

EDUCATION

University of Louisville alumni, journalists rally around the Cardinal

**Thomas Novelly**

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When word spread that the University of Louisville would stop purchasing ads in its campus newspaper — accounting for nearly 50 percent of the student publication's budget — alumnus Mike Lindemberger was alarmed.

"I know how valuable that arrangement is," Lindemberger said of the university's agreement to purchase ads in the Louisville Cardinal. "I was worried about the financial future of the paper."

Lindemberger, now an editorial writer and board member at the Dallas Morning News, is rallying support for the Cardinal amid its financial hit. Bringing together graduates, journalists, and others, he is buying a \$1,190 ad in the Cardinal next week: a full-page testimonial to its impact on young writers and a condemnation of the university's decision to abandoned it.

Amid the university's \$48-million budget shortfall, school officials told the student journalism staff they would cease advertising in the independent student newspaper by the end of the 2018 spring semester.

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Dale Billingsley, acting executive vice president of U of L, sent an email to the student editor of the paper, stating this would be the final year supporting the

school paper.

"Please note that due to the tight budget situation, this will be the final year for this commitment," Billingsley said in the email. "By providing this notice early, we hope to give you ample time to find other sources of revenue for future years."

If funding ceases, and the paper can't afford to publish, the University of Louisville could be the only college in the Atlantic Coast Conference without a campus newspaper.

"We're caught in the middle of the university's financial problems," Jenni Laidman, chair of the Louisville Cardinal board of directors, previously told the Courier-Journal. "We don't know what the future's going to hold ... but it could mean the end of the Cardinal."

In a Facebook page titled, "Alumni Supporters and Friends of The Louisville Cardinal student newspaper," Lindenberger has brought together nearly 150 Cardinal alumni and supporters.

Since becoming an independent newspaper in the 1970s, the Cardinal received anywhere from \$40,000 to \$60,000 from the president's and provost's office for advertising. Whatever wasn't spent on advertising was kept by the paper and factored into its operating budget.

Background: [University of Louisville pulls funding from student newspaper. Could this mean the end?](#)

In 2016, the university decreased its funding commitment by \$20,000. At the end of the 2018 spring semester, that number will drop to \$0.

So far, 30 people have signed up to help pay for the testimonial.

Tracy Green, director of development for the Louisville Free Public Library Foundation, is one of the 30 that signed the testimonial. In her two years at U of L, she served as the assistant managing editor and features editor for the Cardinal.

"The Cardinal is very interesting," Green said. "There aren't that many independent newspapers on college campuses, and we took our job very seriously. It was a shocking moment to think that it could away."

Green said the Facebook group is a testament to the strength of the paper and the impact it had on student journalists.

"The university puts so little in and gets so much out. The graduates of the Cardinal go on to do great things ... the people in that group are successful journalists and successful business and community leaders," she said.

While the ad is just a short-term way to provide the Cardinal with some revenue, Lindenberger said the efforts to keep supporting the paper won't stop anytime soon.

"It's a mistake," Lindenberger said. "\$60,000 is a small sum for what that paper does in perpetuity."

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