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How UA will handle Olson's contract unclear

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Many questions surround Lute Olson's retirement, including his contract.

There were no details in Olson's retirement press release about what the University of Arizona will be paying him upon his retirement since his contract runs through 2011. His base salary is \$737,790.

Phone calls to UA Human Resources and the Office of General Counsel asking about contract details were referred to Paul Allvin, UA associate vice president for university communications.

Allvin said multi-year contracts "are very unusual" at UA and details as to how Olson's contract and retirement would be handled were not available. He did not know when they would be made public.

Media reports about Olson stepping down spread quickly across campus Thursday.

Some students did not know whether to believe the reports, and even UA president Robert Shelton denied Olson had resigned when he was interviewed just after 4 p.m.

"I admire coach Olson," Shelton told the Citizen. "I want him to coach as long as he has the fire in his belly."

Olson's official announcement came just before 5 p.m., when UA athletic director Jim Livengood said he had just learned "moments ago" that Olson was retiring, effective immediately.

Hunter Pace, a 21-year-old senior, said everyone in his classes were talking about Olson.

"Obviously, Lute has done an amazing job. Hopefully, the new guy can have as much success," said Pace, who plays baseball for UA.

Losing Olson is "a big loss to UA," said student Maricella Campuzano, 21. "He's a huge community figure and he is basketball."

Sophomore Ryan Roy, 19, said a lot of students on campus are saying, "We just lost our last hope in sports."

Roy said, "He could be sick. But he's not saying that, and so we just don't know."

"If Lute has to do this, Lute has to do this, but we have a university to take care of," UA student body president Tommy Bruce said.

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