

Woelk: Baylor lobbyist gets creative in evaluating CU

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Boulder Daily Camera

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Readers, meet Buddy Jones.

Buddy is a former politician and a current lobbyist. That means Buddy has actually worked in two professions that fall below journalists and lawyers on the public esteem totem pole. As one of the former and a friend of the latter, I can assure you such a feat is not easy. You have to work to have that many people dislike you.

But Buddy isn't just any old lobbyist. He's a lobbyist in Texas, where big money flows like oil. Buddy is also a regent for Baylor University. That means that along with looking out for the interests of folks who have lots of green, he also looks out for the interests of things green and gold.

And that's why you might have heard of Buddy recently.

Last week, when news leaked that the Pac-10 was considering issuing invitations to six Big 12 schools -- Baylor not among them -- Buddy got his undies all twisted up.

So Buddy started sending e-mails to everyone he could think of, a list that included Baylor president Ken Starr (if the name sounds familiar, think "Monica Lewinsky"). He called legislators. He sent out lists of prominent Texas folks for people to call to express their displeasure with Baylor not being asked to the dance.

Most of all, Buddy started dissing Colorado (and Nebraska, for good measure).

Here's just some of what good ol' Buddy wrote in his e-mails:

"Baylor is superior to Colorado academically. Baylor has athletic facilities superior to Colorado. Colorado doesn't participate in the number of sports that Baylor does. Baylor's overall record in all collegiate sports dwarfs that of Colorado."

Did I mention Buddy is a lobbyist? I'm guessing that's his license to stretch the truth here and there -- and Buddy is doing a lot of Gumby stuff with that statement.

Superior academically? Not to bring numbers and facts into play, but last time I checked, the University of Colorado has rung up four Nobel Prize winners.

Baylor? Couldn't find any.

Or, you can keep score with Rhodes Scholar winners: Colorado 19, Baylor 5.

"Baylor has athletic facilities superior to Colorado."

Floyd Casey Stadium vs. Folsom Field? No contest. Ask anyone who has been to both.

"Baylor's overall record in collegiate sports dwarfs that of Colorado."

Hmm. Unless the record books are wrong, Baylor's next national championship in football will be its first. Colorado was the consensus national champion in 1990. CU also has a Heisman Trophy winner and a couple of Butkus Award winners while Baylor takes a big stiff-arm in those categories.

Bowl games? Baylor has been to 16 -- and none since 1994, meaning the Bears have never played in a bowl game as a Big 12 team. The Buffs have been to 28 bowl games, including eight as a member of the Big 12.

Speaking of the Big 12 -- Colorado has one Big 12 football championship and four division titles. Baylor's totals in those categories? Zip and zilch.

But the best part was Buddy's math. Wrote Buddy in one of his e-mails: "The CU football team is 16-33 the past four years, and the hoops team has made the NCAA Tournament twice in the last 41 years. Baylor's football isn't much better at 15-33, but the Bears' hoops program is on the rise."

I hope Buddy didn't learn his math skills at dear old Baylor. Every calculator I use says 16-33 is actually a few percentage points better than 15-33.

Buddy also pulls out the loyalty card:

"The four Texas schools in the Big XII conference have decades (if not a century) of history as being a family. The continuation of this almost sacred relationship is important to our State and to higher education in Texas."

I'd side with Buddy on this one -- if Buddy's school hadn't been part of the old Southwest Conference coalition that unceremoniously kicked TCU, SMU and Houston to the curb when the Big 12 was formed. Where were the "sacred" relationships then?

Sorry, Buddy. Have to call hypocrite on this one.

Buddy also touches on other subjects, including the fine reputation of Baylor's student athletes, etc. While I hate to bring up the ugly past, I can't help but wonder if Buddy has conveniently forgotten what is almost certainly the worst scandal in collegiate sports history. That would be the murder of a Baylor basketball player by a teammate -- and then a coach who tried to cover up the situation by coaxing his players to tell investigators that the dead player had been a drug dealer.

That led to a nice, long NCAA penalty, among other things.

Buddy also managed to take a shot at Nebraska in his e-mails, writing in one of them, "It's hard enough get the home teams to stick tight. But harder still to influence a bunch of corn shuckers."

Ouch. I could have told Buddy to save himself a whole lot of grief and not pick on the Corn.

But best of all, Buddy even played the religion card.

"The Baptist church base extends across the country and certainly trumps the University of Colorado's local base limited to a small town in Colorado."

News flash, Buddy: They don't speak in tongues in the Pac-10.

On a more serious note, I will give Buddy credit for one thing. He's trying to rally the troops. His heart is in the right place, if not his head.

Honestly, I'd like to see a little public support in Colorado.

I know our state legislators have plenty to worry about these days. They need to direct their attention to stuff that actually matters. Ditto for Gov. Bill Ritter.

But thing is, CU does matter. I'd like to see a few of the powers-that-be in Colorado stand up and say if the Pac-10 is going to invite six Big 12 teams, CU ought to be one of them.

Just once, I'd like to see someone stand up and say CU is important. I'd like them to acknowledge that the state's flagship university is important to the well-being of the entire state, and membership in a prestigious conference is a nice piece of that puzzle.

That would be nice -- and it might be the only place Buddy got something right.

CU: No Pac-10 invite yet

Regents, officials meet in private to discuss legal options

By **Kyle Ringo and Erica Meltzer** Camera Sports Writers
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/08/2010 07:28:52 PM MDT

DENVER -- University of Colorado leaders and members of the Board of Regents had little to say following a 2½-hour meeting called Tuesday night to discuss the possibilities and ramifications of realignment and expansion in athletic conferences across the nation.

The meeting was conducted almost entirely in executive session with the board's legal counsel making "attorney-client privilege" a popular phrase afterward.

CU president Bruce Benson took two questions from reporters before handing off to spokesman Ken McConnellogue.

"There is a lot of buzz going on and we just need to sit down and talk," Benson said, characterizing the meeting.

Benson would not say whether CU has received an invitation to join another conference, but McConnellogue later said the school has not received any such invitation.

McConnellogue also said the Big 12 Conference has not given CU any kind of deadline to pledge its allegiance to the league. CU never has wavered from its stance that it is a proud member of the Big 12 in its current form.

"Sure, right now we're committed members of the Big 12," McConnellogue said.

Nebraska and Missouri reportedly have been given a deadline of this Friday to make a decision about their future. It's unclear what the repercussions might be if those schools make no decision, but it's likely there wouldn't be any. The Big 12 bylaws don't address the issue. CU chancellor Phil DiStefano and athletic director Mike Bohn also participated in what served as a briefing of the board and president but also became a roundtable discussion of different scenarios and how they might affect the school and its athletic department. Members and administrators left the meeting very much in wait-and-see mode.

The board took no official action and doesn't expect to any time in the immediate future, McConnellogue said.

A report in Texas citing anonymous sources Tuesday speculated that CU was about to accept an invitation from the Pac-10 and that an announcement was planned for today.

Steve Bosley, chair of the Board of Regents, said he "doesn't know anything about" an announcement planned for today. He said there was no vote at the meeting, as the regents cannot vote in closed session, and there are no meetings scheduled to further debate or vote on any decisions related to the conferences in the next few weeks.

"There's a lot of publicity and discussion in the media about what's going to happen," Bosley said. "Our legal team advised us of all of our options, and we have to see how it unfolds. It's a moving target."

Regent Jim Geddes said there was some discussion among the regents about CU's options, but most of the meeting was taken up with receiving legal advice. He said he couldn't talk about what was discussed without violating attorney-client privilege, and it "would not be fruitful or productive" to discuss his personal views.

Regent Kyle Hybl also said he couldn't discuss the meeting without violating attorney-client privilege.

"The purpose of tonight's meeting is to understand our legal options, depending on how things play out," he said. "There are a lot of things in play right now."

Colorado is one of many schools around the nation waiting for some decisions to be made by the Big Ten and Pac-10

Conferences regarding their desire to expand. Both of those conferences have targeted Big 12 Conference schools.

Colorado is a logical target for Pac-10 expansion because of its tradition in athletics, its strong academic foundation, the culture of the school and the Boulder community and its proximity to the 16th largest television market in the U.S.

Missouri and Nebraska are candidates to join the Big Ten.

One scenario reported last week features the Pac-10 inviting Colorado, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State to form a super conference. Another scenario has Baylor replacing Colorado in that mix.

Baylor supporters and Texas lawmakers have been vocal in recent days in their attempts to make sure the school isn't left behind by its fellow Big 12 South Division members.

Colorado has done no public lobbying and has no plans to.

"I think the fact that our Board of Regents is meeting tonight and having discussions about this shows that the university is engaged," McConnellogue said. "Are we engaged in a public way with lawmakers? No. Baylor is doing what Baylor needs to do."

If Colorado was passed over by the Pac-10 or left out in the cold in some other conference realignment or expansion scenario, one doomsday scenario could be ending up in the Mountain West Conference with Colorado State, Air Force and Wyoming.

The Mountain West is not a BCS conference, though it could be with significant expansion, but it probably wouldn't be able to provide the same kind of revenue CU currently gets in the Big 12 because its schools aren't connected with enough large television markets.

McConnellogue left no doubt CU wants to remain in a BCS conference, but he said there is no formal plan in place for making sure that happens. He attempted to ease the anxiety some Colorado fans might be feeling through all the speculation.

"CU fans can be assured that the leadership of the institution is having serious discussions and they are extremely engaged in this issue," McConnellogue said.

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CU regents discuss possible move to Pac-10

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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(Denver Post file photo)

The University of Colorado's board of regents discussed legal options for switching conferences Tuesday afternoon but said CU did not receive an invitation to join the Pac-10 Conference.

During a two-hour emergency meeting that caused phone lines to buzz across the nation, the board emerged with little to say but with assurances that CU is still in the Big 12.

Asked if CU has an invitation from the Pac-10, Ken McConnellogue, associate vice president for university relations, said, "No, we don't."

CU president Bruce Benson and athletic director Mike Bohn declined comment. McConnellogue wouldn't say what options they discussed.

One of the options is leaving the Big 12 for the Pac-10, which reportedly has Colorado among its expansion targets. However, the Big 12's buyout clause is reportedly \$9 million to \$10 million.

Colorado could not pay off football coach Dan Hawkins' estimated \$3.1 million buyout last fall. So can the Buffaloes afford to leave the Big 12?

"That would be speculation," McConnellogue said. "There are discussions the board has in executive session that will stay in executive session. There's a lot of money involved in college sports. I don't know what we can afford."

CU officials also wouldn't address Baylor's self-promotion campaign to look more attractive than CU if the Pac-10 expands. Bronson Hilliard, spokesman for Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano said: "There's no need for us to sell ourselves. We think our achievements as a university, athletically and academically, stand on their own merits. We're not going to get in a

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public debate with Baylor on who's more fit to be a member of this or that conference."

If it comes down to Colorado and Baylor, Colorado still has the edge. A Pac-10 insider told The Denver Post that as a major state university, Colorado is a better fit than a private religious school such as Baylor.

Still, Baylor is exploring ways to pressure Texas

into including it if the Pac-10 expands to 16 teams. Baylor was the only Big 12 South school not included among the Pac-10's targets, according to reports.

Post Poll - Conference Call



Denver Post columnist Mark Kiszla says CU should keep conference alliance with the Rocky Mountains and join an expanded Mountain West Conference. What do you think?

☐ **Join Mountain West:** Conference rivals close by in an economically challenging time. What a great idea!

☐ **Stay in Big 12:** It's a great conference. Keep it as it is.

☐ **Join the Pac-10:** . . . or Pac-16? It would be a power conference, no doubt.



erence, no doubt.

Politicians with Baylor ties as well as Houston Astros owner Drayton McLane are urging Texas to force the Pac-10 to include Baylor if it raids the Big 12, where Texas is the prize.

Texas state Rep. Jim Dunnam (D-Waco) said Tuesday there are no laws requiring the Longhorns to take Baylor with them. "I hope that decision is made based on state interest rather than one individual school," Dunnam said.

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"(Texas has) been responsive to that type of policy in the past."

Asked if the Texas Legislature could withhold funds from the Longhorns, he said, "If any state entity does something contrary to the best interest of the state, there are consequences."

The Pac-10 expansion, however, still appears tied to Nebraska and Missouri. If they adhere to a Big 12 deadline and decide to leave for the Big Ten by Friday, Texas has hinted it will seek a larger conference.

Nebraska athletic director Tom Osborne told Omaha radio station KFAB on Tuesday night that a decision regarding conference membership "will be put together in the next few days."

Osborne has chafed at what he believes is a Big 12 bias toward Texas.

"I think before too long, and I don't know exactly what that time frame is, we'll be able to put this thing to bed because I'm getting tired of it," Osborne said. "The fans are getting tired of it."

The Denver Post's Tom Kensler contributed to this report

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