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From the Editor

Commentary: Tough Month?
In an article titled "A Warning, a Crusade, and a Public Reckoning at the U. of Florida" published in the August 4, 2017 Chronicle, a very unusual tale unfolds. Huntley Johnson, a lawyer who had represented individual university athletes, was apparently unhappy with a recent contentious fee-negotiation involving a football player and took action based on public records requests. The thousands of pages of records he obtained revealed numerous unfurled details about the University of Florida, including pornography purchased by a top administrator, and improper spending on a new presidential house. As the disclosures went on, the issues involved broadened. "It's a textbook example of how Mr. Johnson's battle against the university has at times veered into unexpected terrain, bringing fresh scrutiny to issues the administration might rather keep quiet," "Month after month, the university has been buffeted by negative headlines. In the Gainesville Sun, just as Mr. Johnson promised, this form of accountability or is it vengeance? Maybe it's both," In closing, author Michael Vasquez asked, "Are more shoes about to drop?" Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson says, "this is not a two-legged animal. The answer to your question is yes."

Vulnerability to this sort of legal digging is, no doubt, widespread on campus. I suspect at least a few campus decision makers who came across this article read it muttering to nobody in particular, "There but for the grace of God go I". As a notion, I think we have learned dealing with an exposed cover-up is more difficult than with the event itself. Maybe the challenge for the business side of the house on campus is selling transparency across the board.

The Chronicle's "What's Behind Texas A&M's Rush to Fire Karen Watson" needs a follow up to complete the file. This article suggests there might have been other issues but doesn't provide specific reasons, other than the stated appearance of conflict of interest. The abrupt termination came just two months after a laudatory farewell reception in honor of the soon to retire provost and a few days before her scheduled departure. "An audit had found the appearance of— but no evidence of— misuse of resources related to a conflict of interest involving Ms. Watson's wife." Over a period of several years the University had paid a company owned by Nancy Watson $438,000 of which, "about $114,000 was paid through the office overseen by Karen Watson." The text is apparently handled via a normal procurement process. Whether or not an improper conflict of interest influencing procurement occurred was not established in the article. But I can imagine the consternation in purchasing, the business office, and the president's office when the issue surfaced. There was no mention of any procurement department involvement in this case and that may be part of the problem. But I'd wager every CIO and NAEP member procurement professional across the country with access to the copy of the Chronicle closely read this article more than once. I imagine the CIO spent some time responding to inquiries from his governing board and peers.

"Tough Talk," published in the same issue of the Chronicle, discusses the reaction to statements of an outspoken, prominent, black, philosophy professor hired by a major public institution in a conservative state. "The philosopher wanted to talk about race and violence. People didn't want to hear," reads the copy accompanying his picture on the first page. As I digested the long article, I came to believe that this was an example of how the smoke of hot rhetoric can both communicate and obscure the message. I don't believe that Professor Tommy Curry was advocating the use of gun fire to redress racial issues in America. But apparently some did. I think his goal was to draw attention to what he seems as a major national fault, not the possible need to kill more white people. But I imagine his university's CIO needed more than a purple pill of two before going to the president's office the after hearing from those on campus and in the larger community, who felt threatened or, maybe, insulted. Language can be a powerful tool available to all sides—and hot words, although very inexpensive to utter, can be incredibly costly to recall.

The Chronicle wasn't the only bearer of troubling news. A front page article above the fold headline in the August 25 issue of the New York Times declared, "Affirmative Action Yields Little Progress on Campus For Blacks and Hispanics." The subhead was, "After 35 years, Racial Gaps Widen at Top U.S. Colleges, an Analysis Shows." Maybe you and your CIO thought the U.S. Supreme Court had settled that discussion and corrective action had been taken. I did. Higher education has devoted a lot of time and treasure to addressing this problem and, according to the article, had come up short among the elite institutions.

What has all this to do with purchasing in support of higher education? Only one on the list was directly focused on traditional financial transaction issues but all involved the business office, one way or another. The September—October double issue of the Harvard Business Review carried an article titled: "Why Do We Undervalue Competent Management?" The subhead was, "Neither Great Leadership Nor Brilliant Strategy Matters Without Operational Excellence." To earn a voice in the discussion, procurement professionals and other business leaders must use their understanding of the organization's goals, challenges, and options to provide the necessary operational excellence in their area of expertise and offer relevant input.

What is high on the Cabinet's agenda as, probably behind closed doors, members seek to establish, review and fund institutional priorities? The Chronicle and the national media are good sources of information. What the general public thinks of our stewardship matters and media coverage of higher education provides a view into the workings of the administration on campus and relationships among the players, as viewed from an off-campus perspective. Being aware of the public perceptions, implications, and pressures can maximize your ability to contribute to a successful outcome.

The challenge around the Cabinet table is always what to do? I'm sure your CIO wants to contribute something positive to the discussion. Given the matters outlined above, what might the message be? What would you say?

What's happening on your campus?
From the President

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

Rosey Munro - NAEP President 2017-2018

Recently, as I was packing to leave for a wonderful opportunity as the Chief Procurement Officer at Florida State University, I started thinking of the expectations of my new institution. Part of the reason I selected Florida State was the energy, support of procurement, and the desire for innovation. It is a place where great ideas are fostered and encouraged. While I am very excited to get started, I am also a little bit nervous. With great expectations comes the opportunity for success and institutional rewards. A brief thanks to everyone for their support and encouragement during this transition.

A few weeks ago, I was fortunate to have a chance to listen to my new leadership talk about what keeps them up at night and what was important on campus. One of the comments that may resonate, as it is universal to us all, large or small institution, is the expectation that we work to become a campus strategic partner and support our leadership in that effort. Making the time to identify the expectations of all of procurement constituents at every level of the institution is critical for achieving long-term success. As we begin the new semester, it offers a new opportunity to partner with our campus stakeholders to work together to exceed their expectations. Let’s get started!

This post has not been tagged.

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Board of Director Nominations Open

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

NAEP needs you. We need your vision and your strategic planning. Join the NAEP National Board of Directors and advance yourself, your school, and your profession.

This year, we have several open positions on the board as current members roll off at the conclusion of their service terms. Now is your opportunity to help shape the future of higher education procurement. The NAEP Nominating Committee is calling for nominations for candidates for the office of NAEP 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, District 1 (New England) District 3 (Great Lakes and Michigan). In February 2018, an election will be conducted online via the NAEP Website Electronic Ballot. Deadline for nominations is October 31.

Submit a Nomination by the deadline of October 31, email nominations to NAEP Nominations Committee Chair Kelly Kosliski

This post has not been tagged.

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Calendar of Events

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

Negotiations Institute
December 11-12, 2017
Hanover, Maryland
Registration

Facilities Institutes
December 11-13, 2017
Hanover, Maryland
Registration

97th NAEP Annual Meeting
April 8-11, 2018
Orlando, Florida
Registration

This post has not been tagged.

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Upcoming Regional Meetings

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

Great Lakes
Indianapolis, Indiana
September 28-30
Registration

Great Plains
Minneapolis, Minnesota
September 25-28
Registration

Kentucky
Louisville, Kentucky
September 25-28
Registration

Michigan
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan
October 13-14
Registration

New England
Springfield, Massachusetts
October 16-19
Registration

TAGM
Biloxi, Mississippi
October 23-26
Registration

TOAL
San Marcos, Texas
September 25-28
Registration

Upstate New York
Lake Placid, New York
October 4-7
Registration

Deadline for 2018 Annual Meeting Presentations Submissions

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

The Program Committee is still accepting applications for presentations at NAEP's 97th Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, April 8-11, 2018. To submit, click here. (The deadline is the close of business on Monday, September 25th.)

The 2018 Annual Meeting will offer 40 to 50 concurrent sessions. Attendees will represent purchasing professionals from two- and four-year institutions, including public, private, research, K-12 school districts and healthcare areas. Session topics will also relate to higher education staff that work closely with procurement, such as supplier diversity, facilities, materials management, contract management, accounts payable, food services, auxiliary services, HR, telecommunications and information technologies. Suppliers are considered to be attendees and may participate in sessions.
October is Campus Sustainability Month: How You Can Participate

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

Held every October, Campus Sustainability Month is an international celebration of sustainability in higher education. Throughout the month, colleges and universities organize events on campus and elsewhere to engage and inspire incoming students and other campus stakeholders to become sustainability change agents. AASHE has developed a promotional toolkit to show you how you can get the word out about your institution's participation. If your campus has a Sustainability Office, please forward this link to them as well.

http://www.aashe.org/get-involved/campus-sustainability-month/

Facilities Institute, December 11-13, 2017, Maryland

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

This institute is customized to serve the procurement or supply chain professional who either currently supports the facilities team or who has an interest in doing so. Participants will learn best practice techniques for managing facility spend and the key areas where procurement can provide significant contributions. In-class time will utilize "how-to" road maps and worksheets. Presentations and class discussion will be designed to increase the value of what you can take back to your institution for immediate use.

* Location:
  Hotel: Arundel Preserve
  Hanover, MD 21076
  410-796-9860
  Room rate: $149 per night

* Information:
  Melanie Freeman
  mfreeman@naepnet.org
  463-219-3614

* Registration
Quote of the Month

Posted By NAEP, Thursday, September 21, 2017

“The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking.”

—Kenneth Galbraith

This post has not been tagged.