

THE Kentucky Kernel

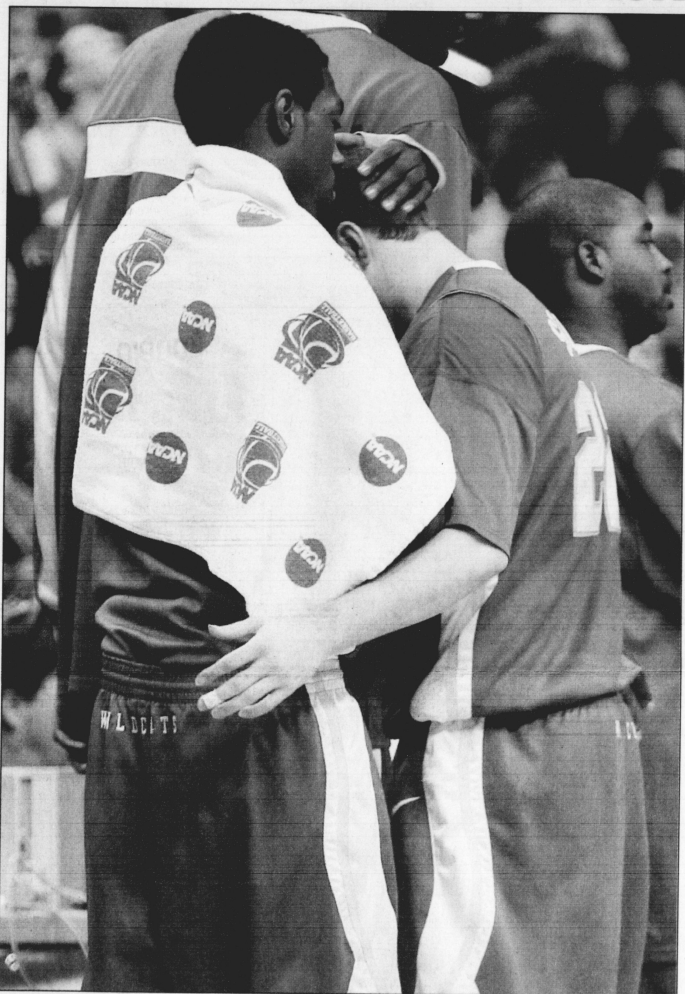
Monday, March 20, 2006

Celebrating 35 years of independence

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UConn 87, UK 83

UConn CANS UK COMEBACK



UK sophomore Ramel Bradley hugs senior Patrick Sparks after their last game as a Cat after yesterday's 87-83 loss to UConn in the NCAA tourney. HILLY SCHIFFER | STAFF

Huskies' late free throws ice game, knock UK out of NCAAs

By Josh Sullivan
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL
PHILADELPHIA — With less than three minutes remaining, the UK men's basketball team was on the verge of vaporizing the memories of a disappointing regular season.

Led by an electric 28-point effort from senior guard Patrick Sparks, the Cats had charged back from a 12-point halftime hole and were riding a wave of momentum that appeared primed to wash over top-seeded Connecticut.

But then they experienced a fatal case of déjà-vu. Trailing by four points, the Cats gave up four offensive rebounds, three of which came off missed Husky free-throw attempts. Those boards allowed UConn to stretch its lead to seven with 1:50 remaining and put the game out of reach.

"I saw those rebounds and all I could

think about was Michigan State," said sophomore guard Ramel Bradley, referring to last year's double-overtime loss to the Spartans in the regional finals, when the Cats gave up a flurry of offensive rebounds that contributed to the loss.

"They had two (players) up on the line and we had four and we just couldn't pull them down," said sophomore guard Rajon Rondo. "(The rebounds) were heartbreakers."

And back-breakers. The Cats cut the lead to two points three more times before the final buzzer sounded, but the Huskies knocked down six straight free-throws in the last 30 seconds to end UK's season with an 87-83 loss.

When asked about the emotional impact of the offensive rebounds, sophomore guard Joe Crawford couldn't bring himself to answer right away. After the question was posed, he slumped over and buried his head in his arms for several seconds before sitting back up and

See Cats on page 2

Cats' true leader emerges too late

PHILADELPHIA — It's been this way all season; it's been a cause-and-effect his teammates have tried to emulate.

It's always a big shot when Patrick Sparks lets fly. "We put the ball in Patrick's hands, I think that helped some," Tubby Smith said. "When he gets hot, you can see the team's spirit lift."

He's this season's version of Chuck Hayes. He's the emotional touchstone for every blue-clad baller, as Sparks flies, so do the Cats. Yesterday, he flew higher than ever



Chris Johnson
SPORTS EDITOR

See Johnson on page 2

SG court: Violations deep-six two Senate campaigns

By Sean Rose
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Four candidates in the spring Student Government campaign were originally disqualified before spring break over technicalities with their signature sheets, but two of those were returned and the candidates will be on the ballot.

The Elections Board of Supervisors monitors the process for violations before, during and after the elections, to be

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held March 29 and 30. At-large Senate candidates must obtain 400 student signatures to run for office.

The Supreme Court said it upheld disqualifications for both Jessica Hobbs, an accounting a finance junior; and Sean Cooper, a political science junior, because they didn't provide proof that their signature sheets were legitimate, which they were required to do.

"It would be nonsensical to conclude

that because the candidate failed to submit the required documentation in a satisfactory manner, the Board then would have the burden to prove that the candidate was not eligible," the court's opinion said.

Hobbs was disqualified when the elections board found another candidate's name crossed out and replaced with her own on the signature sheet. In

See Violations on page 2

Staff pay woes heard at forum

Packed Memorial Hall lets Todd hear gripes

By Darush Shafa
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

Staff members at UK continued to voice their outrage at a town forum-style meeting held Wednesday afternoon, when UK President Lee Todd took questions and tried to defuse anger and concerns over a two-tier pay raise system which many staff said makes them feel undervalued and unappreciated.

The proposed pay raise system would issue a 5.5 percent faculty salary pool raise and a 3 percent staff salary pool raise. Both groups received a 4 percent salary pool raise last year after averaging a 1.3 percent raise over the three years prior to that. Both faculty and staff operate on a merit-based raise system, meaning that, for example, a staff member could earn more or less than the 3 percent raise.

But the difference in proposed salary pool raises has struck a raw nerve with many of the more than 10,000 staff at UK.

"The message they are conveying is that we are second class citizens," said Samantha Gange, a staff member in the College of Law.

Todd said that's not the message he's trying to send. "That bothers me a lot," he said. "I take that pretty personally."

Someone in the crowd shouted "It should!" in reply and drew applause from the entire audience — a standing-room only crowd in Memorial Hall. Staff members frequently voiced their opinions, at times booing Todd and launching personal criticisms.

Without us, this university will not be able to reach top 20 status," said Drasilila Bakert, associate dean of admissions in the College of Law, who is also a staff member.

Though the pay raise was of chief concern, many are

still concerned about the ability to earn a living, and staff members pointed out that about 1700 UK employees working full-time earn a salary that still places them below the poverty level, and countless others work two or more jobs to make ends meet.

Paul Wilson, a Staff Senate representative, said that, according to Todd's figures, the cost of living went up 3.3 percent last year, above the maximum most staffers could get through merit-based raises.

"No one is perfect at their job," Wilson said, adding that he expects most people to get an average raise of 2.4 percent. "A lot have told me they cannot live at this wage."

"There are people in there (the forum) that work three and four jobs and are still on food stamps," said Jay Prentice, a staff member who works in the Physical Plant's carpentry shop.

Many staff members felt their questions went unanswered. "I'm leaving here more frustrated than when I got here," said William Young, a building operator on the staff, adding that he felt this was a chance for Todd to justify the current proposal and not to give staff the opportunity to be heard. "This was not a chance for us to change some minds."

Others foresaw problems in UK's immediate future because of this course of action. "We are going to see an exit of staff members," Wilson said. "We're going to lose some good people."

"We're already seeing it," he continued. "I see people now looking for jobs (elsewhere)."

Others like Young said they can't just leave their jobs. "(Todd's) got us all by the throat," Young said. "We have to take what they're going to give us. It would take a whole

See Forum on page 2

Staff discussing unions to gain leverage with UK

By Darush Shafa
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

UK staff members angry over a current salary pool raise proposal are weighing their options and one of the choices — unionizing — is getting added attention. But the head of the Staff Senate doesn't believe that's a smart move at this point.

UK President Lee Todd, as part of the Top-20 Business Plan, has proposed a 3 percent staff salary pool raise and a 5.5 percent faculty salary pool raise. Many staff members have seen that difference as sending the message that they're not as important to UK as faculty are, an idea that Todd denies is true.

Todd held a town hall-style forum last Wednesday to listen to staff concerns and try to address them, but many believe nothing has changed. "I think a lot of people who were angry before the meeting are still angry," said Staff Senate Chairman Kyle Dippery. "I don't think a lot of minds were changed."

For now, unionization is being talked about but is not underway. The Lexington Herald-Leader reported yesterday that UK staff would be meeting this week with officials from the Communications Workers of America union. But Bryce McGowan, the executive vice president of the union's chapter covering the Lexington area, said he's unaware of that meeting and actual organization is not taking place. He declined further comment.

Todd said he did not intend to make anyone upset by proposing the unequal salary pool raises, adding that this is the unfortunate result of having to stretch funds.

"The issue is that we have finite resources. We have to prioritize," Todd said. "All of our employees are important. They contribute to this institution. But the fact is that we need to pay faculty more competitively to recruit more teachers to lower classroom sizes, retain them, and dramatically improve the re-

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Newsroom: 257-1915

Forum

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body effort to walk out to change his mind, and we can't do that."

That has some staff considering unionization, which has already happened at many of UK's benchmarks.

Union

Continued from page 1

search engine at this institution to grow jobs and create opportunity for this state."

Dippery said unionizing carries its own degree of risk.

"I think we need to be careful in how we approach this and make sure we know what we're trying to do," he said.

The upside is that doing so would "give the staff a much stronger voice in bargaining with the administration," he said. On the other hand, "I think one of the downsides is we lose a lot of our indepen-

"There are staff talking about it," Wilson said, adding that he believes if UK's staff unionized, staff at the rest of the state's universities would follow suit. "Suddenly, you'd be talking to every staff member in the state of Kentucky."

In the meantime, some are trying to organize UK's staff to fight the current proposal. Gange said a proposal that she is helping circulate has already garnered more than

2,000 signatures from faculty and staff who are opposed to the differential pay raise proposal, and as of Wednesday the petition had yet to circulate through the medical center, where she expects even more support.

"They cannot propose this," Gange said. "It is unequal; it will create a huge amount of outrage and it already has."

"I fully admit that there are tough issues in terms of staff compensation that need to be examined and, I hope, addressed over time. We are committed to doing that because I deeply value the contributions that both faculty and staff make to this institution," Todd said.

"But as president, I have to make decisions — sometimes very tough ones — on how best to move UK forward. This is one such decision and I am committed to it."

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Violations

Continued from page 1

Cooper's case, the elections board originally found he didn't turn in the required number of signatures. Cooper argued that several sheets were misplaced by the SG office.

The Supreme Court overturned the disqualifications for integrated strategic communications sophomore Meredith Storm and arts ad-

ministration junior B.J. Lee and both will appear on the ballot.

One of Storm's signature sheets had another candidate's name marked out, but she supplied enough evidence showing that the sheets were blank when she obtained them.

"Ms. Storm offered statements by signatories from the top of the ambiguous signature sheets," the court's opinion said. "We are satisfied that under the facts of this case, these statements are enough to show that it is more likely

than not that Ms. Storm's name had replaced the previous candidate's name before the signatures were gathered," the court said.

Lee was originally disqualified because he did not have the required number of signatures — after the board withdrew several of his sheets that did not have his name on them, but Lee provided statements from 45 signatories supporting him, which the Supreme Court found was satisfactory proof.

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Cats

Continued from page 1

responding. "We had the game," he said. "I was very confident we were going to pull it out. But we just gave it away on those free throws. This is a hard way to end it."

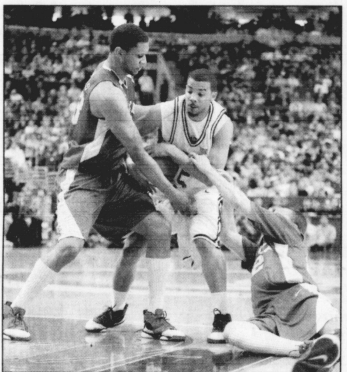
In the final game of his UK career, it was obvious Sparks had no intention of allowing the underdog Cats to end it without scaring the daylights out of the team many experts have tabbed as the favorite to win it all. He recorded what might have been his finest college game against the Huskies, posting a UK-career-high 28 points and also notching five steals.

"They were closing out on me quick and giving me driving lanes," Sparks said. "I was able to hit some mid-range shots and make some extra passes in there. Then I started hitting some threes."

On a couple of occasions, he single-handedly kept the Cats in the game as UConn teetered on the edge of breaking it open.

He pulled up from deep and nailed one of his four 3-pointers to cut the Husky lead to 38-48 with just under 13 minutes to go. Two possessions later, he cut into the lane and swished a short jumper.

On UConn's next trip down-court, he darted behind guard Marcus Williams and swiped the ball away then found UK forward Shery Thomas underneath, who knocked down two free throws to complete an 8-0 UK run and



MELLY SCHIFFER | STAFF
UConn guard Marcus Williams comes away with the ball as UK center Randolph Morris and senior guard Patrick Sparks try to steal it back.

shrink the gap to 58-53. "Patrick, when he gets hot, you can see the team spirit lift because he gets things going," said head coach Tubby Smith. "We place a lot of faith in him. Everybody believes in him. Everybody believes in him."

After the momentum-shifting series of Husky rebounds, Sparks drained another three-pointer, then drove into the lane after a UConn shot-clock violation and hit Thomas with another pass for a layup to cut the gap back to two points at 61-59.

"He stepped up huge," Bradley said. "He was the leader for us today."

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Johnson

Continued from page 1

before, and the team played its best game of the season.

He played all 20 minutes of the best half of basketball the 2005-06 Cats have had to offer, as UK outscored UConn 52-44.

It wasn't enough to rid UK of the 12-point cave it had hidden in by halftime. But that doesn't change the fact that he's the leader this team never had.

He did everything he could yesterday, scoring 28 points and playing his best point guard game all season.

He stayed on the referees from the outset, even when he took out UConn stud Rudy Gay with a supposedly intentional foul. It was the play a leader makes — keeping momentum in check for at least a few more seconds.

And with every shot he hit, and every open man he found, his teammates' heads got a little higher, shoulders grew a little taller, tenacity a

little stronger.

Randolph Morris took on UConn's Josh Boone — the Big East defensive player of the year with the worst dreadlocks this side of Dave Chapelle in "The Nutty Professor" — and scored on him often in the second half. Bobby Perry notched his second straight 20-point game.

Playing in the second half against the best team in America, Sparks, the smallest player on the floor, put his team on his back.

He didn't want the second round to be his finale. "I wasn't trying to think about that, really," Sparks said, before relenting. "I didn't want it to be my last game."

Rajon Rondo, his roommate and closest confidant since arriving from Western Kentucky two years ago, put Sparks' head under his arm as the 6-foot guard walked off the court.

"He played great; that's the way you want to go out, swinging in," Rondo said.

With every punch Sparks landed, UK got tougher to knock down.

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RREVID Clue: What Alan R. was

THIYMG Clue: "Mousy" adjective

LCADUAR Clue: A night "zoo" or "zoo"

SOEPLORBI Clue: Mistake

Answers to 10/06: JUMBLE: CHARLIE BUTCHER FLOWERS DINOCAUR
Answers: This was the first U.S. sitcom to have a cast of all-people of color.
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Cats dispatch Mocs, face tough MSU test tonight

By Chris DeLottel
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

ROSEMONT, Ill. — In March 2005, the women's basketball teams at UK and Michigan State were in the semifinals of postseason tournaments. But while the Cats were hosting a game in the National Invitation Tournament, Michigan State was playing in the NCAA Final Four.

In a measure of how far the UK program has come this season, the two squads will meet at 7 tonight for a berth in the NCAA Sweet Sixteen. The Spartans (23-9) ended last year's tournament run with a loss to Baylor in the national title game.

MSU is led by powerful 6-foot-1 forward Liz Shimek, the school's all-time leading scorer. She scored 27 points in the Spartans' first round win over Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and MSU is 12-1 when she scores at least 20 points.

"They've got great size and a very good perimeter game as well," said UK head coach Mickie DeMoss. "But we've got size as well."

The Spartans play a match-up zone defense that can be confusing to opponents. UW-Milwaukee was flummoxed throughout the

game against MSU, committing 22 turnovers.

"They forced UW-M into a lot of turnovers (Saturday)," DeMoss said. "So we've got to do a better job of taking care of the basketball. We didn't do a very good job of that (Saturday)."

UK's players are subscribing to theory of survive-and-advance.

"It feels good to be here, but that's not enough," said Jennifer Humphrey. "You want to make it to the Sweet 16. We want to keep playing and make it farther."

UK dominates post vs. Mocs

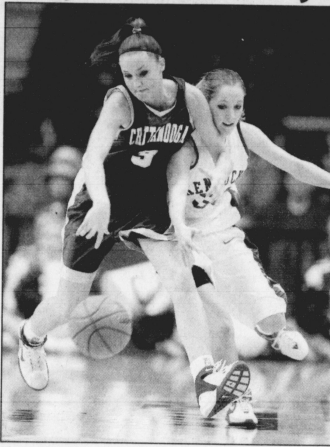
Sarah Elliott and her Kentucky teammates had a message to deliver after Saturday's 69-59 NCAA Tournament victory over Chattanooga.

An attack of the butterflies never hurt anybody.

Despite admitted nervousness that came with UK's first NCAA Tournament appearance in seven years, the Cats rode Elliott's hot hand and team-high 22 points to a win over the overmatched Mocs.

After not attempting a shot in the first half, Jennifer Humphrey scored 11 points in the second, including 9-for-12 shooting at the foul line.

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KEITH SMILEY | STAFF
UK guard Jenny Pfeiffer goes for a loose ball in UK's 69-59 win Saturday over Chattanooga in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

UK vs. Michigan State: Tonight at 7; TV: ESPN2

Baseball misses weekend sweep

By Ryan Mabry
THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

The unranked UK baseball team was literally one strike away from topping the No. 8 LSU Tigers yesterday afternoon and snapping a bad six-year streak against conference foes.

But the next pitch erased the Cats' lead and spoiled their bid at a three-game weekend sweep, halting their winning streak at eight games at the same time.

Andrew Albers (1-1) gave up a two-run home run with two strikes and two outs in the top of the ninth inning to give LSU its first lead of the game, and the Tigers tacked on two more before the inning was over, giving them a 5-2 victory.

"We should've taken the series (sweep)," said UK starting pitcher

Greg Dombrowski. "That's just baseball. We played well enough to win, and we were one pitch away."

UK (17-4, 2-1 SEC) beat LSU by a 6-3 margin Friday and a 5-2 total Saturday, locking down the weekend series victory.

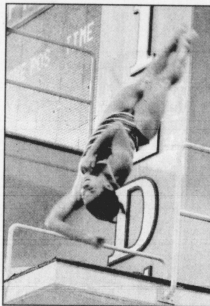
Dombrowski worked into the eighth inning and struck out seven. He had a no-hitter through five innings.

Derek Olivey (5-0) got the win for the Tigers, giving up his only earned run on a solo homer to right-center fielder the bat of UK senior third baseman Michael Bertram in the fifth.

"LSU came in here No. 8 (in the country), and we showed we were just as good if not better than them," Dombrowski said.

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National champion



Her name's already splashed all over UK's record books. But now, you can call UK junior diver Taryn Ignacio a national champion.

Over the weekend, Ignacio earned UK's first-ever national title in platform diving by storming back to post an NCAA-record 335.20 in the final round of competition in Athens, Ga.

HILLY SCHIFFER | STAFF



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CAMPUS CALENDAR

The Campus Calendar is produced by the Office of Student Activities, Leadership & Involvement. Registered Student Orgs. and UK Depts. can submit information for FREE online ONE WEEK PRIOR to the MONDAY information it is to appear. Call 257-8667 for more information.

Monday 20 th	Tuesday 21 st	Wednesday 22 nd	Thursday 23 rd	Friday 24 th	Saturday 25 th
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street •Swing Dance Lessons, 8:00 PM, Tates Creek Ballroom, 1400 Gainesway Dr. •KARAOKE, 7:00 PM, Student Center Cat's Den •Solar Car Team Meeting, 4:00 PM, DVT Engineering Building •Feminist Alliance Meeting, 7:30 PM, Gaines Center for the Humanities 232 E. Maxwell St. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cheap Seat Tuesdays presents The Ringer, 8:00 PM, Worsham Theatre •SCRAPBOOKING WORKSHOP, 7:00 PM, WILDCAT LOUNGE (CATS DEN) •College Democrats Weekly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Rm. 211 Student Center •ART Education Senior Show, Radfall Gallery, Student Center •Relay for Life Kick-off event, 8:00 AM, POT Plaza •BINGO!, 7:00 PM, STUDENT CENTER CAFETERIA •Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), 7:30 PM, student center rm. 357 •Poetry Slam, 7:00 PM, Cats Den •Alpha Phi Omega Active Meeting, 7:30 PM, Student Center, Room 359 •Horticulture Club Meeting, 5:30 PM, Greenhouse classroom •Soc. of Telecom. Scholars Meeting, 5:00 PM, Maggie Room, Grehan Building •Fencing Club Practice, 8:00 PM, Buell Armory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Deskey Speakers, 7:00 PM, 211 Student Center Addition •STITCH & BITCH WORKSHOP, 7:00 PM, WILDCAT LOUNG (CATS DEN) •Comedy Caravan, 8:00 PM, Student Center Cats Den •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fencing Club Practice, 8:00 PM, Buell Armory •Kill Bill Vol. 1, 10:00 PM, Center Theater in the Student Center •Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), 7:30 PM, student center rm. 357 •Theoretical Thursdays: Revelation, 8:00 PM, Memorial Hall •Working at a Top 100 Company... Hear from Those Who Do, 3:30 PM, 408 Rose St •Relay for Life team representative meeting, 8:00 PM, WTYL Gallery •Non Traditional Student Organization meeting, 7:25 PM, Pazzo's •RSA General Assembly Meetings, 5:30 PM, 359 Student Center •Internship Information Sessions, 9:00 AM, 408 Rose St 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Deadline to Apply Via CyberCAT to interview with Sherwin-Williams at the Career Center, 408 Rose St •ICF Free Dinner and Fellowship, 7:00 PM, CSF Building (across from Cooperstown Apt.) •ALL ARTISTS! Submissions Due for SMSC Student Show, Submit entries to SMSC, c/o Gaines Center, 232 East Maxwell, Lex., KY 40506 •Kill Bill Vol. 2, 10:00 PM, Worsham Theater in the Student Center •Emerging Leader Institute Applications Due, 106 Student Center •James W. Stuckert Career Center Drop-In Hours, 3:00 PM, James W. Stuckert Career Center 408 Rose Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •True Romance, 10:00 PM, Worsham Theater in the Student Center <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;"><i>Sunday 26th</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •UKUFO, 10:00 PM, Seaton Field

Opinions

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IN OUR OPINION

Take steps to make raises more equal

As the frustrations expressed by staff members at last week's town-hall meeting and the previous week's rally show, the controversy over uneven salary-pool raises for faculty and staff is not going to die out quietly by itself.

Unless UK President Lee Todd is comfortable with alienating many of the university's 9,600 staff members, it is obvious that changes need to be made to next year's salary pool plan so that staff and administration representatives can have a longer, in-the-open discussion about staff raises and the Top-20 Business Plan.

What's become obvious is that Todd and the staff have markedly different notions of where staff is and where it should be in terms of comparison to the local market and UK's benchmark schools.

On one hand, as Todd has said, UK undoubtedly needs to play catch-up in regard to faculty salaries. The average salary for faculty at UK is \$73,665, compared to \$82,664 at its benchmarks — a difference of more than \$8,000 — and at the university has lost many outstanding faculty to other schools in recent years.

In short, as this editorial board said two weeks ago, UK competes on a national level for faculty but only on a regional level for staff, and that means salary increases will not always be equal.

However, implicit in the statement that uneven raises are justified by the different markets of competition is the assumption that UK is on par with the local market in regard to staff salaries. Some figures that have been brought up in recent weeks indicate that this may not be the case.

Staff Senate representative Paul Wilson told The Kernel last week that the cost of living went up 3.3 percent last year, which is more than most staff members would get from the proposed 3 percent salary pool raise, since individual raises vary based on merit assessments.

And according to a December 2004 preliminary report by the Staff Senate's ad hoc salary committee, 1,825 staff members were earning less than the "Lexington living wage" of \$21,677 per year. In all the controversy, one mystery lingers: Why is UK spending \$5 million on benefits for staff, when the same amount could go toward an equal pay raise, which staff members seem to desire more?

Each additional percentage point increase of the staff salary

pool costs \$1.67 million, which means that only \$4.175 million would be needed to give the staff a salary pool increase of 5.5 percent, equal to that of the faculty. But UK spokesman Jay Blanton told The Kernel two weeks ago that UK had not considered using the \$5 million budgeted for benefits on raises instead.

We think it would be wise for Todd and the Board of Trustees to change course by putting most of that \$5 million toward salary raises for the staff.

Of course, as Kyle Dippery, the Staff Senate chairman, and Russ Williams, the staff representative on the Board of Trustees, both told The Kernel two weeks ago, that move would only be an immediate fix — it wouldn't solve the long-term problem of how staff raises fit into the Top 20 Business Plan.

But there is not time right now for a long-term solution to be devised, as the Kentucky General Assembly wraps up the budget process and as UK needs to finalize its own budget in order to set tuition and fee rates for next school year.

The discussion of what benchmarks to measure staff salaries against, how much catching up needs to be done and how quickly that process should take place doesn't need to be had in a matter of weeks.

Rather, UK administrators and staff representatives should set up a task force to analyze how well UK compensates its staff compared to other employers in the region and UK's benchmark schools.

And over the next year, more public meetings should be held to collect staff viewpoints and discuss raise proposals.

The anger over this year's plan seems to have resulted from a massive miscommunication — unless Todd anticipated but did not care about the reaction from the staff.

A task force and public forums would help alleviate the risk of such a miscommunication occurring again, and it would help staff members and university administrators get on the same page about how future raise proposals should look.

But until that stream of communication opens up and some consensus emerges, Todd would do best to heed the staff's desires and spend the additional \$5 million on raises rather than benefits.

UK should spend its \$5 million on staff raises, rather than budgeting for a benefits pool.



AMANDA HARDAWAY, THE KENTUCKY KERNEL

COMMENTARY

Free speech doesn't put us on the moral high ground

The Kernel recently expressed concern over freedom of speech (see Ian Conley's Feb. 24 column, "Freedom of speech should prevail over Holocaust sensitivity"). The controversy surrounding this issue stems

from the publication of cartoons in a Danish newspaper depicting Mohammed as a terrorist. The "Islamic world" was outraged; while in the United States and elsewhere, columnists and cartoonists have made clear that they defend the right of the paper to publish the cartoons, even though they were offensive.

As a person who identifies as a member of the "left," I find myself in something of a bind. On the one hand, I'm a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union, and I think it's important that governments be limited in their ability to curtail the speech of others. On the other, I've been reticent to join in the outcry since I take much of it to be a form of racism.

It's no secret that groups of people often secure their own identity through the exclusion and denigration of others. Typically, people understand themselves as the opposites of certain people around them. Despite the fact that people identified as such come in a wide variety of shades, hues and colors, we refer to the two predominant racial groups in America as "black" and "white."

In this case, Muslims have been cast as barbaric and irrational sav-

ages whose inability to accept offensive speech and control their reaction is indicative of their primitive nature. Americans, on the other hand, are understood in contrast to this as reasonable and tolerant — we live in a more mature society whose forbearance is evidenced in the fact that we believe in the rights of others to state their opinions, however perverse or offensive these may be.

If this were an accurate characterization of either group, it wouldn't be fair to call it racism. If it really were the case that some humans are better than others, we'd have to accept this as fact and hope that some day those "barbaric" Muslims figure out that you can't silence everything that hurts your feelings. But this just isn't how things are.

As evidence of this, I'd like to point to some recent events here at UK. On March 1, members of the Committee for Democracy and Social Change passed out fliers at the Career Fair in the Student Center. The fliers explained how to pay for college without working as part of the war effort and told which companies at the fair were affiliated with the Department of Defense. We managed to hand out around 200 sheets before we were kicked out.

The fact that we were kicked out was not exceptional. What was disturbing was the response of Student Center Director John Herbst. When pushed as to where any group had the right to hand information out, Herbst maintained that such activities were relegated to the "free-

speech zone." Such zones, however, are known to be violations of the First Amendment and every university that has been challenged on this has backed off or lost.

Herbst knew this, yet he attempted to deceive us. He followed this with another whopper: We were only allowed to distribute our information outside the building. Here again, he knew better and backed down when we challenged him.

Indeed, our group has discovered what many of our fellow students think about our "right" to speak freely. Although these people rarely express themselves with the subtlety of John Herbst, they make clear time and again that what we have to say just shouldn't be said.

To make a long story short, a lot of people in America and Europe have spent a lot of time recently talking about a moral superiority, which — if my experience is normal — doesn't exist. The "right" to "free speech" is just as contested today as it has ever been.

Americans are often quite hostile toward those who say things we don't like. There are a myriad of ways that we attempt to curtail the speech of people with whom we disagree. Maybe some of the time we're right to do so, I don't know. But we're wrong to be so quick to judge Muslims for it; and I'm almost positive that our readiness to do so is part of a deeper insecurity about our place in the world.

Brandon Absher is a philosophy graduate student. E-mail opinions@kykernel.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Play is a force for change Blame administration, too

In response to Doug Scott's March 10 column, "Vagina" a worthy trip outside my comfort zone. I would like to say that as the organizer and participant, I am glad that he came and experienced our show, even though it was outside of his comfort zone.

The monologues are intended to inspire change. We wish to celebrate the lives of the women we love, understand them through a community strong, beautiful, and dedicated females, and to incite a burning desire to make the world, and specifically this campus, a safer environment for these women.

I would like to thank you, Doug, and all of the men and women who attended and made the production a success in raising more than \$6,000 for charity and raising consciousness, for being willing to step out of your comfort zone and expand your world to take that first step.

I would like to encourage everyone to continue to take an active stand in ending violence against women. Awareness is only the beginning. Getting involved on campus is what will truly begin to change the face of this campus and the world for the better. Until the violence stops, we will continue to educate, encourage and be a positive force.

ASHLEY ROUSTER
English and women's studies junior

As a student, I am just as concerned about tuition increases as everybody else. Still, I'm not ready to start pointing fingers just yet. Specifically, most of the university seems ready to burn either the General Assembly or Dr. Todd in effigy, depending on which day of the week it is. Recently, The Kernel's editorial board even stated outright that we should blame the General Assembly for tuition hikes.

Once again, I'm not saying The Kernel is wrong, as I certainly feel as though the state could and should provide more money than the current version of the budget passed by the House allows. Regardless, in looking at the Council on Postsecondary Education's Web site, I noticed an interesting trend. While bearing in mind that double-digit percentage increases in tuition have been occurring regularly for about four years now, the site's data clearly shows that while General Assembly funding was reduced by only about \$2,000 from 2003 to 2004, revenue from tuition increased by approximately \$17,000. Other sources of revenue equal a \$40,000 increase in total revenue over the same period of time.

So what does this mean? It means that the administration can't get away with blaming everything on the General Assembly. To be fair, remember that UK is a growing school with a need to spend a great deal of money in search of that elusive Top-20 goal; but also be careful when reading rhetoric blaming the

General Assembly whether it comes from the Student Government president or The Kentucky Kernel.

Certainly, the legislature should do more, and the administration should be more forthcoming about why they are increasing tuition, but that doesn't mean that either side is the "boogey-man" in this debate. If students want to be taken seriously as valuable members in an ongoing conversation to find UK's niche in the state budget, we're going to have to start doing more than chanting and holding signs outside the State Capitol.

CHAD REESE
philosophy sophomore

All-black groups aren't at UK

In response to the recent editorials discussing the university's concerns with diversity, I submit the following to clear up many misconceptions.

The statement was made that "it is unfair to have all-black organizations," which is true. However, as an equal-opportunity institution, UK has no all-black organizations.

The Black Student Union's mission "is to educate the University's community to the contributions of Black Americans; to assist, guide and orient incoming Black students; to provide continual guidance for members of the Union; to improve relationships between all other students; to provide a social and cultural outlet for its members; to participate in

the cultural, social, and athletic activities of the University of Kentucky."

Our constitution explains our membership policy, which states: "Membership shall be open to any student interested in the purpose of the BSU." Nowhere do we limit our membership to black students. We have a very diverse membership that includes black, Hispanic/Latino, and white members.

All of the Black Student Union General Body meetings are held on Wednesdays in Room 230 of the Student Center, at 4:34 p.m., bimonthly beginning March 29. We encourage everyone who is interested in our purpose to join us and actively participate.

Other confusion seemed to center around the need for historically black Greek organizations, which were created during the time of segregation when blacks were not welcomed into the "Historically White Greek Letter Organizations." Today, no Greek organization, historically "black" or "white," limits its membership to those of a specific race.

Therefore, if there is a wave of students who would like to begin what Mr. Sandburg is calling, "The White Student Union," I would gladly support your efforts. Since I know the real definition of "racist," I would see no problem with such an organization, as long as it adhered to the regulations of the university. I hope this letter provides some insight to the fallacies earlier stated.

JONATHAN BEST
sociology junior

Submissions

Send a guest column or letter to the editor to Opinions Editor Brenton Kenkel or Assistant Opinions Editor Wes Blevis. Please limit letters to 350 words or fewer. Be sure to include your full name, class and major with all submissions.

E-MAIL opinions@kykernel.com

Note to Readers

The Opinions page provides a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Unlike news stories, The Kernel's unsigned editorials represent the views of a majority of the editorial board.

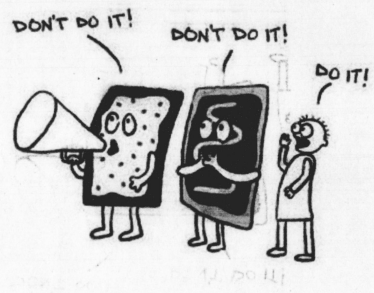
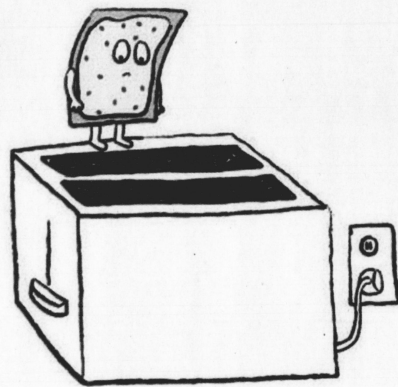
Letters to the editor, columns, cartoons and other features on the Opinions page reflect the views of their authors and not necessarily those of The Kernel.

Columnists Needed

The Kernel is looking for new columnists to write for the Opinions page on a regular basis.

Columnists of all interests will be considered, but The Kernel especially seeks those who have an interest in campus and local issues.

E-mail opinions@kykernel.com if you are interested.



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