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Tomanek Hall: Newspaper, two editorials about the new physical sciences building

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FHSU president criticizes Daily News

I have always tried to defend the rights of the press and to be considerate of the difficult task you and your reporters have in ascertaining facts. But, in the last few days, two examples of your journalism have caused me to write this letter.

The first example was your newspaper's handling of the alleged attack on a band camp student at the university. You were critical of the administration because we made no comment and because we asked the press not to report the alleged incident. Our reservations were based on strong suspicions that research would prove that the incident did not occur. A day later you were confronted with the reality that the alleged attack did not occur and that your front page story was unfounded.

The second example of your failure to properly research an issue shows up in your editorial regarding the new physical sciences building at Fort Hays State University. You allege that this project is not needed and that it is purely a local political maneuver to spend U.S. tax dollars. If you would have taken the time to research thoroughly, you would have found that:

1. The Kansas Board of Regents had reviewed the project and had determined it was a priority for the state of Kansas and all the regent institutions.

2. The Kansas Board of Regents had

already scheduled \$12 million of state funds for the building in the mid-1990s; and,

3. Last October the Kansas Board of Regents had authorized FHSU to pursue federal funds in order to lower the state's financial obligation.

Last year \$44.8 million was appropriated in the federal Energy and Water Appropriation Bill to fund university-based projects. This year \$45 million will be allocated for university-based projects — regardless of where they are built. Senator Dole and the Kansas delegation agreed to assist us in the pursuit of our needed project, and they checked to make sure that it was reviewed by the Kansas Board of Regents and was a state priority.

Unlike the conclusion of your editorial I believe Kansans and Ellis County citizens can be very proud of the fact that it appears our university will be successful this year in competing for federal funds for this needed project. I believe that the state's taxpayers can be proud that our Washington representatives, the Kansas Board of Regents and FHSU have worked hard to obtain federal dollars on a competitive basis for a project that would otherwise be built entirely with state funds.

President Edward Hammond,
Fort Hays State University

Sen. Dole protects FHSU's well-being

I am sorry The Hays Daily News doesn't think the students of Hays State University merit a new physical science building. Let me tell you in one word why I fought to have this project included in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill — safety.

The current science building was built in 1928. That wouldn't be a problem if the building was used for teaching history or English, but an out-of-date science building can be a serious health hazard.

Corroded and clogged ventilation systems don't do a good job of removing the fumes from chemistry classes — the smell gags you even in the morning. The wiring is so old that people have blown fuses trying to hook up personal computers — don't even think about using bigger, more sophisticated machinery that most schools consider standard issue. Space is so limited that one professor must share an office

with an X-ray machine, and, no, he doesn't wear a lead suit to work. The problems go on forever. Is it any wonder the state of Kansas has closed the building on numerous occasions for fire and safety code violations?

I want to make sure, as Senate Republican Leader, that Kansas gets its fair share of federal funds. If ensuring the well-being of the students and faculty at Fort Hays State is considered pork by your paper, then let me loudly plead guilty as charged.

Sen. Bob Dole,
Washington, D.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Daily News has been unable to ascertain any closing of the current science building because of safety violations. We will, however, continue to research the issue thoroughly.