COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Abu Ghraib figure Larry James is finalist for MU position

By John Farmer de la Torre
January 9, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Psychologist Larry James, who has been linked to controversial interrogation techniques at the detainee center in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq, is one of two finalists for a high-ranking position at MU's College of Education.

James was director of the Behavioral Science Consultation Team at Guantánamo Bay in 2003, and again from 2007 to 2008. He led the same group at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, according to a curriculum vitae he provided to the college's search committee. He is being considered for the job of division executive director, in which he would oversee a faculty of about 65.

Some faculty are concerned about James being hired by the college. Peggy Placier, a retired MU professor, received — with other faculty and staff — an announcement from the search team alerting them that James was a finalist.

"They said they had done their research and had asked the hard questions," she said.

Professor Deborah Popowski, lecturer on law at Harvard Law School, who has led a team of investigators at the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School, said there is strong evidence that James could be prosecuted for ethics violations at the very least.

"The evidence indicates that he used his health training to hurt people," said Popowski, "which violates the cardinal ethical rule to do no harm."

The Harvard Law team, working with human rights activists in Ohio, filed a professional misconduct and ethics complaint with the Ohio Board of Psychology. The board dismissed the complaint without comment. A similar complaint was filed in Louisiana and also failed.

"He was a senior intelligence psychologist in one of the most notorious prisons of our time at one of the worst times in its history," said Popowski.
James disagrees.

"There has never been any evidence whatsoever for any of these boards to have the slightest cause to investigate me," he said in a phone interview.

MU professor Michael Pullis, head of the search committee, said the committee found James to be forthright.

"I understand the allegations, but that is not sufficient to discriminate against anyone," said Pullis.

The search team considered James' credentials substantial enough to offer him a Skype interview.

Members of the search committee faced the allegations head on, and, according to Pullis, so did James.

"We asked him directly. We said we had become aware of his activities as a military psychologist, and we asked him to explain that, and about how that had been dealt with officially," Pullis said.

Pullis said the gist of James' explanation was that he was not brought to the detainee centers to teach interrogation. He was instead on hand to clean up issues related to detainees and personnel working with detainees.

James was adamant when he spoke of his role.

"Absolutely not. I did not have command authority," James said. "I was a consultant to a commanding general."

"These are some rough places, and some bad things happened there before I arrived, so I trained the staff and I wrote policies so other abuses would not occur to anyone in our care," he said.

James is expected to interview at MU the first week of February. He has been the dean of the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University since 2008.

*Supervising editor is Katherine Reed.*
MU law graduate takes federal post

Tuesday, January 8, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Tammy Dickinson has taken the oath of office to become the United States attorney for the Western District of Missouri.

Dickinson, who received her law degree in 1998 from the University of Missouri Law School, was nominated by President Barack Obama in July and confirmed by unanimous consent of the U.S. Senate on Jan. 1, according to a news release from the court. She took the oath of office late yesterday from U.S. District Judge Beth Phillips, the former U.S. attorney, the release said.

"I'm honored to serve as the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri," Dickinson said in a statement. "I would like to thank President Obama, Congress, and especially Senators McCaskill and Blunt for their support."

Dickinson, a Kansas City native, is a career state prosecutor. She joined the Jackson County prosecutor's office in 1998 and has been the chief trial assistant in that office since 2002. Dickinson is a member of the Missouri Bar Association and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association.

As U.S. attorney, Dickinson is the top-ranking federal law enforcement official in the Western District of Missouri, which includes Kansas City, St. Joseph, Columbia, Jefferson City and Springfield. She oversees a staff of 127 employees.
A new analysis of state spending on higher education finds that states with a diverse economy, low unemployment, and a history of support for higher education are likely to maintain public spending on colleges. Conversely, states that do not have those characteristics have a hard time overcoming fiscal challenges to create a robust system of higher education.

The study, described in a report titled “College Funding in Context: Understanding the Difference in Higher Education Appropriations Across the States,” was conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities’ department of organizational leadership, policy, and development. It found that states that are leaders in higher-education spending tend to stay at the top of that category, creating a kind of “virtuous cycle.” The study was published by Demos, a nonpartisan organization that studies and advocates for government spending to promote economic equality.

Specifically, the study found that a one-percentage-point increase in unemployment correlates with a seven-percentage-point decline in state appropriations per full-time-equivalent student, or “FTE.”

An older population also corresponds with less state spending on higher education, the researchers found. “For every 10-percentage-point increase in the proportion of a state’s population that is 65 or older,” they write, “there is an almost 7-percent reduction in FTE state appropriations for higher education.”

Higher voter participation in presidential elections, they found, also correlates to less spending on higher education. That finding, the authors write, suggests that widespread economic
struggles over the four-year election cycles “may relate to voter participation in national elections and negatively impact state higher-education budgets.”

Using case studies from Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania, the researchers also tied strong gubernatorial leadership (though not partisan affiliation) and ties between legislators and colleges to higher levels of state support for higher education.

“Historically, both Minnesota and Pennsylvania developed a robust system of public and private higher education in relationship to sustaining a diversified economy with demand for highly skilled labor,” the report concludes. “Louisiana and Colorado, in contrast, illustrate that states rich in natural resources may have difficulty creating an appetite for higher education among elected officials and the public at large.”
They are off and legislating, and the halls of the Gray Dome in Jefferson City are filled with confused women and men (not all, but most) trying to look like they know what they are doing. What they are about to do is scuttle our ship of state.

With the GOP's super majority, who knows what we might, or might not see, come May. What will our state representatives and senators actually accomplish in 2013? To that end, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch editorial board asked two hard questions.

“What have the Republicans done with those majorities in [the last] decade?” The answer is not much.

“If cutting taxes was supposed to pave the road to prosperity, why all the potholes?” Well?

Since 2003, the P-D reports, Missouri’s tax burden have been one of the lowest in the nation. But has this reduction of taxes improved the lives of our citizens? In the simplest terms — no.

While the GOP is blaming all of the current ill of state on Gov. Jay Nixon and President Barack Obama, they have proved without a shadow of a doubt that their own policies and Ronald Reagan’s “trickle-down economics” do not work, and that giving more to the wealthy and big business does not equate to economic prosperity for the rest of us.

Jefferson City-based Associated Press reporter David Lieb provided us with a “Hall of Shame” list on the last day of 2012.

- Missouri’s health care and child care is gravely ill.
- Our public schools are badly underfunded, even by Missouri standards.
- Missouri has instituted greater restrictions concerning women’s reproductive rights.
There is no marriage equality for non-married couples regardless of sexual orientation.

The state’s unemployment and prison population numbers are reaching new records.

Is this the legacy Missouri’s Republican legislators want? Is this how our conservative legislators will be remembered in 2013 — as the political party that did nothing for Missouri citizens? Let’s see...

State Sen. Wayne Wallingford, R- Cape Girardeau, and Rep. Chuck Gatschenberger, R-Lake St. Louis, have introduced bills that would “...fully protect the rights of an alternatives-to-abortion agency and its officers, agents, employees and volunteers to freely assemble and to freely engage in religious practices and speech without governmental interference.” Really? This is already written into the federal and state constitutions. Why are you wasting our time and money?

Representing Missouri’s northwest corner, state Sen. Brad Lager wants a constitutional amendment that would create a “...cash operating reserve fund to be used to reduce all state income tax rates,” if more tax revenues than anticipated are collected. Can’t the funds be better used to improve schools, health care for the poor, elderly and veterans, to create jobs and to fix the roads?

Rep. Delus Johnson, R-Savannah, wants to reduce corporate taxes as a method of increasing employment. This is and will continue to be a failed policy, so why would Mr. Johnson want to continue to bang our heads against the wall.

Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Carthage, wants to allow our K-12 teachers and administrators to carry firearms at school. Yes, let’s arm the teachers AND reduce public K-12 funding at the same time.

This is a partial list, more are being filed, and proof positive that our legislators will use their 2013 veto-proof majority to sink Missouri deeper into the economic and human whirlpool.

One of the few lights on the horizon is our own Sen. Kurt Schaefer; at least his bills are not drilling new holes in our hull.

Imagine: Missouri with a healthy and well educated work force, with our K-12 and universities properly funded, and being known as a state that takes care of our own. More businesses would want to expand into the state and more people will be employed. Isn’t that the goal?
However, that would make Missouri’s GOP over-populated legislature look, human, and we cannot allow that happen, can we.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Gray Dome, now is the time to look at your own history and ask yourselves one question: Can we do better?

It appears that the GOP will continue to drill holes in our state’s fiscal hull. It is our job, as citizens of this state, to stop them and stop them now... before our ship is dragged under.

David Rosman is an editor, writer, professional speaker and college instructor in communications, ethics, business and politics. Questions? Contact Opinion editor Elizabeth Conner.
Soon, portable X-Ray that could fit in the palm of the hand

WASHINGTON: **Hand-held scanners, or tricorders, of the 'Star Trek' movies and television series are one step closer to reality now, as an engineering team from the University of Missouri has invented a compact source of X-rays and other forms of radiation.**

The radiation source, which is the size of a stick of gum, could be used to create inexpensive and portable X-ray scanners for use by doctors.

"Currently, X-ray machines are huge and require tremendous amounts of electricity," Scott Kovaleski, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at MU said.

"In approximately three years, we could have a prototype hand-held X-ray scanner using our invention. The cell-phone-sized device could improve medical services in remote and impoverished regions and reduce health care expenses everywhere," he added.

Kovaleski suggested other uses for the device. In dentists' offices, the tiny X-ray generators could be used to take images from the inside of the mouth shooting the rays outward, reducing radiation exposure to the rest of the patients' heads. At ports and border crossings, portable scanners could search cargoes for contraband, which would both reduce costs and improve security. Interplanetary probes, like the Curiosity rover, could be equipped with the compact sensors, which otherwise would require too much energy.

The accelerator developed by Kovaleski's team could be used to create other forms of radiation in addition to X-rays. For example, the invention could replace the radioactive materials, called radioisotopes, used in drilling for oil as well as other industrial and scientific operations. Kovaleski's invention could replace radioisotopes with a safer source of radiation that could be turned off in case of emergency.

"Our device is perfectly harmless until energized, and even then it causes relatively low exposures to radiation," Kovaleski said.

"We have never really had the ability to design devices around a radioisotope with an on-off switch. The potential for innovation is very exciting," he added.

The research is published as "Investigation of the Piezoelectric Effect as a Means to Generate X-Rays" in the journal IEEE Transaction on Plasma Science.
Law Deans Confront a 'New Normal' as Schools Adjust to Job-Market Changes

By Katherine Mangan

New Orleans

With applications to law schools in free fall and many of their graduates struggling to find jobs to pay off staggering debts, about 3,000 legal educators gathered here over the weekend to discuss what a panel of law deans referred to as "the new normal."

It's a world where unemployed graduates take to the courts to sue their schools and where structural changes in the job market are forcing schools to revamp their curricula and slash spending.

Participants at the annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools described the hard choices they're making and the tough messages they're delivering as they seek to reinvent their schools.

"Whether or not it's true, there's a perception of absolute crisis and chaos in legal education," said Frank H. Wu, dean of the University of California's Hastings College of the Law. He described how the freestanding Hastings school had shrunk its class size this year, from 425 to 320; increased the teaching load of faculty members; and cut staff positions.

"I've been so candid with my faculty that I worry about faculty morale, but without that understanding, they're still going to come in with unrealistic demands," he said. "The question is, Is this a blip or is it permanent? I happen to believe we're dealing with a profound, permanent, structural change" in the legal job market, and by extension, in legal education, he said.
Law schools produce more than 44,000 graduates each year—about two for every new opening for a lawyer or judicial law clerk, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Not surprisingly, the Class of 2011 had the worst employment numbers of any since 1994, with only 55 percent of graduates known to have found full-time jobs requiring a law degree nine months after graduation.

Reports of unemployed graduates who are drowning in debt and suing their schools gave many would-be applicants pause as the number of applications tumbled a cumulative 25 percent over the last two years. As of last month, the Law School Admission Council reported that applications for the fall of 2013 were down nearly 25 percent from where they were at this time a year ago.

The continued nosedive has many talking seriously about a point that seemed unthinkable several years ago, when record numbers of students were flocking to law schools: the point at which there won't be enough applicants to fill all the available seats and some law schools could be forced to close.

If law schools hadn't begun to trim their enrollments, those lines could have been crossed as soon as next year, said Jerome M. Organ, a professor of law at the University of St. Thomas, in Minneapolis. If the Law School Admission Council's early numbers hold up, just under 53,000 students will apply for seats in next fall's class, he said. Over the last decade, law schools have never admitted fewer than 55,500 into their entering class.

Faced with such numbers, law schools have put the brakes on years of accelerating enrollment over the last two years, trimming entering-class sizes by 15 percent since 2010, according to preliminary figures from the American Bar Association.

**Pressure on Students**

The turmoil in legal education has many students feeling stressed out and depressed, worried about their chances of landing a job that will put a dent in their six-figure student-loan debts. With jobs so hard to come by, the pressure to score at the top of one's class is more intense than ever, making law schools' competitive atmosphere even more cutthroat, according to speakers at a session on student well-being.

Meanwhile, the very nature of legal education, which emphasizes cognitive reasoning and "thinking like a lawyer," encourages students to stifle their emotions as they engage in adversarial sparring matches.

The fallout can include escalating rates of depression and alcohol use as students progress through law school, according to Robert P. Schuwerk, a professor of law at the University of Houston. He teaches a seminar in which students critique legal education and discuss their psychological and emotional responses as they progress through law school.
“By their third year, a lot of students are angry or depressed or both,” he said in an interview. “Some blame career services, and other say the curriculum didn't teach them enough practical skills and that the only way they'll be able to be a lawyer is to hang out a shingle.”

Other law schools are coming up with their own ways to support students. George Washington University Law School now assigns all first-year students to one of six cohorts, which provide support and camaraderie, along with opportunities for mentoring and individualized career counseling.

Many law schools are providing students with as much practice-based experience as they can, through clinics and “bridge” programs in their third year, to make them more marketable.

Meanwhile, law schools are under intense pressure to be upfront with prospective students about both the debt they will incur and their job prospects if they enroll.

Job-Placement Information

In August the bar association's accrediting arm approved new standards requiring law schools to report much more specific information about scholarship retention and employment prospects. Rather than just reporting that 90 percent of graduates were employed nine months after graduation, the schools must now disclose whether the jobs are part time or temporary, paid for by the school, or don't require a law degree.

"It may not be a coincidence that with the greater transparency, we've seen a decrease in applications," said Scott F. Norbert, deputy consultant for the bar association's accrediting group.

Despite the new requirements, many of the nation's 202 accredited law schools continue to report misleading statistics on their Web sites, according to a fellow panelist, Ben Trachtenberg, an associate professor of law at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

For instance, he said, law schools still compile average salary figures based on little more than half of graduates reporting, and those figures are typically skewed upward because graduates with jobs in top firms are more likely to report their income than those who are unemployed or working for low wages.

Mr. Organ, of the University of St. Thomas, said legal educators should pay more attention to their educator role when publishing employment data about their schools.

"One of the problems law schools are dealing with is that we don't think of ourselves as professionals relating to clients," he said. "Often we act as trial lawyers and assume we can put out information at the edge of what is reliable and that there will be an adversary putting out information to counter that. That's OK in trial, but our relationship with prospective students should not be an adversarial one."
Nurse with no flu shot refuses to wear mask, is fired

The holistic nurse balked at wearing a surgical mask while at work because she chose not to take a flu shot.

Thomas Gounley, Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader

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Story Highlights

- This is first year hospital employees must get a vaccination or exemption
- Hospital says it's requiring surgical masks because flu can be transmitted before symptoms show
- The nurse said the masks made it difficult for her to breathe, gave her headaches

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A nurse who refused to wear a surgical mask after receiving an exemption from a mandatory flu vaccination was fired for violating her hospital's policy.

Carla Brock, a board-certified holistic nurse who has worked 11 years at Cox South Hospital here, said she is speaking out because she believes her hospital's new requirement to wear a mask if a staffer opts out of the flu vaccine amounts to a scarlet letter. CoxHealth, which owns four hospitals in southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas, says it simply is putting the patient first.

"I love my job, and I loved the people I worked with," the pre-admissions nurse said. But "I have spiritual and religious reasons to not have those toxins in my body."

STORY: Flu season turning out harsh

COLUMN: Surging flu no reason for shot mandate

Mandated flu shots already are part of a national debate that pits employee rights against what some say is patient safety. Most recently, in December, an Indiana hospital fired eight employees who refused to get flu shots, according to ABC News.
Brock's situation adds another layer to the debate. This is the first year that CoxHealth employees are required either to get the vaccination or produce paperwork showing an exemption, according to Stacy Fender, media relations coordinator for CoxHealth. In the past, flu shots were strongly recommended.

In early September, Brock sought and was granted a religious exemption although she admits she's more "spiritual" than "religious."

"We jumped through the hoops," she said. "We did all the right things."

But CoxHealth's new policy also requires employees who receive an exemption to wear a surgical mask while working, which Brock did starting Dec. 31.

Plenty of people are fighting against the flu vaccine requirement. Brock is fighting against the mask requirement.

"It's obviously punitive," she said. "It's obviously coercive."

Springfield, Mo.

Brock believes the masks are meant to intimidate and humiliate those who seek an exemption so they will conform and get the shot rather than stand out.

"The 'scarlet letter' word keeps coming up," she said.

Brock also believes that there is no evidence that the mask policy is effective and noted that hospital visitors don't have to wear them.

"If that's the case, Cox should have every single person who walks in the door wear a mask," she said.

Patients awaiting surgery were taken aback when Brock would enter the room wearing a mask, fearing something was wrong, she said. That forced her to explain the situation and in the process divulge more about herself than she wanted to.

"I felt like I was violating my own privacy," she said.

Brock also said the masks made it difficult for her to breathe and gave her headaches. She started pulling the mask away from her face but eventually just took it off when she was in the room with one patient.

"I told him, 'I'm sorry. I'm not contagious. I just can't do my job with this on,' " she said.

Throughout the past week, Brock sent messages detailing her objections to her managers.

"I've tried to communicate a different viewpoint, but there's been no willingness to reconsider."

-- Nurse Carla Brock

On Friday, an employee relations manager told her she needed to provide medical documents to substantiate her condition if she thought she had a medical condition that prevented her from wearing the mask.
This past weekend, Brock said she met with others, including the minister who provided documentation of her religious exemption.

She doesn't have a medical condition, she said. In fact, her preference for holistic health means she doesn't even have a primary-care physician. On Monday, she presented a letter saying that she would not wear the mask and was terminated.

"It is a Cox standard and becoming a national standard from Colorado, where it is a state mandate for non-vaccinated healthcare workers," her corrective action memo read.

Brock is most frustrated because she thought she had no options.

"I've tried to communicate a different viewpoint, but there's been no willingness to reconsider," she said.

In more than a decade of working for CoxHealth, Brock had faced disciplinary action only one other time, she said, when she acquired her mother's lab results with her mom's permission but without following protocol. She felt that situation was handled appropriately.

Fender, the CoxHealth spokeswoman, said the hospital does not comment on individual personnel issues but did offer an explanation of the hospital's mask policy.

"The logic behind it is that you can spread the flu before you have symptoms of it," Fender said. "The way you spread the flu is through your upper respiratory system, so the mask contains that."

Fender said that 99% of CoxHealth's employees are vaccinated.

"Our policy is similar to hundreds if not thousands of health systems across the country," she said. "Our first priority has to be the patients."

Another area hospital, Mercy Hospital Springfield, started requiring its employees get a vaccination or wear a mask in 2010. A representative Monday said she was not aware of any employee push-backs against Mercy's mask policy.

Brock is not alone in her feelings about the masks. Staff members at hospitals in Worchester, Mass., and Boston have complained about the masks as more health care providers have made them a requirement, according to media reports.

But at least one decision following dissent has given Brock hope. In December 2011, the University of Missouri Health Care network backed off its mask requirement.

"We reviewed national guidelines and determined it wasn't clear if this procedure would actually improve patient or staff safety," spokeswoman Mary Jenkins told The Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune in 2011.

Brock said her husband is supportive of her decision, although the termination will create some hardships for them. As a side business, she teaches holistic health classes, including one called "The Danger of Vaccines."

Brock is not yet sure if she will take legal action.
"If I have legal rights, I want to exercise them," she said. "I want to at least consider it."