Lawmakers optimistic about bond issue

By Rudi Keller

In a round of news conferences after the election, Republican legislative leaders and Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon all said they were open to the idea of a major state bond issue next year.

The University of Missouri has identified four projects that would be completed with bond money

Nixon said his support was dependent on passing legislation that would generate new revenue by putting limits on tax credits, but the overall tone is encouraging, Rep. Chris Kelly and Sen. Kurt Schaefer said in interviews.

Kelly, a Democrat, and Schaefer, a Republican, have said persuading fellow lawmakers to go along with plans for a bond issue of $800 million or more would be their top priority in the coming year. With interest rates below 3 percent and a large backlog of needs, the state would be foolish to wait, Kelly said.

"There is no corporation in America who had our needs who wouldn't snap that up," Kelly said.

For the University of Missouri System, the bonds hold the potential of completing projects that have been on hold for years and in some cases a decade or longer, said Nikki Krawitz, vice president for finance and administration.

"We are cautiously optimistic, as we always are," Krawitz said. "We appreciate the efforts of those who support bonds. Interest rates are at historic lows, and we could really lock in those very, very low interest rates and address a large number of capital needs across the state."

Kelly has sponsored a bond issue in each of the past four years. He came closest in 2009, when the bill passed the House with the support of then-Majority Leader Steve Tilley but died on the Senate debate calendar.

Last year, Kelly proposed an $800 million bond issue with $550 million set aside for higher education.

The bonds would be repaid over 25 years, and Kelly said the money would come from the decline in payments as past voter-approved bond issues are retired.
In the current fiscal year, the state will pay out $77.3 million in principal and interest on voter-approved debt. By fiscal 2018, that cost will decline to $38.9 million.

Nixon, however, told reporters that he wants legislation controlling tax credits, which diverted $629 million from the state treasury last year, to help pay for any new debt.

"I think that in many ways that is all connected with getting some level of tax credit reform," Nixon said. "When one-twelfth of your general revenue budget is going to entitlement tax credits, and it is growing, I think we need to continue and get some clarity and conclusion in that area, because I think those are inexorably tied."

Kelly, however, disagrees with Nixon about tying the two issues together. Realistic expectations for cutting tax credits would be to reduce them by $100 million annually, he said, and that savings is not certain.

The higher education projects to be funded by the bonds, Kelly said, would be the top priorities of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Drawn from the priorities set by each school, the coordinating board list also includes unfunded projects from the Lewis & Clark Discovery Initiative and a request for engineering equipment. The total comes to $736 million.

When the state pays for major renovations to a building, it generally has not required local matching funds, Wagner said.

"It is a lot easier to raise money for a new building," Wagner said. "When you renovate, it is harder, because you can't put your name on it."

The top UM projects for each campus have an estimated cost of $239.4 million.

In addition, the system has asked for $190 million in capital funding for "critical needs" maintenance and repair across the four campuses.

Krawitz said that funding would pay for major upgrades for safety, energy efficiency and modernization.

Buildings with issues covered by that category include Schrenk Hall in Rolla and Waters Hall in Columbia, she said.

Schaefer, who will be Senate Appropriations Committee chairman, said he is encouraged by the response he has received so far from fellow Republicans.
"We are really in the early stages of this," Schaefer said. "I would like to see it move quickly in the General Assembly once we get that off the ground, which I hope we can."

Reach Rudi Keller at 573-815-1709 or e-mail rkeller@columbiatribune.com.
MU's administrative culture is toxic

Autocratic system devalues honesty, squashes dissent.

By EDDIE ADELSTEIN, STEPHEN MONTGOMERY-SMITH, GALEN SUPPES AND ANDREW TWADDLE

No matter how egregious the actions of University of Missouri administrators, they have developed the art of never backing off or admitting they made a mistake. Their explanations are generally unbelievable. Their decisions are generally based on their administrative failures, punishments of independent faculty and certified acts of cronyism. They continue to support ill-advised decisions made by deans who rule the university as independent fiefdoms.

Under the MU leadership dating back to the 1980s, the university has flourished as evidenced by an ever-increasing student body and a beautiful campus. Perhaps that is enough, but we believe it can do better.

Present MU administrators, on the other hand, have done little to deal with low national ratings (ranked 90th in U.S. World News in 2012), large class sizes, rising tuition and decreased proportionate numbers of tenured faculty, low faculty salaries and an ever-growing expensive administrative structure.

Listed below are decisions that have defined the basic philosophy of the university administration and the problems we are experiencing. Behavioral economist Dan Ariely writes in his recent book, "The Truth about Dishonesty," that cheating is contagious, and when we see others succeed by cheating, it makes us more likely to cheat as well. The university's selection process at the highest level eliminates honest individuals with high integrity, with rare exception, as too dangerous.

We are paying a price for these decisions. Recent allegations of Medicare fraud at University of Missouri Health Care might have roots in the autocratic administration we have fostered.

Some of these administrative decisions are as follows:

In 1992, the dean of the MU School of Medicine supported the efforts of Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital to take part in a cover-up of alleged wrongful patient deaths and to take active roles in the punishment of university whistleblowers.
In 1994, the MU and UM administrations, having failed to manage the medical center and in cooperation with the dean, tried to sell the hospital to a notorious health corporation. Actions by the faculty and the governor stopped the attempt.

In the 1990s, the MU Faculty Council challenged the grievance process, noting that of 32 faculty-filed grievances, the faculty lost all of them. The process always allows the administration to have the final decision. Subsequently, only minimal improvements have been made in the process, and only a rare judgment supports the faculty.

In 1999, the chancellor of the university authorized the payment of $945,000 to the retiring basketball coach for "consulting." The state auditor challenged the payment.

In 2000, the dean of engineering, with the support of the then-provost, tried to close down the highly successful Nuclear Science Engineering Institute (NSEI). The chancellor provided a solution for an independent department. Still, in 2008-09, the NSEI was prevented by the provost from submitting a grant proposal for NRC funding to hire new faculty.

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In 2002, to save the hospital, the MU administration hired new medical school and hospital administrators. Only after faculty members secured an audit was the chancellor forced to remove the new management team and bring in an expensive consulting group. To succeed in this endeavor, the curators also had to bring in a highly competent president, Elson Floyd, who not only saved the hospital but was challenging the large expenses of the system. Understanding a lack of support for him among a majority of curators, he left in 2007 to take the helm of Washington State University. He remains the only president who supported the faculty, and though he was unable to substantially raise salaries, he secured tuition relief for all UM employees' families.

In 2004, the MU administration, with the support of the College of Veterinary Medicine, spent thousands of dollars in an effort to bring a Level 4 research facility into the heart of this community. This facility would have brought into our city the most dangerous and infectious agents in the world. They were willing to put not only Columbia but also the state of Missouri at great risk. A review of this proposal by the Government Accounting Office deemed it risky. A single outbreak could not only have destroyed the livestock industry in Missouri but would have frightened students from coming to the university. Only the action of concerned citizens was able to take Missouri out of the running, and the present awarding of this contract to Manhattan, Kan., is under critical review.

In 2009, the MU legal department filed a lawsuit against one of its most creative and productive engineering faculty members, which prevented him from carrying a grievance forward. This was an unprecedented abuse of administrative power. This issue is still in the courts.
Recently, a $2 million grant was taken from an engineering faculty member and given to a family member of the MU vice chancellor of research. The episode led to a two-year conflict that wasted the time of many and has resulted in a lawsuit.

In March 2012, MU administrators abruptly and without following university regulations sought to shut down the highly successful Nuclear Science Engineering Institute. Their original explanations were unbelievable. Their actions have compromised this institute's ability to train and educate students in the areas of radiation diagnostics and cancer therapy, radiation protection, and nuclear reactor engineering and safety.

Recently, using the "dead of night, don't tell anyone what is going on" policy and violating university rules and tenets, the UM administration announced it was closing the University Press to save $400,000. The press is the heart of an educational institution, one of the crown jewels of the school, and has served us well. It appears the hidden agenda was to remove the highly skilled personnel who have run this operation. Only recently, with almost global outrage, did administrators reverse this decision. The press has reopened under MU campus administration with most of its original staff.

Tenure has been almost entirely replaced at MU Health Care by short-term contracts of one to three years, and research by physicians has sharply plummeted.

We've created a university where honest people and competent physicians are made to feel unwelcome. No one is willing to invest him- or herself in an institution that won't invest itself in providing a stable and ethical working environment for its employees.

So we have developed an administrative culture of autocratic decision-making, ignoring the collected rules and regulations that govern us and violating all precepts of shared governance. Decreasing tenure further prevents intellectual dissent.

It is clear we need new leadership with high ethical principles and creative intelligence if we wish this institution to achieve real greatness. In the past, when we identified leaders of high intelligence, compassion and honesty, with rare exception, we simply labeled them as "difficult to work with" and made sure they never achieved a leadership position. It is time for a change.

The authors are MU professors and members of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, of which Eddie Adelstein is president.
Personality trait may hurt some marriages

By Janese Silvey

A personality trait that keeps people from understanding or sharing emotions can take a toll on marital bliss, a University of Missouri researcher has found.

It's called alexithymia, and when one spouse suffers from it, both partners experience loneliness and a lack of intimate communication, says Nick Frye-Cox, a doctoral student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

He collected data from 155 married couples, of which about 7.5 percent of men and 6.5 percent of women suffered alexithymia. The trait, often found with other conditions on the autism spectrum, causes people to have physiological responses to emotions, such as sweaty palms or faster heartbeats, but difficulty identifying them.

"People with alexithymia have trouble relating to others and tend to become uncomfortable during conversations," Frye-Cox said in a statement. "The typical alexithymic person is incredibly stoic. They like to avoid emotional topics and focus more on concrete, objective statements."

Once they're married, they're likely to have a tough time communicating intimately, he said. That appears to lead to a lower marital quality.

"People with alexithymia are always weighing the costs and benefits, so they can easily enter and exit relationships," he said. "They don't think others can meet their needs, nor do they try to meet the needs of others."

The study, "Alexithymia and marital quality: The mediating roles of loneliness and intimate communication," will be published in the Journal of Family Psychology. In previous research, co-author Colin Hesse, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, found affectionate communication such as hugging could help those with high levels of alexithymia lead more fulfilling lives.

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MU journalist explores using drones for reporting

A University of Missouri journalist is studying the use of unmanned drones more commonly seen in military applications as a potential tool for gathering news.

The Columbia Missourian reports that KBIA-FM news producer Scott Pham has received a $25,000 school grant to work with counterparts in the MU College of Engineering to develop flying robots for journalism use.

Pham said the drones can take aerial photographs and record video from difficult-to-reach news scenes. He came up with the idea while reporting in southeast Missouri on the breached Birds Point Levee in October 2011.

"The reporting was difficult to do because you had to do it from the ground up, and it was so low," he said. "We would have benefited so much more from getting a bird's-eye view.

Researchers at the University of Nebraska are also studying the possible use of drones by journalists. The Lincoln school has received a $50,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to establish a Drone Journalism Lab.

The Missouri grant money will go toward drone construction, equipment purchases and teaching expenses. Pham said he hopes the first stories will be published by the end of the spring semester.

"Not knowing exactly what you're going to do is challenging," Pham said. "A good drone requires a quick reaction. They can't do that when there are wires sticking out everywhere. After we test them, we will build the drones with help from the engineering department."

Matthew Dickinson, the project's technical adviser, said the drones will be built using materials from existing components.

"When you build a house, you don't chop the tree down to build the walls," said Dickinson, an MU information technology specialist. "You go out and buy wood. We are using different materials that already exist, such as different kinds of plastic and computer chips, to build the drones."

U.S. government use of military drones has escalated rapidly under President Barack Obama's administration while also being used for covert CIA operations. The small planes can transmit
live video and fire missiles, and are operated by remote control thousands of miles away at military installations such as Whiteman Air Force Base near Knob Noster.

The Federal Aviation Administration is developing regulations for commercial use of drones, with specific rules expected by 2015. A graduate journalism class assisting the project will also study the ethics of drone use to report news.

"There are a lot of civilian uses that can be good things," Dickinson said. "If someone wants an aerial shot, they can use a drone instead of paying thousands of dollars for a helicopter shot."

Pham said journalism drones could be particularly valuable in documenting rural, agricultural and environmental projects, such as droughts or flooding.

"This could be a really promising innovation when it comes to reporting," he said. "It could change the way we do it. We want journalists to do stories that put drones up in the air."
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

EDUCATION DIGEST

November 16, 2012 5:10 pm

WENTZVILLE SCHOOLS • The Wentzville School District has selected Frontier Middle School Principal Phil Ragusky to lead the new high school when it opens next year. The Board also voted to name the school Liberty High School, based on the suggestions of students, parents and staff members. The school’s mascot will be an eagle; red, white and blue will be the school colors. Ragusky has served nine years as a middle school principal in Wentzville. Liberty High School, at 2275 Sommers Road, will open for a freshman class in August.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA > Smoking ban accelerated • Smoking won’t be allowed at the University of Missouri on July 1, six months earlier than originally planned. The Missouri Students Association pushed for the earlier date, saying there was no good reason to wait for the previous Jan. 1, 2014, deadline. The ban will end an effort that began in 2009, when smoking was banned from buildings. Last summer, the university designated certain spots on campus for smoking, such as parking lots. After July, all smoking will be banned on campus.

CLAYTON SCHOOLS > Debate team headed to international competition • Students from Clayton High School have advanced to the “Top 32” round of an international debate competition. As finalists in the Bickel & Brewer/New York University International Public Policy Forum, the students remain eligible to win the $10,000 grand prize and a trip to the finals in New York in April. This year, 213 teams — representing schools in 34 states and 29 foreign countries — submitted qualifying round essays.
Washington University, the University of Illinois and the University of Missouri are all ranked among top business school for 2012 by Bloomberg BusinessWeek.

Washington University’s Olin School of Business was 31st, the University of Illinois Business School at Champaign-Urbana was 40th and the University of Missouri Trulaske College of Business in Columbia was 56th among programs worldwide.

The University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business ranked first.

Mizzou was previously unranked. Wash U. was previously 40th, and Illinois was previously 46th.

At $20,974, Mizzou’s was the least expensive program among all the schools.

The rankings are based on a survey of newly minted MBAs, a poll of corporate recruiters, and an evaluation of faculty research output.
Engineering and business students qualify for international competition

Challenge presented by international company Grundfos is a great opportunity for jobs.

By MARA ROSE WILLIAMS

About four months from now, engineering and business students from three area universities will be in Denmark in the thick of a global challenge that dangles potential jobs as the grand prize.

The road to the big challenge, where Kansas City area students will compete against teams from around the world, including China and Denmark, began this past week when engineering and business students from the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri and Rockhurst University beat out teams from Fresno State and Purdue University.

The challenge was presented by Grundfos, a major international producer of commercial-use water pumping systems and developer of energy-efficient solutions to global water challenges. Grundfos posed a real-life problem to the teams: how to expand the company’s product into the municipal water utility market.

Given how tight the overall job market has been over the last four years for new college graduates hoping to land employment in their field of study, the Grundfos challenge is a “great opportunity,” said Cole Bittel of Bazaar, Kan., a member of the KU engineering team.

The challenge is designed “to give students a chance to interact in the business environment, and we get a chance to show them our company,” said Dennis Wierzblicki, president of Grundfos U.S.

Wierzblicki said that in the past his company has found top-notch engineers through the challenge and brought them to work for the company after they had completed their degree.

In this region, six three-student business teams and five three-student engineer teams took on the challenge. Student teams in China and Denmark worked on the challenge at the same time.

Each were given 22 hours to come up with a solution and prepare a presentation for competition judges.

Teams from KU and MU won the engineering portion of the challenge, and teams from Rockhurst and Purdue won on the business side.
“We put in 22 hours of hard work to design a solution, and I think we got about 30 minutes of collective sleep between the three of us the entire time,” said John DiBaggio of Overland Park, a member of the winning KU engineering team.

This is the first year that Grundfos, which has its U.S. headquarters in Olathe, has opened the two-day challenge to American university competitors.

In March the area winners will compete in Denmark.
Water challenge tests MU team’s creativity

By Janese Silvey

A University of Missouri team is in Olathe, Kan., today participating in a competition to test their design and business skills.

This is the first year the Grundfos Challenge, which began in Denmark in 2006, has been held in the United States. The water pump company’s contest gives students a real-world scenario and tests their abilities to come up with innovative solutions.

"I’m excited," Danielle Sprowl, a senior and one of three on the MU team, said Wednesday before leaving. "I’m just ready to experience things I could potentially be dealing with when I enter into the real world and working with a global company."

Joining her are master’s student Sachin Goel and senior Ryden Bell. They’re competing as a business team and will be up against other business students and engineering teams from the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Rockhurst, UM-Kansas City, Purdue and the University of California-Fresno.

Judges will grade teams based on technical or business acumen. Two business teams and two engineering teams will be tapped to represent the United States in a global competition against Chinese and Danish teams in Denmark in March.

Grundfos isn’t just looking for new ideas; the company is also scouting for future employees, said Steve Pierson, the company’s chief business innovator.

"One of the reasons Grundfos puts this challenge on is because we’re one of the companies that probably moves the most water in the world because we’re one of the largest pump companies," he said. "This gives the company a chance to look at the talent out there, the young talent in universities. It really is a great way to recruit this talent, and it also gives students insight into Grundfos and our business."

Teams weren’t expected to get their case scenario until they arrived at the site. They had yesterday and today to come up with solutions.

"Basically, we’re given 24 hours to come up with an idea in which Grundfos decides, 'Is this innovative, and can we use this?" Sprowl said.
The MU team has been preparing over the past few months by studying up on the company and industry trends.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Hispanic, Latino voters are concerned with more than immigration

November 16, 2012 12:15 am  •  by Rita Flórez

This week, there’s been a lot of talk about why the Republicans lost the Hispanic vote in this presidential election. Often, it’s attributed to the conservative party’s get-tough stance on immigration policies.

Major outlets referred to Mitt Romney’s loss as the Republican Party’s Hispanic or Latino problem. Framing the loss as a problem based on ethnic origin only helps to marginalize. That’s because words matter. The association of Hispanic or Latino with the word “problem” bolsters the idea that we’re a group of outsiders intent on changing America in ways that conservative media often describe negatively.

The problem with blaming the overwhelming loss of our vote on the single issue of immigration is that it paints the Hispanic community as a one-dimensional group that only cares about one thing: whether our abuelos get deported. The characterization is also rooted in stereotypes about what the larger community values.

The idea that eligible voting Latinos, all 24 million of us, don’t care about a lagging economy, health care, the federal deficit or foreign policy is just untrue. Sixty percent of Hispanic voters pointed to the economy as the most pressing issue we Americans face today, almost matching the 59 percent of the general electorate’s belief that the economy is the most important issue right now, according to the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank.

My views on American priorities are in line with most of the country’s — regardless of whether you put me in the Latino or general electorate. I’m a third-year law student at the University of Missouri School of Law. Before law school, I was a reporter facing extreme job insecurity. Then I got laid off and spent a year looking for work. I worry about my ability to find a job when I finish school. I worry about my future children’s ability to find meaningful work, and neither they, nor I, will ever have to worry about being deported.

Reducing the Republican loss to immigration is an incomplete perception of Hispanic views on that single issue. It fails to take into account that there are generations of American-born Hispanics in key battleground states like Florida, California, Texas and Colorado — states that have been hit especially hard in the Great Recession. It paints us as “other” rather than U.S. citizens who proudly voted in this election. Ultimately, it shows a lack of recognition that Hispanics contribute to the communities in which they live.
The president didn’t win the election because half the country wants to be put up by the
government. I view this election as the American public saying they want more tolerance and
less rhetoric whose only purpose is to divide.

This election was significant in so many ways: We re-elected the first African-American
president; we have more women elected to the U.S. Senate than ever; a viable Mormon candidate
ran on a presidential ticket and received almost half of the country’s support in the popular vote.
And through our votes, we said we wanted marriage equality in a number of states and would not
tolerate misguided beliefs about rape and women.

This year, American tolerance was the theme of the election, not whether Hispanics voted blue
because of the other party’s views on immigration.

Rita Flórez is based in Columbia, Mo., at the University of Missouri School of Law.
IT worker reflects on Sandy mission

By Janese Silvey

Nov. 16, 2012

Erin McGruder is back to dealing with Mizzou Wireless glitches at her job on the University of Missouri campus after spending a week helping residents affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Although Internet troubles in the middle of a homework project might not compare with holing up in a flooded apartment without electricity, McGruder knows "disaster" is a relative term. The damage caused by Sandy, for instance, wasn't the same as the destruction she saw in Joplin after a May 2011 tornado.

"Joplin was such devastation," she said. "That set the bar pretty high on what 'disaster' means."

The 80 men and women who made up Missouri Task Force 1 crews during the mission to the East Coast are settling back into life at home, said Gale Blomenkamp, Boone County Fire Protection District battalion chief. Many took a day off, and because Veterans Day was observed Monday, "they were able to take some time and rewind and reconnect with family."

The fire department has an assistance program that lets firefighters and task force members connect with counselors after fires or other disasters. Because the program is anonymous, Blomenkamp does not know how many people take advantage of it, but he doubted a mission such as Sandy would trigger the need for counseling.

"Was Hurricane Sandy a high-stress mission?" he said. "Not for these people. 9/11 was a high-stress mission. Joplin was a different deal, seeing that true death and total destruction. But everyone deals with that stuff in different ways."

Still, the images from New York — the boats washed up on shore, the trash and moldy carpeting piled up outside of homes — stick with you, McGruder said.

McGruder joined the fire district as a volunteer in 2003 as a way to try to give back to her hometown of Harrisburg. She also has volunteered at Joint Communications.

"Being able to reassure someone and see someone through the darkest moment is very rewarding," she said.
McGruder was visiting a relative in the hospital Oct. 29 when she learned the crew would be leaving that night. The task force left at 2 a.m. Oct. 30 and got to New York at 2 a.m. Oct. 31.

They spent the first day going door to door in Queens, using a flashlight to navigate hallways to make sure residents had everything they needed. In many cases, the Missouri crews were the first people residents had seen since the storm struck four days earlier, Blomenkamp said.

"Imagine the city of Columbia being without power for X amount of days and being flooded where the water has receded, leaving debris and stink," he said. "They can't get the trash truck around, so debris is piled up in front yards. People are trying to get life back together with no services to help them with that."

McGruder also helped document the incident, taking photos and making sure information was being passed along proper channels.

For the first several days back, she said, task force members checked in with one another making sure everyone was easing back into routines. For McGruder, that meant volunteering at a horse show last weekend and catching up on emails and bills. "You go from one disaster to the next," she said.

But days on the road also build relationships that continue even when emergency workers return to other jobs.

"You leave as individuals," she said, "but you come back as a family."

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Can a Professor Require Civility?

November 19, 2012 - 3:00am By Colleen Flaherty

A new kind of "civil" rights debate is brewing at Queen's University in Ontario.

At issue is the "civility clause" psychology professor Jill Jacobson included in her third-year course syllabus, which some view as encroaching on free speech rights. A formal complaint launched against Jacobson earlier this year has come to light in recent days, inciting a Canadian media firestorm, and the university is now reviewing the policy.

Jacobson instituted the clause -- which threatens a 10 percent reduction in a student's final mark for a first offense -- to assure that adjuncts and teaching assistants maintain authority over students during her maternity leave early next year, she said (the course is a yearlong requirement for psychology majors). A previous maternity leave left her replacements with little recourse against disruptive or aggressive students, she added.

"If your question is not answered to your satisfaction on the first attempt, please accept the instructor's or TA's need to resume with the lecture or tutorial and instead speak with him or her after class or arrange a separate meeting outside of class time," the clause reads. "Discriminatory, rude, threatening, harassing, disruptive, distracting, and inappropriate behavior and language will not be tolerated in this class regardless of the context in which such actions occur (i.e., in person, in email, online, in peer reviews, etc.)." 

Jacobson has been teaching at Queen's for 11 years and said she's never experienced similarly uncivil student behavior outside her third-year course. Still, she said she didn't foresee enacting the penalty unless the behavior was "egregious," and expressed surprise at the amount of attention her policy is receiving.

But Isabelle Duchaine, a fourth-year academic affairs commissioner with the university's undergraduate student government body, the Alma Mater Society, said the anonymous complaint filed against the policy held merit.

"My concern with the civility clause is predicated on practical application, in terms of its scope,"
she said, noting that an offense committed in September wouldn't have bearing on a student's grade until the end of the academic year in May. The clause also conflates "annoying" behavior with "offensive" behavior, Duchaine added, without defining either.

The student academic affairs commissioner said universitywide policies already in place should govern student behavior. But Jacobson said her policy is in line with the university's Academic Regulation 1, which allows for reductions in grades for violating codes of conduct.

John Pierce, associate dean of studies at the Faculty of Arts and Science, said via e-mail: "I recently learned of this clause and am currently looking into the matter and working with both the students and the department of psychology to determine what the next steps might be. The university highly values a respectful and inclusive learning environment for students, teaching assistants and faculty members."

Queen's librarian Constance Adamson, president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, a union representing 27 Ontario faculty organizations, said she had no official position on the matter. But she said the clause -- especially Jacobson's academically punitive step -- was a novel one at the university. It's not uncommon to hear professors talk about difficult classroom environments, however, she said, particularly since Ontario higher education institutions have become more crowded during the past several years, as public funding for students has increased. Indeed, Jacobson said maximum enrollment in her psychology course has increased from 90 to 140 in recent years, and the requirements for students wishing to major in psychology have been relaxed.

Jacobson said she felt the student government officers forwarding the case against her were "pro-bullying," and "counter to Ontario labor laws that protect employees and thus my TAs from verbal abuse." Discussions thus far with the student government haven't been "all that useful because they've equated freedom of speech with academic freedom with the right to be abusive," she said.

Still, others outside Queen's University said Jacobson's clause goes too far.

Robert O'Neil, a free speech expert and former University of Virginia president and law professor, said the clause paints a "kitchen sink" picture of uncivil behavior -- labeling everything from inappropriate to rude as grounds for punitive action. And while he understood Jacobson's desire to give her policy teeth, he said he couldn't support grade reductions against offending students and instead advocated "hortatory," pro-civility discussions.

Robert Kreiser, senior program officer at the American Association of University Professors and adjunct history professor at George Mason University, said civility clauses resemble speech codes. The association
rejects such codes as inconsistent with the principles of academic freedom.

Although he acknowledged differences between Canadian and U.S. free speech laws, Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, said it has long been established that student free speech can't be limited on U.S. public university campuses "in the name alone of 'conventions of decency.'" The precedent was set by 1973's Supreme Court case *Papish v. Board of Curators of the University of Missouri*, which found that students can't be punished for offensive speech that doesn't disrupt campus order or interfere with others' rights.

Additionally, said Lukianoff, author of *Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of the American Debate*, social scientists have been studying the "silent classroom" phenomenon -- a decline in robust and meaningful classroom debate -- spanning the past decade with concern.

"Queen's University is clearly concerned that this broad attempt to keep lessons from being disrupted will chill the speech and interaction of students," he said.

Here is the full text of Jacobson's civility clause:

"The teaching assistants and instructors do not take any joy in seeing you perform poorly, and the requirements of this course were designed to improve your skills and better prepare you for future challenges, not antagonize you. Thus we need not have an adversarial relationship, nor should we be subjected to a hostile work environment. To this end, it is course policy that everyone be treated with mutual respect and civility. You are free to question the views offered in this course and to come to their own conclusions about debatable issues. We welcome and encourage such critical thinking. However, you do need to demonstrate respect for diversity including ideas and approaches that differ from your own personal preferences or prior learning experiences. Also, during class time, please be respectful of the other students, and the instructor's or TA's obligation to cover the course material within the allotted time. If your question is not answered to your satisfaction on the first attempt, please accept the instructor's or TA's need to resume with the lecture or tutorial and instead speak with him or her after class or arrange a separate meeting outside of class time. Discriminatory, rude, threatening, harassing, disruptive, distracting, and inappropriate behavior and language will not be tolerated in this class regardless of the context in which such actions occur (i.e., in person, in email, online, in peer reviews, etc.) The first offense will result in a 10 percent reduction in your final mark, and violations in person will result in the student's removal from the classroom. The student will still be responsible for the material covered, but he or she will lose the opportunity to earn any points available for that class period. If a student continues to act in the same manner during future lectures or labs, the instructor reserves the right to drop the student from the course and/or pursue disciplinary action at the university level."