

JOAN PAYNE:

I worked in the Registrar's Office for 24 1/2 years when I left in June of 2006. Colom started officially in our office in January 2006. He actually showed up before the end of 2005 before he was officially confirmed by the A&M board of regents. He immediately started making changes. I never intended to leave the office. I always thought I would retire from there. I had advanced from a clerk typist to Associate Registrar. I served as interim registrar twice before I left.

One of the first things he did was to tell the director of admissions he needed to find a new job. Paul Carney was the director of admissions at the time. He was told to leave within the first month of Colom arriving at OSU. Colom brought several people with him from the school he came from in Florida. He had to make room for them in the admissions office. One of them was immediately named the director of admissions. One long time employee---over 30 years-- who was in an administrative position was assigned to work a counter as basically a clerk. He told her that her new job would be to be the "pretty lady at the counter" and smile. This employee was well respected across the state of OK and was very competent and professional in her job. The stress of this took a toll on her. She was on sick leave for a year and then came back and retired. She could not work under those conditions.

The associate director of admissions was charged with restructuring the office and making changes that were detrimental to the employees. She was not able to work under the stress and left the office to be an academic advisor in the College of Education. She too, was well respected across campus and the state of Oklahoma.

Albert was only focused on making changes to the Registrar's and Admission's offices. He had a total disregard for university and state regents policies in regards to admissions, posting transfer work, processing applications for admissions. He once asked me why everyone was so afraid of the state regents he told me they didn't have any authority over us.

He is a bully and created a hostile workplace. The people he brought with him from Florida were just as bad. Admissions got the brunt of their demeaning and bullying treatment. Admissions lost their director, assistant director, coordinator of admissions processing, and coordinator of international admissions in a very short time. The director and assistant director were both gone by May.

The carnage wasn't as severe in the Registrar's office initially. After I left in June things got worse for the remaining staff. The office was set up so that everyone was either in an office or a cubicle. These were very nice cubicles. We had just moved into this space in 1999. Albert removed all of the cubicles and placed desks throughout the office. It became a wide open space with desk after desk. There wasn't any privacy for the workers. He restructured the counter space up front and consolidated the services provided to the students. Instead of having a dedicated counter for transcripts, fee adjustments, and certifications he combined it all into one space that did not serve the students' needs. Supporting documentation for policy and procedures in the office and for the university were thrown away. Supporting documentation for admissions processing and course evaluations were thrown away.

He began posting CLEP and AP scores against the guidelines set up by the state regents.

He made a lot of changes in the recruitment office. They had a large turnover within months of him coming.

After about three months I realized I could not work with him and make the changes he wanted to do in the Registrar's Office. It began to take a toll on me---health, mentally, emotionally. I could not treat my staff in the manner he wanted. I made the decision to leave and took a job as an academic advisor with the College of

Arts and Sciences. Telling my staff I was leaving was the hardest thing I had ever done. They were good people and very dedicated to the university and the office. All of them were committed to protecting the integrity of the academic record and the office.

Leaving the office cost me 1/2 of my salary---which was a very good salary. Ultimately it has cost me in retirement. Oklahoma Teacher retirement is based on your 3 highest years of income. I have never come close to making the money I was making when I left the office. But, on the other side, I think that I saved myself health problems by leaving. The stress of staying would have been too much.

In my opinion, the Registrar's Office and Admissions have not recovered from him. The people he put in place--Registrar, Associate Registrar and Admissions leadership are not empathetic or concerned about policy and procedure. They are definitely not student orientated. Staff in both offices are not treated as valuable members of the office and feel demeaned. Ultimately, it has affected the culture on campus.

I feel like I am rambling. I don't know how to express how toxic it was during that time and how many good people suffered because of him. It's been a long time and there are probably things I have forgotten. You might want to look at Bowling Green University. This is where Colom ended up when he was told to find another job. You might want to reach out to Linda Owens. She was the assistant director of admissions who left and went to the college of education. She is now retired. Her email is: [REDACTED] I told her yesterday about your email. Hopefully she will be willing to provide some information for you. [REDACTED] is still left in the Registrar's Office. I'm not sure how comfortable she will feel about helping you considering the atmosphere in that office. .

In closing, I will say that out of a staff of almost 30 full-time employees in the Registrar's Office at the time he came---only two are left. In admissions only 2 employees are left.

I know this is long. I will try and think back and hopefully find more useful information for you. I don't have any emails. I may visit with [REDACTED] and see if there is anything she wants me to forward to you.

I have relatives who live in Eau Claire. I would never want them to work for him or bear the brunt of his changes that coming down the pike.