

Penn State trustees revealed to have awarded \$5.5 million to Joe Paterno

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The [New York Times](#), in an exclusive report this morning, broke the story on what many will come to see as the most egregious of decisions made by the collective leadership of Penn State University: the grand payoff of [Joe Paterno](#) for his silence and complicity in covering up crimes against (at least) ten students and their families, who'd placed their faith, trust, and education in their very hands. [To wit:](#)

“*In January 2011 Joe Paterno learned prosecutors were investigating his longtime assistant coach Jerry Sandusky for sexually assaulting young boys.... That same month, Mr. Paterno, the football coach at Penn State, began negotiating with his superiors to amend his contract, with the timing something of a surprise because the contract was not set to expire until the end of 2012, according to university documents and people with knowledge of the discussions.*”

By August 2011, the agreement had been reached between Paterno and the (then) university president: “Mr. Paterno was to be paid \$3 million at the end of the 2011 season if he agreed it would be his last. Interest-free loans totaling \$350,000 that the university had made to Mr. Paterno over the years would be forgiven.... He would also have the use of the university’s private plane and a luxury box for him and his family for the next 25 years.”

Importantly, “the university’s full board of trustees was kept in the dark about the arrangement until November, when Mr. Sandusky was arrested.”

Most importantly, “in the end...the board of trustees gave the family a package worth roughly \$5.5 million,” including “the use of specialized hydrotherapy massage equipment for Mr. Paterno’s wife at the university’s Lasch Building, where Mr. Sandusky had molested a number of his victims.”

On Thursday, the [New York Times](#) reported: “In 1998, officials at Penn State, including its president and its legendary football coach, were aware Jerry Sandusky was being investigated by the university’s police department for possibly molesting two young boys in the football building’s showers. They followed the investigation closely, updating one another along the way.”

In that same story, “Mr. (Louis J.) Freeh’s investigation makes clear it was Mr. Paterno, long regarded as the single most powerful official at the university, who persuaded the university president and others not to report Mr. Sandusky to the authorities in 2001 after he had violently assaulted another boy in the football showers.”

After a 1998 [investigation](#), “upon his retirement (from Penn State), Mr. Sandusky was given a lump-sum payment of \$168,000 and a special designation of ‘emeritus’ rank that carried special privileges, including access to the university’s recreational facilities.”

Also on Thursday, the [Washington Informer](#) noted that the “question of how could this (victimization) have gone on so long without Jerry Sandusky being detected” being “just one of a number of questions the public is left to ask following a high-profile trial after which Sandusky was found guilty in 45 of 48 counts of sexually abusing 10 boys over the course of 15 years.”

The report of the Freeh investigation was made public Thursday. The [New York Times](#) noted “the probe took seven months and involved more than 400 interviews and the review of voluminous e-mail correspondence and other documents.”

The numbers tell the story: 15 years of abuse; 10 boys who were sexually abused; \$5,500,000 of rewards to Mr. Paterno (and his family); and a lump-sum



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payment of \$198,000 and the rank of 'emeritus' awarded to Mr. Sandusky, along with the full rights and privileges of retirement as any other honorable colleague.

Mr. Paterno died in January 2012, with the full knowledge that his tenure, image, legend and all the accoutrement of power he once wielded, to the very end of his career at Penn State University until his firing, had been revealed to be nothing more than greed, fraud, and shameful behavior.

No payoff, payback, or payment in kind will ever measure up to the pain endured by the victims of Mr. Sandusky, convicted and squirming to appeal his inevitable future life sentence in prison. When parents send their children off to college, they imbue to that institution and its leaders a full and complete trust that they will take care of their child, protect him or her from harm, and lead by example the way they should conduct their own business, ethics and morals in the future.

Penn State has failed in every way possible in the past 15 years. The only thing they did right was in hiring Louis Freeh and his firm to discern the truth, and shining a light on it, at last.

No football victory, no number of professional players to come from Penn State, or memories of any glory days of student-athletes lifting up and carrying Joe Paterno above their shoulders will ever be the same again.

It's not about protecting the reputation of a school's football team and coaching staff; it's about the ten young men who have endured minutes, days, weeks, months, and years of memories of not being deemed above the shroud of secrecy and the importance of covering up. Each person who knew, but did not speak, who saw, but did not report, and who received continuing and ongoing rewards for silence

The victims of this scandal span far beyond the football players whose lives were forever scarred and violated. This pallor of scandal is cast upon anyone enrolled at Penn State, their school, because when you hurt "one of them," you in fact hurt "all of them." What does a degree from Penn State mean right now to the May graduates of that university?

In professional meetings across the country, for the faculty of Penn State who attend convocations of mathematics, present papers in engineering research, or yield scholarly works by those who have never attended even one sporting event on that campus—all are affected and permanently impacted by the lack of common decency, the university administration's disregard of ethics, morals, and standards that should have been there without question, and the entire devaluation of the worth of even one student's safety in favor of a hot tub for Mrs. Paterno in return for silence.

How can that once august collective of critical thinkers among the Penn State faculty hold their heads high and say they are proud of their tenured affiliation with the institution? No one stopped to think of 'all' the victims of these decisions. Tenured faculty are, for better or for worse, permanent employees of Penn State for a lifetime.

By seeking and securing tenure, each PhD—who has studied at least 8 to 10 years to attain those credentials, has worked another 10 years teaching, researching and writing peer-reviewed papers that are vetted by national and international experts in their particular field—has indicated that Penn State was their choice "for the rest of their lives." Tenure means, in effect, the last stop on the career track; faculty, aside from one-year sabbaticals, declare that they don't want to be anywhere else but there.

How do the best and brightest academics feel about "their" school and affiliation now? No one among the football czars, former students with their influence and donations, none of the leaders in the cover-up process ever gave the "eggheads" a single thought. Little x's, and o's on the AstroTurf and the win-loss records and national television contracts were the sum focus of their lesser minds.

In just one person's opinion, at least, the term student-athlete didn't mean much to the people authorizing the payoffs or signing the checks in exchange for the safety and dignity of the young men, whose only hopes for a professional football career were to be guided by gatekeeper Sandusky and overseen by former coach Joe Paterno.

Questions remain: how can the university's most prestigious official as Joe Paterno once was have accrued close to \$350,000 in loans from the university? Never mind the wisdom or legality of a state institution acting as a banking official. Someone might want to ask how a multimillion-netting leader, who also qualified for Social Security benefits, who had lucrative sports apparel deals and other endorsements might have needed an extra paltry \$350,000.

Someone else might want to know why it was so important to employ an 84-year-old man as head coach, when his decision skills were already known to university officials, the university president at least, as not in the mind-set that would be considered good decision making. Someone could have let Paterno retire quietly and fade into the sunset, when the first scandal broke and paid him to be the "good humor man" and let him ride in a convertible around the stadium and wave to the crowd before the game if they were going to cover up his part in the travesty.

But they didn't even do that. King Football was held to a lesser standard, no standard at all, in fact. "If you win on Saturday, you can do anything, and they meant anything, you want to," was the message the power brokers spouted, Paterno lived by, and the public was supposed to believe, accept, overlook, and swallow. There was a tradition called "**Paternoville**," "the student tradition of camping out in front of Beaver Stadium prior to a home football game, begun in 2005." What exactly does their **slogan**, "Success with Honor" mean today?

They had two national **championships** under Paterno in 1982 and 1986. Was that really worth protecting Mr. Paterno as honored, dignitary and multimillion-dollar compensated leader from 1998 to 2011? The leadership of Penn State (then and until they hired Louis J. Freeh) was in a reward-for-silence mode.

The victims of the abuse are still victims, as are their families, as is the future peace of mind of any parent who might be asked to send his or her son or daughter to Penn State University athletics in the future. When will it be safe again? When can the parents start to sleep at night, knowing in their hearts that

their children's best interests and, above all, safety, will come first at Penn State?

On Thursday, the [NCAA](#) issued the following [statement](#) on Penn State; the statement came from Bob Williams, vice president of communications:

“Like everyone else, we are reviewing the [final report](#) for the first time today. As President Emmert wrote in his November 17th letter to Penn State President Rodney Erickson and reiterated this week, the university has [four key questions](#), concerning compliance with institutional control and ethics policies, to which it now needs to respond. Penn State's response to the letter will inform our next steps, including whether or not to take further action. We expect Penn State's continued cooperation in our examination of these issues.”

• [NCAA partners with Stop It Now! to prevent abuse](#)

From the above link: here are the four key [questions](#):

- “**
- 1. How has Penn State and/or its employees complied with the Articles of the Constitution and bylaws (cited in the letter)?**
 - 2. How has Penn State exercised institutional control over the issues identified in and related to the Grand Jury Report? Were there procedures in place that were or were not followed? What are the institution's expectations and policies to address the conduct that has been alleged in this matter upon discovery by any party?**
 - 3. Have each of the alleged persons to have been involved or have notice of the issues identified in and related to the Grand Jury Report behaved consistent with principles and requirements governing ethical conduct and honesty? If so, how? If not, how?**
 - 4. What policies and procedures does Penn State have in place to monitor, prevent and detect the issues identified in and related to the Grand Jury Report or to take disciplinary or corrective action if such behaviors are found?**
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Of relevance, also in the NCAA letter to Penn State, the following sentence: “The behaviors and failures described in the allegations set forth by the grand jury try not only the integrity of the university, but that of intercollegiate athletics as a whole and the NCAA member institutions that conduct college sports. It is critical that each campus and the NCAA as an Association re-examine how we constrain or encourage behaviors that lift up young people rather than making them victims.”

The [NCAA](#) is now charged with reviewing the [Freeh report](#) and determining the future of football and all athletics at Penn State. The report, over 250 pages long, is entitled “Report of the Special Investigative Counsel Regarding the Actions of The Pennsylvania State University Related to the Child Sexual Abuse Committed by Gerald A. Sandusky.”

Reading through the e-mails and following the patterns of the leaders in charge tells the story, without any commentary necessary, except for the reader to draw personal conclusions. The public can thank Louis J. Freeh for his uncompromising ability to reveal the truth.

The eyes of the nation are now focused upon the NCAA. Many in the nation still can't bear to look at a picture of Mr. Paterno or Mr. Sandusky. Justice has not (yet) been served.

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