

Opinion

Too little too late for UWO custodians?

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Across the nation, the Great Resignation is affecting businesses, institutions and other organizations, and UW Oshkosh is no exception.

UWO has struggled in the past couple of years, in large part due to the pandemic, to retain staff, students and now, most notably, custodial and maintenance faculty.

After being notified in August of the university's consideration of outsourcing custodial and maintenance services from Tennessee, UWO custodial and maintenance staff marched with concerned students, faculty and community members all over Wisconsin to protest the decision.

Per Chancellor Andrew Leavitt's email on Monday, the outsourcing will not take place.

But is the damage done?

Had the university proceeded to hire the Tennessee-based company, current UWO custodial, maintenance and grounds employees would have been offered a job with higher wages and a sign-on bonus, but they would lose the state benefits they've no doubt earned over their years of employment.

While the custodial and maintenance staff will now keep their jobs and their benefits, the university's initial consideration may have compromised their relationship with staff, potentially leading to lower retention rates.

As one commenter on the change.org petition to keep custodial and grounds staff state-em-



Charlie Bruecker / Advance-Titan

UWO staff, students and other community members protested the privatization of UWO custodial, maintenance and grounds jobs.

ployed wrote, "Respect for your employees goes a long way toward their pride in their jobs."

Another commenter and UWO custodian said being state-employed and having the benefits that come along with it serves as motivation in his job.

"I take pride in being a state employee," he said. "It keeps me driven at work to do the best job I can."

Clearly, the mutual respect between employee and employer yielded high-quality work.

But as angry, betrayed and passionate as custodial and grounds

staff seemed to feel during the period of uncertainty, it's possible that this relationship has been tainted.

Professor Robin Martin of the University of Manchester studies leader-follower exchanges and how this affects employees' performance and well-being.

Unsurprisingly, Martin found that poor relationships between employers and employees leads to suffering performance as morale decreases and stress increases.

His research also shows that these suffering relationships can negatively impact the psychologi-

cal well-being of both employers and employees.

Thankfully, Martin says there is the possibility that with open discussion and action, these relationships can be rebuilt.

Hopefully, for the sake of the university, this will be the outcome as Leavitt rolls out his new plans for faculty retention over the next few weeks.

Of course, in a best-case scenario, custodial and grounds workers could be in a good place in their employment now that they know their jobs won't be unfairly privatized, and stellar job performance

will remain constant.

But only time will tell as the university has yet to reveal their plan to retain and recruit workers, as well as improve working conditions.

However, one thing is certain: the protest efforts did not go unnoticed, influencing Leavitt's decision.

In such a tender situation, it's more crucial than ever to nurture the employer-employee relationship to ensure a continuing high-quality performance and worker retention.

Dobbs ruling is the first domino

By The Advance-Titan Staff
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With the recent *Dobbs* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, abortion is not a right protected by the federal government for the first time in 50 years.

This means that abortion is not a criminal act by the federal government, but instead left up to each state to decide how their state will fall on the abortion argument.

The consequences of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision and its overruling will fall heaviest on those who are less economically well off as they may not have the ability to travel out of state to receive abortion care, all at a time when state leaders have become extremely partisan on the topic.

The burden of blame rests on many shoulders.

Some Democrats failed to take initiative on this issue that impacts the livelihood of many women.

An increasing number of conservative talking heads refuse to compromise with "more liberal policies".

But blame also falls on the Supreme Court, and in particular those justices who lied or misled about their acceptance of *Roe v. Wade* during their confirmation hearings.

Due to the current partisan climate, rights have become a rallying point behind the Democratic



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The 1973 *Roe* decision set precedent for several other rulings that federally protect gay marriage and access to contraceptives.

party which for the past 50 years, has failed to properly codify *Roe v. Wade* either because it refused to see the growing bitterness on the issue or used the protection of a basic civil right as merely a campaign slogan.

Now nearly any assemblance of reason has been thrown off balance.

Too many legislators believe abortion should be prevented at any time under any circumstance, without care for the reason the procedure is necessary.

Abortion is perhaps the first domino in this extremely partisan climate to fall, as the right to body

autonomy has gone on to establish other civil rights.

For instance, Plan B is an effective contraceptive that is protected by *Griswold v. Connecticut* which, in turn, has its legitimacy through *Roe v. Wade*.

Although it is not an abortion, it has the ability to stop a pregnancy early on.

If the courts are to follow their same path of undoing certain rights to privacy, they may find that as it prevents a pregnancy after contraception it is on the same chopping block as federal abortion rights.

Another right that was ensured

by *Roe v. Wade* is the right for sodomy at the federal level, established in *Lawrence v. Texas*.

That case gave further legitimacy to gay marriage being protected federally in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Shortly after the unprecedented *Roe v. Wade* overturning, Justice Clarence Thomas spoke of returning to several cases with *Obergefell v. Hodges* being one of them.

Although some may call this fear mongering, many would have called a fear of *Roe v. Wade* being overturned fearmongering two years ago.

With the current position of abortion rights being returned to states, it leads to a terrifying reality for those in deep red states, who have realized their rights are more fragile than they thought.

However, if a strong federal push begins, the rights of Americans who live in blue states may be at risk.

Just Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-SC, introduced legislation to federally ban abortion at 15 weeks, granting exceptions for rape, incest or the mother's health.

This measure is a slap in the face of everyone who believed that abortion would truly be up to the states, which was a major argument for the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

This has shown how far the floodgates have opened, washing values of honesty and cooperation

away, and undoubtedly bringing in more legislation like this in its wake.

In many states, unless you are able to arrange transport and take time off work, abortion is inaccessible.

And if further rights such as the right to gay marriage are removed, relocation will be an extremely arduous process.

What this ruling has shown is that at times voting isn't enough and won't be enough.

Mainstream Democrats can't continue to run off protecting rights solely for their term, and moderate Republicans are becoming few and far between.

If America continues this track of taking away federally guaranteed American freedoms, few stops are left before all forms of body autonomy are lost.

So what can you do? Of course you should always vote to have greater control over who creates legislation.

But you should also invest yourself into joining clubs and organizations that take action to advance or give awareness to certain issues.

By becoming a politically active member of your community, you can better the system by bringing your own experiences and problems into the fray, influencing the world in a more nuanced way.