

Other Viewpoints

Online classes affect school's rep

Fort Hays State University graduate student Topher Rome and more than 145 of his colleagues think the school may be damaging its academic reputation by allowing a private company to offer courses online and grant credit for them under the university's name.

Rome may be proven right. It's too soon to tell. It's not too soon to say he and others who raise questions about the value of higher education credits earned online without the participation of a university are right to do so.

Universities across the country provide online classes and more are doing so each year. The course work for those classes, however, usually is developed by the university and supervised by a university employee.

Under the Fort Hays deal with StraighterLine, the company will run its own courses, designed by its own experts. Any credits earned will go on a transcript under the university's name and will be indistinguishable from credits earned in a university classroom....

Fort Hays State's interest in the arrangement is understandable. It hopes students who take the classes and earn credit from the university will opt to continue their education there in the traditional classroom setting, and pay the traditional tuition and fees.

The university has been granting credit for StraighterLine courses since May 2008, however, and to date, none of the online students have transferred to the school....

There is much to be said for the traditional university setting and the lessons young people can take with them from their experiences in and outside the classroom. But that experience in becoming more expensive every year, and it isn't unreasonable for students to look for more affordable alternatives, or for private enterprise to step up and provide them.

That said, students who begin college online would be well advised to plan for the day they will walk onto a campus and ensure their credits will be accepted by the university they have chosen.

— Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building, 300 SW 10th St. Room 143-N, Topeka, Kan. 66612. (785) 296-7676 e-mail: jmorrison@ink.org web: www.morrisonfamily.com

State Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer, State Capitol Building, 300 SW10th St., Room 128-S., Topeka, Kan. 66612, (785) 296-7399 ralph.ostmeyer@senate.state.ks.us

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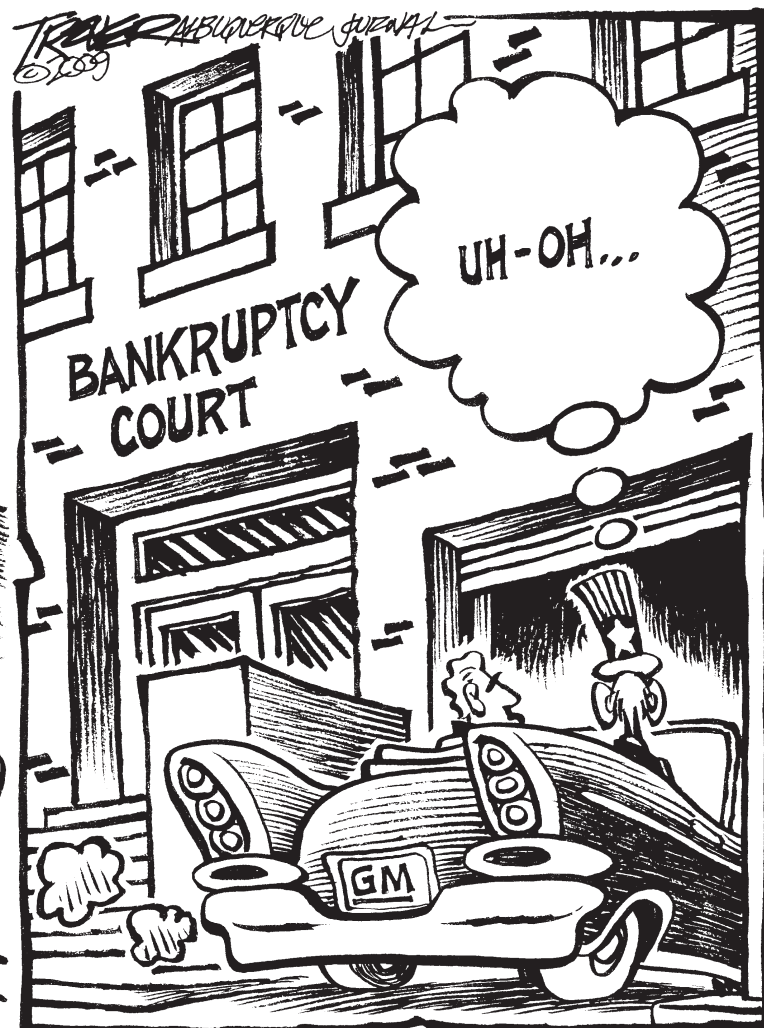
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Baseball jersey is in the pink

Yeah, I was in the show. I was in the show for 21 days once — the 21 greatest days of my life. You know, you never handle your luggage in the show; somebody else carries your bags. It was great. You hit white balls for batting practice, the ballparks are like cathedrals, the hotels all have room service and the women all have long legs and brains. — Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) in "Bull Durham."



Steve Haynes

• Along the Sappa

You'll know I'm coming if you see me wearing my new baseball jersey.

It's bright pink.

It's not just that my wife likes me to wear bright colors. (She says she likes to be able to spot me in a crowd, but I think she just wants to keep an eye on me.)

I've learned over the years that women pay attention to men who wear bright colors, especially pink. You might take some ribbing down at the pool hall, but who do you want to spend time with, a bunch of sweaty guys — or some pretty women?

Besides, it was all for a good cause, something called Pink in the Park. While we were in Georgia, the girls took us to an Augusta Greenjackets game, and it happened to be the annual breast-cancer fund raiser.

Rodeo cowboys and other sissy types have taken to wearing pink for the same reason. That night, all the Greenjackets were wearing pink uniform tops, snappy pinstripe jerseys with the team logo on the front and their num-

bers on the back.

Hey, this is a Class A league; nobody gets his name on his jersey. Players come and go too fast. (While the team is owned by Baltimore Hall of Famer Cal Ripkin Jr. and some friends, it's a San Francisco Giants farm club.)

One of the hospitals was giving out pink caps and the team has a silent auction going behind home for the pink uniforms. Brad got a jersey for Lindsay; older sister Felicia was wearing one Nik got her the year before. Cynthia went and got a cap, and I thought maybe I should get a jersey.

While a couple of the prime prospects on the team were drawing lots of bids, most of the guys had just one or two. Some had none at all. I put the minimum bid on the manager, a guy named Dave Machemer. Never heard of him, and no one bothered to top me.

I couldn't recall ever hearing of Dave Machemer, though he turned out to be a pretty interesting guy. In this day and age, if you've played sports, you're record is out there. Machemer turned out to be sort of a Crash Davis

kind of guy.

Made it to the Show twice, 10 games with the Angels in 1978 and 16 with the Tigers in '79. Infielder, 5 foot 11, 180, born 1951. Fourth-round draft pick in 1972 out of Central Michigan. Lifetime batting average in the majors, .229, with 11 hits. He hit his one and only home run his first time up for the Angels, and as one fan wrote, "it was all downhill from there."

He stayed in baseball, started managing in the minors with Class A Beloit, a Brewers farm club in Wisconsin. He moved up the ladder, but seemed to hit the wall at AAA Denver, where he managed a couple of years before the Colorado Rockies came along.

Dave Mac had a winning record up 'til then. In Denver, the Zephyrs were 69 and 77 in '80, 68 and 76 in '90. Machemer was replaced by a guy named Tony Muser. Since then, he's managed in mostly AA and AAA leagues, posting a lifetime record as a manager of 1,255-1,278. Now he's back in Class A, the South Atlantic League.

On the field, he seemed like a pretty nice guy. I kind of took a liking to him.

Anyway, he signed the number on the back of the jersey, and you can see the autograph if you want. You'll know it's me.

Steve Haynes is editor and publisher of the Colby Free Press and president of Nor'West Newspapers. In his spare time, whenever that is, he likes to enjoy a good baseball game.

Taiwan now partner in combating flu

The Republic of China (Taiwan) has long sought to return to the World Health Organization in order to directly and effectively contribute to the international health network and global disease prevention efforts.

Recently, this goal was achieved when Taiwan accepted the invitation of Margaret Chan, director-general of the agency, to take part in the 2009 World Health Assembly as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei" when in Geneva this month.

With the continuing growth of global trade, tourism and business travel, national borders appear increasingly irrelevant when it comes to dealing with human health threats. Both information sharing among countries and international technical assistance are hugely important for global pandemic prevention and other concerns. Recent efforts to keep emerging influenza viruses under control and assure food safety offer concrete examples.

There is an urgent need for every country to cooperate and exchange information to prevent the spread of the H1N1, or "swine flu," virus. As a member of the international community, Taiwan will closely participate in the international prevention effort—exchanging information freely with all countries, striving to prevent transmission and the further spread of the disease, and working to develop and manufacture a vaccine and stockpile pertinent medical treatment materials to deal with a potential outbreak. When needed, Taiwan will also extend a helping hand to assist other countries with disease prevention and help provide the necessary medical treatment resources to resist the influenza virus.

Another area in which Taiwan is fully prepared to cooperate and contribute within the agency's framework is global food safety, an increasingly serious problem. Rapid transpor-

Other Opinions

• Yeh Ching-chuan
Minister of Health

tation and advanced preservation techniques are allowing foodstuffs to travel great distances and be consumed around the world like never before. Finished food products enjoy wide circulation, and their ingredients can come from any corner of the globe.

As the sourcing of ingredients grows ever more complex, food safety is becoming more and more difficult to control. Only the correspondingly swift circulation of accurate information — as well as enhanced cross-border cooperation when it comes to monitoring and controlling foodstuffs — can keep countries abreast of the safety of each type of food product and trace the source and destination of contaminated foods the moment a threat is uncovered. Modern food safety management differs from traditional approaches, and prevention nowadays requires concerted cooperation among all countries.

Like all countries, Taiwan is confronted with these major public health issues. As a major global trading hub facing the challenges of a globalized world, it is more imperative than ever for Taiwan to be fully included in the international health network. Taiwan therefore looks forward to actively participating in and contributing to health activities in its new capacity as an observer — not only to better ensure the health safety of its 23 million people, but that of the global population as well.

Taiwan has much to share with other countries in terms of its outstanding health system. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Taiwan second worldwide in terms of health system performance. Taiwan has a long history of public health challenges and successes, such as eliminating domestic cases of smallpox, cholera, malaria and polio, providing comprehensive inoculations against hepatitis B, and launching one of the world's premiere universal health insurance programs.

Taiwan has demonstrated malaria-fighting results in São Tomé and Príncipe and has set up Taiwan Health Centers in both the Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands to provide medical treatment and public health services. Taiwan is more than willing to help other countries solve various public health challenges, such as medical network planning, infectious disease prevention and treatment, health insurance, medical research, emergency relief and aid, as well as tobacco hazard prevention. The return of Taiwan to the international health mainstream will enable us to more effectively share our experience and resources with other countries.

The international community has positively affirmed Taiwan's pragmatic and flexible attitude with Taiwan's invitation to become an observer in the World Health Assembly this year. Taiwan's participation in the assembly is a great step forward for global health-related human rights and seals the last remaining gap in the international health security network.

Finally, Taiwan hopes to achieve even greater participation through appropriate means in future events, mechanisms and meetings.

Yeh Ching-chuan is minister of health for the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

