THE CONVERSATION



The report on Ted Carter's presidency, completed by OSU's compliance and integrity office and its department of internal audit, cannot possibly settle things in the public's mind.
ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

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Carter investigation raises serious criminal questions

We get it. Ohio State University wants to move on quickly from an embarrassing scandal revealed when the yearslong "inappropriate relationship" between its former president and a podcaster sponsored by JobsOhio was exposed by a tipster. • That can't happen. • There are far too many unresolved questions about the university's actions — or inaction — and potential illegal acts former President Ted Carter may have engaged in during his entanglement with Krisanthe Vlachos of the Callout Podcast. • Things have moved swiftly since Carter met on March 7 with Ohio State trustees who questioned him about his relationship with Vlachos and his possible improper use of public resources, allowing him to resign instead of being fired.

Days later and with no public input, the board of trustees unanimously promoted new Provost Ravi V. Bellamkonda, to the presidency. He's the third president in five years.

The board also ordered an internal investigation that was conducted in just six weeks and released April 21, concluding there were no systematic failures that helped give the scandal more life.

We disagree.

The relationship went unnoticed for two years

It is illogical to conclude that everything worked as it should. If it had, why did it take nearly the entire time of Carter's tenure as president to expose his alleged misdeeds?

"For almost two years, Carter used the authority of his position to make wide-ranging efforts to assist (Krisanthe) Vlachos both inside and outside the university," OSU's report reads.

While the report is appropriately thorough and documents Carter's many inappropriate actions and failures to help Vlachos, its conclusions gloss over documented lapses where employee concerns about the president's abuse of power were not properly investigated.

Yes, it's good Ohio State did not hire Vlachos or give her $100,000 despite Carter's efforts, but he still enlisted 14 employees, university resources and outside groups to help her while abusing his valuable time and influence.

Still, the university's press statement tried to assure us all was well.

"While our internal systems held strong, the circumstances disclosed in the investigative report underscore the need to continually examine and make adjustments accordingly," Ohio State Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer Gates Garrity-Rokous said in a press release issued with the report.

That's right, folks. While it could have been worse, there's nothing to see here. Move along. Case closed.

Ohio laws may have been broken

The report, completed by OSU's compliance and integrity office and its department of internal audit, cannot possibly settle things in the public's mind.

Only an external investigation from a truly independent body could do that. Only then can any appearance of failures or criminality be resolved.

No state agency is known to be investigating the case. In the name of the public's trust and money, the Ohio Attorney General's Office, the Ohio Auditor's Office, the Ohio Ethics Commission or the Ohio Inspector General's Office must step in.

Susan Willeke, communications manager with the Ohio Ethics Commission, told The Dispatch that her department is reviewing Ohio State's report.

In their report, investigators explicitly ques-

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Racism, sexism loom over race for governor



Amelia Robinson
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Unless *H.E. double hockey sticks freezes over*, someone who is not a White man will be elected Ohio governor for the first time in history this year.

My friend's mom — and Ohioans like her — might be a big problem for Republican gubernatorial candidate Vivek Ramaswamy.

His Democratic challenger, Amy Acton, faces challenges of her own.

But first, Ramaswamy and the undeniable hurdles he faces with Ohioans like my friend's mom, a White, MAGA-aligned conservative in her early 70s.

If race were not a factor, she'd likely be lined up to support Ramaswamy, who received President Donald Trump's endorsement about a year ago.

My friend's mother lives in a small rural town, which has consistently backed Trump for president, despite all his many controversies.

She votes in every election. The problem for Ramaswamy, according to her son, is that she won't vote for someone like him due to her deep mistrust and dislike of immigrants, Muslims, and Black and Brown people.

A 'bad painter'

Ramaswamy, an Upper Arlington resident and son of Indian immigrants, was born and raised in the Cincinnati area and waves the red, white, and blue. He's Hindu, not Muslim.

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Ohio governor candidates Vivek Ramaswamy and Amy Acton THE ENQUIRER/COLUMBUS MONTHLY