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## Bush's First 100 Days in Office: UD Faculty Split on Performance

University of Dayton

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**NEWS TIPS**

**BUSH'S FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE: UD FACULTY SPLIT ON PERFORMANCE**

**SHOWS 'CALLOUS DISREGARD' FOR ENVIRONMENT**— FDR did a lot of things in his first 100 days in office. How has George Bush, who will reach that number this Sunday, fared? "He's been a calamity for the American people," says Gerald Kerns, a University of Dayton political science professor. "He's shown his true colors, that of a spokesman for corporate interest at the expense of public interest."

Kerns is especially disheartened by Bush's "callous disregard for the environment. He's already reversed his campaign pledge to reduce carbon dioxide in the air. And his approach to the nation's energy crisis is to drill for oil instead of looking for viable alternate resources."

On foreign relations, Kerns says Bush botched the spy plane incident with China. And Wednesday's announcement that he would help defend Taiwan against China is another big mistake, he says. "He's reckless and could be making an enemy of China rather quickly. This posturing couldn't have come at a worse time in American-Chinese relations."

Kerns also finds trouble with Bush's proposed \$1.6 billion tax cut: "It's totally misguided and will only truly benefit the very wealthy. It won't put money in the pockets of the middle class, who need it to spur consumer spending."

For media interviews, contact **Gerald Kerns** at UD at 937-229-3650, at home at 513-583-9672 or via e-mail at [gerald.kerns@udayton.edu](mailto:gerald.kerns@udayton.edu).

**BUSH'S ADMINISTRATIVE STYLE IMPRESSIVE** — "Well, we've certainly seen a different administrative style in George Bush than from that of his predecessor," says the Rev. John Putka, S.M., a political science lecturer at UD. "His style is low key — he isn't interested in being on stage. He's been quite competent in his first 100 days. He's getting things done."

Putka says he is encouraged by Bush's effectiveness at getting Congress to agree to almost all of his tax plan. "He's proving that he can bridge the partisan gaps. I think people are finding that he's a genuinely likable person. He's had a record number of members of Congress, from both parties, visit him in the White House."

Bush's "calm and cool" stance during the U.S. spy-plane incident, especially in gaining release of the U.S. hostages in China, has also impressed Putka. "There was no grandstanding or hotdogging. He used diplomacy and held firm to the Chinese. He wouldn't apologize because the U.S. had done nothing wrong. He's showing great leadership early in his presidency."

For media interviews, contact **Father John Putka, S.M.**, at 937-229-2594.

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**BUSH BUSY SWAYING DEMOCRATS** — “George Bush is doing exactly what was expected of him — he’s maintaining the Republican ideology that the health of American business is equivalent to the health of the economy,” says Una Cadegan, an associate professor of history at UD and director of the school’s American studies program. “And I define economy here in Republican terms: maximizing profits for stockholders.”

Cadegan says she is disappointed by the Democrats’ absence of opposition to the new president. “I think they have more leverage than they realize. If they had more confidence in their progressive, populist heritage, we’d see more of a debate on pressing issues.”

One particular Bush plan — his proposal to open up federal land to drill for oil — especially chafes Cadegan. “I’m not surprised because he’s an oil man at heart, after all. The only surprise for me is that anyone would be surprised by the things he’s doing.” Labor is another hot-button topic to Cadegan: “Labor issues such as health care and unionization always limit profits for companies so they’re going to take a big hit during Bush’s presidency.”

For media interviews, contact **Una Cadegan** at UD at 937-229-3468 or via e-mail at [una.cadegan@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:una.cadegan@notes.udayton.edu).

**BUSH HAS RESTORED DECENCY TO OFFICE** — “In terms of restoring decency, honor and trust to the office of the presidency, George Bush gets an A+,” says Larry Schweikart, associate professor of history at UD and author of the textbook *Entrepreneurial Adventure: The History of Business in the United States* (Harcourt College Publishers, 2000). “He has done this quietly, and not calling a press conference to welcome home the U.S. hostages held in China is a clear example of how classy he is.” Bill Clinton, Schweikart says, would have used the event for self-promotion.

Schweikart also gives excellent marks to Bush in another area, the finessing of his tax plan through Congress: “If the tax cut goes through as it appears, I’d say that it surpasses Ronald Reagan’s achievement in 1980.”

As for recent environmental issues, Bush has shown that he is “willing to consider some of the less loony things” and not acquiesce to “environmental whackos,” Schweikart says. During the California energy crisis, Schweikart says Bush demonstrated “much needed fortitude” when he told the state he wouldn’t bail it out. “It’s the equivalent of the 1980s air traffic controllers strike when Reagan held his ground.”

Schweikart adds, “To think that he has done this much with a Senate that is ostensibly Democratic — you have four loser ‘liberal Republicans’ who might as well be Democrats — is an incredible testimony to Bush’s ideas and his commitment to those ideas.”

For media interviews, contact **Larry Schweikart** at home at (513) 748-4257 or via e-mail at [schweikart@erinet.com](mailto:schweikart@erinet.com).