COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Graduate dean apologizes for group e-mail with private information

By Pavan Vangipuram, Regina Wang
October 14, 2010 | 7:20 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Be careful with your electronic privacy. MU Graduate School Dean George Justice often advises students. But his words came back and bit him.

At 9:31 p.m. Wednesday, graduate students at MU received an unintended e-mail from Justice about a student's decision to withdraw from the university. The e-mail — accidentally sent to all graduates — included the student's name, e-mail address and comments about the student's "mental distress."

Justice sent another e-mail to graduate students at 6:19 a.m. Thursday apologizing for his mistake.

According to his second e-mail, the student had e-mailed Chancellor Brady Deaton and copied the graduate student list. But no graduate students received that e-mail because the student didn't have authorization to activate the e-mail list.

"However, it made it to the 'cc' box when I hit 'reply all.' And because I do have authorization to use the listserv, both the original and my message went out," Justice wrote in his e-mail apology.

Several graduate students replied with expressions of "distress," Justice said.

The e-mail string included an explanation from the student about her reason for withdrawing from MU.

"I'm extremely sorry about it," Justice said in an interview on Thursday afternoon. "I'm a big believer in privacy rights. I'm sorry to have been the cause of this student's privacy being violated. I don't take any student's situation lightly. ... It's very upsetting that I
didn’t show the student the highest amount of respect by not being careful who I sent the private information to.”

A spokeswoman for Provost Brian Foster said he will issue a response Friday.
Private e-mail mistakenly forwarded to graduate students

Graduate School Dean George Justice said he regrets the error

By Allison Prang

Published Oct. 15, 2010

In an attempt to forward a student’s e-mail to faculty members Wednesday, Graduate School Dean George Justice accidentally forwarded the message to all MU graduate students. In his own message within the forwarded e-mail intended for faculty members, Justice said, based on his own observation, he believed the student suffered from "mental distress."

Justice later sent out an e-mail apologizing to the students who received the initial e-mail unintentionally and asked them to please delete it from their inboxes.

“It was clearly (and obviously) a mistake which I regret,” Justice said in a separate e-mail to The Maneater.

Justice said the graduate student’s initial e-mail was sent to Chancellor Brady Deaton and copied to him as well as other administrators in the Political Science department. He said the student had also tried to copy the entire MU student body on the e-mail.

Justice said he made the mistake because when he hit “reply all” he assumed he was only replying to the administrators and did not see that the listserv of the MU graduate student body was in the CC box.

“I deeply regret this mistake, especially as I inadvertently violated the privacy of a former student,” he said.

The political science graduate student in question did not respond to an e-mail request for comment. She left MU earlier this semester.

Counsel for the UM system Paul Maguffee refused to comment on whether the situation could instigate legal problems, but he did say that during his approximately six years in the UM system, he has not been aware of any lawsuits pertaining to student privacy violations.

“We’re here to provide advice and counsel to the university faculty and administrators, so it wouldn’t be appropriate for us to speculate about whether there could be legal concerns arising out of a particular thing like this,” Maguffee said.
Journalism graduate student Chelsea Reynolds was among the students who received the e-mail. “Having looked over it once or twice, I can’t really determine whose fault it was,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds also said the fact that the e-mail contained the student’s I.D. number and name could lead to privacy concerns.

“Well, what worries me about this entire mishap is that if you’re not extremely aware of the way our listservs work, you could provide confidential information to the public,” she said.
Financial aid expert Allan Purdy dies at 96

Allan Purdy - best known for his efforts in helping college students secure loans and scholarships - died Thursday after suffering a stroke on Sunday. He was 96.

Purdy worked as director of scholarships and student financial aid for the University of Missouri for 21 years, was the founding president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and helped create the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority, spending 20 years on MOHELA's board of directors.

Purdy was born in Macon County in 1914 and grew up active in 4-H and Future Farmers of America, according to Tribune archives. He graduated from Macon High School, then farmed for a year alongside his father.

In 1938, he earned a bachelor’s degree in horticulture and a master’s degree the next year. Purdy then joined the Navy, where he served as a PT boat captain during World War II.

He returned to MU to work as an extension horticulturist and became an advocate for the agricultural school to provide scholarships for more students, working alongside the College of Agriculture dean.

His efforts got noticed. In 1957, then-MU President Elmer Ellis put him in charge of all MU scholarships, student loans and jobs, the first position of its kind on campus. He’d spend the next 21 years in the office.

In 1982, then-Gov. Kit Bond called on Purdy to help students from across the state obtain student loans.

At the 2006 NASFAA National Conference in Seattle, according to the organization, Purdy told his financial aid colleagues: "It has been a wonderful 40 years of service to students. It is, I’m sure, a wonderful experience to each of you when you see students that have long-since graduated and now are gray-haired, and they thank you for what you have done for them over the years. That is your overtime pay. Certainly we are not in the highest paid profession, but I think that we have the highest rewards for the work that we have done."

He is survived by his wife, Vivian and four children and their families.
Autism expert Temple Grandin draws a crowd

A standing-room-only audience listens to Temple Grandin's lecture Wednesday night at Monsanto Auditorium on the University of Missouri campus. Grandin, who is autistic, is a renowned animal scientist and autism advocate.

By J. S. Silver

Thursday, October 14, 2010

The 250 seats in Monsanto Auditorium on the University of Missouri campus were filled well before the lecture started, but that didn't deter the masses who came later. They simply sat along the staircases, gathered on the floor near the podium and leaned against the walls of both sides of the auditorium.

Grandin speaks Wednesday night to a crowd composed largely of teachers, education majors and parents of children with autism.

And guest speaker Temple Grandin didn't disappoint. Although she only told brief snippets about her life — featured in a recent award-winning HBO movie starring Claire Danes - Grandin
knew her audience. The teachers, education majors and especially parents of children with autism in attendance wanted tips.

Grandin’s most repeated refrain of the night: Don’t overmedicate a child. There’s a place for medication, she said, noting that antidepressants help her control fear and panic, but only when all else fails. Have children exercise, avoid sugary diets and try other lifestyle changes before resorting to drugs, she said, sparking applause from the audience.

Grandin also left family members with hope. Although she shows some signs of Asperger’s, a form of autism — Grandin had to shut a door in the auditorium because the buzz of a nearby computer lab was distracting — she also displayed behaviors not typically associated with people who have autism. Grandin cracked jokes and even laughed slightly at a couple of them.

“Here’s this lady who obviously has autism but is funny and interacting with people,” said Cheryl Unterschutz, spokeswoman for the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, which co-sponsored the program.

Grandin’s professional success also highlights that children with autism can learn marketable skills. She’s a professor of animal sciences at Colorado State University who invented humane cattle chutes and livestock-handling equipment now used worldwide. She credited her success to doing chores and manual labor at an early age and getting her sketches into the right hands.

“You have to bypass the HR department and get to the techies who are going to appreciate your drawings,” she said. “Sell your work, not yourself.”

Grandin encouraged parents and educators to find out what interests children, then work to develop those skills for careers later in life. For instance, she said, a child who thinks in patterns might excel in computer programming, while a visual thinker might be better suited for work in design.

“That inspired the families and professionals” in the audience “to think: ‘OK, my kid does have these skills. Now I need to build on these skills,’ ” Unterschutz said. “You don’t want kids so medicated they don’t perform and aren’t able to use their strengths. You want to balance it so a child can still achieve and be the person he’s meant to be.”

Grandin gave simpler tips, too: If flickering fluorescent lights hurt a child’s eyes, use an incandescent lamp instead. Try pastel-colored paper or buy a pair of pale-colored glasses to tone down bright lights.

Regardless of what parents and teachers try, the key is early intervention, Grandin said.

“If you’ve got a little autistic kid, the worst thing to do is nothing,” she said. “You’ve got to work with these kids. You’ve got to keep them connected to the world.”
Binge drinking draws fresh scrutiny

By T.J. Greaney

Thursday, October 14, 2010

Anger about binge drinking in Columbia is always at a low simmer. The issue generates a steady stream of complaints about football tailgating lots that look like Bourbon Street and bar scenes in need of police wearing riot gear. But late last month when a student fell 10 to 15 feet from a patio at Quinton’s, fracturing her skull and neck, that anger ratcheted up to a boil.

When it was revealed that the student was 19 and had a blood-alcohol content of approximately four times the legal limit for operating a vehicle, the condemnations came in fast and furious.

“I hope CPD is able to determine who provided her with the alcohol,” a commenter wrote on the Tribune’s website. “Someone needs to pay dearly for this, i.e., prison time.”

“A 0.32 blood alcohol content? marveled another Tribune reader. “In my day, that would be flat pee-pants passed out cold. … Partying is more dangerous today.” The reader pointed out that students today are mixing cocktails of booze, Red Bull and prescription drugs to achieve dangerous new highs.

And, of course, there were the inevitable condemnations of the city itself and its permissive attitude toward liquor. “Columbia is the Sodom and Gomorrah of Missouri,” one reader wrote. “The most liberal town there is in this state, and this type of activity should not be a surprise to anyone.”

Amid this din, it’s not often one hears a fresh voice. But I think I might have found one in the issue of the Hoover Institution’s Policy Review out this week. Marshall Poe, a historian at the University of Iowa, writes that the battle against college drinking has stalled and those favoring a rigid crackdown and those preaching liberalization might have both lost.

If you have the chance, I’d highly recommend reading it at http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/49796.

Poe begins the piece with what seems to be an all-too common occurrence for him. It’s 3 a.m., and a drunken college student is at the door of his Iowa City home trying to force his way in. The professor opens the door to find a young man who is disoriented and, maybe, ready to spew. “Dude, can I sleep here?” the student gurgles. Poe calls the police but afterward feels tired of the charade.
“Everyone plays their part: I wrote angry letters to local papers decrying college drinking; the city council expressed outrage; the provost said a commission was studying the problem; the students proclaimed their ‘right to party.’ Then nothing happened.”

In researching the problem, Poe found that for more than a decade, an uneasy standoff has arisen among reformers concerned with college drinking. Some favor what is called “the environmental approach,” where new barriers are erected to prevent students from getting their hands on alcohol. These barriers include dry campuses, higher alcohol prices and crackdowns on the use of false identification.

Others, led by sociologist H. Wesley Perkins, pushed for the “social norms” approach that seeks to change the drinking culture at colleges by, among other things, reversing the peer pressure that leads to binge drinking. This is behind efforts to educate students that actual rates of drinking among their peers are far lower than they might suspect.

More recently, a third way has emerged. Led by Middlebury College President John McCardell, the “Choose Responsibility” initiative seeks to abandon efforts to enforce current law and lower the drinking age to 18. McCardell has succeeded in getting more than 130 college presidents to sign a petition urging the change. These college leaders believe the current drinking age leads to clandestine, unsupervised boozing that is far more dangerous than drinking of the public variety.

But none of these initiatives seems to be making much headway. Poe points out that the drinking rate among college students has remained stable over the past 30 years with about 80 percent of students drinking and about 45 percent engaged in binge drinking, according to his research.

One problem that might have stalled progress is that college drinking is approached like a public health crisis. In a manner similar to AIDS or the flu, educate the public, offer forms of protection such as designated drivers and try to heal the ill. But Poe offers that, unlike public health crises, drinking is not all bad. In fact, boisterous bouts of drinking help bind together communities of friends, fraternities and maybe even entire colleges.

“For most students and alumni, rowdy drinking is considered essential to becoming a Hawkeye,” Poe wrote. “The house parties, the downtown bars, the Greek socials, the pregame tailgating — it’s all part of the package. It may well constitute some of the glue that holds said package together.”

Poe says what college administrators should be worried about is not the vast majority of students who drink underage. They should not even be overly concerned with the 45 percent who engage in binge drinking. What they should worry about are the 10 to 15 percent of students who prove through their repeated actions that they cannot drink safely.

Who are these students? A perusal through the University of Missouri Police Department’s daily report log gives some likely candidates. It shows a steady stream of students arrested for things such as public nuisance, assault or DWI. I’m reminded of a memorable bout who fought and head-butted police and, once arrested, repeatedly managed to dial 911 from the MUPD booking room.
In Poe’s mind, this student has clearly demonstrated he cannot or will not drink safely. Poe’s solution: Any student who demonstrates this should be expelled from the university. The criteria for expulsion are up for debate, but a student could only be readmitted once she has shown through steady work, a clean record and participation in a substance abuse treatment program that she has addressed the problem.

“Such a policy will not diminish the rate or intensity of college drinking. That is practically impossible,” Poe wrote. “But it will teach some students that they cannot drink safely, and it will shield the college community from further damage they might do. The former may well save their lives; the latter may save mine.”

Poe’s prescription is radical, perhaps even excessive, and it would surely send parents and students alike speed-dialing their attorneys. But one wonders how many lives might be saved by preventing tragedies such as the fall at Quinton’s. One also wonders how many lives would be saved down the line by catching nascent alcoholism in its early years. It’s worth discussing.
Diversity course requirement remains stalled in Faculty Council committee

After six years, officials are optimistic the course will become reality.

By Zachary Murdock

Published Oct. 15, 2010

This is the third and final part of a three-part series on the diversity general education course requirement.

After two white students scattered cotton balls on the front lawn of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center in spring 2010, students, faculty and the Columbia community called into question the progress MU has made on diversity issues.

In the weeks following the incident, town hall meetings and forums, held by the Legion of Black Collegians and Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, amplified sentiments about a need for better and more effective diversity education and inclusion on campus.

But since 2004, the issue of creating a diversity course requirement has stalled.

Administrators point to a variety of hurdles that have slowed the requirement's progress, but six years after a task force recommendation and student backing, a requirement has yet to be finalized.

Former Four Front Co-Chairwoman Jackie Cook-Eberle, now Jackie Gold, was part of the course requirement effort in 2004, which laid the groundwork for the current proposal.

Working with Multicultural Center Assistant Director Pablo Mendoza, professors and Initiative Office Director Noor Azizan-Gardner, Cook-Eberle and other students created a model course for MU, but one was never adopted.

Cook-Eberle said people were supportive of the idea of a diversity course.

"No one was pushing back on the fact that we need diversity education around the school," she said.

But by 2006, after Cook-Eberle's graduation and the expiration of a task force deadline to review a diversity course, no such proposal was officially sent forward.
"I, frankly, have thought since the time I was in LBC 40 years ago that there needed to be a diversity requirement in the curriculum," Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said. "I think it's important that all students develop some awareness of issues related to people of different backgrounds, different experiences, different cultures and get some academic grounding in the issues surrounding that social interaction."

**Slow change**

Under the heading of a general education review, the first task on a list of 12 was the inclusion of a diversity course requirement.

"I think it's more important that we understand there are some basic values and basic knowledges that we want all students exposed to," Middleton said.

Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin said a diversity course requirement proposal, as well as the general education review, has been submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Charged with reviewing the entire general education architecture proposal, the Academic Affairs Committee will present its recommendation to Faculty Council when the review is complete, Rubin said.

"There have been past efforts to do this that have failed, and we don't want to simply reproduce failed past efforts," Chief Diversity Officer Roger Worthington said. "We want to do something that is going to be successful, so we have been very systematic and methodical to ensure that we are really going to make this happen."

Under the general education review, the originally proposed diversity course requirement is similar to the writing intensive requirement already in place, Worthington said. Classes that qualify as diversity courses would fulfill the diversity requirement and count toward a student's major requirements, meaning the diversity course adds no additional credit hours to students' degree requirements.

"I'm hopeful (the diversity course requirement) happens in the wisdom of developing a mechanism that ensures that every student on this campus gets some academic grounding in these cultural diversity issues," Middleton said.

"It takes time"

In 1966, Middleton helped found the Legion of Black Collegians and presented a list of 10 demands to the chancellor, he said. None had been met by the time he graduated from the School of Law in 1971, and no progress was made in the following years, either.

"When I came back in 1985 as a law professor, many of those demands had not been met," he said. "Here we are in 2010, and we've received another list of demands, and many of them have been met."

Middleton explained his frustration as a passionate student when administrators said it took time to accomplish things.
"It takes time," they said, and that is not a satisfactory answer when you are passionate about what are you are trying to accomplish," Middleton said. "But the fact of the matter is, it does take time, and I think we have got to accept that reality and be diligent."

Although change has been slow, progress has been made to advance the diversity climate on campus, Worthington said. He said students' limited time on campus is an obstacle to showing consistent progress on complex issues like diversity.

"Because students are here for only a relatively short period of time, compared to faculty and staff and administrators, slow change seems like no change," he said.

Cook-Eberle, who has yet to see the work she did as a student manifested in university policy, said the changing face of the student body is part of a bigger issue of social reform on college campuses.

"There's only so much you can accomplish in four years, and ultimately there's going to be other leaders that take those issues on," she said.

In the long run, Middleton said, students who have worked on the diversity requirement and graduated without seeing its implementation should still take pride in their work and recognize the benefit of the requirement for future students.

"They should be proud and satisfied that they were able to be a part of that change," he said.

Not done yet

After review by a Faculty Council task force, the proposed general education review now sits within the Academic Affairs Committee of Faculty Council. In the coming months, Faculty Council will review the proposal before the entire general education review is voted on by the entire faculty.

But because of the nature of the proposal, if the general education review is not wholly approved by the faculty, no part of the proposal, including the diversity requirement, will be implemented.

For many students, such as former Front Co-Chairwoman Chai'Toyya Sewell, this means they will leave MU without ever seeing the implementation of a requirement.

Sewell, who worked with other students, the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative and the Chancellor's Office to create a possible requirement, said there were complications to get the requirement done quickly, but an official proposal should not have taken this long.

"At this point, to be honest, I think it will still be years from now," Sewell said. "I think it's going to take a long time."
Editorial: Administration should stop dragging feet on diversity course

Published Oct. 15, 2010

If MU's administration really does care about promoting an understanding of diversity at this university, it doesn't show in their efforts (or lack thereof) to create a general education diversity course requirement at MU.

A 2005 Campus Climate Study proposed more than 100 recommendations for the MU administration and campus as a whole to consider in terms of diversity. Following the study and among nearly 60 task force recommendations was a diversity course requirement. It was taken seriously by students and MU staff, who worked together to make models of what that course would look like. The models went nowhere and the proposal stayed in limbo for about two years.

Then a few events took place, most notably the cotton ball crime outside of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center. After this, students saw the opportunity for the issue to cut to the front of the bureaucratic line. But, it didn't. The issue had just stepped forward from its stagnant state as something that was being taken care of, and several people wanted credit for it. Only a few outraged students addressed that nothing had been done in two years. Few in MU's administration seem to mind that it took an event such as the cotton ball crime for the diversity class proposal to be in the spotlight again.

The university has let this proposal process drag on for much too long. The other 100 recommendations from the Campus Climate Study aside, the diversity course has been supported by students and faculty who actually put work into it, and now it's stuck in the bureaucracy of administration, awaiting approval by a Faculty Council subcommittee.

Just because it's a complicated proposal doesn't mean the course should be on the back burner for eternity. Rather, it should be one of the Faculty Council's priorities until its future is resolved.

At present, the diversity course proposal is similar to a writing intensive course — not a class in itself, but a number of other classes that meet the requirement. It's not so much a radical change than it is renaming the social sciences credit requirement for all majors, so far as we can tell. How could it possibly be taking this long?

The proposal is bogged down in the Academic Affairs Committee of Faculty Council which decides the makeup of our general education requirements. If it gets through there, the next step is Faculty Council at large. Because the course is one part of a review of the general education
system as a whole, one complaint about one part of the review could shoot down the diversity course along with it.

If the proposal's progress has been allowed to stay stagnant for this long, perhaps Faculty Council should take the time to act. Or, if it's going nowhere, perhaps they should scrap the review so students and faculty can start over. Either way, action needs to be taken because if the university can't follow through on this simple initiative, how can students trust their administrators?

Both students and faculty support the idea of a required diversity credit, and it wouldn't present students with any radically inconvenient change to their education.

It's important to keep in mind that the course credit is really only one step in an array of changes that need to be made regarding diversity. The problem won't be solved, but it's a step in the right direction.
Legal conflict between MU, Tan Time flares up again

The Spa is taking MU to the Missouri Court of Appeals over its lease.

By Sally French

Published Oct. 15, 2010

The Spa, the tanning salon in the Student Recreation Complex, plans to take MU to the Missouri Court of Appeals in a lawsuit regarding whether the company has the option to renew its lease for the spring semester.

Operated by Tan Time LLC, The Spa has been in legal battles with MU since 2008, when MU informed the company that its services would no longer be needed by the recreation complex due to health risks posed by tanning beds.

The contract between MU and Tan Time ends Dec. 31, and MU does not plan to renew the lease contract beyond that date.

"The university will not be renewing the lease contract beyond Dec. 31, 2010, and has informed The Spa partners of this decision," Recreation Services and Facilities Director Diane Dahlmann said.

But Tan Time's lawyer said the company has the right to remain in the recreation center regardless of MU's actions.

"Basically we are saying that, first of all, it doesn't automatically terminate on Dec. 31, 2010," Tan Time's lawyer Thomas Schneider said. "We think it automatically renews. The Court of Appeals is going to have to answer that question."

Legal battles between the two parties have been going on for more than two years.

"It was in August 2008 that we got the injunction against the university," Schneider said. "They locked the doors and tried to loot us out. The trial court ruled that out."

In fall 2009, the court ruled the contract could not be terminated until the end of 2010. But Tan Time wants to continue operations in its recreation complex location, MU lawyer Kelly Mescher said.

"We have the ability to terminate the contract, and it expires by the term," Mescher said.
The lawsuit will be reviewed again by the Court of Appeals, where an opinion will be written. No date has been set for when the lawsuit will reach the court, but Schneider said he believes it will be in December or January.

Schneider attributes Tan Time’s desire to stay in business to the investment the company has put into it.

“They spent a whole lot of money finishing it, like $180,000,” he said about Tan Time.

Schneider said Tan Time doesn’t want to lose the space they invested money in.

Should the case not conclude until after the current contract expires, lawyers are uncertain about whether The Spa will remain in business at the recreation complex beyond the date of the contract’s expiration.

Mescher said MU hasn’t looked into that possibility yet.

“The logical thing is to just continue with the business’ operation,” Schneider said.

In the meantime, MU has no official plans for the future of the space.

“According to some of our Student Voices survey data, MU students today favor more emphasis on services typically found in day spa settings,” Dahlmann said.

She listed amenities such as de-stressing pods, various massages, manicure and pedicure services, exercise consultation and expanded personal training opportunities.

“As a result, Mizzou Rec is looking at the service options that will best fit the space available and the needs of our students today,” Dahlmann said.

She said she attributes the decision to not renew the contract to changing values among students.

“A great deal has changed since the university entered into the lease contract in 2006,” Dahlmann said. “The greatest change has been in the numbers of new students, the first-year student enrollment and the interests of new generations of students.”

Although Dahlmann said the recreation center is still exploring ideas of what will occupy the space, she expects future use of the space will be self-managed.