

Opinion

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Editorial

Review should yield proper place at med school for Ivy Tech

Indiana’s Ivy Tech Community College Southwest has taken it on the chin this year, losing out on a role in the Indiana University medical school in Downtown Evansville and seeing other Ivy Tech plans put on hold as well. An Associated Press report says the school faces a state review of its programs over low graduation rates and declining enrollment.

There is no harm in a review of any statewide public school’s status. But at the same time it should be recognized that Ivy Tech’s role in Indiana education is different than that of the state’s four-year and advanced degree schools. In some cases, Ivy Tech has a role of preparing two-year students to move on to four-year schools.

For the medical school, Ivy Tech was expected to provide for some 1,600 students. Indeed, Ivy Tech was looking for \$22.9 million for the medical school from the Legislature, but it was not to be.

Even so, there should be some expectation that in the next budget session two years from now that Ivy Tech might move back into the picture for the med school. It should.

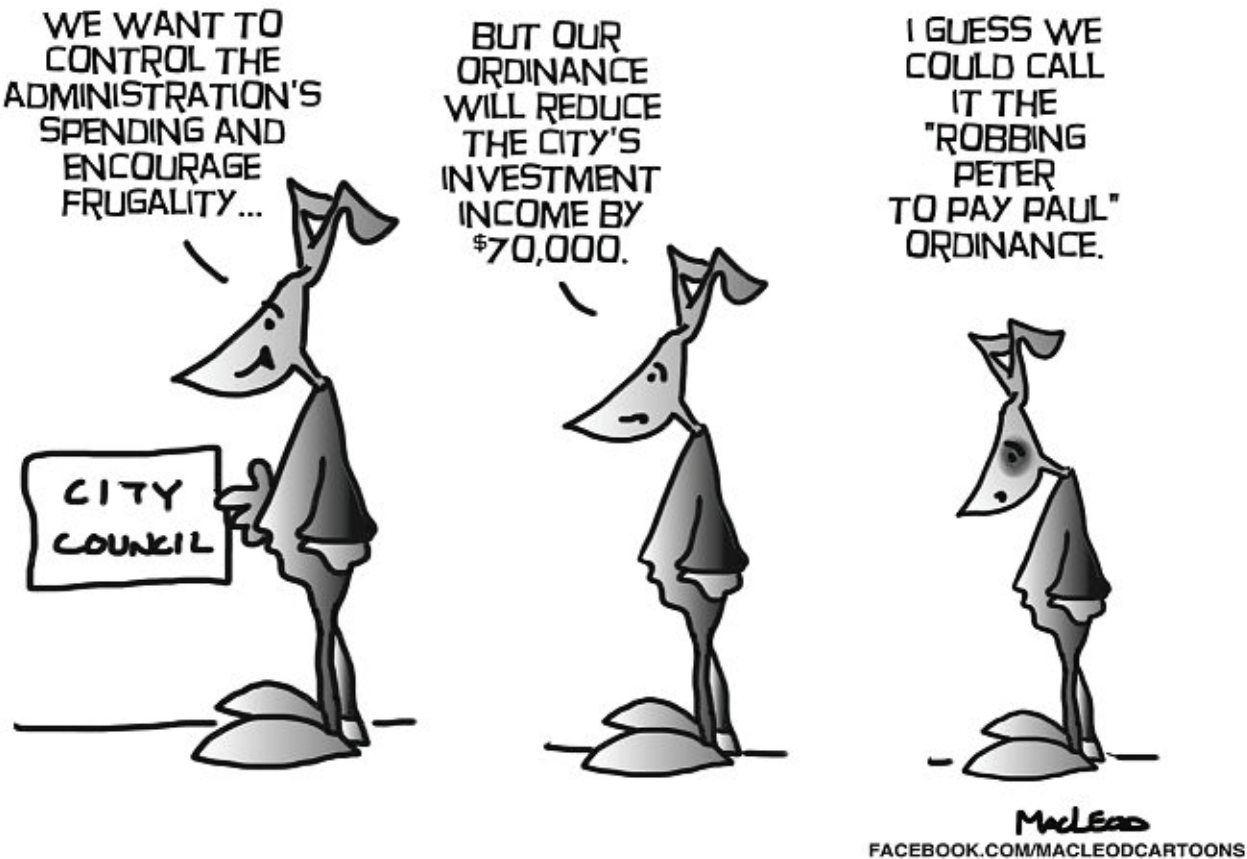
Ivy Tech was at first to have a place in the Downtown campus along with Indiana University, the University of Southern Indiana and the University of Evansville. UE, a private school, is paying for its own place on the campus. The General Assembly funded \$25.2 million for IU and USI programs, but lawmakers rejected any funding for Ivy Tech.

It was a shock to a lot of folks in Evansville, and especially to Jonathan Weinzapfel, the Ivy Tech chancellor. Another Evansville official, City Council President Dan Adams, said a place for Ivy Tech at the medical school remains a goal. In a recent news story by Courier & Press staff writer John Martin, Adams called it a temporary setback.

Meanwhile, state budget master — Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Luke Kenley, R-Noblseville — said he has questions to be answered about Ivy Tech’s effectiveness at running the state’s community college program.

Kenley said the school has gone through a great deal of change, and it is time to reassess.

Let us hope that reassessment includes two years from now a major role in the medical school.



Trade issue far bigger than Obama



Like all modern presidents, Obama wants a deal. But he has utterly failed to bring his party along. It’s not just because for six years he’s treated all of Congress with disdain and prefers insult to argument when confronted with opposition, this time from Democrats like Elizabeth Warren. It’s also because he’s expended practically no political capital on the issue. He says it’s a top priority. Has he given even a single televised address?

The trade deal itself will likely pass the Senate eventually, there being eight or so Democrats (out of 46) who support the deal but wanted to extract certain guarantees before fast-tracking it. (They got the guarantees and on Thursday broke the filibuster on fast track.) The problem is the House. Very few House Democrats will vote yes. House passage will require Republican near-unanimity. And it’s not there.

One group of GOP opponents are traditional

protectionists of the Pat Buchanan paleoconservative school of autarky. The others are conservatives so reflexively anti-Obama that they oppose anything he proposes. Having strongly opposed Obama’s constitutional usurpations on immigration, health care, criminal justice and environmental regulation, I’m deeply sympathetic to that concern. But in this case, there is no usurpation. There is no congressional forfeiture of power. Fast track has been the norm for 81 years. And the final say on any trade agreement rests entirely with Congress.

As for the merits, the TPP is a boon for America. It reduces tariff barriers to vast Asian markets and strengthens protection for intellectual property, America’s forte. To be sure, any trade deal, while a net plus overall, produces winners and losers. But the TPP will be accompanied by so-called Trade Adjustment Assistance, training and subsidies to help those negatively affected.

Moreover, the overall gain is more than just economic. In our deadly serious competition with China for influence in the region, the TPP would anchor our relations with Pacific Rim nations. If we walk away, they will

inevitably gravitate to China’s orbit. The question is (as Paul Ryan and Ted Cruz succinctly put it in The Wall Street Journal): Who is going to write the rules for the global economy — America or China?

And one final consideration. Watching America’s six-year retreat under Obama, the world wonders whether this is the product of one idiosyncratic presidency or of an inexorably declining America. Republicans have been telling the world that decline is not a condition but a choice, and that America’s standing will be restored when U.S. policy is entrusted to geopolitically serious people. Here is the GOP’s chance to show seriousness.

The Democrats, inventors of the postwar free-trade regime, have now turned against it (and their own president). This is the Republicans’ chance to demonstrate that they can think large.

I wouldn’t mind seeing Obama sunk by his own arrogance in intraparty fratricide. But the issue is bigger than Obama. In 20 months, he will be gone. Asia will not. And it will get away from us if Republicans don’t step up and step in where Obama and the Democrats have failed.

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Wendy Bredhold, Evansville

Put air quality before perception

I am disappointed, but not surprised, by the City EPA and Vanderburgh County Health Department’s joint letter to U.S. EPA on the proposed Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard. In reading their comments, it is clear that their greatest concern is public perception, not public health. Further evidence of that priority was the omission of our failing ozone grade in the American Lung Association’s State of the Air report from the City’s news release on that topic in late April.

In the letter, the City EPA director and County Ozone Officer express concern that if the ozone standard is made substantially stronger, they will have to issue “too many” ozone alerts. They say that if they issue too many alerts, people will ignore them. If the standard set is stricter than 70 ppb, they threaten to issue alerts based on a weaker

standard.

They say there is no evidence that a 60 ppb standard is more protective of public health, but according to U.S. EPA, a standard of 60 ppb would prevent up to 7,900 premature deaths and 1.8 million childhood asthma attacks in 2025 alone.

Health and environmental organizations including Moms Clean Air Force, Sierra Club and the American Lung Association support a standard of 60 ppb. The ALA’s letter to U.S. EPA in support of the 60 ppb standard was signed by 1,100 physicians and health professionals from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. U.S. EPA’s own independent science advisory committee also supports a 60 ppb standard.

Evansville and Vanderburgh County residents need accurate information about air quality in order to protect their families — especially those affected by asthma and other respiratory diseases. Even if we can’t meet the new standard right away, and even if the city and county have to issue more ozone alerts,

families need and deserve to know the truth about what they are breathing.

Wendy Bredhold is Indiana field organizer with Moms Clean Air Force

Richard J. Tenbarge, Evansville

Treat pensions as sacred ground

I was happy to see the City Council take action on the practice of the city administration borrowing money from the police and fire pension account which is funded by the state. Any pension account should be considered sacred ground. Any money borrowed from a pension account affects the money earned by that pension account. I would hope that money earned by any pension fund or account would remain with that fund and not be used for other purposes. Local police and fire personnel pay more each payday into their future pension then other

workers pay into Social Security.

Police and fire personnel do not pay into Social Security, their future pension is their retirement security. If a police or fire officer works outside the department before, during or after their career the amount they can receive from Social Security is greatly reduced by federal law.

This is why it is so important to treat the police and fire pension funds as sacred ground. It is security for the future for the men and women who protect us day and night and with their lives if need be.

A lot of cities and states are having pension problems and I would guess that these pension problems were caused by taking money from the accounts and not leaving the money earned in the accounts.

This is the problem with Social Security, money has been taken from the account in the past and not repaid, now they want to punish future retirees for actions taken by congress in the past. Of course congress has its own separate pension system and

does not rely on Social Security.

Tenbarge is a retired Evansville police officer.

Jeanie Williams, Evansville

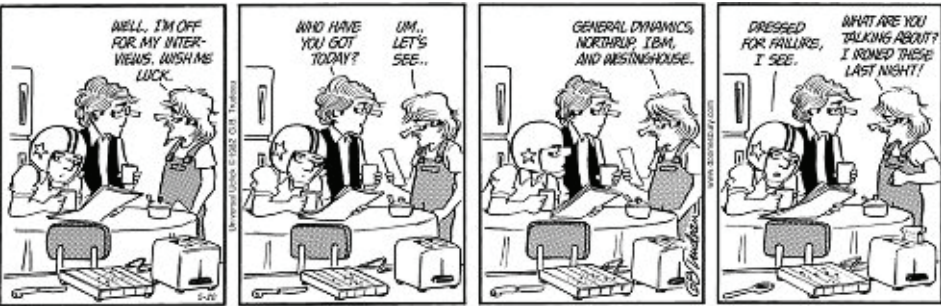
EVSC excels at self promotion

I read your coverage of Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation Superintendent Dr. David Smith’s “State of our Schools” address. It is my view that what Dr. Smith and the EVSC are best at is self-promotion.

When the Indiana Department of Education recently named the four star schools, only one, Scott Elementary, was from the EVSC. It is disheartening that out of approximately 36 schools in the EVSC, only one is rated four stars by the state.

Dr. Smith is paid more than \$200,000 per year by the taxpayers of Vanderburgh County. We deserve more four star schools and less self-promotion.

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