DENNIS GOLDEN 7

Dennis Golden is one of 23 peer educators at the University of Kansas.

Peer educators are students who serve as academic resources and mentors to help first-year KU students adjust to campus life.

This is the second year Golden, a second-year law student, is a peer educator.

He is the son of Robert and Sherry Golden, Baldwin City.

He graduated from Ottawa High School.

He received a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in East Asian languages and cultures from the University of Kansas spring 2006.
Ryan Huschka, Ottawa, was one of 160 graduates of the University of Kansas School of Law. He was honored during hooding and commencement ceremonies May 20.

Huschka was a member of the Kansas Law Review. He served as editor in chief for Volume 55.

He was the recipient of the C.C. Stewart Award in Law for top graduate in the Class of 2007.

After sitting for the bar exam he will begin a judicial clerkship for the Honorable Deanell Reece Tacha, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Ap-

peals for the Tenth Circuit. He is the son of Jim and Sherry Huschka, Ottawa.

[Photo of Ryan Huschka]
Frats haven’t paid

Baker’s Delts, Sig Eps owe property taxes

BY JONATHAN KEALING
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Two Baker University fraternities are on a Douglas County list of individuals and organizations that are delinquent on their 2007 property taxes.

Delta Tau Delta and Sigma Phi Epsilon still both must pay half of their 2007 taxes, in the amount of $2,691.06 for Delta Tau Delta and $3,215.12 for Sigma Phi Epsilon. This is the first time that Delta Tau Delta has been delinquent, according to the Douglas County Treasurer’s office. But Sigma Phi Epsilon has been late paying its taxes each year since 2003, said Stacy Kurtz, director of taxation and accounting.

While the public notice of delinquent taxes warns that any property listed could be sold at auction as soon as September, even when the property is worth far more than the past-due taxes, the reality is it takes years of nonpayment before the county takes such action, said county treasurer Paula Gilchrist.

"It's at least three years before we start tax foreclosure proceedings," Gilchrist said. "Typically it comes down to notification."

Gilchrist also said that if it does come to foreclosure, "the amount that's due is superfluous." Even a bill in the thousands could mean a property will be sold. Gilchrist said it's not uncommon for auctions to actually raise less than the tax bill, let alone the value of the property.

All fraternities and sororities at Kansas University are paid in full.

When reached this week, Bob Andrews, chapter adviser for Delta Tau Delta, said that he was aware that there were some back taxes, but not the extent of it. When told the amount, he indicated he expected the fraternity could pay them off virtually immediately.

"That's not bad at all," he said of the $2,600 his chapter owes. "I've seen a lot worse as an attorney. I think we should be able to get that straight. I think we've got the money to pay it."

Andrews said there have been some problems with the fraternity, and the national office has appointed him to go in and get things straightened out. Andrews did not specify what sort of problems the fraternity had been having.

As for Sigma Phi Epsilon, Kurtz said that the fraternity has a history of paying taxes late. It paid its 2003 taxes in July 2004, when the final amount was due in May. It paid the 2004 taxes in November 2005, when they were due in December 2004. The 2005 taxes, which were due in May 2006, were not paid until November of that year.

Kurtz said the county has no contact for Sigma Phi Epsilon and messages left by the Journal-World with the chapter adviser on file with Baker University, Tyler McLenon, as well as with the bookkeeper listed on the fraternity's 2006 federal tax return, Scott Hughes, were not returned.
OURVIEW

Major concern

Officials should be concerned

THE LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Are tuition premiums placed on some areas of study at Kansas University and other U.S. colleges pushing low-income students into majors with less career potential?

According to comments by KU Provost Richard Lariviere in a recent New York Times article, the answer to that question appears to be “yes.”

“We are seeing at this point purely anecdotal evidence,” Lariviere told the Times. “The price sensitivity of poor students is causing them to forgo majoring, for example, in business or engineering, and rather sticking with something like history.”

The next question KU officials should be asking themselves is: “Does such a trend serve the state of Kansas and its students?”

KU is one of several universities mentioned in the New York Times article. KU began charging “differential tuition” (now referred to on the KU Web site as “course fees”) in the early 1990s. The fees were justified as a way to ensure students in certain majors have the up-to-date equipment and top-notch faculty necessary to succeed in their careers. However, the tie between higher course fees and majors that lead to higher paying jobs is undeniable.

Course fees this semester in the KU law school are $154 per credit hour. Pharmacy majors pay an additional $132 per hour, business students about $86 per hour and engineering students, $34. A move to add fees to courses in KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences failed earlier this year.

It’s worth noting that even this year’s entering freshmen, who will pay the much-touted four-year “guaranteed” tuition, must pay course fees. And, unlike their tuition, those fees will increase. The per-hour fee for business students, for instance will be at $102 by the time this year’s freshmen are seniors.

The evidence that low-income students are avoiding majors with additional course fees may be anecdotal, but it is nonetheless disturbing. Some observers try to justify the fees by saying that students in disciplines such as business or engineer-
ing should pay more because they will earn more when they graduate, but that is a weak rationale. Acquiring a well-paying job may be one goal of a university education but universities shouldn’t be in the business of placing a relative dollar value on various fields of study.

It’s also unsettling for university officials to point to scholarship programs that are funded by the additional fees. That amounts to having students who pay full tuition and fees actually subsidizing the education of some of their classmates.

Universities should be in the business of opening many doors of opportunity to students rather than discouraging them from entering certain fields because the cost of courses in those fields stretch a student’s ability to pay. Too many students already are being left behind because of the rising costs of higher education.

There’s nothing wrong with being a history major, but it doesn’t serve the state of Kansas and its economic future to push people into liberal arts majors rather than encouraging those who are interested to pursue professional degrees. If even anecdotal evidence that course fees are having that effect doesn’t worry KU officials, it should.
Johnson County names Letcher as its new treasurer

OLATHE, KS (Johnson County Square) — Johnson County has named a familiar face as its new treasurer.

He is Charles M. “Mick” Letcher of Olathe, who has served as the county’s interim treasurer for the past two years and has worked in the Treasurer’s Office for almost two decades.

In his new role, Letcher will become the first appointed treasurer in the history of Johnson County. In the past, the treasurer was elected by county voters until seven years ago when Johnson County voters approved the county’s new Home Rule Charter, making the county treasurer an appointed position by the county manager.

His appointment was announced Monday, July 9, by County Manager Michael B. Press.

“We are very happy to have Mick remain a member of the county’s management team. He has a wealth of experience and has proven his dedication to county government and Johnson County citizens as a longtime county employee and interim treasurer. He has helped to ensure a smooth transition of changes in that important office under the county’s new charter,” Press said. “He was simply the right choice. It’s a good fit for both Mick and county government.”

“It’s a great opportunity and I am honored the county manager has chosen me to fill this role in our organization,” Letcher said.

To the Letcher family, longtime residents of Olathe, the Treasurer’s Office has become a family tradition. He is the second generation to work in the office. Letcher became a full-time county employee in October of 1987 as his mother, Nellie, was retiring after more than 40 years of service as a distribution clerk.

His father, Charles Junior Letcher, also is a former Johnson County employee, working as a superintendent at the Public Works Department for more than four decades until his retirement in December of 1986. Both parents still reside in Olathe. Government, along with the Division of Motor Vehicles.

The new treasurer will direct the office, now called a department of Johnson County. “Our plan is to be innovative, yet resourceful, in our efforts to continuously improve services provided to the taxpayers of Johnson County,” Letcher said.

The department currently has approximately 85 full-time employees with the responsibility for the collection, distribution, reconciliation, and disbursement of approximately $1 billion annually of real estate, personal property, state assessed, and motor vehicle taxes. The department performs countywide accounts receivable functions along with the collection of delinquent accounts for select departments. The changes in the Treasurer’s Office and the county treasurer’s position have been in the works since approval of the county’s new Home Rule Charter in November of 2000, which mandated changes in the structure of Johnson County Government.

These changes included:
  • Consolidating the County Clerk and Register of Deeds offices. That transition resulted in the creation of the Department of Records and Tax Administration in early 2005.
  • Converting the county treasurer from an elected to an appointed position. In the 2000 elections, Dennis Wilson of Overland Park was elected the 32nd treasurer in Johnson County history. The transition of the treasurer’s position would occur at the end of his term or when Wilson vacated the position. He ended his duties as county treasurer on June 24, 2005.

Wilson is a current member of the Kansas Senate, representing the county’s 37th District.

Letcher has served as the county’s interim treasurer since Wilson’s departure in June two years ago. Prior to that, he had served as chief deputy treasurer since March of 2002.

When he joined the office staff in 1987, he worked as a senior account clerk before being promoted to cash accountant. From July 1990 to February 2002, Letcher was an accountant in the office until becoming chief deputy treasurer.

In his college years, Letcher worked part-time in the Treasurer’s Office during school breaks to assist the staff with the annual tax season.

A native of Olathe, Letcher has lived most of his life in Olathe except for a few breaks to go to college and work elsewhere. He attended the University of Kansas where he received B.S. degrees in accounting (1989) and business administration (1982).

He and Carmen, his wife of five years, have a 2-year-old son Brian. The family also includes an 18-year-old son, Colin, who will attend Maple Woods Community College, Kansas City, Mo. this fall.
Area university leaders repudiate boycott call

By Rick Hellman

Editor

The leaders of the top universities in Kansas and Missouri have joined hundreds of their colleagues across the nation in repudiating an academic boycott of Israel that is being proposed by the leaders of Britain’s University and College Union.

The American Jewish Committee is promoting the college presidents’ campaign as a way of pushing back against international threats of boycott and divestment against the Jewish state. A full-page ad featuring the signatures of 300 college executives, including the University of Missouri-Columbia Chancellor Brady J. Deaton, appeared in the New York Times last week. The headline was “Boycott Israeli Universities? Boycott Ours, Too!” The fine print was a statement by Columbia University President Lee Bollinger, taking a stand for academic freedom and in defense of educational exchanges with Israel.

In addition to Deaton, the ad carried the signature of Park University President Beverly Byers-Pevitts.

After the ad appeared, officials of the Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee here sent out a letter to several other area college leaders, asking that they endorse the statement, too, and condemn the “deeply misguided” action of academic boycott. Kansas State University President Jon Wefald and University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Richard Lariviére signed on to condemn the British effort.

“I’m impressed they did it so quickly,” JCRB/AJC Executive Director Marvin Szenel said of the university leaders. “We’re big believers in everyone standing up for justice. No one should stand up for justice alone. That’s why we advocate for justice for Israel in the public arena. Israel shouldn’t be alone.”

A condemnation of the proposed boycott — using far stronger language than the AJC ad — passed the U.S. House of Representatives on a unanimous voice vote last month.

Leaders of Britain’s University and College Union, which represents about 120,000 employees in higher education, called May 30 for a boycott on cooperation with Israeli academics and institutions to condemn the “complicity of Israeli academia in the occupation” of the West Bank, Gaza and other disputed territories around Israel. The full union still has to vote on the matter. Boycott proponents aim to prevent Israeli and British university or college staff from working on joint projects or assisting each oth-

Any attempt to burden or ban these scholarly exchanges in order to make a political point will have a chilling effect . . .

KU Chancellor
Robert Hemenway
KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway today said that the university will not burden or ban changes in order point will have a er in their work, which could affect student exchanges, grants, publication of research papers and participation in conferences.

The UCU Congress resolution condemned Israel without ever mentioning Palestinian irredentism, terrorism or the numerous wars levied against Israel by Arab nations.

The KU officials went beyond merely rejecting the idea of boycott and signing on to the Bollinger statement.

"We are all students of the world," Hemenway and Lariviere said in a joint statement. "The academic exchange between scholars of different nations is an essential means by which we learn from each other and about each other. Any attempt to burden or ban any of these scholarly exchanges in order to make a political point will have a chilling effect on the free exchange of ideas and severely hinder research in many fields, notably scientific discoveries and advancements in technology. Academic freedom among all institutions of higher education must be carefully nurtured, no matter the nation or existing political environment."
KC native returns to area to work at KU Hillel

KU Hillel has hired Laura Gilman to be the new Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow. She will focus on creating programs, initiatives and other opportunities to engage students in Jewish life on campus who might not initially seek it out on their own.

Gilman is returning to the Kansas City area after graduating from Goucher College in Baltimore, Md., where she majored in sociology and anthropology. Between graduation and beginning her position at KU Hillel on Aug. 1, she spent two months in Israel studying at the Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Gilman’s experience in the Kansas City Jewish community is extensive. She grew up at Congregation Beth Torah and is a graduate of the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy. In addition, she was an active member of BBYO. During college, Gilman worked for the Jewish Heritage Foundation in the summer of 2006 as part of CAJE’s Jewish Learning for Life summer internship program.

Gilman comes to KU Hillel with a tremendous amount of knowledge about Judaism, the Jewish community and Hillel in particular. She was involved in Jewish campus life at Goucher, serving as Hillel president and receiving numerous awards for Jewish student leadership from Hillels of Greater Baltimore. In both Baltimore and Israel, Gilman worked with various Jewish communities and populations, ranging from young synagogue youth-groupers to newly arrived Ethiopian-Israeli immigrants.

“We are so excited to have Laura join our staff,” said Jay Lewis, KU Hillel’s executive director. “Her warm and friendly personality coupled with her passion for Judaism make her the ideal person to reach out to college students. She is going to have quite an impact on the KU Jewish community.”

Lewis also said he believes her Kansas City roots will help her in her position.

“She knows this Jewish community as well as any young adult does. I know how much of an asset that is. I am thrilled we were able to bring her back to the community,” he said.

To find out more about KU Hillel or Jewish life at KU, call (785) 749-5397 or go to www.kuhillel.org.
KU alum volunteers in Israel

This summer, University of Kansas alumnus and Overland Park resident Danny Ross volunteered with Magen David Adom in Israel as part of its Ambulance Volunteer Program.

For five weeks, he and other international Certified First Responders assisted paramedics with transporting patients to local hospitals in Haifa.

“This is a great program, and volunteering in the Jewish homeland is worthwhile for anyone,” Ross said. “The experience is especially helpful for college students seeking medical, dental, heath, social welfare and foreign based careers.”

Ross received financial support for the program from KU Hillel and the Mort and Regina Brown Fund at the Jewish Community Foundation.
Sumner graduate named Mount Oread scholar

Laura Elizabeth Hochman, a Kansas University freshman in pre-education and graduate of Sumner Academy of Arts and Sciences, was named one of the 189 Mount Oread Scholars at KU.

Established in 1996, the Mount Oread Scholars Program is designed to facilitate academic connections on campus and is part of KU’s University Advising Center. New first-year students are invited to become Mount Oread Scholars during their first years at KU if they graduated in the top 20 percent of their high school classes, and received an ACT composite score of at least 28 or a minimum SAT score of 1,240.

Mount Oread Scholars work individually with an adviser in their fields of interest, share class schedules to form study or discussion groups, attend scholar support sessions and enroll in relatively small classes taught by veteran faculty. There is also a Learning Community and seminar course reserved for scholars. The program’s retention rate the past two years is about 94 percent.
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