THE CONVERSATION



Ohio State University President Ted Carter and his wife, Lynda, right, watch the Buckeyes play in the College Football Playoff National Championship game on Jan. 20, 2025, with Provost Ravi Bellamkonda (center), his wife, Lalita Kaligotla (left) and their daughter, Ameya. OHIO STATE UNIVERITY

DISPATCH EDITORIAL

OSU trustees have wronged new president and public

There's a "joke" that says the most important person in Ohio is the one who coaches the Buckeyes on the football field. ● The validity of that joke is *debatable*. What isn't is that the person who leads the state's flagship public institution of higher learning is key to shaping what Ohio is and what it will be. ● The scandalous resignation of Ted Carter, just over two years into his tenure as president, has renewed severe leadership concerns at Ohio State University that will not be easily fixed. ● The March 12 appointment of Ravi V. Bellamkonda as the 156-year-old university's third new president in five years is a Band-Aid over a wound that the Ohio State University Board of Trustees still must heal.

The move to fill the position seems inexplicably rushed, considering that Carter was essentially forced to resign less than a week ago for reasons that have not been fully disclosed to or processed by the public.

The board enthusiastically and unanimously supported Bellamkonda based on his "vast experience, his personal values and management skills" exhibited during his 400 days as OSU provost.

It enthusiastically and unanimously appointed Carter on Aug. 22, 2023, based partly on his "strategic ingenuity and a highly collaborative leadership." He assumed the role Jan. 1, 2024.

With a base salary that was set at $1,189,733, Carter was the second consecutive Ohio State president to abruptly leave before their contract expiration.

As with the secrecy shrouding the resignation of Kristina Johnson, the Carter episode shows the board of trustees isn't fulfilling the final principle outlined in the university's shared values under integrity and respect: "Building trust through honesty, transparency, and authentic engagement."

Transparency is lacking

Ohio State, one of the largest colleges in the nation with 61,677 students, wields incredible influence in and out of the state.

The public's trust and money are on the line. Ohioans deserve the truth.

Yet, the board of trustees has been vague about why Carter was allowed to resign instead of being fired, leaving distracting speculation where there could be honesty and clarity, with a renewed focus on the land grant university's core goals.

Carter said he made a mistake.

The university has said Carter had an inappropriate relationship with "someone seeking public resources to support her personal business."

Carter and his wife, Lynda, married in 1982 after meeting in 1979.

Hours after Carter's resignation became public, a spokesperson from JobsOhio said the woman Carter was possibly in an unspecified relationship with was "The Callout" podcast host Krisanthe Vlachos.

JobsOhio, a private nonprofit corporation funded by the state's liquor profits, paid $60,000 to sponsor four episodes of the veteran-themed show. It paid $15,000 for the first episode that had only a few thousand downloads. It also spent $10,000 to support an affiliated play, raising many troubling questions for another day.

The university is investigating Carter's

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Columbus has outgrown its transport system — we need elevated rail



Your Turn
Dave Eastburn
Guest columnist

Columbus has never conformed to stereotypes about Midwestern cities.

From the modest capital I grew up in to one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the United States, its story has been defined by expansion, opportunity and ambition.

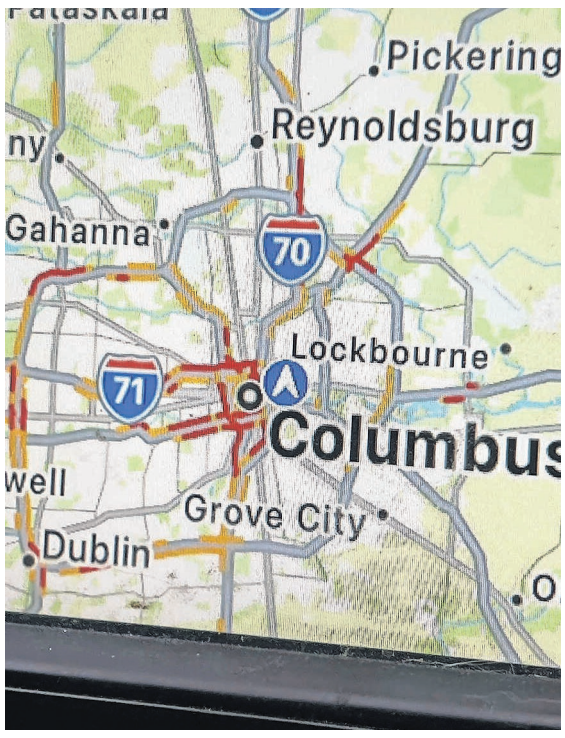
But as the region grew to 2.3 million residents, systems established in the 1950s and '60s failed to keep up. This is particularly true when it comes to how we move around it.

Transportation is not just about roads or commute times; it shapes the rhythm of daily life and the possibilities a city can offer its residents.

Evolving to meet the new Columbus

For Columbus, now the nation's 15th largest city, to sustain its momentum, it must think more boldly about its residents, their quality of life, and the toll on the infrastructure that's already past its limits.

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iPhone map shows traffic congestion in Columbus. AMELIA ROBINSON/DISPATCH