

# OU president blamed for missing report

NORMAN, Okla. (U-Wire) — The answer to the Athletic Department's budget crisis may lie in a 13-page report.

The only problem is, OU President David Boren ordered the confidential report shredded, according to an anonymous source.

Boren and four regents were given the report last winter. The report, obtained by The Oklahoma Daily, outlines \$2.9 million in services — services that most other universities pay for — that OU won't. It also identifies areas of cost containment that could save the department another \$2.8 million annually.

The report wasn't the answer university administrators were looking for. Boren said the report was unacceptable, and he threw his copy away.

"The report was incomplete and inaccurate," said OU press secretary Kim Hefty. "He told them to start over." But Boren never asked the Athletic

Department to redraft the report, according to the anonymous source. Instead, Boren told those who were given the report to shred all copies of it. The report was never redrafted.

Former athletic director Steve Owens said he's unsure why Boren wanted the report shredded.

"I don't know," he said. "When you really take a look at the Athletic Department, you can't give away tickets, you can't discount tickets. There's a lot of things that are given away, and if you're fighting budget problems, it's hard to give things away."

"We did the report as honestly and truthfully as we could," Owens said.

"Why we really have a lot of trouble balancing the budget (is) because there's a lot of things given away or that we're paying for that we're not getting reimbursed for."

The services referred to in the report include complimentary tickets for donors, the Pride of Oklahoma, spirit

groups and academic advising, which don't inherently belong under the Athletic Department. Most universities subsidize these services, and up until two years ago, the OU Athletic Department paid for all of them.

"The University of Oklahoma Athletic Department and its staff continue to look for areas to cut costs without affecting our student athletes," the report states. "However, with Title IX Gender Equity and other required support programs, we cannot save ourselves into a profit."

About half of the \$2.9 million comes from tickets. Ticket sales generate the most revenue each year, bringing in \$8.4 million.

But they could bring in more. The Athletic Department could pay off the debt in about four years if the central university began paying for the money lost in tickets to student and faculty discounts, donors, regents, legislators and the president. Most universities

across the country do this.

The Athletic Department loses about \$600,000 each year because it is not reimbursed for these seats' donor component — a \$100 to \$500 donation per seat in addition to the season ticket's face value.

When donors want to buy a premium football or basketball ticket, they pay for the ticket's face value as well as the donor component.

There is a waiting line for these premium tickets, so when the university gives them away or only charges the ticket's face value, the Athletic Department loses out on the donor component.

The department loses an additional \$1 million each year on student, faculty and staff discounts.

Another cost the department absorbs is the presidential skybox at Oklahoma Memorial Stadium. It costs \$48,000, but the university doesn't pay for it.

"Take my box, the president's sky-

box, which I can tell you is a work station," Boren said. "Most of the time what I try to do is bring in special guests, people who either contributed or people who are very special guests to the university, like some outstanding speaker."

Like Boren's million-dollar renovated home, the Boyd House, Boren said he uses the skybox to get potential donors to give OU money. But that money doesn't necessarily go to the Athletic Department — it usually goes to the university.

The remainder of the \$2.9 million would pay for the Pride, spirit groups, promotions and Academic Student Services, totaling \$1.2 million.

As part of the Gender Equity Plan approved by the regents in June 1996, the university took on partial financial responsibility for the band, \$200,000; for Academic Support Services, \$600,000; and for partial compensation for the value of tickets.

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