

Race-based scholarships at MU draw group's fire

By Janese Silvey

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

A conservative think tank is considering litigation against the University of Missouri after the U.S. Department of Education concluded that MU is within legal rights to offer scholarships and other financial aid based, in part, on race.

The education department's Office for Civil Rights has been investigating MU's race-based financial aid programs since the Center for Equal Opportunity lodged a complaint against the university in 2005. In a Nov. 26 letter to Chancellor Brady Deaton, the department concluded that MU has a compelling interest to offer financial aid to minorities to create a diverse campus.

MU has dozens of scholarships, grants and other financial aid packages that are awarded to students based in part on ethnicity. That includes 34 scholarships that require applicants to be of an underrepresented ethnicity and 18 more that give priority to applicants who are minorities.

"Scholarships that help the University of Missouri create a diverse campus environment not only benefit our students but also our society as a whole by preparing productive citizens," Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management, said in a prepared statement.

Roger Clegg, president and general counsel for the Center for Equal Opportunity, called the practice "illegal, unfair and bad policy." He thinks it violates the Civil Rights Act, which says no one should be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity based on race.

The center is contesting the education department's determination and will consider litigation against the university if the appeal is rejected, Clegg said. In a statement released after the department's ruling, the Center for Equal Opportunity said it has been in touch with possible plaintiffs and law firms.

The university argued that the financial aid programs provide incentive for minorities to come to MU, which has a history of racial segregation, according to the education department's letter.

"The university asserted that its location in counties with large white populations combined with its 120 mile distance from the nearest urban centers were impediments to attracting and enrolling students of color," the letter said. Later, it read: "Further, campus climate surveys have illustrated

the continuing concern of students of color about a campus climate perceived as unwelcoming and the need for additional efforts to achieve the benefits of diversity."

The university also cited to the department recent high-profile racial incidents including the 2010 case in which white students lined cotton balls outside the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center and one last year in which a freshman painted a racist slur on an outdoor sculpture.

The department said its ruling was based partly on the fact that the scholarships in question are awarded based on multiple factors, not just ethnicity.

But that still uses race in a "mechanical way," Clegg said. "During segregation, you didn't automatically get into Ole Miss because you were white — you had to graduate from high school and meet other qualifications. But you automatically didn't get in if you were black," he said, referring to the University of Mississippi.

Many colleges no longer offer race-exclusive scholarships, he said. "We hope that eventually the University of Missouri will conclude as well that students of all racial and ethnic groups should be eligible for consideration for all of its programs, including all of its scholarship programs."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

New dorm to help MU handle record freshman enrollment

COLUMBIA -- A new five-story residential hall at the University of Missouri is scheduled to open in 2015.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that the new dorm will help the university keep up with record-setting freshman classes.

Construction of the 92,000-square-foot building is scheduled to begin in September 2013. Current designs call for single and double rooms as well as study areas and common spaces.

Freshmen have to live on campus and are given higher priority for housing. The Columbia campus has experienced record numbers of freshmen for several years.

Residential Life director Frankie Minor says depending on enrollment, the new housing could allow upper-level students to live on campus.



Former health tech accused of thefts

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

A former University of Missouri Health Care technician was arrested yesterday on suspicion of 42 counts of stealing drugs and medical supplies.

University of Missouri police Capt. Brian Weimer said investigators believe Huntsville resident Stacey L. Vogan, 32, a technician with MU Health's Center for Education and Development, stole nonscheduled drugs and medical supplies on several occasions between Aug. 30 and Nov. 23.

Vogan no longer works for the university, said Mary Jenkins, MU Health spokeswoman. Jenkins would not comment on when that occurred or how long Vogan had been an employee.

A nonscheduled drug is not a controlled substance or an amphetamine, Jenkins said. Not all nonscheduled drugs require a prescription, according to online sources.

Items allegedly were stolen from machines that store the drugs for auditing purposes and an emergency room machine that required Vogan to enter a fake patient name.

Weimer would not comment on what tipped off staff and investigators to the alleged stealing or whether Vogan was stealing the items to sell or for personal use.

MU Health staff tracks potential discrepancies through daily data collection, Jenkins said. Random audits allow staff to know when a drug was accessed, who accessed it, what time and the quantity taken, as described in court records charging Vogan.

Vogan remained in the Boone County Jail this morning with bond set at \$117,000.



KU fan fights to keep anti-Mizzou license plate

By Janese Silvey

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

A St. Charles man with an apparent disdain for University of Missouri athletics is fighting the state's Department of Revenue in hopes of keeping his "MZU SUX" license plate.

In October, the Administrative Hearing Commission — which is under Missouri's Office of Administration and has jurisdiction over statutorily specified administrative matters — ruled that Toby Gettler's personalized plate is not obscene or profane and therefore not subject to recall.

The Department of Revenue is appealing the decision, and the case is now in the Western District Court of Appeals.

The department issued Gettler the "MZU SUX" license plate in 2009. In hearing documents, the commission wrote that the plate's configuration stands for "Mizzou sucks," with a footnote that says it's "a reference to the quality of the University of Missouri athletic program." Gettler chose the vanity plate's wording "because he is a fan of the University of Kansas," according to commission documents.

The Department of Revenue attempted to recall it after receiving a public complaint about the plate, citing a statute that says no personalized license plate shall be obscene or profane. The department argued that the word "sucks" derives from a demeaning sexual connotation, according to documents. The commission, however, cited the Merriam-Webster's definition that says "sucks" is slang for "objectionable" or "inadequate."

The Tribune was unable to contact Gettler, who told a Kansas City television station last week that reasonable people would not assume the plate's message refers to anything sexual.

"It's pretty obvious that I'm using it in a fashion that demonstrates my belief that Missouri's athletic program is more subpar than anything else," Gettler told KCTV Channel 5 News.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said the university would not comment on the plate or the legal situation.

Medical professor gains better understanding of life through husband's struggles

By Dandan Zou

December 12, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Debra Oliver, 52, **an MU School of Medicine professor and former hospice worker**, has spent decades working with patients who have terminal illnesses and conducting research on the people who take care of them.

Oliver's relationship to her subject of study became far more intimate in September 2011 when her husband, David Oliver, 70, was diagnosed with stage four nasopharyngeal carcinoma. Suddenly, she became part of her research — first person.

David is a retired professor of gerontology and deputy director emeritus of Interdisciplinary Center on Aging at MU. After his diagnosis was confirmed, he took an unusual step and posted a series of videos online documenting his experience and reflecting on the experience of living with cancer. The videos spread quickly and inspired thousands of viewers, not only in Missouri, but across the globe.

Life has changed forever for the happily married couple. They found themselves on a parallel journey, experiencing cancer from starkly different perspectives. Debra has learned what can only be gained from personal experience. For his part, David has been overwhelmed by the experience of being cared for by the woman he loves who seeks no other reward than helping him get through one of life's challenges.

"It's something that you come to appreciate so much," he said. "You believe in people, you believe in humanity, you believe in love."

Pain and tears

Although Debra says her "whole career has been talking about death and dying," that knowledge and skill set didn't give her immunity from pain or fully prepare her for what lay down the road.

"It's a whole different thing when it's this person you love," she said in an interview recently in her office at the Medical Sciences Building at MU.

Before her husband got sick, she couldn't understand why people wouldn't go to the Cancer Caregiver Support Group held at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center the fourth Tuesday every month.

And then she became a caregiver and found herself hesitating, at first, to go as well. Trained to be a social worker, Debra is a sympathetic listener — it's natural for her to feel others' pain.

Yet a person has only so much space for pain. She was experiencing so much of the same kind of anguish, she couldn't bear others' too, she said.

Then there was the physical part. Besides the stress and sorrow, her body began to act up. She suffered severe insomnia. In the quiet of the night, she would wake up and think about some future day when David might not be with her. She would start crying and think, "What am I gonna do? Can I do it? Can I cope with this? How will I get out of bed? Who will make me laugh? Who will think with me? Who will dance with me?"

Thinking her husband was sound asleep, she'd give in to the sorrow and feeling of hopelessness. She thought he would never know or find out how much despair she was feeling.

But David wasn't asleep. He lay silent and motionless, letting her have her cry.

So she was shocked when she heard him say during a lecture to medical students how heartbreaking it was to hear his wife crying in the middle of the night.

She still cries, but now she goes to the bathroom and closes the door.

"The shower is a good place, too," she said.

Who's caring for caregivers

According to a research paper from the National Alliance for Caregiving, an estimated 65.7 million people in the U.S. served as unpaid caregivers in 2009.

Of the 289 participants in Debra 's ongoing research, 30 percent are severely anxious, and six of them considered suicide within the past six months.

In David 's opinion, the caregiver suffers the most.

When all the attention is on the dying person, caregivers remain silent despite all the work and effort they did. They listen carefully to everything the doctor says; pay close attention to medication; transport the patient; and attend to the patient's needs. Some caregivers end up quitting their jobs, which means a loss of income and new stresses. And in the end, their "reward" is being left alone when their loved ones pass away, David noted.

He cared for his mother in 1989 when she had cancer, until she died in his arms four months later. He has a vivid memory of helping his mother go to the bathroom on a trip from one hospital in Springfield to another one in St. Joseph. That help involved using a bedpan in a car at a rest stop — not the easiest of tricks.

"The learning from that is you do what you have to do," David said. "The caregiver has to be creative, and brave, and strong, and ready for anything that might come their way."

Another challenge is for caregivers to stay healthy so they can provide the best possible care and support to the person who's ill.

"The patient will only be as successful — especially when they are really ill — as the caregiver is," Debra said. But with all the attention going to the patients, caregivers can feel pretty helpless.

As a result of her experience, Debra now sees her job as designing ways that people can help. Her current research focuses on using video conferencing technology to allow caregivers to participate in conferences about their loved ones' hospice care.

Ups and downs

Debra cried all the way through [the first YouTube video](#) David made to break the bad news to his colleagues. What viewers see is his smile and brave attitude, even clouded by the darkness brought by cancer.

His intention was to put acquaintances at ease with his troubling news. So the couple was caught by surprise when the video reached a much broader audience and galvanized a wave of support across the country. Hundreds of greeting cards poured into the mailbox at their home in southwest Columbia. Professors from other universities sought his permission to use the video for classes. Newspapers, magazines and TV stations came one after one to do stories. The couple even flew to New York in February to appear on a national morning news show. It was an exciting time.

But after the highs comes the lows. Two days later, David was back to chemotherapy for the next four weeks.

"The reality hits you very quickly," Debra said.

Work used to be Debra's escape, a place she could hide from outside pressures — but not any more. In the first couple months, she could barely stand to go to work, let alone read research papers about what she's personally experiencing.

Her office, a sunny place decorated with various Missouri Tiger toys, frames and paintings featuring tigers, is bursting with books and research papers focusing on how to alleviate the pain of the dying and those who care for them. It constantly reminds her of the reality she lives in.

It was also a strange experience for Debra to listen to the same persuasive speech she used to give as a professional about why it was so important to go to the caregivers' support group. Now, that speech was coming from others, such as her former student Denise Swenson.

Swenson, who has master's and doctoral degrees in social work and works with patients and caregivers at Missouri Cancer Associates, asked Debra to trust her and to go when she first refused. Finally, she followed Swenson's advice. It was the right thing to do. Among others who understood how she felt, she learned that she's not alone.

Swenson sees Debra as a true pioneer in end-of-life research, a person with a true researcher's mind.

She's benefiting from her knowledge about the end of life and the role of the caregiver because she knows what good end-of-life care can look like, how valuable hospice can be and how important it is for caregivers to take good care of themselves, Swenson said.

But there's a flip side that can be terrifying, when the death of a loved one lies just ahead.

"On the personal side, I think sometimes you can know too much," Swenson said.

Plan and control

One of the biggest challenges Debra, as a caregiver, faced was learning how to identify her needs and have the courage to seek help. She didn't feel right asking others to take David to the hospital or take him home after chemotherapy treatments. She deemed it her

responsibility and didn't want to burden others. The conflict between his needs and her work became overwhelming.

Known to be chronic planner, Debra likes to take control. But her husband became her priority, and that sense of control vanished.

Debra is now working on a four-year project and will present at a conference in New Orleans next March. But she's known from the start she might have to back out at the last minute.

"Literally overnight, I can be taken out and have to take care of him. It's no different for any caregiver," she said. "You go on, you try to do your work, but knowing that maybe tomorrow you are not gonna be able to come in. As a professional, that's really hard."

Her coping strategy is when "life stops, refocus, take care of the emergency and come back."

Referring to it as a ticking bomb, she said: "At some point, you know it's gonna go off, you are acutely aware that it's ticking, and yet you have to be glad that it's not going off right now," she said. "Be very grateful for the time you have and enjoy it to the most. And we work really hard to do that."

Interestingly, the most productive period of her entire career has coincided with her husband's illness: She has published more than 10 research papers in 14 months.

Hope and the future

Debra's experience with hospice taught her that death can be a beautiful and moving experience. So her biggest fear is actually not the end but the suffering.

When Debra went back to one of her earliest papers, "Redefining hope for the terminally ill" (2002), she was somewhat comforted to learn that the rules still apply.

"One of the most important things that can be given in the face of death is hope," she wrote. "The challenge for those working with the dying is to help them discover meaning in the light of their dying."

Debra now tries to break down big plans into short-term practical goals to concentrate on the present, such as to hope that the tumor will become smaller, that symptoms will be controlled or that the next PET scan will be clear. Maybe it's just to have a good holiday.

She sees herself as a realist and struggles to always think positively, but she's learning to do so. Now she tries to start the day by thinking about something for which she's grateful.

This week, that something is David's latest PET scan result on Dec. 5, which showed that the cancer cells remain smaller than one centimeter. That means the cancer hasn't grown back yet, and David has six more months until the next PET scan.

In one of David's 15 videos named "Following chemo: Time takes on new meaning," David sat in a wheelchair and was showered in beautiful sunshine. He had an autographed basketball from the Missouri basketball team players and the coach in his hand, a souvenir that means the world to a stalwart Tigers fan.

In the video, he says, whenever he hears someone say, "Gee, I can't wait until summer," he replies that he can wait. He doesn't want life to fly by.

Three months ago, David's biggest wish was to die well. Now he hopes to live well.

Debra and David are looking forward to the holiday. First, they're going to take their three daughters to Las Vegas for five days. Then they'll be home for Christmas Day. After that, they're off on a seven-day cruise to the Caribbean with David's three sons and their families.

Their oldest daughter, Jessica Tappana, is pregnant and due in June. Debra hopes David will be there with her to welcome the newborn into the family.

Supervising editor is Katherine Reed.

MU's film studies program continues to grow as popular major

By Olivia Hancock

December 12, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — At MU, film studies wasn't even a major until 2010. Two years later, the program has found its footing: There are 78 students who have declared themselves film studies majors.

Roger Cook, director of the film studies program, said that puts the program ahead of schedule.

"This number is already ahead of what we proposed or expected for five years," Cook said. The number stated in the proposal of the degree was 35 majors in five years.

Film studies started being offered as a minor at MU in 2001. A student group called Mizzou Students for Film started campaigning for the program to offer majors in the area in September 2005.

Cook said getting the major to MU was important because film is a major record of human experience.

"To my mind, it's a little bit dumbfounding that film studies is not already an integral part of academic institutions," he said. "Here we are on the cusp of the digital age, and only now is film studies really beginning to have a more firm foothold in the academic curriculum."

Devoney Looser is an English professor at MU who also played the lead in a student film production called "Vampyras," filmed in 2012. She said the study of film is similar to the study of English.

"I think film studies offers the same rich combination of the critical and the creative as literary studies, but the texts involved are also visual and require a different set of skills to read and understand," said Looser, who does not teach film studies.

The major mainly focuses on the critical analysis of film, and students must take courses on film history, theory and method to earn their certificate.

Faculty who teach film studies courses come from several departments, including English, psychology and theater. Courses offered cover topics as disparate as studying film adaptations of Shakespeare to architecture's relationship to film.

However, one of the classes that has proven to be the most popular is Introduction to Film Production. The class used to be offered only in the spring and was taken in coordination with a summer internship during which students produce a feature film. Due to demand, it is now being offered both semesters, and students produce a short film at the end of the course instead of a feature over the summer.

Brian Maurer, an instructor in the film studies department, teaches the course. He said students learn about the different aspects of producing a film in the class, including cinematography, sound design, casting and directing.

"We look at films like "Apocalypse Now," and it's very dark and there's lights going across the guy's face. We know why they did that on an analytical level, but now they take the production course and they know how to achieve it," he said.

Maurer said learning about film production can affect how people watch movies.

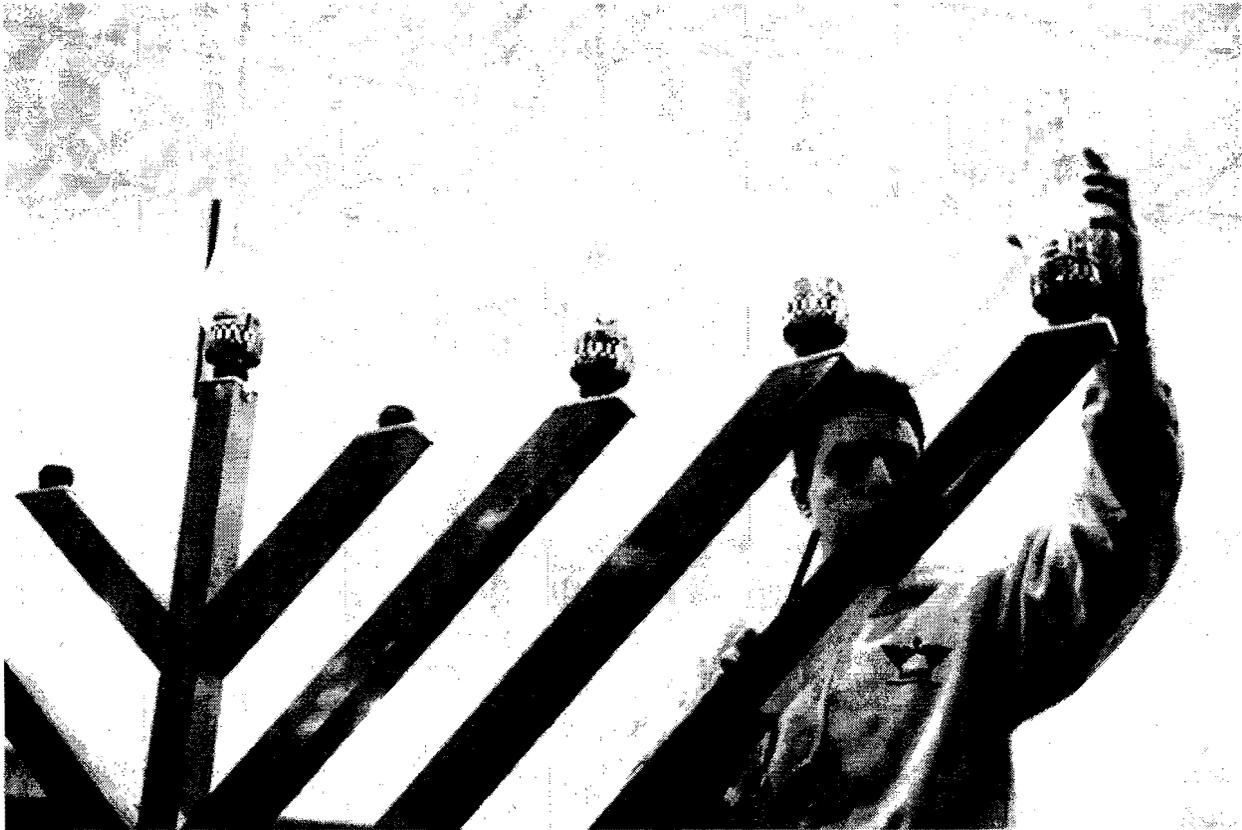
"It's kind of a Catch-22. I watched Paranormal Activity 3, right?" he said. "And instead of enjoying the experience and getting frightened when things happen, I sit there and try to figure out, 'OK, I wonder how they did that. How would I do it?'"

For the future, Cook said he hopes to add a post-production course dealing with editing and special effects, as well as more classes in film theory and genre. He said the caliber of students the program attracts continues to impress him.

"It used to be film courses were what students looked at as, 'Oh, it's going to be easy,'" he said. "Now students who had that attitude find themselves in courses with students who have a sophisticated understanding of the history and aesthetics of film."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.

Festival of lights



Ryan Henriksen | [Buy this photo](#)

By Ryan Henriksen

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

Jeremy Hershey-Nexon, president of the Chabad Jewish Student Organization, lights a menorah yesterday in the University of Missouri Student Center. About 30 people gathered for the event marking the third day of Hanukkah.