believing that he can deliver, only because of his success in business. Whereas in real life Trump is not nearly the excellent businessman he calls himself, his top

deal-making skills notwithstanding. He has become a billionaire by lying, cheating, and filing four bankruptcies. In short, to rise to the top in U.S. politics Trump used many of Hitler's tactics, and nonetheless the demonization of ethnic and religious minorities. In thus doing, Trump has transformed the Republican Party into a mass movement, a white supremacist political mass movement that at the grass-roots level is not altogether or intrinsically different from German Nazism.

In real life, Trump never before cared about the ordinary folk. Neither did Hitler really care about the Volk, the ordinary German folk; he deceived the folks just to feed his colossal narcissism, exactly like Trump. Hitler set up a massive deception game to destroy German's weak Weimar Republic, and so Trump has done to our far stronger democracy, a long shot at a doomsday scenario that this nation might look like.

So like Hitler, Trump has blamed non-whites and foreigners for that which is a structural, and economic, problem: the ups and downs of industrial, and post-industrial, economies. So it is all the Mexicans' fault, and here Trump promises devastating trade wars that have the potential of turning into actual wars. Then maniac "President Trump" holding the nuclear codes: can you, current UT students, imagine what might come next, that is from a thin-skinned leader unable to tolerate any slight? Once in power Trump would not deliver but further scapegoat ethnic and religious minorities, hence fueling violent white supremacies.

UT students, you do not want to get your degree and then watch the news about white supremacists brandishing assault rifles storming mosques or either Mexican-American or African-American neighborhoods, and murdering scores; then, in revenge, your family being killed by New Black Panthers or other violent ethnic militants.

But that is precisely the potentiality of what Trump has unleashed. Particularly because the drug cartels, now closely connected with both neo-Nazi state and non-state actors and

Islamic terrorism, would love to make of the United States another battlefield like Mexico. No, Trump will not have any SA-like Stormtroopers seize the Reichstag, i.e. U.S. Congress, although the infamous Trump tweet with his face, the White House, the flag, and the German SS troops marching makes one cringe: freedom in the U.S. can only be lost gradually, step by step, incrementally.

In sum, this is not the normal presidential transition I experienced as a UT student at both the undergraduate and the graduate level; it calls for personal responsibility from each and every UT student, faculty member, and employee; plus all family members, friends, acquaintances, and neighbors.

We all need to rally against white supremacist, mentally deranged Donald Trump. Those of you who happen to be conservative Republicans, and all others, can most certainly vote to reelect Republican U.S. Senator Rob Portman, whose Senate work for both Ohio and the nation has been outstanding. But please do not vote for Trump, or, in the event of the catastrophe of Trump winning next November, one day you will deeply regret it.

There is a likelihood that the presidential election will be decided here in Ohio, so please, register to vote and vote against Trump.

Thank you,

Ricardo Oscar Martinez, UT alumnus

Nieszczur: Why UT shouldn't encourage fueling up on

“empty calorie foods”

Last week UT students and faculty members received an advertisement via email that included some mixed messages about stress, focus and health. The advertisement came from the University of Toledo Barnes and Noble Bookstore. You may remember seeing this ad, which is pictured here. The heading for the ad was “Stay Fueled & Stay Focused” (see ad in the next column). I do not see much here that is worth fueling your body. Certainly, yes there are calories here ... so by those terms alone, this is “fuel.” That said, the items in this advertisement are empty calorie foods, which means they lack nutritional value. These types of foods are loaded with simple sugars, solid fats and sodium.

Let’s think about this: does it really sound like the best strategy to “fuel up” on simple sugars and empty calorie foods to “focus”? I think we all know the answer to this, and it is NO. UT is sending a mixed message to students with advertisements like this. As an instructor and fellow student on campus, I recognize the stress students are under this time of the year. As a dietitian, I know there are better options. These types of choices, although okay in moderation, do have detrimental effects if consumed in excess. For example, if consumed on a regular basis, empty calorie foods are likely culprits for weight gain. It has clearly been documented that students who consume more fruits, vegetables and grains score higher on academic assessments. I recommend foods that provide valuable nourishment to fuel our minds and bodies. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2015), people should consume nutrient-dense foods, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy and lean protein as part of a healthy eating pattern. Moreover, the guidelines specifically recommend the avoidance of empty calorie foods, like the ones presented in this image. A major movement in the public school system is to provide nourishing choices for students. What about colleges?

Should UT not hold this environment to the same standard? As a learning institution, UT needs to provide an environment that fosters student learning and success at the highest level. If UT or the bookstore promotes sugar- and fat-laden snacks to students ... are they really helping students?

Kerri Knippen, MPH, RDN, LD, BC-ADM

Associate Lecturer, Dept. of Health & Rec.

College of Health Sciences

Doctoral Student, Health Education

[Decrease the gender pay gap](#)

Dear Editor:

Many think getting a college education is the key to closing the wage gap, but it is not. In fact, the wage gap actually widens as women pursue jobs requiring higher education. That is why Equal Pay Day, celebrated on April 12 this year, is important as it brings to light many economic issues women face because we are not compensated for the same work as men. The gender pay gap is an issue for all women, but especially Millennial women. Young female college graduates experience a wage gap right off the bat, earning less on average in our first job compared to men.

Also, high student loan debt continues to be a major hurdle in the fight for equal pay. The American Association of University Women notes that, among full-time workers repaying loans one year after college graduation, 53 percent of women were paying more than what they could reasonably afford toward their debt – compared with 39 percent of men. This creates financial instability for many women entering adulthood.

Ultimately, Ohio women lose out on hundreds of thousands of dollars of income over the course of their careers because of the wage gap. This is not OK and should be changed

immediately. It is time to support economic policies such as the Paycheck Fairness Act that would ultimately help Millennial women in Ohio like me succeed. Please contact your congressional representative and encourage them to vote for the Paycheck Fairness Act!

Jennifer Thurau

Public Health

Undergraduate 1 University of Toledo

Resident Adviser 1 International House

Campus Ambassador 1 Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation

Trump planting seeds of an all-against-all civil war

Dear Mr. Abayateye,

As a UT alumnus, I want to thank you for your article, "Don't spread hate, spread love": you did hit the mark about what Trump's message is all about. So I want to make a few more points about it. Trump is not acting alone; there are foreign interests, related to re-emerging Nazism, behind his mass movement. It is a mass movement in the same sense that German Nazism was a mass movement; it is so unstructured that Trump is losing at the political game of selecting delegates to the Republican convention. But it is a dangerous mass movement because Trump is appealing at the WASP nostalgia for a time in which society was exclusively ruled by WASP's. With utter demagoguery, Trump is conveying a most sinister message to disenfranchised WASP's: "I can take you back to the old glory, the old project of an apartheid nation." It is entirely possible, indeed, but, to achieve it, entire ethnic groups would have to be literally wiped out, or oppressed to the point of semi-slavery. So, in my analysis, Trump's incendiary

message of white supremacy is planting the seeds of a possible all-against-all civil war. He can't care less; if it is what it takes to satisfy his stratospheric ego and hubris, so be it. To make sure, it is a far worse variant of racism than there was among the Founding Fathers because the latter's was grounded on false beliefs, of supremacy, that were completely discredited after the Holocaust. There is no longer any justification for racism, this is, as you have it, hatred. Yet divisive Trump, a total egomaniac, or better said a megalomaniac madman, has mesmerized WASP's, even those who are, moderate Democrats; like Hitler managed to do in Germany, Trump is making his followers to think not with the brain's frontal lobe, but with the thalamus; this is, to think emotionally. Trump's political disclosure is What Trump would do as a president makes rational people shiver; as so many people in Israel have it, he would become another Hitler. This is, unless the Congress would quickly strip the Presidency of most of its Constitutional powers; but then Trump would just make his people riot, as he has already threatened, I am a foreign-born U.S. citizen, so someone please help me understand how could a serious nation like the United States fall this low, or, as you have it, into hatred.

Ricardo Oscar Martinez, BA
UT Alumnus

[Acknowledging our mistakes](#)

Admitting mistakes is always a hard thing to do. It's awkward, extremely uncomfortable and usually comes about because someone else was affected. It happens to the best of us, and even to journalists at The Independent Collegian. Our story last week, "Job search struggles," affected those in the

Career Services department in ways that we did not intend. One issue with the story was the headline and subhead, which were both misleading and did not reflect the tone or direction of the article. Unfortunately, a lot of issues with this piece seemed amplified because of them. As the start of the piece, it set an expectation that was not backed up by facts and numbers.

The story was comprised of mostly student opinions. Our intention was to give voice to students; we wanted to know their opinions of on-campus jobs and how well holding minimum wage positions allow them to pay for tuition. There was a paraphrase we included in the article that we should not have because we could not back it up, but other than that, the opinions stated belonged to the students we interviewed and accurately explain their views. However, the lack of context left these quotes open to interpretation in ways that reflected negatively on Career Services.

Having mentioned this, it is important to note that we should have found students who had great success with on-campus jobs or employment found through Rocket Jobs. We should have spoken with the director of the department instead of the job location specialist, and we should have spoken with her after interviewing the students instead of before. Had we done so, she would have been able to respond to the opinions of the students and provide us with concrete numbers and facts about Career Services and Rocket Jobs.

A part of these issues comes from the struggle of putting together a story on deadline, with only a few hours to work. Another part stems from a lack of experience and knowledge. Between the headline, the unbalanced opinions in our reporting and the lack of facts and numbers, this story ended up being far from the piece we envisioned it to be. It is not a representation of Career Services, Rocket Jobs, or the IC's usual quality of work. In the future, our reporting will include more facts and numbers, more appropriate sources and a larger variety of opinions.

Career Services helps students and alumni prepare for and launch their careers

We editors at the IC requested this letter to the editor from Career Services, as one of our stories last week caused some distress in that department. The story in question is no longer available online. We did not intend to report any information we feel could misrepresent any person or institution.

Students can face many challenges and choices as they navigate their way through college and transition into their careers. The Jan. 13 article "Job search struggles" attempted to highlight the struggle of some students to find viable employment opportunities to fund the cost of their education. Initially, I was interested to see how the article would address the issue but, after reading it, was left both disappointed and concerned with the reporting and the negative messages that students might take away from it.

As the Director of the Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services (CELCS), I take exception to the subheading "Career Services helps some students, lets others down" and the last phrase in the first sentence, "though their success seems to be varied." There is nothing reported in the article that supports those statements and they are misleading at best. Further, a Career Services professional was quoted as saying, "Career Services isn't here to get you a job," which was taken out of context and how it was edited sounded very harsh. The accurate statement is that while Career Services cannot place students in particular jobs, we can absolutely assist in helping students find desired employment and career

opportunities. We are here to help students launch their careers!

The article later goes on to imply that because a student may not be able to fund their entire tuition with an on-campus job that it is not a viable employment option. Students might be discouraged from considering on-campus employment as the benefits of it were not discussed including: income, the gaining of valuable transferable knowledge and skills, establishing professional references and great networking opportunities with other students, faculty and the campus community at large.

Finally, it was suggested in the article that students are not able to find good paying jobs on Rocket Jobs. In reality, there are full and part-time positions that pay well posted on Rocket Jobs and there are employers who post on it that offer attractive tuition reimbursement and/or scholarships for college students. Students who are unsure about how to find such employment/employers should make an appointment with one of our professional staff to discuss their unique situation and needs.

The point I hope to make by responding to this article is to reassure students and alumni that there are multiple resources available to them to address their employment and career-related questions. Last semester alone CELCS assisted over 6,000 students and alumni via in-person appointments, online support, programs, events and student employment services. It is also important to note that there are faculty, success coaches, academic advisors, and other career services professionals embedded in the individual colleges who also provide valuable career-related services, programs and events. I am proud of my CELCS team and proud to work with colleagues across campus who are student-focused and committed to student success. Let's focus on solutions and go launch some Rockets together!

– Shelly Drouillard, Director of the Center for Experiential Learning and Career Services