Student Body President Election Compromised by Voter Fraud

By Chase Staff

Fraudulent votes have been uncovered in the results of ENMU’s Student Body Presidential election, in which graduate student Kathryn Bigham defeated junior Joseph Gergel after a four-day online voting period from April 2 – 6, 2018. The majority of fraudulent votes only benefited Bigham and were the result of multiple votes originating from the same IP addresses within approximately five minutes of each other.

“My personal surprise was it and disappointed, that somebody or some group of people would try to affect a student government vote,” said Gergel. “I personally blame it on an Internet virus, it’s called the ILOP virus, so saying the system was hacked, an outlandish statement.”

The fraudulent votes were identified by Cristine Watson, Executive Secretary for the Office of Planning and Analysis. “When you have 50 of the exact same IP address within five minutes of each other, that means everybody was sitting in one location.” The location was not specified.

Deidre Long, Vice President of Student Affairs stated, “their advisor, Chief Mauldin, brought it to my attention… the day after he sent me the election results.” The location was not specified.

Conversely, Chief of Police Bradley Mauldin, who is also the advisor to ASENMU expressed, “It wasn’t just one candidate that had votes like that. Now there was one candidate that was more predominate than another one, as it related to those votes.”

Mauldin held a meeting with both candidates after fraudulent votes in the first election were found. “I asked them [the candidates] point blank and they stated that they were appalled by what had happened and they had no involvement.” Mauldin continued, “We had the Student Body President, Ryan Montano, the director of elections Kayla Wilson, and we had both candidates sitting right there in those chairs that you gentlemen [Chase reporters] are sitting in.”

Contrary to what Mauldin stated, Gergel said, “I was initially contacted by the Director of Elections who asked if I could meet in Chief Mauldin’s office with everyone. I said I couldn’t because I was in Albuquerque at the [Townhall...] I called into the meeting later that afternoon and talked on the phone on speaker for about 30 minutes with the Director of Elections, the other candidate, Advisor Mauldin, and our Student Body President Montano.”

Upon interviewing, Bigham stated, “when we found out that there were issues, we decided, or I decided I didn’t want to win that way.” Gergel added, “I was given information that even once all of the fraudulent votes were dismissed, Kaythlyn still won. So, when I was given the option to appeal the results, I did not see the purpose since I was told either way she won.”

However, I also did not want to concede the election to Kaythlyn since the entire process was jeopardized. “A new election was conducted April 16 – 20, 2018. Both the candidates were required to attend a candidate orientation meeting before the elections began. “At this meeting, the Director of Elections went over briefly some of the rules for campaigning and the dates everything was happening,” stated Gergel. “The Director of elections works very closely with our advisor to set up what they call the Writ of Elections… it has a section in there that are campaign rules… a lot of it was, follow what is in place by Student Code of Conduct and all that,” said Bigham.

Following the second election, further investigation led to evidence of mass mailing which violates the ENMU Student Code of Conduct. Bigham stated that any abuse of her position [at Multicultural Affairs] would be an “unfair advantage,” and “we don’t do that.” She did however state that outside of her position emails were sent to athletes and international students. Despite the emails being sent on her own personal time, this is a violation of the ENMU Student Code of Conduct, 60-3 Broadcast Messages on University Electronic Mail (E-Mail), the code violated 60-3-2 which states: “The email facility of the University is intended for individual communication when timely, indirect interaction is required. Messages of a general nature at a broad audience should use other appropriate forums to disseminate information (such as general menus, newsletters, flyers, posters, Grievance Guide, etc.).” According to this code, broadcast email refers to sending messages that pertain to a broad audience that is not meant for one-on-one communication. This violation also goes against the ENEMU Writ of Elections, which states, all candidates will abide by the student code of conduct and any applicable university governance.

The content within the emails showed that they were all sent within a distinct time-frame on April 13. Evidence shows that mass emails were sent to international students that specifically requested their support. “I actually went in and changed my signature on my email even so that it only said ‘Kaitlyn Bigham’ and then my cell phone number if students wanted to contact me,” said Bigham. While Bigham previously stated that she did not advertise her position as International Affairs Director, within the mass emails sent to international student’s her signature reads: “Multicultural Affairs Graduate Assistant, International Affairs Director, and ASENMU Chief of Staff.”

According to Code 60-3-6 Permissions, a broadcast email may only be sent if approved by the appropriate senior administrator. Broadcast emails are only meant to be used by select offices of the campus, of which Bigham does not represent. At this time, it’s undetermined as to how Bigham gained access to these students’ emails, which could have possibly been an abuse of her position as International Affairs Director.

Diana Cordova, Multicultural Affairs Director, corroborated on the matter saying, “The International Affairs Department sends emails to international students pertaining to university events and information, scholarships, internships, community events, meetings, emails from faculty inviting international students to their homes for holidays, or to speak in classrooms, etc. – Information that will involve and help adapt international students to American lifestyle.”
Students Donate Blood to Save Lives

By Josh Miller

United Blood Services, “Bloodmobile” was parked outside of ENMU’s Campus Union Building on Thursday, Apr. 19, 2018 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The Bloodmobile, which visits campus about five times a year, encourages students and faculty to donate blood in a process that may not be as complex as most may think.

The interviewing process, which consists of multiple questions about your personal history takes about 30 minutes, then actually giving blood can take anywhere from 7-12 minutes. Donating blood is a safe and easy process which gives donors the chance to change lives. However, a common misbelief, it is not possible to get AIDS or any other infectious diseases by giving blood.

A brand new sterile and disposable needle is used for each blood donation. Once used, the needle is discarded. A person who donates blood burns about 650 calories with every pint donated, as the body must work to replenish itself. Donors, who give a pint of blood, can save up to three people’s lives.

According to Red Cross, 4.5 million Americans would die each year without lifesaving blood transfusions. Approximately 32,000 pints of blood are used each day in the United States. As the average human has ten pints of blood in his or her body, donating blood can make a huge difference.

Taylor Conner, a current ENMU student explains, “I’ve given blood like five times, it doesn’t hurt...they have snacks that they encourage you to eat so you can get your blood levels back to normal quicker.” While some student’s may have a higher pain tolerance than others, Calista Veroneau, another ENMU student mentioned, “On a scale of 1-10 it’s like a 5, it only hurts when the needle goes in, but after that it doesn’t hurt at all.” When asked why she donated blood, Veroneau said, “It’s always good to help people, it’s doing something positive, and saves lives.”

FBI Alumna Returns for Career Fair

By Christian Gruis

Job searching has always been a lingering thought in graduating students’ minds and as May approaches, those in search of their career path are beginning to fill out applications and conduct interviews is almost gone.

On Friday, Apr. 27, 2018, the Spring Career and Teacher Fair took place at ENMU for students seeking careers. Deenie Collucci, an ENMU Alumna who now works for the FBI, stated that they look for, “dedication, hard work and the ability to pass a background check.” Among the schools who were present, there were also many other job opportunities such as with the Portales Detention Center and the Tulsa Police Department.

Those in attendance were able to mingle with businesses and their representatives; the prospects learned more about their hiring process and requirements. As incentives for stopping by their tables, many businesses were passing out free cups, bags, pens and everything in-between to thank the prospects for their interest in the company they work for. Debbie Olds of the Portales Detention Center stated, “I come to every job fair here at ENMU and we hire a lot of people from here.”

Overall, the event was a great opportunity for the students of ENMU to get their resumes and names out there to businesses who were looking to hire.
Social Work Students Attend Annual Conference

By Tylen Caffrey

Students and faculty from the ENMU Social Work Program traveled to Albuquerque to attend the 38th Annual conference hosted by the New Mexico Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-NM).

The ENMU Social Work Club’s mission is to serve, advocate, improve the lives of others, adhere to integrity and be culturally competent. Social work students attended workshops and seminars during the conference to learn this foundation of social work through the conference titled, “Stress, Strengths and the Social Environment.”

Joining 703 social work professionals, ENMU students had the opportunity to attend this three-day conference packed with seminars and two keynote speakers: Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD, LCSW, who is best known for developing a model of historical trauma for the Lakota people, and “Warrior Social Work: A Combat Veteran’s Perspective on Social Work” presented by BJ Gareen, CEO of Service Dogs for Heroes. ENMU students had the opportunity to attend student sessions along with 120 student peers from other New Mexico universities to learn Cultural Perspectives on Advocacy and Activism, Environmental Stresses, Transgender 101, Connecting to the Community and Lean Forgiveness.

Current ENMU students also enjoyed the opportunity to meet ENMU Social Work Program alumni who were also in attendance.

NiCole Ryan, Senior and NASW Student Representative said, “The NASW conference is a great place to network.” Ryan added she attended the session titled Together We Rise: Advocacy, Action and Activism. “She said during this session she joined students from other universities throughout the state and came together on ways to advocate. Finally, Ryan said, “By the end of the session we had not only made astounding connections, she also learning the importance of advocacy.”

To raise the money for this event, the Social Work Club held a t-shirt fundraiser and received money from the ENMU Student Senate. Due to the nature of the ENMU program, many students attend via distant education which makes it difficult to host fundraising events as many students are out of the area and out of the state.

Mariah Walters, Senior and Social Work President stated, “The Social Work Club would not have achieved what we have without the help of our members.” She said, “great leadership, motivation and teamwork is what it took at attend the conference.”

The ENMU Social Work Club was able to assist with travel and expenses for eleven students to attend the conference, they also received six scholarships from the NASW-NM Chapter to cover the conference expenses.

Dr. Gentry Applauds Semester End Performance

By Felix Hernandez

Hold for more than 15 years on campus, the annual Spring Concert was hosted by ENMU Music Department in Buchanan Hall on April 19.

As a closing to the spring semester, the concert called “Of Love, Of Life” showcased the talent of three choir groups: The Chamber Singers (26 singers), The Swan Singers (11 singers who PR for the music department), and lastly, The University Singers (64 singers). “This is our semesters work in each of our classes, we have been rehearsing since January,” said Kenneth Miller, Director. Throughout the semester, participating students have continuously worked hard as they met two times a week, rehearsing for over an hour each time. Ken Miller, who has been filling in for Dr. Paulk (gone on sabbatical), said that each rehearsal process has been delightful.

Lasting roughly two hours, the concert had an abundance of songs. From “Vive La’Amour” to a collaborative mix of hits from the 80s to an original piece (“From Spring Days to Winter”), written by Dr. Mark Dal Porto, the evening premiered different styles of rhythm. During the concert, Miller gave thanks to the faculty and the seniors whose performance was their last. “My experience here has been absolutely wonderful. I’ve been here for four years, and I love every minute of it, and the supportive faculty we have here, and all the love and encouragement I have gotten here. I’m excited to keep on going,” said Angela Ruff, a senior graduating in May.

While attendees were wowed by the performances, Dr. Gentry (Dean of Fine Arts) was highly impressed, saying, “All three choirs were stunning. What I loved was the university singers, which is a no audition group, was just as meaningful, and powerful as the audition group. Amazing.”

Though this concert is the last musical performance of the year, The Swan Singers will be touring later this month at different venues for prospective students.

Students Call for Racial Diversity on ENMU Campus

By Andrea Ramos & Jessica Doughtrey

The topic of race and ethnicity has been controversial for centuries, including issues such as segregation and discrimination. While there have been some improvements in the recent decades, students at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) believe there are still steps to take towards making campus and community life more racially inclusive.

The concepts of race and ethnicity are often confused for each other, but differ greatly at their core. The American Sociology Association describes race as “physical differences that groups and cultures consider socially significant,” while ethnicity is defined as “shared culture, such as language, ancestry, practices, and beliefs.”

Inspired by National Geographic’s, April 2018 edition titled “The Race Issue,” Chase reporters set up an anonymous survey to “help facilitate a dialogue” and help “create an inclusive campus environment amongst the ENMU community.” One participant explained the two concepts, saying, “At first, they seem interchangeable. However, race is more so stereotyping physical traits to a certain group, whereas ethnicity is what someone identifies as through his or her cultural, lingual, and ancestral background.” Understanding the difference between the two is imperative to avoid social constructs, racial tension, and cultural conflicts.

Some students at ENMU seem to think there are not many racially-fueled incidents on campus, while others have reported seeing troubling interactions in daily campus life. During in-person interviews, Jazzmyn Trevino, a sophomore at ENMU, mentioned seeing a divide on campus due to race. “I have seen people not talk to people of color, just because that’s what they were raised to do and [they] don’t know any better,” said Trevino. Despite outliving incidences like the one Trevino describes, most of the students around campus seem to feel safe and included. “I think everyone is pretty open about it,” said Selena Lujan, a freshman at ENMU. “People shun away that type of topic.”

While opinions surrounding whether or not racial tension is present on campus differ, most students agree racial stigmas exist among the ENMU community. One participant explained the two concepts, saying, “I think it’s mainly due to culture, because people from different races, their ethnicity plays into their race and the way that they are brought up, so people can connect easier or more comfortably with people of the same race, without considering the benefits of expanding outward and learning about different races and cultures.”

Racial tension is still a very prominent issue facing today’s world. Students at ENMU are aware of this problem, and hope that one day they can help resolve some of the tension. “I just plan to be respectful of your culture and race pretty much,” said Lujan. “If I understand it, I understand it, if I don’t I will ask questions. I’ll be very respectful of it and won’t do anything to cause any conflict.”

I want to keep on going,” said
College can feel like a lot sometimes -- classes, homework, jobs, internships. Imagine all of that along with being a committed student athlete -- who has made all-conference line backer and all-conference academic teams -- and a father for a 6-month-old baby.

Eastern New Mexico University senior Brad Hardin, 23, doesn’t have to imagine it. He lives it every day.

Hardin, who graduates in May with a health and physical education degree, took 24 credits last semester as he prepared for the major of his dreams, while working at Hamilton nursery, playing football for ENMU and getting married and having a baby -- all while maintaining a high GPA to be placed on the commissioner’s honor roll each year.

“A lot of coffee was my time management,” Hardin laughed. “I stayed up really late and got up really early for football. I think for the first six months, I probably drank two pints of coffee a day to keep me going.”

And then there is his wife, Tyra, 22, who is currently working on her master’s in education.

“Honestly, it was a lot of Tyra. Tyra helped out a lot, and when I was gone playing football, she took on a huge part in my success.” Hardin said of his wife. “She does so much for me. Even today, she’ll wake up before I have to go to work and get my lunch ready for me. She’s just always there for me.”

Although the couple’s 6-month-old son, Ty, came as a surprise, they wouldn’t have it any other way.

“Well, at first, it was all, how are we going to tell everyone? How is everyone going to react? What are we going to do?” said Hardin, but the couple could not help their excitement overcoming any concerns.

“I think after Ty came, there was just all this pressure to have everything lined up and be able to explain where we’re going (in life) and how we’re going to get there. I think that was hard for us, because we just wanted to have it all together. And we just didn’t,” said Tyra Hardin. “Looking back on last semester, we’re like, wow, that was crazy. But when we were going through it, it just seemed fun, especially with Ty; he just makes everything so fun, so it just hasn’t felt like it was hard.”

Not to mention, the couple has an amazing support system, said Tyra.

“I think so much of it doesn’t really have anything to do with our ability,” she said. “I think that we’ve been super blessed with the opportunity and help from our friends. Even at work, his bosses are awesome people, and they try to understand and support the same with teachers and coaches. We’ve just been placed around people who have a heart to help people and love people.”

Brad will continue school after graduation to pursue his master’s in sports administration while also playing one more year of football.

“We’ve had Ty, we talked a lot about it, and I was going to make it be my last year of football. I was going to graduate and be done and go find a job,” he said. “I just love being around it. That’s why I want to do it. I just love the game so much, once I’m done playing, I still want to be a part of that. Just seeing the way kids’ lives have changed and the way my life has changed by some of the coaches that I’ve hard, I just want to have that kind of impact on people.”

And what makes all of the hard work worth it?

Brad and Tyra’s end game -- Ty.

“I think just knowing that there’s going to be an end game where we’re both going to have a master’s degree and have a job where we can give Ty whatever he needs. I think that’s the real end game, and that’s what we have been working for. We’ve got to just keep going through, no matter how crazy life is. There’s always going to be an end game, you’ve just gotta achieve your goals.”


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