

## Problems with community colleges discussed

Probably over 400 faculty from regents universities, community colleges and tech schools met at K-State – the auditorium was full.

While some discussions for basic lecture classes went smoothly, there was plenty of action in the biology sessions. The representatives had previously voted to approve requirements that microbiology labwork had to be genuine supervised labwork – twice. And twice the Board of Regents' TAAC (Transfer and Articulation Committee) rejected it. It was returned to Kansas biology faculty for a third time.

While there was a faculty moderator who did a good job managing the discussion and voting, the real debate was with the TAAC representative. TAAC is charged with implementing the KBOR "vision" of having all 100 and 200-level courses in Kansas seamlessly articulate across all Kansas institutions.

The TAAC representative asserted that they did not approve it before (and would not likely approve it again) because we had gone beyond just listing competencies. In specifying genuine supervised labwork, we had dictated the "mode of teaching" and thus violated "academic freedom."

The real "bottom line" behind this is that there are six community colleges and tech schools in Kansas that offer their microbiology lab online. While the taxpayers of KS have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in genuine microbiology labs equipped CSI-type equipment that students use to learn hands-on microbiology, these online programs offer nothing but canned computer simulations or cheap and simple Mr. Wizard kits to use at the kitchen sink each Friday.

Kansas biologists overwhelmingly rejected this "mode of teaching" argument. UC-Berkeley, San Diego, University of Minnesota, and many other high-reputation schools refuse to accept transfer science labs for exactly the same reason. It defies commonsense to approve courses in swimming without a pool, training in welding using only a computer screen, or to graduate nurses who have never set foot in a hospital. But this is precisely the nonsense we were being coerced to accept.

K.U.'s Pharmacy program is a Kansas example that does not accept virtual lab course transfers. Because there is no distinction on a transcript whether a course is online or face-to-face (there should be) for an applicant student, K.U. Pharmacy phones Kansas feeder universities each year to determine if any of their chemistry labs have gone online. As a graduate program, they can restrict transfer. At the 100/200 level, we were being told that we cannot.

Kansas biologists said we had the right to specify hands-on because online cannot accomplish the competencies. You cannot learn to make sterile slides or handle bacterial media – and do it safely – without direct supervision and modern advanced equipment.

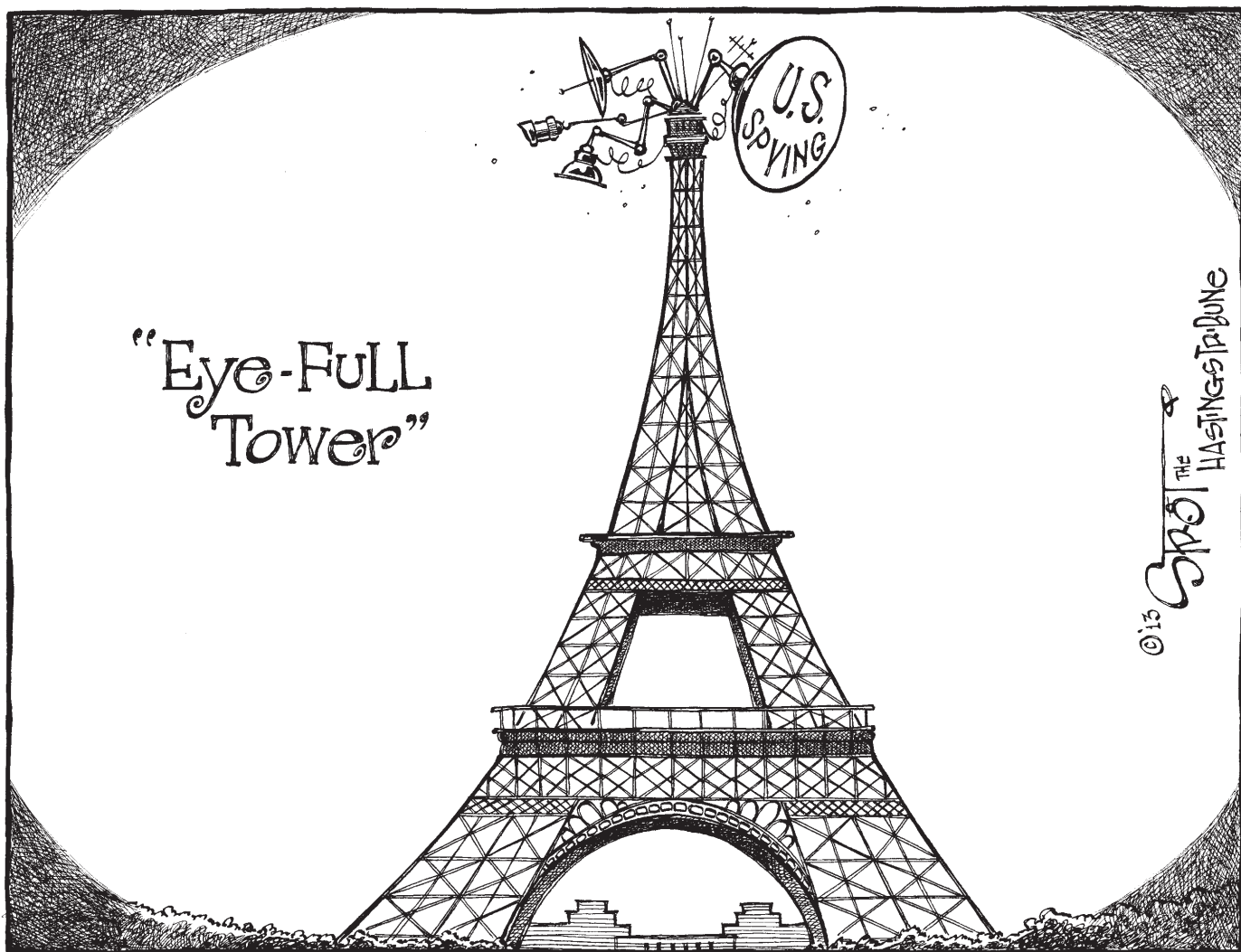
When the TAAC representative pointed out that a room of computers with a faculty member present could possibly be considered "supervised," the response was swift. Kansas faculty (one school, one vote) voted overwhelmingly to keep "supervised laboratory" in the microbiology criteria and even strengthen it to "supervised wet lab" to prevent any other interpretation.

Other real problems: 1) faculty requirements to teach at Community Colleges and Tech Schools lower than for high school teachers, 2) 3 credit hour courses offered in 2 weekends, and 3) why Tech Schools are allowed to offer any non-Tech academic courses at all – we were not allowed to address.

Unfortunately the KBOR "vision" to make all 100 and 200-level courses across Kansas "fully articulate" ignores the fact that a "baby" micro lab with a high school level text for training certified nursing assistants is not the same course as a major's microbiology lab preparing pre-Meds and nurses. The KBOR "vision" and their TAAC system is designed to address student's gripes when a course does not transfer. It is not designed to maintain quality.

If they bring the microbiology labs back to us next year – for the 4th time – it will be clear that the beatings will continue until we approve fraudulent labs. Just what part of "no" (to virtual labs) they do not understand?

-John Richard Schrock



## The crazy things you can find on the internet

It looks like a zoo has set up residency in my office. The good news is these are the kind of "animals" you don't have to clean up after.

At this very moment you will find a dachshund, two parrots, a monkey, and a yellow rubber ducky in various stages of repose on my desk. Did I mention it's a pink monkey, one blue and one orange parrot, a black wiener dog and, of course, a yellow duck? For good measure throw in a blue sword and two crowns, one green, the other white.

Jim volunteered us to make balloon animals for our church's annual fall carnival. It's been ten years since we've done this and, to say the least, we're a little rusty.

Those long, skinny balloons you need for twisting and turning into shapes are not available at any local stores, so we had to turn to the Internet. A click of the mouse and hundreds of multi-colored balloons and the pump to blow them up with were on the way. That's why I have a pink monkey on my desk. Sunday night was practice night.

It's a little scary what you find when you Google "How to make bal-

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



loon animals." There are people out there who take this art form extremely seriously. We found the "Twister Sisters," "Bob the balloon guy" and "Gordo."

We didn't want anything too fancy, just your run-of-the-mill carnival favorites. Jim followed the tutorials for making elephants and giraffes, but gave them up as a bad deal. "I'll stick with what I know," he said. "You blow 'em up and I'll turn 'em into monkeys and parrots."

Deal! Now, we just need to find our old clown outfits.

-ob-

Know what else I found on-line? A website on how to yodel. Talk about a dying art. Yodelers always fascinated me. How can they control their voice like that? Sometimes I sound like a yo-

deler when I sing, but it's not necessarily on purpose.

Someday, when Jim is out of the house and no one is within earshot I'm going to find that website again and give it a whirl. Then, the next time I get asked to do a special number, I will break out warbling, "All 'ya gotta do-oo-oo. When you're feelin' blue-oo-oo, is yodel-aa-dee-ee, ah-ee-dodde-lee-dee-oo."

-ob-

I have found other interesting things on the Internet this week. One was a remedy for chest colds and sore throats. I'm going to try this. Slice two lemons very thin, and place in a pint jar. Next, slice two pieces of ginger root (about the size of your pointer and middle finger together) and add to the jar. Cover with about a cup of honey, making sure the honey seeps into all the cracks and crevices, completely covering the lemon and ginger. Cover and refrigerate. This will form a syrupy mixture.

Next time you feel a cold coming on, put a spoonful of the syrup in a cup of hot water and drink like tea. Can't hurt 'ya; might even cure 'ya.

## Farmers and ranchers grappling over trade

During the last decade, growth of U.S. agricultural exports to the European Union (EU) has been the slowest among this country's top 10 export destinations. If U.S. farmers and ranchers had an opportunity to compete, trade with the EU could become a growth market for them.

"Regulatory barriers have become a significant impediment to that growth," says Steve Baccus, who farms in Ottawa County and serves as Kansas Farm Bureau president.

In mid-October Baccus spoke to members of the North American and European Union agricultural conference in Mexico City. He also serves as chair of the American Farm Bureau Federation trade advisory committee.

Long standing barriers against conventionally raised U.S. beef, ongoing restrictions against U.S. poultry and pork and actions that limit U.S. exports of goods produced using biotechnology remain the greatest obstacles between the United States and the European Union, Baccus says. It's negatively impacting trade relations with Europe.

"Last year we shipped more than

### Insight John Schlageck



\$8.8 billion worth of agricultural and food products to the EU," Baccus notes. "In turn they shipped back about \$16.6 billion. As big as those numbers are, they could be a whole lot bigger if barriers to trade were removed."

Baccus says the EU ag leaders admitted for the first time in Mexico City they understand the damage these restrictions are doing to them and their ability to compete in world trade.

European farmers and ranchers understand the strides biotechnology has made, Baccus says. They know their inability to use these advances is hampering their ability to remain competitive.

As with previous meetings between the two groups, the U.S. trade committee continually reminded the EU to let

their consumers decide.

"We've talked to them about providing their consumers with both organic and conventionally grown foods," Baccus says. "We've also talked with them about giving shoppers the opportunity to buy conventionally produced beef or hormone-free beef, and that's a misnomer."

Baccus believes agricultural world trade is about options for this country's overseas customers.

"We've said for years that the consumer is king," he says. "We believe they should dictate market trends not government."

When and if this change occurs, Baccus says U.S. farmers and ranchers will be willing and able to meet the food needs and desires of people around the globe.

"It's interesting that people throughout the world embrace new advancements in health care, the work place and their homes, but when you talk to them about food in this context, they become nervous about using modern technology," Baccus says. "We'll continue to tell our story."

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