



April 20, 2026

INVESTIGATION REPORT
Circumstances Surrounding Ted Carter's Resignation

Executive Summary

On March 7, 2026, Walter “Ted” Carter Jr. resigned as President of The Ohio State University after disclosing to university Trustees an inappropriate relationship with someone seeking public resources to support her personal business. On March 8, 2026, Ohio State’s Board Chair requested an investigation of the circumstances that led to Carter’s resignation. The Office of University Compliance and Integrity and the Department of Internal Audit jointly investigated these issues at the direction of the General Counsel, and make the following findings:

1) Carter misused his position as Ohio State’s President to seek resources from the university and key university partners for a personal associate, Krisanthe Vlachos. Carter put his own interests and those of Vlachos before the university’s interests. Carter’s actions betrayed Ohio State’s Shared Values and violated university policy. Carter had a close personal and business relationship with Vlachos, and he allowed that relationship to improperly influence his actions and impair his judgment. For almost two years, Carter used the authority of his position to make wide-ranging efforts to assist Vlachos both inside and outside the university. In addition to misapplied time and effort of numerous university personnel as a result of Carter’s influence, resources that Carter directly sought for Vlachos included:

- Employment at the university;
- Space on campus to conduct her business;
- Staff and technical support for her podcast;
- Staff assistance for her business projects;
- University investment in her business proposals; and
- Financial support and engagement from key external university partners.

Referring a contact for potential employment or inquiring about potential space on campus are not, in themselves, inappropriate activities, but are included as evidence of the extent of Carter’s efforts on Vlachos’ behalf. Neither the inappropriate nature of Carter’s relationship with Vlachos nor the pervasiveness of his efforts was apparent when they occurred, however, because Carter typically kept his requests to individuals separate and made them over a long period of time. This prevented any single employee from understanding the range and extent of his efforts. In other ways, Carter concealed his actions through use of his personal email, personal meetings on his calendar, and other means.

2) University processes and decisions by university employees prevented Carter’s efforts on behalf of Vlachos from succeeding within the university. Specifically:

- Vlachos was never hired as an employee or consultant.

- University staff did not perform extensive work on her podcast, App, or other ventures.
 - She never received university funds.
 - She was held accountable for paying bills under an appropriate contract with WOSU.
 - She was never given an improper university space from which to work.
 - Her physical access to Carter’s office was curtailed.
 - Individual employees tried to raise concerns about Vlachos appropriately.
- 3) **Carter’s actions impacted several key partners.** Internal processes and personnel could not mitigate the impact of Carter’s actions outside the university. Carter sought resources for Vlachos from state government departments, corporate partners, and a national veterans organization for her business ventures. Carter and Vlachos also falsely represented or exaggerated to others Carter’s engagement of university donors to support her business projects. These efforts to support Vlachos with these external parties were discordant or in conflict with ongoing university projects and priorities.
- 4) **No additional personnel actions are recommended.** Chris Kabourek, Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning and Senior Advisor to the President, understood himself to be Carter’s designee as Vlachos’ primary point of contact at the university. Kabourek went far beyond any other employee in supporting Carter’s efforts to assist Vlachos, both inside and outside the university; he failed to stop or report those efforts himself; and he failed to appropriately address concerns raised to him by other employees. Kabourek resigned from his position at the university on April 13, 2026.
- 5) **Respond as appropriate to state and federal inquiries.** The university received inquiries from three state and two federal agencies immediately following Carter’s resignation. We will continue to assist the General Counsel in appropriately responding to these inquiries.
- 6) **We provide additional recommendations based on our findings.** These include: existing travel and expenditure review processes of the President’s Office be maintained; units review their practices on leadership requests for assistance; additional ethics and insider threat training be considered; and the Board of Trustees and President continue their focus on reinforcing a values-driven leadership culture.
-

This Report details these findings in the following sections:

- I. Relevant Background (page 3)
- II. Scope and Process (page 6)
- III. Findings (page 8)
- IV. Analysis (page 37)
- V. Conclusions (page 43)
- VI. Recommendations (page 47)

I. Relevant Background

Walter “Ted” Carter Jr.

The Ohio State University [announced](#) it was hiring Walter “Ted” Carter Jr. as its 17th president on August 22, 2023. At the time, Carter was President at the University of Nebraska System where he served from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023. Prior to his tenure at Nebraska, he led both the U.S. Naval Academy and U.S. Naval War College. He is a graduate of the Navy Fighter Weapons School, known as Top Gun, and retired as a vice admiral after 38 years of service and more than 6,300 flying hours logged. He holds educational credentials from the Navy Nuclear Power School, the U.S. Air Force Air War College, the Naval War College, and the Armed Forces Staff College. Ohio State’s Board of Trustees named Dr. Peter Mohler, then Executive Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Knowledge, as Acting President from August 22, 2023, until Carter assumed his duties at Ohio State on January 1, 2024.

Upon beginning his role, Carter requested ethics training. (Such onboarding is customary for all new senior leaders.) The Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of University Compliance and Integrity met with Carter and his wife in person on January 3, 2024, to answer their questions and discuss his obligations under the Ohio Ethics Law. As a new employee, Carter was also provided and signed an acknowledgment of receiving a copy of the Ohio Ethics Law.

University Leadership During Carter’s Tenure

As Ohio State President, the Board of Trustees conferred on Carter the authority to oversee all university operations. Carter’s Office of the President included 14 full-time employees and was led by Chief of Staff JR Blackburn, who had served in the Chief of Staff role since October 5, 2020.

On October 28, 2024, Carter [named Chris Kabourek](#) as Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning. Carter highlighted their experience working together closely at Nebraska and noted Kabourek’s 27 years there where he served as interim president in addition to his role as chief financial officer following Carter’s departure. Carter described Kabourek’s areas of expertise to include facilities and capital planning, accounting, budgeting, procurement, and human resources. Kabourek reported to Carter and supervised Facilities Operations and Development; Facilities Design and Construction; Planning, Architecture and Real Estate; Transportation and Traffic Management; Public Safety; UniPrint; Technology and Digital Innovation; and WOSU. The Office of Technology and Digital Innovation had reported to the Provost until it was moved to Kabourek upon his hiring.

Effective January 14, 2025, Ravi Bellamkonda became Ohio State’s new Executive Vice President and Provost. Carter [announced the hiring](#) on October 14, 2024. As Provost, Bellamkonda served as the university’s chief academic officer and led the Office of Academic Affairs, which supervised Online Learning, Undergraduate Education (including Military and Veterans Services), and Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship among other key functions. On June 17, 2025, Bellamkonda made several leadership announcements, including naming John Glenn College of

Public Affairs Dean Trevor Brown as Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs overseeing several Office of Academic Affairs teams, including Undergraduate Education, the Graduate School, Ohio State Online, Academic Programs, Institutional Research and Planning, and the Vice Provost for the Arts office.

On July 23, 2025, Carter announced several leadership transitions effective September 1, 2025:

- Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communications Elizabeth Parkinson would retire on March 31, 2026.
- The Office of Marketing and Communications was split, with marketing functions reporting to Senior Vice President for External Affairs Mike Eicher.
- Vice President for Government Affairs Stacy Rastauskas would also report to Eicher rather than President Carter as she had done previously.
- Kabourek was promoted to Senior Advisor to the President in addition to his role as Senior Vice President for Administration and Planning, and Communications would remain a separate entity from Administration and Planning and report to Kabourek in his expanded role.

Non-University Individuals and Entities

Facts obtained during our investigation involved non-university parties. Several of the most relevant such individuals and entities include:

Krisanthe Vlachos

Krisanthe Vlachos' LinkedIn profile highlights her work in founding and leading "The Callout Podcast" since July 2020, whose mission is to "connect our transitioning Military and Veterans with Power, Gas, Telecom and Water Utility Careers - especially as Power Linemen." Vlachos' profile also notes that she is a "Proud Mom of US NAVY Submarine Volunteer."

Vet Mentor AI

[Vet Mentor AI](#) is a small business founded in Maryland in 2024 to assist veterans with navigating disability claims. It is "a platform that uses AI to help veterans optimize VA disability claims—strategy, documents, coaching, and more—in one place." Vet Mentor AI is led by CEO Paul Hylenski.

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services

The [Ohio Department of Veterans Services](#)' mission is to advocate for veterans and their families, to ensure they receive the benefits they earned, and to foster programs that enable them to live with dignity, security, and opportunity. On May 30, 2025, Maj. Gen. John C. Harris Jr. retired his post as Ohio Adjutant General and became the Department's sixth Director.

The Ohio National Guard

[The Ohio National Guard](#) comprises the Ohio Army National Guard and the Ohio Air National Guard and operates under the Ohio Adjutant General. National Guard units can be mobilized at any time by the governor of the State of Ohio upon declaration of a state of emergency or by the presidential order to supplement regular federal armed forces. The university has substantial partnerships with the Ohio National Guard, including through its ROTC programs.

Student Veterans of America

The [Student Veterans of America](#) (SVA) is a national nonprofit organization that provides financial and educational assistance to student veteran organizations through a network of over 1,600 campus chapters, including at Ohio State, representing 600,000 student veterans. Governed by a Board of Directors, which Carter joined in July 2025, SVA was led by President and CEO Jared Lyon until its January 2026 National Conference.

JobsOhio

[JobsOhio](#) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization formed under the Ohio Revised Code to promote economic development, job creation, job retention, job training, and the recruitment of business to Ohio. Unique among economic development funding models in the country, JobsOhio is not supported by tax or other public dollars. Instead, it is wholly funded by an independent private source—the profits from the JobsOhio Beverage System liquor enterprise. Governed by a Board of Directors, JobsOhio is led by President and CEO J.P. Nauseef, whose Chief of Staff is Phil Greenberg. JobsOhio and Ohio State are engaged in multiple ongoing collaborations and projects.

Anduril Industries, Inc. (Anduril)

Anduril is a private American defense technology company specializing in the development of advanced autonomous systems. The company is building a manufacturing facility in Pickaway County, Ohio, which is anticipated to be the largest job creation endeavor in Ohio history. Anduril also is an official multi-year sponsor of Ohio State Athletics, through a sponsorship deal announced on August 21, 2025.

OH.io Ventures Holding, Inc. (OH.io)

OH.io is a 2025-founded, Columbus-based venture engine and startup studio designed to transform Columbus into a major AI and tech hub. It has significant ongoing relationships with various individuals and initiatives at Ohio State.

II. Scope and Process

On March 8, 2026, Ohio State’s Board Chair requested an investigation of the circumstances that led to Carter’s resignation. At the direction of the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of University Compliance and Integrity and the Department of Internal Audit jointly investigated these issues. Key questions included but were not limited to:

- 1) What, if any, is Vlachos’ contractual or business relationship with the university?
- 2) Were any university employees improperly influenced by Carter or anyone else acting at his direction to assist Vlachos?
- 3) Were any university resources improperly provided to Vlachos?
- 4) Is there any evidence that Carter misused his public position to benefit Vlachos?
- 5) Is there any evidence that Carter misused his public position to benefit personal associates beyond Vlachos?
- 6) Were any individuals deterred from raising concerns regarding any interactions involving Vlachos or others, and, if so, why?
- 7) Are there any university policies or processes that need improvement based on facts learned in this investigation?

Evidence Collected

Investigators sought and assessed any relevant evidence, including information from:

- Emails, calendars, and text messages;
- Carter’s two university laptops;
- University social media account direct messages;
- Contracts, payments, and travel expenditures; and
- BuckID records.

Interviews Conducted

Investigators conducted 60 total interviews, including 12 individuals external to the university.

University Employees

(Offices and titles listed are current as of March 8, 2026.)

Administration & Planning

- Chris Kabourek, Senior Vice President, Administration and Planning, Senior Advisor to the President
- Rob Lowden, Vice President and Chief Information Officer
- Elizabeth Parkinson, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Communications
- Ginger Breon, Associate Vice President for Enterprise Support and Executive Director of Research Computing
- Amy Burgess, Associate Vice President
- Lindsay Komlanc, Associate Vice President, University Communications
- Ben Johnson, Assistant Vice President, Media & Public Relations
- Joe Camoriano, Director, National Broadcast Media
- Melissa Lee, Director, Executive Communications

- Aaron Nestor, Assistant Director, National Broadcast Media
- Crystal Garrett, Executive Assistant

Alumni Association

- Molly Calhoun, President and CEO

Board of Trustees Office

- Jessica Eveland, Secretary, Board of Trustees

Business & Finance

- Mike Papadakis, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

College of Engineering

- Blake Stringer, Director of the Center for Aviation Studies, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Dept. of Theatre, Film, and Media Arts

- Sheree Greco, Production Manager and Stage Management Advisor
- Dev Singer, Business Operations Manager

Enterprise for Research, Innovation, & Knowledge

- Peter Mohler, President of Alabama University, former OSU Executive Vice President of ERIK

External Affairs

- Mike Eicher, Senior Vice President for External Affairs
- Stacy Rastauskas, Vice President for Government Affairs
- Sara Rubin, Vice President of Development
- Luiza Newlin-Lukowicz, Associate Vice President, Corporate and Foundation Engagement
- Bill Couch, Assistant Vice President, Federal Relations

Human Resources

- Katie Hall, Senior Vice President for Talent, Culture & Human Resources
- Kim Lambert, Director, Talent Acquisition
- Alex Broshious, Talent Acquisition Consultant

Office of Academic Affairs

- Ravi Bellamkonda, Provost and Executive Vice President
- Karla Zadnik, Former Interim Provost, College of Optometry Dean
- Trevor Brown, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Norman Jones, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education
- Jason Lemon, Vice Provost and Dean for Online Learning
- Shereen Agrawal, Associate Vice President for Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Kevin Cullen, Assistant Vice Provost and Director of Military and Veterans Services

Office of Legal Affairs

- Anne Garcia, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

Office of the President

- JR Blackburn, Chief of Staff
- Hannah Bechtold, Senior Director, Administration and Operations
- Jake Snoble, Director, Commencement and Special Events
- Carolyn Speicher, Manager - University Residence
- Alexis Cunningham, Strategic Scheduling and Special Projects, Assistant Manager
- Rachel Rokicki, Executive Assistant
- Rori Taylor-Goldsmith, Executive Administrative Assistant
- Jill Toft, Executive Assistant
- Michael Sullivan, Correspondence Coordinator
- Scott Holbert, Presidential Aide/Driver

Student Veterans of America, OSU

- Josh Davis, Chapter Student President

WOSU

- Anthony Padgett, General Manager, WOSU
- John Prosek, Producer/Director and TV Production Manager
- Caleb McDonald, Multimedia Production Coordinator

External Interviews

Vet Mentor AI

- Paul Hylenski, Founder & CEO

Ohio Department of Veterans Services

- Maj. Gen. John Harris Jr. (U.S. Army, retired), Director

Student Veterans of America

- Scott Blackburn, Board Chair
- Cory Boatwright, Interim President & CEO

JobsOhio

- Phil Greenburg, Chief of Staff

Anduril

- Zachary Mears, Senior Vice President of Strategy

OH.io

- Colin McGinnis, Chief of Staff

International Lineman’s Museum

- Andy Price, Founder and Board Chairman

Stark State College

- Para Jones, President

Task Force Pineapple

- Kari Ellis, Tour Manager

University of Central Florida

- Andrea Guzman, Vice President for Access and Community Engagement
- Mike Kepner, Director, Student Resources – Military and Veteran Student Success

Interviews Attempted

- Ted Carter declined our requested interview through his attorney.
- Krisanthe Vlachos did not respond to a request for an interview.
- Jared Lyon, former President and CEO of Student Veterans of America, did not respond to a request for an interview.
- Cappy Surette, Senior Manager Corporate Communications, Disney Parks, did not respond to a request for an interview.

III. Findings

Our Findings are organized into the following sections below: (A) general observations; (B) Carter’s internal and external efforts to aid Vlachos; (C) university expenditures related to Vlachos; and (D) overview of key events.

A. General Observations

Krisanthe Vlachos

Vlachos used two different names (“Vlachos” and “Vlahos”) during the period she connected with Carter and Ohio State. Her married name was “Karagiannis.” Her online profile and job history do not reflect substantial entrepreneurial experience; data available online also reflects that Vlachos has been a defendant in at least 12 court cases for minor issues.

Vlachos' LinkedIn presence highlights her work in founding and leading "The Callout Podcast" since July 2020, while her résumé states that she founded the podcast and "LINEMAN+US" in May 2017. On the podcast's website, Vlachos listed Carter as a cohost, and he participated in at least five of the 19 episodes that are still available on Apple (she removed the podcast from all other platforms soon after Carter resigned). Vlachos' podcast appears to have never obtained many subscribers or significant viewership and did not evidence substantial marketing capabilities. A witness who participated in the podcast described it as unprofessional and unengaging.

Vlachos and Carter appear to have met at a Veterans in Energy forum in Washington, D.C. in March 2023, when Carter was President of the University of Nebraska System and a keynote speaker at the conference. Vlachos described this meeting to others later as the start of their friendship, the occasion when she asked him to mentor her son who was joining the Navy, and when she asked him to cohost her podcast.

Notably, witnesses frequently used three adjectives to describe Vlachos: "persistent," "unsophisticated," and "weird," and often described reaching these conclusions after one or two meetings. Vlachos was described as "persistent" because she often contacted people unexpectedly, created extensive email chains, leveraged contacts and name-dropped, and included individuals as cc's. She frequently leveraged Carter's name and cc'd his email, and she did the same with others. She often overstated the strength of her connection with others, as well as their authorization of her projects or ideas. Vlachos also frequently exaggerated the readiness or established validity of her projects and ideas. Vlachos was described as "unsophisticated" because she often appeared to be making it up as she went along. One employee commented: "I have first year students who could do a better job of presenting." Vlachos did not create her own legal entity in Ohio until December 20, 2025. Vlachos was described as "weird" because she did not follow typical professional courtesies. She was very demanding and made unusual requests or comments, like asking to house-sit professors' homes or saying she was living out of her car. According to one employee, Carter said she had a side job cleaning horse stalls. She made employees uncomfortable, and many witnesses described avoiding or ignoring her contacts.

After interacting with Vlachos, witnesses reported confusion about why Carter had asked them to engage with her. Several witnesses (including two who had a single interaction with Vlachos) stated that when they heard Carter resigned in connection with an inappropriate relationship, they suspected the situation involved Vlachos.

Vlachos' Access to Carter

Vlachos had extraordinary access to Carter while he served as Ohio State's President. In addition to taking at least five trips with him, Vlachos had at least 24 separate meetings with Carter, both in-person and online, including appearances he made on her podcast. Witnesses stated that she met with him a handful of times that were not pre-scheduled or documented. In addition to emailing his university account, Vlachos communicated with Carter using his personal Gmail account. However, university processes prevented Vlachos from obtaining inappropriate access to university space and resources, with the following minor exceptions:

- Carter texted his driver Scott Holbert on approximately three occasions that Vlachos was “coming up through the garage” to his office on the fifth floor at University Square South (USS). Hannah Bechtold, Senior Director for Administration and Operations in the President’s Office, stopped this practice by first speaking with Carter and then directing Vlachos to enter through the main entrance.
- Vlachos asked the USS security desk to be able to access the fifth floor without having to call someone every time. Bechtold denied the request.
- Vlachos was seen by staff with Carter on multiple occasions, including having lunch near USS, entering and exiting his car near USS, and walking outside of a Philadelphia hotel in the morning at the November 2025 Association of Public and Land-grant Universities annual meeting. No inappropriate interactions were observed.
- Vlachos appropriately obtained a BuckID to enter WOSU starting on July 8, 2025, after signing a contract for podcast production services. Electronic records reflect that she used her BuckID 1,745 times on 95 days through January 13, 2026, at WOSU’s building (the large number reflecting entries through both exterior and interior doors). She attempted to obtain entrance with her BuckID at USS once and was denied. She did not attempt to use the card to gain access to any other university location.
- Vlachos used Carter’s laptop while giving a presentation to Carter and two other university leaders after she had trouble connecting to the university’s wi-fi network on her own laptop.
- Carter identified Vlachos as the point of contact for events, meetings, and trips and asked staff to work directly with her for logistics.

B. Carter’s Internal and External Efforts to Assist Vlachos

Carter made wide-ranging and persistent efforts to assist Vlachos through university employees and with key partners external to the university. Carter’s internal efforts involved attempts to secure employment, consulting, and workspace at the university for Vlachos; provide production of and advance her podcast; locate campus space for a play with which she involved herself; establish her within the veterans community; and develop and invest in her idea to create an app to serve veterans. Carter’s engagement on behalf of Vlachos demonstrates an unusually broad impact across the university.

At least 14 university employees received direct requests from Carter to assist Vlachos. Some employees viewed requests from Carter related to Vlachos as unusual because he rarely if ever contacted them directly otherwise, or rarely if ever contacted them on behalf of an external individual. Nonetheless, such inquiries and requests were frequently attributed by recipients to Carter’s commitment to veterans’ issues. Carter did not persist in requests with any single employee except for Kabourek (as discussed below). Employees directly contacted by Carter, listed by unit, included:

Office of the President

- JR Blackburn, Chief of Staff (general and App assistance)
- Hannah Bechtold, Senior Director, Administration and Operations (scheduling assistance)
- Alexis Cunningham, Strategic Scheduling and Special Projects, Assistant Manager (scheduling assistance)

- Scott Holbert, Presidential Aide/Driver (garage and private entrance access for Vlachos)

Human Resources

- Katie Hall, Senior Vice President for Talent, Culture & Human Resources (employment assistance)

Advancement

- Sara Rubin, Vice President of Development (employment assistance)

Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge

- Peter Mohler, former Executive Vice President of Research, Innovation and Knowledge (office space and general assistance)

Administration & Planning

- Chris Kabourek, Senior Vice President, Administration and Planning and Senior Advisor to the President (App assistance and external efforts)
- Elizabeth Parkinson, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Communications (podcast assistance)
- Rob Lowden, Vice President and Chief Information Officer (App assistance)
- Ben Johnson, Assistant Vice President, Media & Public Relations (podcast assistance)

Office of Academic Affairs

- Karla Zadnik, Former Interim Provost (performance space for *Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret*)
- Shereen Agrawal, Associate Vice President for Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship (App assistance)
- Jason Lemon, Vice Provost and Dean for Online Learning (consulting and veteran programming assistance)

Numerous other Ohio State employees received indirect or derivative requests or were contacted personally by Vlachos, who communicated Carter's implicit or explicit authorization for the contact or request.

Carter also attempted to obtain assistance from several external entities and university partners on Vlachos' behalf. These entities included:

- Ohio Department of Veterans Services (App assistance)
- Ohio National Guard (conference invitation)
- Anduril (App assistance)
- JobsOhio (funding for podcast, events, App, and conference attendance)
- Stark State College (podcast assistance)
- Student Veterans of America (Board nomination, dinner attendance, conference participation)

Vlachos herself also contacted external entities, with Carter’s implicit or explicit authorization for the contact or request.

C. University Expenditures Related to Vlachos

Documentation of business expenditures requested by Carter reflects appropriate review processes by university employees and shows that no university funds were used to pay Vlachos or subsidize any expense or cost on her behalf. Carter did, however, seek both travel and non-travel spending for purposes connected to Vlachos.

a. Business Travel

We examined all of Carter’s university travel during his university employment, and we identified five trips associated with Vlachos. Each of these trips was supported with reasonable business justifications, and university funds did not appear to be used to cover travel costs incurred by Vlachos herself. On at least one occasion, however, the information gathered through this investigation suggests that Carter fabricated a reasonable business justification for a trip in order to travel with Vlachos at the university’s expense. These trips are as follows.

May 15-18, 2025: Richmond, Virginia

The business purpose of the trip was listed as “Speaking engagement at Gaff n’ Go Rodeo in Richmond, VA.” The agenda included events such as the opening ceremony, drone competitions, benefit concert, lineman competition, and a speaking engagement at the awards banquet dinner with C-suite leadership and Vlachos. Pursuant to review and approval processes for presidential travel, the trip was preapproved by the university Board Secretary. The expenses related to this trip included airfare (\$1,389.48); ground transportation (\$53.61); actual meal expenses (\$65.27); and business meal expenses for dinners with Brian Mosier, Gaff n’ Go Rodeo event organizer, and Mike Milard, Maryland Co-op, with the business purpose of relationship building (\$197.98). Documentation indicated that the Rodeo paid for hotel costs.

September 28-30, 2025: Orlando, Florida

The business purpose of the trip was listed as “Veterans and executive engagements scheduled by President Carter.” This trip was originally planned as a personal trip that was changed to a business trip. There was no agenda provided in the travel documentation for the trip. The trip was preapproved by the Board Secretary. The expenses related to this trip included airfare (\$539.97); lodging (\$297.46); business meal with Cappy Surette, Disney Executive, (\$75.27); rental car (\$240.46); and per diem (\$120.00). None of the documentation for this trip listed Vlachos. (See additional discussion regarding this trip in the Overview of Key Events and Analysis sections below.)

October 16-19, 2025: Kansas City / Overland Park / Bonner Springs, Kansas

The business purpose of the trip was listed as “Speaking engagement (10/18) and drone rodeo judge (10/17) at International Lineman's Rodeo 2025.” Documentation listed the person engaged as “Krisanthe Vlahos (The Callout Podcast).” The agenda included events at the Sheraton Overland Park Convention center for a business expo/meet and greet, the drone competition at which Carter was speaking, the International Lineman’s Hall of Fame Inductee Family Dinner at which Carter was speaking, and the rodeo competition and banquet. Documentation included an email in which Vlahos lists herself as Carter’s guide to each event. The trip was preapproved by the Board Secretary. The expenses related to this trip included lodging (\$763.35); several ground transportation charges (\$189.57); and per diem (\$160.00).

January 6-9, 2026: Las Vegas, Nevada

The business purpose of the trip was listed as “Consumer Electronics Show (CES) being held in Las Vegas, NV 1/6-1/9/2026. Asked by JobsOhio to attend the conference as a speaker. This is an international event designed for global brands to engage and meet new partners and unveil the latest releases and discoveries. Develop solutions to the world's biggest challenges with immersive activations and demos.” JobsOhio requested Carter’s presence and participation at JobsOhio-hosted private meetings, panel sessions, podcast, and media interviews. The trip was preapproved by the Board Secretary. The expenses related to this trip included airfare (\$1,849.01); ground transportation (\$237.57); and lodging (\$2,233.59). None of the documentation for this trip listed Vlahos, although the investigation revealed that Carter asked JobsOhio to invite Vlahos to join JobsOhio’s delegation to the conference, and they agreed. Notably, Vlahos did not submit any expenses to JobsOhio, which did not pay for her travel.

January 9-11, 2026: Colorado Springs, Colorado

The business purpose of the trip was listed as “18th Annual NatCon 1/8-1/10 for Student Veterans of America (SVA) Board of Directors.” The trip was preapproved by the Board Secretary. The expenses related to this trip included airfare (\$1,332.52); lodging (\$517.66); and ground transportation (\$128.45). While no university documentation referenced Vlahos, an SVA news release noted that the conference closed with a general session featuring Vlahos, Carter, and others. Carter joined the SVA Board in July 2025 in his personal capacity.

b. Non-Travel

We conducted a review of Carter’s non-travel business expenditure activity during his university employment and, with the exception discussed below, such expenditures appeared to be reasonably justified. No university funds appeared to be used to pay or cover costs associated with Vlahos. This review included all known names (Vlahos, Vlahos, Karagiannis), addresses, and businesses associated with Vlahos, as well as a review for any instance in which Vlahos could be identified as a listed participant, recipient, potential beneficiary (such as payment for services on her behalf), or with a “ship to” address matching any of her known addresses.

The single exception is a November 17, 2025, dinner hosted by the Student Veterans of America, which was attended by Ohio State, Google, and SVA representatives. The university paid for the \$2,124.12 meal at Carter's specific direction, according to Associate Vice President for Corporate and Foundation Engagement Luiza Newlin-Lukowicz and documentation she submitted after she covered the dinner on her Ohio State PCard. Knowing that it was an SVA sponsored event, Blackburn stated that he took the expense report to Carter and asked if he had authorized the meal. Carter denied doing so and said he wanted that reference removed from the record. Blackburn explained that he would document that information in the university's Workday system and returned the expense report to Advancement, which made the change and processed the expense through the approval process. (See additional discussion regarding this dinner below.)

D. Overview of Key Events

This section organizes Carter's activities with or involving Vlachos into two broad categories: activities inside and activities outside the university. Notably, activities in each category overlapped in time, which makes creation of a simple chronology challenging. This overview does not include all the extensive contacts and meetings Carter and Vlachos had with university employees and external actors. Instead, it highlights the most important communications and events.

Carter's Internal Efforts for Vlachos During His First Year (January 2024–January 2025)

During his first year as Ohio State President, Carter asked various individuals at the university to assist Vlachos in several ways. Many of these requests are not unusual or untoward in themselves but are included below as evidence of the pervasiveness of Carter's efforts on Vlachos' behalf.

Carter's Recommendation for Vlachos' Son

In February 2024, and having been in touch with him in 2023, Vlachos' son emailed Carter's personal Gmail account and sought a recommendation to be accepted into the Seaman to Admiral Commissioning program. Carter forwarded this correspondence to Blackburn on February 8, 2024, and asked Blackburn to help prepare a letter of reference for Karagiannis.

Carter's Request to Consider Vlachos for Employment

On July 1, 2024, from his personal Gmail account, Carter emailed Senior Vice President for Talent, Culture & Human Resources Katie Hall, copying Blackburn:

GM Katie,

Forwarding this resume for any potential job opening. Krisanthe has a son serving in the Navy (I helped him into the Nuke program) and has a varied background. She is planning to move to Columbus immediately (from St. Louis) and is looking for a full time position. She tells me she is open to any opportunity that fits her skill set. Think she would be a good fit for anyone's team.

ATB,
Ted

Hall asked Director for Executive Talent Acquisition Kim Lambert to connect with Vlachos. On July 3, 2024, Lambert began a series of communications with Vlachos and connected her with Senior Talent Acquisition Consultant Alex Broshious and Vice President for Development Sara Rubin. (Carter separately called Rubin directly on July 9, 2024, about employment for Vlachos.) During this timeframe, Vlachos applied to five positions related to Advancement. She does not appear to have ever formally interviewed for any of them and was never hired by Ohio State. In late 2024, Lambert also connected Vlachos with Senior Relocation Specialist Dannel Piper, a realtor who assists the university with relocations, and a temporary housing consultant in the community, as contacts for Vlachos in her move to Columbus. These connections were informational only, and no costs related to Vlachos' relocation were paid for or reimbursed by Ohio State.

In recalling these events, Hall, Lambert, and Rubin said that it is not uncommon or improper for university leaders to seek assistance for prospective employees. Hall said Carter did follow up with her in a meeting and she explained that colleagues had connected with Vlachos, but nothing materialized. Hall said that Carter did not push on Vlachos' behalf and made it clear to Hall that he was not asking for a favor.

Carter's Efforts to Assist Vlachos' Podcast

In October 2024, Carter asked Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communications Elizabeth Parkinson to assist Vlachos in producing her podcast, and Parkinson's team did so on two occasions. Communications staff suggested to Vlachos that they film the podcast at Ohio State for ease of logistics, but Vlachos insisted that it be done at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum, where Vlachos previously had made a connection. This meant that the Communications team had to transport equipment off campus. The Communications team rented a wireless mic and mixer at a cost of \$269.10, which Vlachos paid on her credit card. The Communications team did not otherwise charge Vlachos for its efforts because Carter had asked for its assistance, the podcast was veterans-related (an important topic for him), and the team told Vlachos its help was only for a single episode filmed on October 23, 2024.

After the production of that episode, Carter called Assistant Vice President for Media & Public Relations Ben Johnson about further assisting Vlachos. Communications filmed a second episode on December 16, 2024, on campus in Page Hall and did not charge Vlachos for the work, because Carter was in the podcast. Johnson advised Carter that Communications could not keep assisting Vlachos, and Carter indicated his understanding.

In early 2025, Vlachos asked Johnson if the Communications team could serve as her production crew. Johnson said no but gave her some ideas and contacts outside the university. Johnson also declined Vlachos' request to use some of his team's university office space.

Carter's Efforts to Engage Vlachos in Online Learning

In early December 2024, Carter called Vice Provost and Dean for Online Learning Jason Lemon about assisting Vlachos. Carter shared some of Vlachos' background and said she was working with someone named Matt Guedes on a continuing education course for veterans called "Camp Freedom." At a holiday party later that month, Carter suggested that Lemon should hire Vlachos as a consultant for the university, but Lemon never hired her.

Pursuant to Carter's request to assist Vlachos, Lemon contacted Vlachos and Guedes, provided information about the university's professional and continuing education programs, and offered to connect with them. Lemon met with Vlachos and Guedes, learned that Camp Freedom covers costs for veterans to become certified hunting guides, and understood that this work involved U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs funding for non-credit programs. Lemon and his team engaged in many conversations with Vlachos about these issues throughout the next six months, although he never felt that Vlachos had anything substantive to offer the university. By the summer of 2025, Lemon was attempting to disengage from Vlachos by asking her to coordinate her efforts through Assistant Vice Provost and Director of Military and Veterans Services Kevin Cullen.

Carter's Efforts to Assist Vlachos with "Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret"

On December 10, 2024, Carter asked Interim Provost Karla Zadnik to locate space for a play, "Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret," that had been scheduled to be performed at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus but was cancelled for unknown reasons. Carter identified Vlachos as the point of contact for the production and asked Zadnik to identify someone to contact Vlachos to arrange for the production at Ohio State, which was scheduled for January 17, 2025. Zadnik enlisted the assistance of Theater, Film, and Media Arts to locate space on short notice. Staff felt pressured to find a venue and would not have done so were it not for Carter's request.

After interacting with Vlachos, both university staff and representatives from Task Force Pineapple (the play's production company) concluded that Vlachos was not capable of doing event planning. The production company had never worked with Vlachos, was only connected to her because its leader, Lieutenant Colonel Scott Mann, had appeared on her podcast, and eventually advised university staff to only work with the company and not Vlachos. Ohio State signed a user agreement with the production company at no cost because the request was from Carter and the company is a nonprofit that supports veterans. Ohio State did not otherwise cover any production costs (\$24,000), which apparently were supported by sponsors that Vlachos organized, including AEP, JobsOhio, and the Callout Podcast. Staff stated that Vlachos blamed Ohio State for not selling enough tickets and appeared to be using the play to promote her podcast.

Carter's Internal Efforts for Vlachos' Podcast and His First Business Trip with Vlachos (January 2025–July 2025)

During the beginning of Carter's second year as Ohio State President, Vlachos contracted with WOSU for podcast production and space and invited Carter to an external event, the Gaff 'n Go Rodeo, in Virginia.

Carter and Kabourek's Assistance with Vlachos' Contract with WOSU

In January 2025, Carter asked Executive Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Knowledge Peter Mohler to connect with Vlachos regarding her podcast. On January 17, 2025, Mohler sent an introductory email to WOSU General Manager Anthony Padgett, copying Chris Kabourek, stating that Vlachos was Carter's friend and that they were "working to onboard her to the OSU and Columbus community and that she requested an intro based on her podcast work." On January 21, 2025, Padgett met with Vlachos and connected her with WOSU staff to begin discussing a potential partnership that Vlachos sought.

On March 21, 2025, Vlachos emailed Kabourek for the first time. She stated that in addition to the email, she had texted his cell phone, so he could save her contact information. Among other things, Vlachos stated: "I have a 501c3 - Uniforms to Utilities which is the sister company to the podcast. President Carter has been a long time supporter and guest cohosted 3 episodes. President Carter, Kevin Cullen, Jason Lemmon [sic] & others are working closely with me in support of my mission to connect transitioning military/veterans to utility industry careers." After describing ambitious plans, Vlachos added: "I would appreciate your help with production costs & a tiny work space at WOSU where I could be completely immersed in my process."

On March 22, 2025, Kabourek emailed Padgett: "I know we can't subsidize her production costs or rent, but do you have a ballpark of what these costs at WOSU are?" Padgett replied: "I know our production team has been working with her to refine a few things, but our initial proposal was to produce **50 episodes at a cost of \$93,716**. I've been working with PARE on the most appropriate way to include the **use of space, at no cost**, in the agreement as well." (Emphasis in original.) Kabourek then responded to Vlachos the same day: "Thank you for the note, and nice to meet you. Ted has said great things about you. As a public university, we are heavily restricted on subsidizing outside entities. But I would welcome a chat to discuss further."

On June 26, 2025, WOSU signed a \$93,716 contract with Vlachos for podcast production services covering 50 episodes (\$1,874.32 per episode) and the use of a WOSU "desk/cubicle" at no cost. WOSU Producer/Director and TV Production Manager John Prosek stated that no one directed him to charge Vlachos specific rates for WOSU services. He stated that he used the university rates that apply for nonprofits, and based Vlachos' contract on an existing contract with the Wexner Medical Center. He explained that WOSU considered Vlachos' podcast to be a nonprofit. (Notably, Vlachos created an LLC called VetEarnUSA on December 20, 2025, six months after the WOSU agreement was executed, and listed WOSU's address as her company's address.) Padgett stated that he was eager for this business given WOSU's financial situation, he did not feel pressured by anyone, and he saw the contract as in line with the type of engagement WOSU was seeking to increase revenue.

No evidence suggests that WOSU covered any costs associated with the podcast beyond providing complimentary office space. WOSU had no control over the content or substance of the podcast and only handled its filming and production. Prosek stated that WOSU ultimately served as the

production team for three podcasts, two of which Vlachos published. Prosek stated that Carter was a guest on all three podcast episodes and appeared in the unpublished episode via Zoom.

Carter Attends Gaff-n-Go Lineworker Rodeo in Virginia with Vlachos

On February 19, 2025, Brian Mosier, President and CEO of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives, invited Carter to attend an annual [Gaff-n-Go Lineworker Rodeo](#) and serve as guest speaker at the event's banquet on May 17, 2025. Mosier's email to Carter stated: "We have the pleasure of working with Krisanthe Vlahos [sic] in supporting Veterans in the power utility industry, more specifically electric cooperatives." Carter agreed to do so and attended the event in Richmond, Virginia from May 15-18, 2025, with Vlachos, who had worked with the President's Office on logistics and scheduling details.

At the Gaff-n-Go Rodeo, Carter and Vlachos met Chad Baker from Vet Mentor AI, who subsequently introduced them to the company's CEO, Paul Hylenski (his role is discussed in detail below).

Carter Travels to Florida with Vlachos

Carter traveled to the Orlando, Florida area from September 28-30, 2025. He originally designated this trip as personal and documentation indicated that Carter first asked his wife to book his flights using points through Southwest in early September. Carter later designated the trip as a business trip, with its purpose listed as "Veterans and executive engagements scheduled by President Carter," and requested to be reimbursed for the use of his Southwest points. Documentation listed the persons engaged on the trip as University of Central Florida (UCF) President Alexander Cartwright, Disney Executive Team, and Disney Experiences Senior Manager of Communications Cappy Surette.

On August 29, 2025, the Office of Government Affairs discussed with their UCF counterparts Carter connecting with President Cartwright and, on September 4, 2025, made Hannah Bechtold aware of Carter's request. Bechtold then contacted the UCF president's office that day. Both universities confirmed a meeting for presidents Cartwright and Carter at UCF for September 29, 2025, at noon. On September 27, 2025, UCF notified Ohio State that Cartwright would not be able to attend the meeting and offered for Carter to meet with their Vice President of Access and Community Engagement, Andrea Guzman, who oversees UCF's military connected programming. Carter agreed to do so. Witnesses described the meeting over lunch as informal but informative, and they discussed how UCF has been very successful in recruiting and serving veterans in the past several years. Witnesses stated that they did not discuss Vlachos, her podcast, or her App idea.

Carter also told Bechtold that he planned to meet with a group of Disney executives, led by Cappy Surette as the point of contact, on September 29, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. This meeting was set up by Carter, and the location of the meeting was not provided to the Office of the President. Documentation stated that Carter had dinner with Surette on September 29, 2025. Carter did not

discuss any of these meetings with, or request any follow-up by, his staff when he returned from Florida.

Carter never mentioned visiting the International Lineman’s Museum while in Florida to his staff, nor did he submit any documentation regarding an engagement at that location. No university documentation mentioned Vlachos. Yet social media posts place Carter at the International Lineman’s Museum on September 29, 2025, and a witness confirmed that Vlachos visited the museum with Carter and discussed her App idea. The witness stated that Carter dropped off Vlachos, left to attend a meeting, and returned for approximately an hour-long visit with Vlachos.

Carter’s Internal Efforts on Behalf of Vlachos’ App Idea (August 2025–March 2026)

Carter helped Vlachos promote her idea of using technology (what she referred to as an “App”) to assist veterans in accessing higher education and obtaining jobs. While Vlachos articulated this idea in various ways to different people, she essentially proposed a tool that would link veterans with the training programs they needed to obtain employment, and with available government funding to pay for those programs. Vlachos envisioned that this “Connect to Power” App would focus especially on veterans who were recently transitioning out of the military.

Witnesses explained that building such a tool is extraordinarily difficult to achieve in practice, due to four factors: (1) benefits for individual veterans vary depending on the period and duration of their service, the type of their deployment, and the existence of any service-related disability; (2) such benefits are offered through diverse federal, state, and county/local programs; (3) workforce training-related benefits depend on various program certifications; and (4) certifications depend on diverse educational and program offerings, many of which are not yet developed by the university or approved by diverse accreditation standards. Over time, Vlachos attempted to partner with Paul Hylenski and his Vet Mentor AI company, which has successfully developed an app that assists veterans in obtaining VA benefits, to develop the broader App that Vlachos imagined.

Carter helped Vlachos engage many university employees in efforts to build or fund the development of this App idea, especially Kabourek, Vice President and Chief Information Officer Rob Lowden, and individuals in the Office of Academic Affairs, including online education and veterans programs. Despite Carter’s efforts to support Vlachos’ App idea, university employees never provided Vlachos any technical assistance, and Ohio State never funded a project or initiative based on the idea. Employees noted Vlachos did not appear to understand the obvious technical challenges, and they concluded that Vlachos did not present a viable solution to those challenges or even a thoughtful plan to begin to address them. Further, employees consistently concluded that they saw no benefits to the university in assisting Vlachos or pursuing her App idea.

Carter’s first significant meeting to advance Vlachos’ App idea inside the university occurred on August 18, 2025, when he met virtually with Vlachos and Kabourek. On August 20, 2025, Carter met in person with Vlachos, Kabourek, and Blackburn, and allowed Vlachos to use his laptop to facilitate the discussion in his office after she had trouble connecting her own computer to the university’s network. On August 26, 2025, Vlachos then met with Kabourek, Blackburn, Lowden,

and Paul Hylenski. Notably, after Vlachos emailed the group the next day to thank them and promised “a detailed multifaceted plan for every piece of the tech and marketing for this critical mission,” Lowden emailed Kabourek:

Clearly not a tech angle, I just simply don’t see what an investor will get out of this. I would expect some sort of return either financially or toward some metric we cared about but I am not seeing or hearing that here. More discussion around the tech is not going to help get to the core of that question. Thanks.

On September 22, 2025, Kabourek and Blackburn discussed a request from Vlachos to present her various projects, including the potential App, to a larger group of employees. On September 24, 2025, Blackburn then contacted Kabourek, Lowden, Lemon, Cullen, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Trevor Brown, and Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives Ann Talbot, to request this meeting. Blackburn placed the request in the context of Carter’s recent State of the University address, in which Carter described a goal to significantly grow Ohio State’s veteran population over the next decade. Among other things, Blackburn stated:

Over the past several months, Krisanthe Vlachos has been in [sic] engaging in efforts to support our military and veteran populations. Currently, she produces a podcast (The Callout Podcast) at WOSU and the President has been a guest for a couple of those segments. She is developing an APP to help veterans navigate several complex issues they face in obtaining employment and seeking healthcare/VA benefits access.

Krisanthe has expressed interest in presenting her work and exploring how it might align with our strategic goals.... I recommend we allocate 30–45 minutes for her presentation, followed by 30 minutes for discussion and debrief by our group.

This meeting, which occurred on October 2, 2025, brought together employees who had each been contacted by Carter on Vlachos’ behalf, or had met or communicated regarding Vlachos separately. Blackburn sought to end the separate discussions consuming individuals’ time, so he included an extra 30 minutes for the group to meet without Vlachos present in order to come to a single, collective decision.

At the meeting, Vlachos gave the presentation and described the elements of her proposed App. Her PowerPoint provided no diagrams or other detail regarding how various components of the idea (e.g., how to link veterans to educational benefits for which they may be entitled) could be accomplished. After Vlachos left the meeting, the discussion made clear that her idea should not proceed, as it lacked any practical existing benefit to the university, the technological challenges were formidable, and Vlachos had not even developed a realistic plan to overcome those challenges or considered how that could be accomplished. One witness, Trevor Brown, stated that in his view Vlachos’ App idea was not a product of interest to the university; she was not the person to develop such a product, as she lacked both the requisite technical skills and project

development experience; and in any case further advancing Vlachos' App idea could only occur outside both university and accepted governmental purchasing processes.

Following Vlachos' presentation to the group, Kabourek received a text from Carter asking why Norman Jones had been so harsh on Vlachos in his comments at the meeting. When interviewed, Kabourek stated that it was not unusual for Carter to call him to check in after meetings about the App idea. Kabourek stated that he thought Carter was becoming frustrated with the pace at which the App evaluation was moving. He said that Carter mentioned possibly using private donor money to fund the App and specifically mentioned a \$100,000 unrestricted gift from a donor that could possibly be used.

Notwithstanding the meeting's outcome, Kabourek then drafted Vlachos' idea into a project plan, which included a \$20,000 university contract for a pilot of the App to be funded by private donations to the university. He did so even though he heard the universally negative feedback from the meeting's other participants. Kabourek emailed Blackburn on October 3, 2025:

I clearly heard the tone and tenor of our conversation yesterday – and I do not disagree with the concerns expressed. However, in the spirit of keeping an open mind, and understanding everyone thinks there is an interesting idea here to address a real problem for our veterans, I tried to think about what a potential structure might look like if we were open to exploring an unorthodox approach. The verbiage below is purely draft for reaction and feedback. This is not a proposal to move forward, it is simply a potential framework.

Blackburn responded with caution, emphasized important process considerations, and said that the idea required support from colleagues leading the university's military/veteran initiative:

I remain concerned of [sic] the viability of the app's development and potential functionality along with what the true cost of creation may be. I think things like this can be a much more expensive endeavor than they seem and we could find that funding needs could continue to [be] an issue Finally, if we reach an agreement, we will need to ensure that Krisanthe understands her boundaries and rules of engagement both on campus and in the community as it relates to her relationship with OSU and what her role is. I know I am stating the obvious based on our discussions, but this will be important to figure out if we move forward to create this partnership.

Kabourek then organized a meeting with Blackburn and Brown, at which Brown again made clear the group's consensus that the project was not viable, his team would not be moving forward, and in any case Vlachos could not receive support because she was not a university employee. During his interview Kabourek stated that at this point he concluded he had done everything he could to balance the internal skepticism with Vlachos' idea against Carter's enthusiasm.

Kabourek talked with Vlachos on November 5 and again on November 10, 2025. Kabourek then scheduled yet another meeting to discuss Vlachos' App idea with Vlachos, Brown, Lowden, and

Blackburn on November 21, 2025. That morning, Vlachos asked Kabourek’s executive assistant to reschedule the meeting he had organized on her behalf because another meeting that morning was shifted by 30 minutes “causing a domino effect” on Vlachos’ schedule. On that basis, Kabourek allowed his assistant to reschedule his senior colleagues’ calendars on Vlachos’ behalf, and the meeting was then set for December 11, 2025.

Vlachos later added Paul Hylenski and Matt Poch from Vet Mentor AI to the meeting with Kabourek, Lowden, and Blackburn on December 11. (This internal meeting occurred after a key meeting with JobsOhio on December 10, 2025, as described below; Brown did not attend either meeting.) Blackburn stated that at the meeting Vlachos claimed that the App was now close to being ready, which was not consistent with the perceptions of the App's readiness held by Blackburn, Kabourek, and Lowden. Kabourek nonetheless encouraged Vlachos to share the scaling projections she had described to JobsOhio the day before. The next day, Hylenski emailed Kabourek to thank him for his efforts, to which Kabourek replied with encouragement on December 17, 2025: “I’m excited about the potential of the work you and Krisanthe are doing and I look forward to hearing more about next steps.”

Carter’s External Efforts on Behalf of Vlachos’ Podcast and App Idea (May 2025–March 2026)

Carter also made extensive efforts to assist Vlachos with external university partners while his internal efforts were ongoing. Specifically, Carter connected Vlachos with JobsOhio, Anduril, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, the Student Veterans of America, and the Ohio National Guard. Carter and Vlachos engaged with Vet Mentor AI in many of these efforts. Carter personally attended or supported specific meetings with senior leaders at these entities. With the significant exception of Kabourek, no other university employee assisted Carter or Vlachos in these external efforts aside from scheduling or was in direct communication with Vlachos about them.

Individuals interviewed at these entities described Vlachos in terms consistent with descriptions used by university employees. Regarding her App idea, they noted that Vlachos did not appear to understand the obvious technical challenges and did not present a viable solution to those challenges.

Carter and Vlachos Connect with Vet Mentor AI

Carter and Vlachos met with Vet Mentor AI CEO Paul Hylenski, after first being introduced to another of the company co-founders at the May 2025 Gaff-n-Go Rodeo. On June 4, 2025, Vlachos emailed Carter, copying Hylenski:

Ted,
Paul Hylenski’s software will be the engine for the app I’m developing.

With the OSU initiative launching the same time with the...

Certification program I’m leading with OSU Online Learning Department,

The Callout App connecting Veterans with utility industry careers/workforce development...

Plus last weeks events we were present with JobsOhio & Anduril & Wright-Patterson leadership with whom we're scheduling The Callout Podcast episodes,

In conjunction with workforce development events at NVMM for each of those corps....

It seems we have much more than just Vet Mentor AI to discuss with Paul. (btw - Vet Mentor AI will be accessible thru The Callout App)

When might your schedule allow for a 30-45 minute call for the 3 of us?

Kindest regards,
Krisanthe
[Ellipses in original]

Carter, Vlachos, and Hylenski then met on June 17, 2025, to discuss the Vet Mentor AI tools and Hylenski demonstrated his platform.

Carter Introduces Vlachos to JobsOhio and Anduril

Carter then arranged for Vlachos to meet with two critical university partners, JobsOhio and Anduril. While we could not determine the timing of the first introduction between Vlachos and JobsOhio personnel, the first such meeting identified by witnesses occurred on May 28, 2025, during the Memorial Tournament in Dublin, Ohio. (Notably, JobsOhio was a sponsor of the Task Force Pineapple play in January 2025, which Vlachos helped organize.) At the Memorial Tournament, Stacy Rastauskas joined Carter in attending the JobsOhio Salute to Service Memorial Tournament Brunch. Rastauskas recalled seeing Vlachos there and described how Vlachos "photobombed" a picture with Carter and JobsOhio President and CEO J.P. Nauseef. JobsOhio Chief of Staff Phil Greenberg also recalled meeting Vlachos on May 30, 2025, at the Memorial Tournament breakfast JobsOhio hosted at Bridge Park, which focused on aerospace and defense.

Vlachos then used this introduction to meet with JobsOhio and Anduril. On June 5, 2025, Vlachos emailed Carter, copying Nauseef and Zach Mears, Anduril's Senior Vice President of Strategy, with a subject line "Schedule Call with Anduril & JobsOhio | The Callout Podcast & App":

Good Afternoon President Carter,

I'm following up regarding our conversation about how I believe JobsOhio & Anduril can be instrumental in The Callout's mission -

To connect transitioning Military & Veterans directly to utility industry careers to strengthen national security.

I was honored & thrilled to be included by JP in last week's events hosted by JobsOhio.

As a result, I've the great pleasure of connecting with Zach Mears, Anduril Industries SVP-Strategy & Growth.

With The Callout's podcast, workforce development events at NVMM & app ready for MVP demo & beta testing in a couple weeks - the timing of the past week's events is incredible!

Since DiAnn is out at the moment, I wasn't sure if Alexis would be best to copy to help.

Would it be possible to find 30 minutes for you, JP, Zach & myself to discuss a possible joint forces Ohio collaboration to lead the national mission?

Kindest regards,
Krisanthe

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/krisanthe>
Founder | Creator | Host | Executive Producer
The Callout Podcast
314.280.4663
www.TheCalloutPodcast.com
<https://youtube.com/@thecalloutpodcast3716>

Based on this email, Carter, Vlachos, Nauseef, Greenberg, and Mears met at JobsOhio on July 10, 2025, after Carter also met with Vlachos in his office earlier that day. Greenberg described that he understood Vlachos to seek JobsOhio support for three initiatives at that meeting: 1) her podcast; 2) the App; and 3) event sponsorship opportunities (e.g., Lineman rodeos). He stated that at the meeting Vlachos presented her overall vision, and Carter supplied his support for her efforts. Afterwards, Nauseef asked Greenberg to work with Vlachos and see if her plans merited any support. Greenberg stated that JobsOhio's intent was to consider Vlachos' three objectives piecemeal, starting primarily with her podcast. Greenberg stated that after the meeting, Vlachos reached out to him frequently and they went back and forth for a few months about the podcast. Greenberg said he was trying to evaluate her proposal on his own. Greenberg attempted to keep Nauseef out of the conversation as much as possible given the demands of Nauseef's schedule.

Mears also recounted the July 10, 2025 meeting, which occurred approximately six weeks before the university announced its partnership with Anduril. He noted that Carter spoke only briefly and introduced the meeting by mentioning he had been on Vlachos' podcasts, said he welcomed her initiatives, and then turned the meeting over to Vlachos. Mears said that Vlachos scheduled the meeting only for 30 minutes, but it took a full hour due to her lack of organization. He stated that Vlachos struggled to pull up materials during the meeting, meandered through information about

military veterans transitioning to the workforce, was very inarticulate, and failed to connect all the ideas she discussed. He said that Vlachos described the core tenants of her podcast and efforts to extend outreach and grow its audience base. Vlachos also discussed the concept of an App but did not have a demo. He recalled that Vlachos dialed in Paul Hylenski for a few minutes and introduced him as the App's developer. Mears noted that there seemed to be a blurry line between the App and Vlachos' podcast.

Mears said that Vlachos made no formal request for sponsorship but just asked if Anduril could help with the cause of military veterans joining the workforce. Mears noted that he saw no real fit for Anduril in Vlachos' pitch relative to immediate or long-term workforce needs, and said he had no intention to entertain any further discussions with her. Vlachos attempted to reach out to Mears a few additional times and copied Nauseef, but Mears ignored the communications because he saw no value in a relationship.

Mears stated that Carter never reached out to or spoke with him again about Vlachos after this meeting. Mears said he never felt pressured by Carter about Vlachos' initiatives and did not feel that Carter leveraged the Anduril relationship. Yet Mears noted that he felt confused about Carter's involvement with Vlachos and struggled to understand Carter's judgment in aligning with her. Mears also noted that the time spent by Carter and others on Vlachos' idea felt discordant in comparison with Anduril's substantial ongoing business with the university.

Carter Supports Vlachos with JobsOhio

On July 25, 2025, Vlachos emailed Mears, Nauseef, and Carter, copied Greenberg and assistants, said among other things that she had "a comprehensive marketing plan with budgets & demo for your review," and asked for another meeting at JobsOhio in the next couple weeks.

Carter responded:

Krisanthe,

Thank you for your continued hard work and passion to make a positive difference for our Veterans and Ohioans. My team will work to get you some time blocks for next meeting.

Stay well,
Ted

On July 31, 2025, Carter met with Vlachos. On August 1, 2025, Vlachos had scheduled a virtual meeting with Carter, Nauseef, Greenberg, and Mears, but cancelled it that morning after Mears told them that he had a conflict. Thirty minutes after that cancelled meeting, Vlachos met with Carter in his office.

During August 2025, Vlachos continued to correspond with Greenberg and said she would send him three categories of information for his review: "The Callout Podcast, Veteran workforce

development events & my app” and said that they “are together as part of a comprehensive marketing approach.” On August 20, 2025, Greenberg replied:

Hi Krisanthe — we want to understand all that is being included, proposed, and sent. Regardless if it is together, singular, connected or unconnected so that we can make the most informed and best decision for our organization. Thank you again!

Greenberg forwarded this email chain to Stacy Rastauskas and stated “keeping you in the loop. Very confusing.” Rastauskas replied: “Indeed.”

On September 17, 2025, Vlachos emailed Nauseef, copying Greenberg, and requested JobsOhio funding for her various efforts:

- The Callout Podcast - 4 episodes/month- \$15K/month
- Rodeos 'n' Races Tour - Veteran Workforce Development Events - \$6K/rodeo - \$18K
- TransAm Pirelli Races - 2026 \$30K/Race (and listed seven races)
- AI Powered Veteran Workforce Development App - “Connect to Power” - \$30K

Greenberg responded the next day and told Vlachos that they were reviewing and would be in touch. Vlachos followed up with Greenberg on September 30, 2025 and asked when they might have further discussions. Vlachos emailed Greenberg again on October 1, 2025, and copied Nauseef:

Good morning Phil 😊

Tomorrow I have an 1.5 hour meeting with 8 top tier OSU leadership together in a conference room at OSU headquarters to discuss my Veteran Workforce Development program leading the action for President Carter’s vision.

I want to open the meeting by proudly announcing to the OSU team how JobsOhio is my primary partner to lead this critical mission.

What can I state in my meeting to confirm this is true?

Who at JobsOhio could be available to join me for part or all of this OSU meeting to celebrate the partnership?

Greenberg responded that JobsOhio was interested in the podcast, would like to further discuss their participation and support, and requested that Vlachos send him a formal proposal/invoice. He also noted: “We would like to start there as we work internally on our 5-year strategic plan.” Greenberg forwarded this email chain, which started on September 17, 2025, to Rastauskas, who sent it to Blackburn that same day on October 1, 2025.

Greenberg stated that JobsOhio decided to support Vlachos' podcast through a \$60,000 contract for four episodes and viewed the partnership with her to kickstart or build something they had an interest in; JobsOhio had been contemplating doing podcasts for some time as a way to tell its story to the right people. He said that JobsOhio saw an opportunity to partner with Ohio State, in a low-cost pilot program, to test how the podcast concept might help. JobsOhio, he said, believed that Carter's advocacy was key because it would help bring in viewers. He noted that Carter thought the podcast was a great way to talk about the workforce and careers and had always been very complimentary of the podcast. Greenberg explained that JobsOhio's goal was to expand the focus of Vlachos' podcast beyond just the utilities industry.

Carter Introduces Vlachos to the Ohio Department of Veterans Services

On November 12, 2025, Vice Provost Norman Jones scheduled a meeting on veterans' topics with Carter and General John Harris, Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services (ODVS), in Carter's office. Harris noted that he had regular monthly meetings with a small group that includes Jones to discuss strategies to increase the number of veteran students. Harris stated that he felt very honored to get to meet Carter. Shortly after the meeting, Carter reached out to Harris and suggested he meet with Vlachos on a call, and he asked for Harris' personal phone number.

Following his interview, Hylenski shared screenshots of text messages he claimed he received from Vlachos on November 13, 2025. The first message linked to Harris's ODVS biography and stated:

Carter with his leadership team met with Harris yesterday. Carter is making intro for me. I'm inviting Harris to podcast. Harris might be on our call tomorrow.... You, Carter, me & Harris.

In a second message, she wrote: "Ohio National Guard Major General John Harris will be on the 11:30 call tomorrow!" and then added:

I just got communication from Ted he told the General it's a demo vs just a call tomorrow. Harris is actually dealing with his own VA benefits as we speak. Are we able to do a quick demo tomorrow?

On November 14, 2025, Harris received a call at 10:15 a.m. from Vlachos on his personal cell phone, and she described her podcast, App, and utilities industry focus. Harris stated that he then had a virtual meeting at 11:30 a.m. with a larger group, which included Vlachos, Carter, and Hylenski. (Notably, Carter's calendar that day shows an appointment at 11:30 a.m. listed "Personal; Virtual".) Harris said that Vlachos and Hylenski introduced the idea of an App that would link veterans with jobs, and he understood that it was linked to another AI product of Hylenski's that connected veterans to disability benefits. Harris said that he was initially excited about the concept. Harris noted that after this meeting, Hylenski disclosed that they needed \$2.9 million to build the App.

On November 15, 2025, Vlachos emailed Harris and Carter using both of their personal Gmail accounts, copied Hylenski, and stated among other things:

Thank you again for your partnership and time! Paul & I have started working on the formal proposal with business case analysis. The comprehensive compelling data will be effective in your conversations with fellow advocates & leadership.

On November 21, 2025, Carter and Vlachos met with Harris and two ODVS staff in Harris' office for a demo of the App. Harris described it as a poor and awkward presentation; Vlachos could not get an online connection for the App, so the demo was just a PowerPoint presentation. He realized that the App was more of a concept than a real product. He also felt that the utility industry focus was too narrow. Harris stated that Carter was very supportive of and enthusiastic about the idea. Harris assumed that Carter was there to learn more about the project just as Harris and his team were. After the meeting, Harris knew that this was not something he wanted to engage in and told Vlachos that ODVS needed to step out of the process because it did not have funds to invest and he did not want to step out of line with the ODVS procurement process.

On December 4, 2025, Carter called Harris and encouraged him to support the App. Harris noted that at this point he was starting to wonder a little about Carter's relationship with Vlachos.

On December 5, 2025, Harris had a call with Vlachos and suggested that she call Nauseef because, unlike ODVS, JobsOhio actually has funds they could potentially use to support her efforts.

Carter Discusses Engaging University Donors to Support Vlachos

Paul Hylenski shared information that reflects Carter and Vlachos discussing engaging Ohio State donors to support the App. In September 2025, Hylenski stated that he had multiple discussions with Vlachos about obtaining funding and she stated that she could get Carter to introduce them to Les Wexner. Hylenski stated that Vlachos claimed Wexner would purchase the technology and wanted to help build it out, and Hylenski discussed with Vlachos staying on as Chief Technology Officer if Wexner did so. (Notably, Wexner's attorney was contacted as part of the investigation process and confirmed that at no time did Wexner ever discuss or meet with anyone, including Carter, regarding Vlachos or her App idea, and therefore he never agreed to purchase or invest in any technology associated with it.)

Hylenski shared a text message he purportedly received from Vlachos on November 1, 2025, which linked to Militarytimes.com article "GOP senator proposes commission to study VA disability rating system," and stated: "Carter sent to me this morning" and "Carter was with Wexner yesterday. He'll see him at the OSU game today too. Carter & Wexner are building a great relationship!"

In another text message Hylenski claimed he received from Vlachos, she stated:

Carter called me. He spoke with Wexner 30 minutes ago about us & app. Wexner wants to meet us in person.

Carter is traveling next week. Wexner is in Europe following week. We should anticipate a meeting in Columbus in approximately 3 weeks.

I'd like you, Carter & me to have at least one call, maybe 2 to prep. Carter has advice for the meeting I want you to hear first hand for our prep & strategy.

Wexner plans to move forward.. with money...with us...to fix the VA bullshit & elevate NVMM.

I have ideas for both. I'm already great friends with museum leadership & believe I know how to help them.

You & Carter will help me deliver the rest for VA efforts.

On November 3, 2025, Vlachos emailed Carter at his personal Gmail account and Hylenski, using "App – NVMM – Wexner" as the subject line. In this email Vlachos stated: "I'd like to schedule 1-2 prep calls in anticipation of meeting with Les Wexner." (As noted above, Wexner's attorney confirmed that at no time did Wexner ever discuss or meet with anyone, including Carter, regarding Vlachos or her App idea.) Carter responded: "I can do 1 to 2 tomorrow" and shared additional availability. Vlachos then confirmed that she would send an invite for them to meet from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST the next day. (Notably, Carter's calendar includes "Personal Appointment" from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. on November 4, 2025.)

Using his personal Gmail account, Carter also reached out to Vlachos and Hylenski on November 30, 2025, regarding his presentation on AI Fluency to a large audience at the I/ITSEC conference on December 1, 2025, promising to highlight their efforts in his remarks or in responses to questions there.

On December 4, 2025, Carter, Vlachos, Hylenski, and his Vet Mentor AI business partner Matt Poch met via Zoom. Hylenski shared Zoom-generated notes of that discussion, which Vlachos circulated to the group and summarized:

The meeting began with introductions and updates on recent events, including a successful initiative that would soon be available online. The group then discussed strategy for an upcoming presentation to Jobs Ohio, with plans to leverage General Harris's involvement to secure funding and showcase a comprehensive program including podcasts, an app, and hiring events. The conversation concluded with a detailed discussion of a collaborative initiative involving Ohio State University, Jobs Ohio, and a veterans organization, focusing on tools and programs to attract transitioning military personnel to Ohio while leveraging significant philanthropic contributions and existing military infrastructure.

The Zoom-generated notes included Carter discussing a significant philanthropic contribution from a donor, with a plan that “involves leveraging this funding with JobsOhio’s support to attract veterans to Ohio, with Ohio State providing educational support.” (Notably, this Zoom meeting started at 3:38 p.m. EST while Carter’s calendar lists “DNS [Do Not Schedule]: Strategic Priority Work” from 2:30-5:00 p.m.)

Hylenski described Carter’s involvement at this stage as “coaching” the entire group about how to access funding support for the App.

Carter and Kabourek Support Vlachos and Vet Mentor AI in Seeking Funding from JobsOhio

On November 21, 2025, Vlachos emailed Nauseef at JobsOhio, copied Harris, Carter, and others, and stated among other things:

Per General Harris's request following our meeting this morning with President Carter, I'm sending this communication to request your help for an in person meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to perform a demo of our **fully customizable & white label capable AI Veteran Transition Tool**, as well as review the attached business use case analysis of this technology reflecting the economic impact for the state of Ohio. (Emphasis in original.)

On December 10, 2025, and based on Vlachos’ request, JobsOhio hosted a large meeting focused on the App, which included Vlachos, Vet Mentor AI (Hylenski and Poch), JobsOhio (Nauseef, Greenberg, and others), Ohio State (Carter and Kabourek), and ODVS (Harris and others).

Lowden declined Vlachos’ invitation because he was traveling with Kabourek on university business on the West Coast. Kabourek, however, took a red-eye flight home from that trip to attend the JobsOhio meeting. Kabourek skipped the university’s annual Faculty and Staff Recognition Luncheon that day, where many of his employees were being honored, because Carter asked him to attend the JobsOhio meeting. Carter also made extraordinary efforts to attend. At 11:45 a.m., he left that university luncheon (at which he was the keynote speaker) shortly after it began at 11:30 a.m. He attended the JobsOhio meeting in person at JobsOhio’s offices in downtown Columbus from 12:00 – 12:10 p.m. He then returned to campus to attend the Recognition Luncheon.

In describing Carter’s brief appearance at the JobsOhio meeting, Hylenski said Carter entered the room “like the Godfather” and made direct, authoritative statements about the Vlachos App idea. Hylenski recalled that Carter said he would put his name and the university’s name on the App; pointed at Nauseef and stated: “You need to get this done,” and stated to Harris: “We need to do this.” Hylenski said that after making these statements and engaging in brief additional discussion, Carter exited the meeting.

In describing the meeting, Harris corroborated the substance of Hylenski’s account of Carter’s statements and said that it was very clear that Carter wanted Vlachos’ idea to work. Harris noted

that he brought three of his staff to show interest and to protect the relationship with Carter, and because he thought something might come of the idea in the future. Harris said that during the meeting Vlachos discussed two products: 1) an existing App that belonged to Hylenski that linked veterans to disability benefits; and 2) a “bolt on App” not built yet that would link veterans to jobs, which was Vlachos’ concept. Harris thought Hylenski seemed knowledgeable but noted that the JobsOhio team asked many questions about AI and technology and did not seem impressed.

In describing the meeting, Greenberg said that Vlachos’ representation that Harris wanted the meeting played a big part in JobsOhio’s presence there. Greenberg said that JobsOhio was trying to understand more about Vlachos’ App idea by attending the meeting but thought it was something they probably were not going to do. He stated that Carter was very supportive of the App idea and asserted Ohio State supported pursuing it, but Greenberg did not recall Carter’s approach as overly aggressive. He noted that the JobsOhio tech staff in the meeting were not impressed at all with the technology. Greenberg stated that it was clearcut after that meeting that JobsOhio was not going to go forward supporting the App.

Later that day, Vlachos hosted Carter, Nauseef, and Harris on her podcast. Harris described Vlachos’ interview style as amateurish and the podcast experience as difficult.

In describing the meeting, Kabourek stated that he did not speak during it, but stayed the entire time. Participants understood Kabourek to be representing both the university and Carter at the meeting. Kabourek then attended another meeting with JobsOhio that afternoon on a major \$50M project involving the Innovation District at the university. Kabourek did not advise JobsOhio at the Vlachos meeting or afterwards of the previous conclusions of Ohio State personnel regarding the impracticality of her App idea. As noted above, the next day Kabourek then met with Vlachos, Hylenski, and Poch with Lowden and Blackburn to continue to assist Carter in pressing for internal university action on Vlachos’ App idea, efforts that continued through February 2026 with other parts of the university. Kabourek failed to advise these internal colleagues of JobsOhio’s substantive concerns with the App as well.

After the meeting at JobsOhio on December 10, 2025, Carter continued to help Vlachos in developing the App idea, including assistance with naming and structuring of the future-related business venture. On December 12, 2025, Vlachos emailed Carter’s personal Gmail account, copied Hylenski and Poch, and asked Carter to consider a proposed “OF” logo for the App idea they had named “Operation Forward.” Carter replied:

Krisanthe,

TY for sharing the photos from the podcast. Great event all around. The Logo is cool looking. The “OF” acronym might be a harder sell competing with “Only Fans” which has become mainstream “OF”. Know that seems a stretch but I think it would be confusing for many. Just first impression/reaction.

Ted

Hylenski stated that Carter had discussed being named to an advisory board of the Operation Forward venture, which Hylenski noted might come with some form of equity or compensation.

Carter and Vlachos Break with Vet Mentor AI

On December 20, 2025, according to Hylenski, Vlachos demanded that he give her 25% equity in their venture and demanded to be CEO. Hylenski claims Vlachos threatened that if she was not an owner and CEO, Vet Mentor AI “would lose Ohio.” Hylenski explained that when they had previously discussed Les Wexner purchasing the technology, Vet Mentor AI and Vlachos had only contemplated a business relationship but had never agreed to anything. During his interview, Hylenski emphasized that Vlachos did not establish any formal business entity in Ohio until December 20, 2025 when she incorporated VetEarnUSA L.L.C., using WOSU’s address. Hylenski and Poch told her that she did not own the technology and declined Vlachos’ request.

On December 20, 2025, a JobsOhio Executive Coordinator emailed Vlachos and Poch, copying Greenberg and two other JobsOhio colleagues, to schedule a follow up meeting on January 2, 2026.

On December 21, 2025, after Vlachos was upset she was not consulted about scheduling, Poch explained to Vlachos why they accepted the time on January 2, 2026 that JobsOhio offered. On December 22, 2025, Vlachos emailed Hylenski to say that the previously scheduled January 2, 2026 meeting would not happen, stating: “There is no meeting.” Vlachos copied Carter’s Gmail account and Greenberg.

According to Hylenski, on December 23, 2025, Greenberg then texted Poch and stated: “We should talk.” In a subsequent phone conversation that day, Hylenski stated that Greenberg apologized to Poch and said JobsOhio leadership and Carter said that they could not move forward unless Vlachos was involved. According to Hylenski, Greenberg told Poch that if Vet Mentor AI and Vlachos were able to work things out, they could come back to JobsOhio. Hylenski said Poch explained to Greenberg that they were not able to come to any type of business arrangement with Vlachos but were prepared to keep going with JobsOhio.

On the evening of December 23, 2025, Vlachos emailed Hylenski and stated among other things:

Matt is trying to change our original agreement. In order to hold the January 2 meeting you and I must be on the [same] page. If you’re willing to return to our original agreement in writing, I will facilitate both a JobsOhio meeting plus an additional funding meeting with a different group.

Hylenski replied to Vlachos the next morning and stated among other things:

To be fully transparent, we have since moved ahead. I own 100% of the application and all associated IP. Demo access has been removed, we have funding in place, and we are actively moving forward.

That said, I'm still open to hearing your ideas on how you believe this should be structured. I'm willing to have a constructive, forward-looking conversation. What I'm not open to is revisiting earlier assumptions that no longer reflect the reality of where things stand today.

At the end of the day, this work is about helping veterans. There are hundreds of thousands of veterans in Ohio who could benefit from this technology, and I believe there's a way to reach them if the structure supports the mission—not limits it.

If you'd like to share your thoughts on a revised structure, I'm open to that discussion.

Hylenski then emailed Harris on January 4, 2026 to re-engage ODVS on the project without Vlachos but received no response. Harris stated that he never saw this email and did not communicate further with Vet Mentor AI.

When interviewed, Hylenski alleged that the fact that neither JobsOhio nor ODVS continued to work with Vet Mentor AI demonstrated his company was, in his words, “extorted” by Carter and Vlachos. He based his allegations on three claims: (1) Vlachos’ purported “threat” on December 20, 2025 that he “would lose Ohio” if he did not make Vlachos CEO and give her 25% equity; (2) her December 22, 2025 email (copying Carter and Greenberg) stating that the January 2, 2026 meeting would not occur; and (3) Greenberg’s statements to Poch on December 23, 2025.

When interviewed about Hylenski’s allegations and documentation, Greenberg said he was aware that Vlachos started having issues with Hylenski after the December 10, 2025 meeting at JobsOhio. Greenberg said Vlachos told him that she was being cut out by Hylenski and she did not want JobsOhio to sign an NDA with Vet Mentor AI. She asked Greenberg to hold off on any plans to move forward with Vet Mentor AI.

Greenberg also said that he had a Zoom call with Vlachos and Carter a day or two before Christmas. Greenberg recalled that Carter did not speak much. Greenberg said he reached out to Poch and told him JobsOhio worked closely with Vlachos through her podcast contract and would not be moving forward with Vet Mentor AI. Greenberg noted that Poch pushed, almost in a threatening tone, that Vet Mentor AI would take their technology to another state. Greenberg stated that JobsOhio had no plans to move forward with the App idea anyway, as they did not see anything in the App idea worth an investment from JobsOhio.

Carter and Vlachos Join JobsOhio in Las Vegas

Carter accepted JobsOhio’s invitation to join its delegation at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) from January 6-9, 2026, in Las Vegas. Greenberg stated that Carter asked JobsOhio to invite Vlachos and they agreed, treating her the same as any of their other vendors attending CES by offering to cover travel expenses up to \$5,000. Greenberg noted that Vlachos asked about the

reimbursement process but never submitted a reimbursement request after the trip. JobsOhio did not fund any part of Vlachos' expenses.

When Carter returned from the trip, he told Hannah Bechtold of the President's Office that when he arrived at the hotel, his room was not ready, and the Venetian told him he could upgrade to a suite. He explained to Bechtold that he did so because he had to get ready for a dinner. She replied that he had arrived a few hours before dinner, suggesting that the upgrade was not necessary for business purposes. Carter then asked that Ohio State cover the additional cost of the suite, but Bechtold said it was not permissible under university policy. Carter then instructed President's Office personnel to ask JobsOhio to cover the cost of the suite upgrade, and it agreed to do so. In the meantime, however, the President's Office had sought guidance from the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of University Compliance and Integrity, which advised that JobsOhio could not cover the cost of the suite upgrade pursuant to the Ohio Ethics Law. Carter then covered the cost personally and advised his staff that they did not need to check with Legal or Compliance on such issues in the future.

Carter Introduces Vlachos to the Student Veterans of America

Carter joined the Student Veterans of America (SVA) Board of Directors in July 2025. On October 6, 2025, former SVA President and CEO Jared Lyon emailed Carter an update about SVA's partnership with Google and invited him to deliver remarks at a roundtable SVA was hosting with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce on November 18, which would include senior Google representatives who would be in Columbus that week. Fellow SVA Board member Vivian Greentree invited Carter to join a dinner with SVA and Google on November 17, 2025. Carter asked SVA to include Vlachos as a guest at the 11-person dinner that included Lyon; a Senior Vice President of Hiring Our Heroes (a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation initiative that connects the military community with businesses); three senior Google executives; and Ohio State leadership (Carter, Executive Vice President and Provost Ravi Bellamkonda, Kabourek, Lowden, and Luiza Newlin-Lukowicz).

Carter invited Vlachos to SVA's national conference from January 9-11, 2026 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He requested that SVA allow Vlachos to introduce him at his 10-minute address to the entire conference on his vision for student veteran success, and he introduced her to attendees during the conference.

Carter also nominated Vlachos to join SVA's Board of Directors, but she did not move forward in that selection process because she was not deemed qualified by comparison to other nominees and Board members. Notably, SVA's Directors individually are extraordinarily qualified, and Vlachos' experience and expertise does not objectively compare to those of existing Directors.

Carter Introduces Vlachos to the Ohio National Guard

Carter delivered remarks to the Ohio National Guard Joint Senior Leadership Conference on February 6, 2026. Before the event, Carter called Lt. Col. Tom Calhoun (Ret.) to ask if he could bring Vlachos. Carter said he would like her to attend because she was a friend who had a podcast,

would like to connect with the audience, and really liked to hear him speak. Carter also asked Calhoun (who is married to Ohio State Alumni Association President and CEO Molly Calhoun) to connect with Vlachos after the event.

Carter and Kabourek Assist Vlachos in Engaging with OH.io

On March 3, 2026, Vlachos texted Kabourek:

GM!

No rush, but I would like to find time to catch up. Maybe next Thursday or Friday?

In the meantime, in addition to JobsOhio partnership...

I'm pursuing a partnership with OH.io as my infrastructure for both the podcast & the app. I've already communicated with them. Leadership is interested in supporting.

Along with Ted, may I include you in an email to OH.io & COS by using your personal email?

Kabourek replied that he would like to get an update on where Vlachos was in her efforts, proposed they speak on March 12, 2026, and said: "Yes, can include me on email. Thank you." (Kabourek did not react at the time to Vlachos' request to use his personal email, but subsequently admitted permitting this use was a mistake.) Vlachos then texted that she was meeting with OH.io Chief of Staff Colin McGinnis, shared screenshots of her email to McGinnis that copied OH.io co-founder and CEO Jeff Schumann, as well as Carter's and Kabourek's personal email addresses, and asked Kabourek if he wanted to join her meeting with McGinnis or preferred an update when they were scheduled to meet the following day. Kabourek replied that they could connect later.

McGinnis stated that Vlachos initially reached out to Schumann and other general partners at OH.io along with Carter through LinkedIn connections. He said she then emailed Schumann, copying Carter's personal Gmail account. He said her email was passed off to McGinnis to handle as Chief of Staff, only because Carter was copied. He connected with Vlachos to schedule a meeting on March 11, 2026, which did not take place.

McGinnis said OH.io was skeptical of the contact by Vlachos because she had copied Carter's personal email and referenced JobsOhio, which is an important partner of OH.io. He said that OH.io planned to "slow roll the relationship" with her until they had a better feeling about it all. McGinnis said he planned to meet with Vlachos without any of the OH.io general partners to vet her and the situation, but they never met due to Carter's resignation.

Carter Continues Internal Efforts

In January 2026, Carter called Lowden, told him that Vlachos' App idea was moving forward, and asked him to look at the App idea again. On January 23, 2026, Carter emailed Associate Vice President for Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Shereen Agrawal, Lowden, and Vlachos, and copied Kabourek. Notably, however, neither Carter nor Kabourek referenced the review previously undertaken by the OAA team of Vlachos' App idea, or the conclusions of the October 2, 2025, meeting. Carter's email read:

Dear Krisanthe, Rob, and Shereen,
I would like to introduce the three of you.

Krisanthe and Rob have previously discussed creating a platform to better attract and serve Veterans in their search for education and workforce opportunities. Shereen, in your role as the Director of the Center for Software Innovation, I am hoping Rob can coordinate a meeting for the three of you to discuss future possibilities.

My goal is to explore how we can work together to make our priority of being the most Veteran-friendly university in the U.S. a reality.

Stay well and safe everyone,
Ted Carter

On February 4, 2026, Vlachos met with Lowden, Agrawal, and the university's Chief Application Officer Lynne Sanbe. The following day, Vlachos emailed them and stated among other things:

I'd like to consider pulling together a meeting of my relationships who are ready and willing to support funding and/or socialization of all the above to introduce you to them.

We would lead with an Ohio think tank joint forces collaboration. While you may feel there are additional OSU stakeholders who should be involved as we go, I believe it's important you ladies & Rob be a part of the initial conversation with the CEOs/leadership of these orgs. The organizations I would include in the meeting are as follows-

Funding:
JobsOhio - JP Nauseef
The Ohio Fund - Mark Kvamme
Easy Day - Landon Gyulay

Socialization:
Ohio National Guard - General Woodruff
Ohio Department of Veteran Services-General John Harris

SVA - Cory Boatwright
Anduril - Zach Mears
AEP - Bill Fehrman

This meeting did not occur. Vlachos emailed Agrawal and Sanbe, copying Lowden, on February 10, 2026 and spoke with Agrawal on February 23, 2026. Agrawal explained to Vlachos that the university would not consider exploring whether to build the App for her, because such work was not performed for external parties, particularly where the university did not own the intellectual property.

Vlachos texted Kabourek on March 3, 2026, and asked to catch up with him. He replied and they scheduled a phone meeting on March 12, 2026. That meeting was cancelled on March 8, 2026. Vlachos texted him on March 9, 2026, after Carter's resignation was announced that morning: "When you have a moment, I'd appreciate a brief call please. I need your advice with something so I know best way to handle." Kabourek asserted that he did not reply to Vlachos by text or call.

IV. Analysis

For almost two years, Carter asked numerous individuals inside the university to provide inappropriate assistance to Vlachos, a close personal associate. His efforts were wide-ranging and extensive. Carter sought resources and assistance for Vlachos despite there being no clear nexus to a viable service or product that she could deliver that would serve Ohio State's interests. On the contrary, Vlachos' Callout Podcast appeared to narrowly focus on connecting veterans with utility industry jobs that did not require a college degree, and her related App idea was undeveloped.

Public resources that Carter sought for Vlachos included: university employment; space on campus; staff and technical support for her podcast; staff assistance for her App idea; and university investment in her business proposals. Carter was often overt with others in these efforts. While referring a contact for potential employment or asking about potential space on campus are not, in themselves, concerning activities, the instances identified here help demonstrate the extent of Carter's efforts for Vlachos. The pervasiveness of his efforts, and the inappropriate nature of Carter's relationship with Vlachos, were not apparent when they occurred because he typically made such efforts in serial fashion, and the full extent of those efforts was not apparent to individual employees. In other ways Carter actively concealed the true nature of his actions involving Vlachos through the use of his personal email, personal meetings on his calendar, and other means. Carter's efforts were not successful within the university due to processes and decisions by university personnel, but he wasted significant employee time and created mistrust among colleagues.

According to several witnesses, Carter stated that he had obtained or would obtain donations for or interest in Vlachos' business ventures from university donors. We confirmed that Carter had not, in fact, done so. This misrepresentation of the engagement of university donors by Carter is a notable misuse of influence by a university president.

University processes and personnel could not fully mitigate the impact of Carter's actions on Ohio State's external partners. Carter also sought additional resources for Vlachos' business ventures from state government, corporate partners, and a national veterans organization. His efforts to support Vlachos with these external parties were discordant with, and in fact may have conflicted with, the university's ongoing projects and priorities with those external parties. Carter's efforts on behalf of Vlachos therefore potentially jeopardized the university's relationships and credibility with these external parties.

In sum, Carter intentionally put his own interests before Ohio State's interests when he used the authority and influence of his university position to secure benefits for Vlachos. Carter's actions implicated the following law and university policies, which establish specific expectations and requirements for university employees.

Ohio Ethics Law

Carter requested and received personal ethics training upon beginning his role as university President. As a new employee, Carter was provided and signed an acknowledgment of receiving a copy of the Ohio Ethics Law. Carter also attended two annual ethics law training sessions for university trustees.

a. Conflicts of Interest

Generally, the Ohio Ethics Law prohibits public officials or employees from participating in actions or decisions that definitely and directly affect themselves, their family members or their business associates.¹ The Ohio Ethics Commission states:

The basic assumption that underlies the Ethics Law is that Ohioans deserve public officials or employees who work for the public interest rather than their personal interests or those of closely related parties.²

The conflict of interest provisions in Ohio Revised Code 102.03 (D) and (E) state:

(D) No public official or employee shall use or authorize the use of the authority or influence of office or employment to secure anything of value or the promise or offer of anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

(E) No public official or employee shall solicit or accept anything of value that is of such a character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence upon the public official or employee with respect to that person's duties.

¹ Conflicts of Interest: <https://ethics.ohio.gov/education/factsheets/ConflictsOfInterest.pdf> and O.R.C. 102.03 (D) and (E).

² Conflicts of Interest: <https://ethics.ohio.gov/education/factsheets/ConflictsofInterest.pdf>.

In [Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion 2025-01](#), the Ethics Commission states:

The Commission has stated that voting on, recommending, deliberating, discussing, lobbying, or taking any other formal or informal action within the scope of a public official's or employee's public authority is "use of," or "authorization of the use of" the authority or influence of a public official's or employee's office or employment.

In this Advisory Opinion, the Ethics Commission also states:

A thing of value manifests a substantial and improper influence on a public official or employee if it could impair the official's or employee's objectivity and independence of judgment with respect to his or her public duties.

b. Public Contracts

The Ohio Ethics Law also prohibits public employees from having an interest in the profits or benefits of a public contract with their own public agency.³ This prohibited interest can be financial or fiduciary in nature.⁴ In other words, even if a public employee does not have a prohibited financial interest in a public contract, they can still have a prohibited fiduciary interest in a public contract by serving in a decision-maker role, such as board member or owner/equity holder, for the company. A public contract exists any time the university purchases goods or services.⁵

Additionally, a public employee may not:

[A]uthorize, or employ the authority or influence of the public official's office to secure authorization of any public contract (including employment) in which the public official, a member of the public official's family, or any of the public official's business associates has an interest...."⁶

As noted, state agencies made inquiries to the university following Carter's resignation. Based on the information gathered and analysis of university policies below, Carter's actions may warrant further consideration by them of the following questions:

- 1) Under the Ohio Ethics Law, did the Carter/Vlachos relationship manifest a substantial and improper influence that impaired Carter's objectivity and independence of judgment with respect to his actions regarding Vlachos' business ventures in violation of Ohio Revised Code 102.03 (D) or (E)?

³ O.R.C. 2921.41 (A)(4).

⁴ O.R.C. 2921.41 (A)(4) and [Adv. Op. No. 81-008](#).

⁵ O.R.C. 2921.42 (I).

⁶ O.R.C. 2921.42 (A)(1) and O.R.C 102.03 (D) and (E).

2) Under the Ohio Ethics Law, were Carter and Vlachos business associates and, if so, would Carter's actions with respect to WOSU's contract with Vlachos be in violation of Ohio Revised Code 2921.42?

3) Did Carter's actions in connection with Vlachos implicate any other potential prohibitions?

Ohio State's Shared Values

[Ohio State's Shared Values](#) include "Integrity and Respect." Individuals who embody this value act responsibly and are accountable for their actions. They build trust through honesty, transparency, and authentic engagement and they serve as good stewards of our and others' resources.

Even if Carter's relationship with Vlachos and his involvement with her business ventures did not violate the law, his wide-ranging efforts to use university resources to support Vlachos only benefited her as his close personal associate and at times harmed the university by wasting valuable employee time, created confusion among employees regarding Carter's priorities, and generated distrust with Ohio State colleagues and external partners. Carter's actions reflected behavior antithetical to Ohio State's Shared Values of integrity and respect.

While Ohio State's Shared Values represent institutional aspirations, university policies establish specific expectations and requirements for employees. Carter's actions implicated the following university policies.

The Outside Activities and Conflicts Policy

The [Outside Activities and Conflicts Policy](#) addresses conflicts of interest (COI):

I. Expectations and Responsibilities

D. Employees must take all necessary steps to avoid, eliminate, remediate, and/or manage COCs, COIs, and FCOIs.

This policy uses a comprehensive definition of a COI that includes both "outside activities" and "relationships":

A COI exists when outside activities or **relationships** may:

- (1) Create an improper influence on the employee's or another individual's university decisions;
- (2) Create a prohibited interest in a university contract or transaction under the Ohio Ethics Law;
- (3) Create any other conflict under the Ohio Ethics Law; or
- (4) Involve the use of university resources without prior approval.

Carter's close personal and business relationship with Vlachos created an improper influence on his university decisions, and he failed to take any steps to avoid, eliminate, remediate, and/or manage that improper influence. Therefore, sufficient evidence exists that Carter violated the Outside Activities and Conflicts Policy.

The Fiscal Stewardship Policy

The [Fiscal Stewardship Policy](#) states:

As a major public institution, the university is held to a high level of accountability for its business practices. Every effort must be made to ensure that funds are used in a responsible and appropriate manner consistent with the university mission, applicable law, and ethical practice. As stewards of public funds, we have great responsibility to protect financial resources with wisdom and discipline; inspire ethical and prudent decision making; display courage and speak out on unethical or illegal behavior; and embrace the highest standards of fiscal stewardship and accountability. At the core of this effort is a formalized system of articulated roles and responsibilities, explicit approval authorities, and **internal controls** designed to mitigate the risk of financial impropriety and any resulting damage to the university's reputation and public trust. [Emphasis in original]

I. Accountability

A. The university seeks to ensure efficiency and promote fiscal accountability when performing any financial transactions, using any university resources, preparing financial reports, and accepting funds.

II. Leader and Manager Commitment to Stewardship Values

A. Leaders and managers must create a culture that demonstrates a strong commitment to caring for and managing financial resources in compliance with university policy, applicable law, and ethical practice.

B. Leaders and managers must model ethical behavior, honesty, integrity, openness, and transparency, in all matters of fiscal stewardship and care of university resources.

Carter's efforts to assist Vlachos' business projects did not align with these expectations. He wasted extensive employee time for nearly two years, provided direct staff assistance for two of Vlachos' podcast episodes, and attempted to provide her with substantial non-financial university resources. Although university processes and individual employee decisions prevented Carter from succeeding in most such efforts, the cumulative nature of Carter's attempts on behalf of his close personal associate was fiscally irresponsible. Accordingly, we conclude that Carter violated the Fiscal Stewardship Policy.

The Expenditures Policy

The [Expenditures Policy](#) states:

As a major public institution, The Ohio State University is held to a high level of accountability for its business practices. Numerous constituencies, including students, donors, taxpayers, alumni, the State of Ohio, and the federal government, have an interest in how the university spends its money. Accordingly, every reasonable effort must be made to ensure that funds are used in a responsible and appropriate manner.

Faculty and staff with approval authority for expenditure transactions are expected to exercise judgment and make a good faith attempt to follow both the letter and the spirit of this policy. When questions arise dealing with interpreting this policy, faculty and staff must seek guidance from their senior fiscal officers, who will consult with the Office of Business and Finance as appropriate and document the reasoning behind their decisions.

Definitions

Business Purpose: Written statement that explains the reason/justification behind the travel, purchase, or reimbursement of expenses. Must include details of the transaction (who, what, when, why) and how/why the expenditure benefits the mission of the university/unit. When applicable, must include attendee list (name, affiliation, title).

Policy Details

I. Every expenditure transaction must have a business purpose and an itemized receipt or equivalent documentation and be approved by an authorized approver unless otherwise noted in this policy.

IV. Approval Authority

E. For expenditures of the president, approval authority rests with the secretary of the Board of Trustees and cannot be delegated.

Documentation of travel and non-travel business expenditures requested by Carter reflects appropriate review processes by university colleagues and shows that no university funds were used to pay Vlachos. Carter, however, did request to spend university funds in connection with Vlachos. While university employees satisfied their policy obligations, they trusted that Carter's requests were made appropriately and in good faith. In contrast, Carter's actions suggest that he did not follow the spirit of the policy by incurring business travel and requesting expenditures connected to Vlachos, an individual seeking public resources to support her personal business. This was especially true with respect to the September 28-30, 2025 trip to Florida, which Carter changed from a personal trip to a business trip and generated a facially reasonable business rationale, to justify traveling with Vlachos at the university's expense. This trip, and perhaps others, do not represent a responsible use of university funds, as required by the Expenditure

Policy, because they were connected to Vlachos. Therefore, sufficient evidence exists that Carter violated the Expenditures Policy.

Required Training and Reporting of Alleged Fraud, Theft in Office, or Misuse or Misappropriation of Public Money

On June 27, 2024, the Auditor of State (AOS) released [Bulletin 2024-005](#), which provides guidance and information regarding required training and links to [online training materials](#) produced by the AOS. The Office of the President reported a 100% training completion rate, and records indicate that Carter completed his training on September 28, 2024. The training emphasizes that public officials and state employees are required to report alleged fraud, theft in office, or misuse or misappropriation of public money to the AOS.

Sufficient evidence exists that Carter should have seen that Vlachos' efforts both internal and external to the university implicated this reporting requirement because her efforts, if successful, would have resulted in misuse or misappropriation of public funds. Carter failed to take steps to respond appropriately.

V. Conclusions

We previously outlined seven key questions within scope for this investigation. We provide conclusions to those questions, as follows.

1) What, if any, is Vlachos' contractual or business relationship with the university?

We identified only a single contractual or business relationship between Vlachos and Ohio State, and that was her \$93,716 contract with WOSU for podcast production services covering 50 episodes and the use of a WOSU "desk/cubicle" at no cost. WOSU offered Vlachos the university rates charged to nonprofits because they considered her podcast to be a nonprofit. WOSU personnel did not feel pressured by anyone and saw the contract as in line with the type of engagement WOSU was seeking to increase revenue. WOSU had no control over the content of the podcast and only handled its filming and production. Vlachos was current in her payment obligations as of March 2026.

2) Were any university employees improperly influenced by Carter or anyone else acting at his direction to assist Vlachos?

Yes. Carter made direct requests to at least 14 university employees to assist Vlachos inside the university. Some employees viewed requests from Carter related to Vlachos as unusual because he rarely if ever contacted them directly otherwise, or rarely if ever contacted them on behalf of an external individual. These employees typically attributed such requests to Carter's commitment to veterans' issues. Numerous other Ohio State employees received indirect or derivative requests or were contacted personally by Vlachos who communicated Carter's implicit or explicit authorization for the contact or request. With one exception, these employees all sought to avoid

Vlachos' communications, or efforts on her behalf, within a few meetings or contacts. That exception was Chris Kabourek.

Kabourek served as Carter's university point of contact for Vlachos. No other employee other than Carter communicated so extensively with Vlachos, and no other employee had the same level of awareness of or involvement in Vlachos' activities both inside and outside the university. When interviewed, Kabourek described Vlachos as lacking professionalism and marketing expertise, and did not see her bring anything but enthusiasm to her project. However, at Carter's direction and encouragement, and unlike all other employees, Kabourek made substantive efforts to support Carter's efforts on behalf of Vlachos both inside the university and with key university partners, and he admitted when interviewed that Carter frequently checked in with him on progress.

Significantly, after university experts concluded that Vlachos' App idea was not feasible upon hearing her presentation at the internal meeting on October 2, 2025, Kabourek drafted a business proposal on her behalf, which proposed \$20,000 in support for her App idea. Kabourek also went to great lengths to provide his support to Vlachos' efforts with external partners, including cutting short a university business trip to Washington to attend the December 10, 2025, JobsOhio meeting.

Notably, when interviewed Kabourek asserted that at some point after the December 10, 2025, JobsOhio meeting and before Christmas, he told Carter he saw no path forward at the university for Vlachos' App idea. He acknowledged, however, that this single effort was insufficient to stop Carter's efforts on Vlachos' behalf. In fact, despite asserting when interviewed that after that conversation he had very little engagement with Vlachos, Kabourek continued to assist her efforts.

When interviewed, Kabourek acknowledged his understanding of university policies, and acknowledged receiving ethics training shortly after he was hired. Kabourek also ensured that the contract between WOSU and Vlachos met policy requirements and continued to ensure that Vlachos was accountable for payments to WOSU after that contract was signed. However, no other university employee acted similarly to Kabourek in assisting Vlachos for Carter, and significant, consistent evidence shows that all other employees followed required standards and did not extend favors to Vlachos or offer to assist her inappropriately. In fact, Kabourek could not describe a point at which he would have stopped supporting Vlachos, other than not permitting a payment to her in violation of Purchasing requirements.

In the context of all the facts, Kabourek's statements seeking to diminish his role, knowledge, and personal efforts with and on behalf of Vlachos were not credible, nor was his claim that he did all that he reasonably could have done to limit Carter's efforts for Vlachos. As noted above, Kabourek notified the university on April 13, 2026, that he was resigning his position.

3) Were any university resources improperly provided to Vlachos?

Yes. Carter's actions in connection with Vlachos wasted extensive employee time over nearly two years. Time for any president of a large university is an invaluable resource. Carter provided Vlachos with extraordinary access to himself and to university employees, many in very senior positions. Staff also provided support for two of her podcast episodes at Carter's request. Carter

used his authority as a public official, as well as the university's credibility, to support Vlachos' efforts with external university partners. At Carter's direction and encouragement, Kabourek also invested his own authority as a public official, and the university's credibility, to support Vlachos' efforts with JobsOhio and Oh.io.

4) Is there any evidence that Carter misused his public position to benefit Vlachos?

Yes. Carter misused his position as Ohio State's President to seek and provide public resources to Vlachos. Carter allowed his close personal and business relationship with Vlachos to improperly influence his actions and impair his judgment. For almost two years, Carter involved numerous individuals inside the university in wide-ranging efforts to provide inappropriate assistance to her. Public resources that Carter sought for Vlachos included employment, office space, staff and technical support, investment in her business proposals, and financial support and engagement from key external university partners. While many of these behaviors were not, in themselves, inappropriate, collectively they evidence the extent of Carter's efforts on Vlachos' behalf. Although Carter was often overt in his efforts to assist Vlachos, he affirmatively concealed the true nature of his relationship with and actions involving her, by (for example) using his personal email or labeling meetings with her as "personal." From the totality of the evidence, it is clear Carter substantially concealed the breadth and extent of his efforts to assist Vlachos from the Board of Trustees and all university employees, with the possible exception of Kabourek. Carter's actions betrayed Ohio State's Shared Values and violated university policy.

5) Is there any evidence that Carter misused his public position to benefit personal associates beyond Vlachos?

No. We developed no such evidence.

6) Were any individuals deterred from raising concerns regarding any interactions involving Vlachos or others, and, if so, why?

Yes. Multiple employees stated that they alerted either Kabourek or Blackburn that Vlachos' behavior was in some way concerning. Several employees had suspicions about the nature of Carter's relationship with Vlachos, based on either individual observations and experiences or conversations amongst their peers. However, they each lacked factual evidence of an inappropriate relationship and, therefore, felt speaking out would not be received well. Even if they utilized the university's [EthicsPoint anonymous reporting system](#), the common perception was that they lacked the factual evidence needed to take action.

Kabourek separately received concerns about Vlachos from Rastauskas and Lowden. He responded by telling them to raise any concerns they had to Carter directly, even though both were subordinate to Kabourek in the organizational hierarchy, and in addition Lowden reported to Kabourek. This refusal or unwillingness to respond appropriately to such concerns, and in fact to direct them to go themselves to the person about whom the concern relates, is a dereliction of duty for a senior leader and does not demonstrate the behavior expected by the university of its leaders.

This failure was compounded in this case by the clear power dynamic of the President's Senior Advisor instructing two more junior employees to confront the university president.

For his own part, Kabourek denied any knowledge of an inappropriate relationship between Carter and Vlachos. He asserted that he confronted Carter at some point between December 10 and Christmas, 2025 regarding the unsuitability of Vlachos' App idea for the university and was rebuffed. If he in fact had such a meeting, Kabourek failed to either make clear to Carter the risks presented by Vlachos' activities to the university and to Carter personally, or he did so and Carter did not acknowledge them and change his behavior. In either case, Kabourek failed to elevate the issue to anyone else. Indeed, after this alleged meeting, Kabourek continued to support Vlachos in additional efforts with an external partner. Kabourek admitted he felt confidence in and comfort with Legal and Compliance, yet he asserted he had no concerns to elevate. When interviewed, Kabourek acknowledged the impact of these events on university employees, the university's reputation, and several key university partners. However, Kabourek could not describe a point at which he would have elevated any activity by or on behalf of Vlachos to Legal or Compliance, other than an effort to make a payment to her in violation of Purchasing requirements.

Blackburn, as Chief of Staff, would typically be assumed to focus on Carter's priorities, assist him in appropriately mitigating risks, and act with courage to confront Carter when needed. In this role, Blackburn appears to have been ineffectual with respect to Vlachos. Multiple individuals report alerting Blackburn to specific concerns regarding Vlachos, and Blackburn conveyed his concerns about Vlachos to others. However, many employees reported that Blackburn did not appropriately balance issues, and frequently raised concerns about all types of issues. His concerns about Vlachos got lost in a general communicating style that treated everything as a crisis. In addition, Blackburn believed that raising concerns to Carter put him at risk, because his position as Chief of Staff had been degraded by Carter following Kabourek's elevation to Senior Advisor on July 23, 2025. Blackburn made several efforts, including convening the October 2, 2025 meeting, to pull together university personnel to determine the impracticality of Vlachos' App idea, and effectively and fully supported the President's Office staff in appropriately deciding issues related to Carter's travel and Vlachos' visits.

Stacy Rastauskas deserves special comment for raising concerns. She received information from both JobsOhio and her team (a colleague saw Carter with Vlachos outside a hotel early in the morning at the November 2025 Association of Public and Land-grant Universities meeting in Philadelphia) that suggested the possibility of an inappropriate relationship between Carter and Vlachos. She raised concerns to Kabourek and Blackburn, who each said they understood the concerns. She felt like Kabourek and Blackburn could have done more but acknowledged that it was a difficult situation. Rastauskas also raised concerns to Mike Eicher, her direct supervisor, who failed to understand the seriousness of her concerns. Eicher also failed to understand Rastauskas' worry about raising such concerns in the context of Carter's recent demotion of her position from the President's Cabinet. Notably, Eicher admitted when interviewed that he was recovering from surgery at the time and stated that in retrospect he would have handled the situation differently.

7) Are there any university policies or processes that need improvement based on facts learned in this investigation?

Yes. Please see our recommendations below.

VI. Recommendations

- 1) Maintain the processes of the President's Office and the independence of the Board Office in reviewing travel and expenditure requests submitted by the President, as well as transparent scheduling processes for the President.** These processes and reviews for Carter prevented more significant problems. These steps enable (and require) colleagues to ask questions of the President in a structured and safe manner without fear of reprisal. While these processes and reviews can be perceived as cumbersome, they represent important checks and balances to protect both the President and the university.
- 2) Units should review their practices on leadership requests for assistance.** Based on interviews, it was clear that many individuals were uncertain how to respond to requests by Carter to help Vlachos, because they usually tried to accommodate appropriate similar requests. Individuals were unclear exactly how much to help unusual requests under university policy or unit practice.
- 3) Consider revisions to ethics and insider threat training for senior leaders.** Carter's activities on behalf of Vlachos provide an object lesson in the dangers of university leaders leveraging their authority, or the credibility of the university, on behalf of associates. Even if such activities may not violate legal or policy requirements, they might create conditions in which such violations could more readily occur. This experience offers the university an excellent opportunity to address these types of behaviors through more tailored ethics and concern reporting training.

In addition, it is notable that Vlachos' behaviors themselves did not cause a formal report, separate and apart from any speculation about the existence of an inappropriate relationship between Carter and Vlachos. Vlachos behaved like an individual seeking to infiltrate university processes for the benefit of herself or another and presented risk to the university; those employees who engaged with her did not adequately respond to this behavior as such a risk.

- 4) Reinforce the importance of culture and shared values at the senior leadership level.** Carter's resignation and the leadership transition underscore the importance of a values-driven culture among senior leaders. These events provide an opportunity for the President to empower the Cabinet to come forward with concerns, even if they may not have hard evidence, and ensure clear pathways exist to address issues. We also recommend, as these events recede in time, that the President and the Board of Trustees consider specific ways to measure and maintain that focus, ensuring that university leaders act as role models of ethical behavior.
- 5) Continue to respond as appropriate to any state and federal agency inquiries.**