

## COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

# Woman assaulted near MU Women's and Children's Hospital

By Ashley Hughes

October 17, 2012 | 6:34 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — A woman was assaulted around 6:40 a.m. on Wednesday at 812 N. Keene St. near Women's and Children's Hospital.

**According to an MU Police Department release, the woman was walking in the direction of the hospital when she was grabbed by the wrist from behind and the suspect pushed a hard unidentified object against her left rib cage.**

The woman was able to use pepper spray on the suspect to get him to release her. He fled the scene, heading south.

MU police will continue investigating the case with the Columbia Police Department.

*Supervising editor is Zach Murdock.*



Politics: Fact Checker

## **FACT CHECK: Kurt Schaefer campaign ad**

By Rudi Keller

A TV ad from state Sen. Kurt Schaefer says he "fought his own party to stop education cuts" and that his opponent, state Rep. Mary Still, supported increased taxes and major budget cuts to schools and colleges.

Schaefer is a Columbia Republican seeking a second term in the Senate. Still is a Columbia Democrat who is trying to unseat Schaefer after two terms in the Missouri House.

Schaefer has been Senate Appropriations Committee chairman for two years. In each year, Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, has proposed cuts in higher education spending and public school support. In the current year, Nixon sought to cut \$106 million from colleges and universities. The cut was restored by the Republican-led House Budget Committee, and Schaefer added a small amount of additional money for some universities.

In each year Schaefer has been the Senate's chief budget writer, lawmakers have sought to spend more on education than Nixon requested.

Some Republicans sought cuts to specific education budget items, some of which Schaefer successfully opposed and others that were enacted. One cut popular with some Republicans, which did not take effect, would have eliminated the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Another, which did go through, took away funding for a job overseeing state early childhood programs.

In 2003, Still was communications director for Gov. Bob Holden, a Democrat. To close a budget shortfall, Holden proposed several tax increases that raised money through the elimination of deductions for businesses and other changes intended to raise about \$200 million annually. The alternative, Holden said, was cuts to public education.

Still's job at that time was to explain the governor's proposal to reporters and the public. The ad cites a Tribune article from June 19, 2003, to support the claim. In an article on that date, Holden's plans are discussed, but Still is not quoted. Still said she did, as the public mouthpiece for Holden, speak in favor of his proposal.

This year, Still proposed bills to increase taxes on cigarettes and extend sales tax to Internet purchases.

The ad's claim that Still has not passed a bill in four years in the Missouri House is correct. The ad correctly quotes a December Tribune article in which Still said one reason she wanted a seat in the Senate was to block legislation she considers bad for the state.

## **AD TRANSCRIPT**

Narrator: Two candidates. A clear choice. Kurt Schaefer fought his own party to stop education cuts, increasing funding to record levels without raising taxes. Mary Still tried to raise taxes, then backed the plan to cut \$200 million from schools and colleges.

Schaefer's a bipartisan leader, with education his priority. Still has never passed a single bill and is running to, quote, "keep things from happening."

The clear choice: Kurt Schaefer. Bipartisan results for our children.

## Cigarette Tax Lights Up Both Sides

By Janese Silvey 10/17/12

Missouri voters will decide next month whether taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products should be increased to generate funds for public schools, universities and anti-smoking programs.

Proposition B calls for state taxes on a pack of cigarettes to increase from 17 cents to 90 cents.

Supporters say it's a no-brainer: Missouri has the lowest state tax on tobacco in the country. And smokers who end up relying on Medicaid to treat tobacco-related illnesses are draining state resources, said Warren Erdman, a University of Missouri curator who helped draft the initiative.

Opponents argue that the tax is simply too high: It's a 429 percent increase on major brands and a 760 percent hike on off-brands not currently participating in the 1998 national tobacco settlement. Ron Leone, a lobbyist for the Missouri Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association, also warns a tax increase on cigarettes opens the door to "sin" taxes on other unhealthy products, such as alcohol, fast food or the big sodas now restricted in New York City.

If approved, the tax increase is expected to generate more than \$400 million initially, declining to about \$283 million as more people stop smoking. Of the proceeds, 50 percent would be dedicated to K-12 school districts, **30 percent to colleges and universities**, and 20 percent to a tobacco prevention and cessation fund.

It makes sense for smokers to help pick up the tab for schools because they cost the state Medicaid money that could otherwise be used for education, Erdman said. He said he's tired of "Missourians subsidizing the consequences" of smoking while "watching elementary and secondary education get denied funding and higher education get cut every year."

Of the half dedicated to school systems, the ballot initiative says schools must spend at least 25 percent of the revenue on direct classroom expenditures.

Columbia Public Schools is estimated to get at least \$2.7 million if the tax passes. The district would likely plug those dollars into the budget to dole out for yearly operating expenses such as salaries and transportation, Superintendent Chris Belcher said.

"We're in good financial shape right now, but if this were to happen, it would really allow our long-term budget to be in a solid position," he said.

Belcher is worried, though, that lawmakers would take into account the tobacco tax when making future budgeting decisions. Although the measure specifies that the new dollars cannot replace July 1, 2012, state appropriations, there's no guarantee lawmakers would increase appropriations in future years at the level they would without the tobacco tax increase.

At the higher education level, at least 25 percent of the tobacco tax profits would have to be used to train health care workers. That shouldn't be a problem at MU, where Chancellor Brady Deaton has said the money would be invested in medical school facilities to allow larger class sizes.

Twenty percent of the tobacco revenue would go into a fund to help pay for cessation and smoking prevention efforts.

Show Me a Brighter Future, the campaign supporting Proposition B, estimates more than 40,000 teens wouldn't grow up to be adult smokers if the tax is increased and that 33,300 adult smokers would quit.

Jerry Jerichow of Mexico, Mo., isn't one of them. Buying a pack of Marlboros this week at Midway Travel Plaza west of Columbia, Jerichow said he's against the tax increase. But if it passes, he said, "I'll just pay it."

Midway Travel Plaza Manager Randy Trierweiler said he thinks some smokers would find ways to get around it. "When excise taxes increase, people find alternatives, either by going to cheaper states or buying" cigarettes "off the Internet," he said. "Sometimes government shoots itself in the foot."

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## Your online attractiveness falls on the fingertips of friends

By Olivia Hancock

October 18, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — As Facebook users, you have the opportunity to share all kinds of things about yourself, whether it's your love for a famous Pomeranian or your fluency in sarcasm.

But most likely, the thing that other people are going to look at first is your profile picture.

"The first instinct when you go on Facebook is to look at pictures," MU journalism freshman Jill Deutsch said. The pictures you place most prominently have been shown to have an effect on what people think of you. **A study by MU researchers says profile pictures and your friends' comments on them can influence people's perceptions of how popular and socially attractive you are.**

### What researchers explored

We talked to MU students about what their profile pictures and the comments on them mean. Colleen Armstrong, a sophomore environmental science major, said she thinks negative comments on profile pictures attract more attention than positive ones.

"People look for negative things, and that's what stands out to people," she said. Before we hear from other students, though, here's more about the research: Journalism doctoral student Seoyeon Hong conducted the study with the help of other doctoral students. Kevin Wise, an associate professor in the School of Journalism, sponsored the study.

The research used two concepts related to social media to inform their research: social cues and the warranting principle. Social cues give people a better idea of who a person in a picture is. For example, if a musician uses a picture of herself playing an instrument as a profile picture, she is sending out a social cue to everyone who sees it.

Conversely, a self portrait, or "selfie" as they're commonly known, would contain no social cues because it gives no additional identifying traits about the person.

Wise said social cues can be congruent or incongruent. If a friend's comment backs up the information presented in a picture, it's a congruent social cue. Incongruent social cues happen when someone's profile picture is telling you one thing and a friend's comment is telling you another.

According to the study, the warranting principle states that people tend to trust what others say about a person more than what a person says about himself or herself. Wise said information people present about themselves online is especially suspect because it can be easily manipulated by the person.

### **How the study was done**

The researchers surveyed 104 college students using a mock Facebook profile. The mockup showed a profile picture and friends' comments about the photo. Participants were shown profile pictures with or without social cues paired with comments from friends about the pictures. The number of comments was the same for every picture, and they were either completely positive or completely negative.

After viewing the profiles, participants were asked whether they would add the person as a Facebook friend, whether they would accept the person's friend request and how many friends they thought the person had. They were asked these questions to measure the person's social attractiveness and popularity.

### **What makes someone socially attractive**

People who had social cues in their profile pictures and correspondingly positive comments about their pictures were given high ratings of social attractiveness and popularity by participants. People without social cues in their pictures were given low ratings of popularity and social attractiveness.

If the comments were incongruent with the picture shown — regardless of whether they were positive or negative — the person in the picture was rated as less socially attractive and popular.

### **What students say**

As anyone who has ever been in the back of a lecture hall during a class can attest, MU students are avid Facebook users. Given this extensive knowledge of the site, students have their own take on what profile pictures and the comments posted about them mean.

Michael Lipnick, a freshman pre-journalism major, said he chose his latest profile picture because it was his "first Mizzou picture." The picture of him and his mom during parents' weekend got 17 likes on Facebook, which Lipnick said surprised him.

Lipnick said that in a college environment like MU, alcohol use is expected, but he wouldn't recommend putting it in your profile picture.

"Even if you do it, it's not good to put it out there," he said. "There's no reason to go around flaunting it."

Seeing a beer in someone's hand in their profile picture won't necessarily give a bad impression of someone to Sarah White, a junior majoring in physical therapy. She said if the person looked "sloppy" or "obnoxious" and was also drinking, that would be a different story. White said when she chooses her profile pictures, she makes sure there's nothing in them she wouldn't want her mom to see.

"I don't want anything negative because it's the main picture they see," she said.

Rachel Stuck, a sophomore biological engineering major, had a simple reason for why she picked her current profile picture.

"It has my cat in it, and I love my cat," she said. Stuck said she thinks comments that friends leave on profile pictures don't really tell you much about the person.

"I feel like your friends are almost obligated to say 'Oh, you look cute' or something," she said.

Sophomore Gary Gasperino, a double-major in physics and mathematics, said he tries to make his profile pictures easily identifiable. He said that when he sees seven or eight people in one profile picture, he thinks, "Which one of those people is it supposed to be?"

People's profile pictures don't matter much to him when he is already friends with them, Gasperino said.

"If I knew them well, I wouldn't necessarily judge them on their profile picture," he said.

Eric Nold's current profile picture is of him and his daughter. The senior, majoring in biochemistry, said he hopes people will think he's a good husband and father when they look through his profile pictures. Nold said that profile pictures of people on vacation are particularly impressive to him.

"It's like, 'Oh wow, you have money, and you do cooler stuff than me,'" he said with a laugh.

Jessica Meyer, a freshman international business major, said she didn't think her friends' comments on her profile pictures made much of a difference in what people thought of her. She said most of the time she will receive likes but not many comments. She said she tries to leave anything that would give a bad impression of her, or her sorority, Alpha Phi, out of her profile pictures.

"I'm friends with, like, my grandparents and pastors, so nothing bad can be on there," she said.

### **What can you do?**

According to students, there are lots of circumstances, such as how well you know someone, that can influence judgments of people online. But it's clear that people are still making a judgment of some sort.

There are reasons, such as wanting to appear professional to potential employers, that would make a person want to control these judgments.

Hong said if you want your online profile to give a positive impression, you should pay attention to the comments friends are leaving and moderate them if necessary.

She said to avoid incongruent social cues, simply don't try too hard.

"Wearing Chanel sunglasses, wearing a Louis Vuitton bag, sitting in a Mercedes, it all looks like too much," she said.

If the study is any indication, you're better off resisting the urge to embellish your online image and just be yourself.

And if you choose not to, remember there could always be a well-meaning friend more than happy to set the record straight.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*

## Average debt up again, to \$26,000, for new college grads

7 hours ago • [JUSTIN POPE AP Education Writer](#)

### NO MU MENTION

It's the latest snapshot of the growing burden of student debt and it's another discouraging one: Two-thirds of the national college class of 2011 finished school with loan debt, and those who borrowed walked off the graduation stage owing on average \$26,600 — up about 5 percent from the class before.

The latest figures are calculated in a report out Thursday by the California-based Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) and likely underestimate the problem in some ways because they don't include most graduates of for-profit colleges, who typically borrow more than their counterparts elsewhere.

Still, while 2011 college graduates faced an unemployment rate of 8.8 percent in 2011, even those with debt remained generally better off than those without a degree. The report emphasized research showing that the economic returns on college degrees remain, in general, strong. It noted the unemployment rate for those with only a high school credential last year was 19.1 percent.

"In these tough times, a college degree is still your best bet for getting a job and decent pay," said TICAS President Lauren Asher. "But, as debt levels rise, fear of loans can prevent students from getting the education they need to succeed. Students and parents need to know that, even at similar looking schools, debt levels can be wildly different. And, if they do need to borrow to get through school, federal student loans, with options like income-based repayment, are the safest way to go."

The latest figures come at a time of increasing alarm about the sheer scope of student debt nationally, which by some measures has surpassed \$1 trillion. Recent government figures show nearly 10 percent of borrowers of federal student loans in the most recently measured cohort had already defaulted within two years of starting repayment.

The issue has come up on the presidential campaign trail, though the candidates' specific plans haven't become a major issue. President Barack Obama has touted his record of ending \$60 billion in subsidies to private lenders, directing the savings to student aid and implementing an

income-based repayment plan that caps federal student loan payments at 15 percent of income and forgives repayment after 25 years.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, his Republican challenger, argues the flood of federal student aid spending unleashed in recent years has led colleges to raise tuition prices. He wants to return to a system in which the government supports private lenders, arguing it's more cost-effective, and his campaign has called the income-based repayment program flawed.

In Tuesday night's second presidential debate, Romney repeated an assertion he'd made previously that "50 percent of kids coming out of college (are) not able to get work." That is not accurate, though twice earlier in the debate he made an important qualification, indicating he was referring to graduates who couldn't get "college-level jobs." Figures analyzed by Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market studies last spring did find 53.6 percent of bachelor's degree holders under age 25 were either unemployed or working in positions that don't fully use their skills or knowledge.

The latest TICAS report also cites studies that found more than one-third of recent graduates were in positions that did not require a degree, depressing wages, though other government figures cited by Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce put the so-called "underemployment" rate for young college grads much lower — at around 10 percent.

As for those who have no job at all, according to Georgetown the latest monthly unemployment figure for college graduates under age 24 is 10.5 percent (the figure typically jumps each spring as a new class graduates and declines over the course of the year; last March it was 5.4 percent).

"Increasing student debt in a weak economy can be a knock-out blow to many considering college," said Rich Williams, higher education advocate with U.S. Public Interest Research Group, which advocates for students. "As our economy is recovering, lawmakers must send every signal that college is a good investment. "

Among other finding in the TICAS report:

—Private (non-federal) student loans, which generally have weaker borrower protections but have been diminishing as a source of student borrowing, accounted for about one-fifth of the debt owed by the Class of 2011.

—Debt levels vary widely by state, ranging from \$17,250 in Utah to \$32,450 in New Hampshire.

—Debt at individual schools ranged from \$2,150 to \$54,900, though not all schools report that data.

—Among colleges, the percentage of graduates with debt ranged from 12 percent to 100 percent. At 65 schools, more than 90 percent of student graduated with debt.

*Online: Companion interactive map with details for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 1,000 public and private nonprofit four-year colleges is available at [www.projectonstudentdebt.org/state\\_by\\_state-data2012.php](http://www.projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-data2012.php)*