One of two finalists for an administrative position at the University of Missouri College of
Education is raising some eyebrows among staff.

Just before break, the department sent an email saying Larry C. James, who while in the military
served as the director of behavioral science division at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, was a
finalist for the position of division executive director.

When Peggy Placier, an associate professor in educational leadership and policy analysis,
returned to her office last week, several of her colleagues came to her with concerns about James
after they had found out more about his background.

In 2010, a complaint was filed about James to the Ohio Board of Psychology, focusing on his
time at Guantanamo in 2003 and again for 2007-08, during which time acts of torture occurred at
the prison. The complaint alleged James was part of a "small but influential group of mental
health professionals that advised on interrogation plans." A complaint also was filed against
James to the Louisiana Board of Psychology in 2009.

Both complaints were dismissed, and James was never charged with any crimes in connection
with his service, but Placier said that doesn't totally ease the minds of the staff.

"I just don't know why they didn't consider that this would be problematic," Placier said. "Why
get involved in this controversy?"

Michael Pullis, who served as chairman for the search committee, said the group was aware of
the allegations against James and "investigated that very thoroughly." The committee also asked
James about the accusations during an interview via Skype.
"We still felt he was one of the top candidates," Pullis said. "The American Psychological Association has not done any sanctions against him. In fact, he's received American Psychological Association awards."

James said the allegations against him don't come up every time he interviews for a job, but he said they do come up "here and there." His position, he said, is to be "open and honest."

"All of those things were thoroughly investigated, ... and of course I was found completely innocent and was not involved in any of those horrible things that occurred at any of those places like in Cuba," he said.

Placier said she and others also question whether James' experience is relevant to the position. Right now, he serves as a dean and professor for the school of professional psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

In the MU position, he would be "responsible for the leadership and administration" of three departments — the School of Information Sciences and Learning Technologies, department of school and counseling psychology and the department of educational leadership and policy analysis.

"The only connection is ... the counseling psychology program," Placier said. "There's not really a relationship between counseling and integration or military practices with terror suspects."

James said he has a number of experiences pertinent to the job. His minor was in school psychology, he said, and his doctoral program was housed in the college of education. In his job now, he said his department is in the process of partnering with elementary schools in Dayton for various programs.

He also has experience in administrating and leading, Pullis said. Pullis also pointed to his work in medical education and accomplishments as a scholar and author as two other factors in why he was a top pick.
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.
Research from the University of Missouri indicates that online discussion boards provide safe environments for mothers to anonymously express child-rearing concerns and receive support from other moms.

A major reason could be quick feedback from their e-cohort, not to mention steep medical costs and waiting times for appointments with doctors, according to a Missouri statement.

"Mothers have feelings that they might be embarrassed to talk about face-to-face with someone," said Jean Ispa, professor and co-chair of human development and family studies at Missouri and study co-author.

"Moms may feel ashamed if they have feelings like: 'My child is really stressing me out,' or 'my child is annoying me'. On message boards with a pseudonym, mothers can say whatever they're feeling, and they can get emotional support and advice from other moms with similar experiences," adds Ispa.

Ispa and Noriko Porter, who completed her doctorate at Missouri and now is an instructor of human development at Washington State University, monitored online message boards hosted by two popular parenting magazines.

They evaluated more than 100 posts from mothers of children two years old and younger and found the child-rearing concerns moms expressed related most often to feeding or eating, sleep, development, discipline, toilet-training and mother-child relationships.

"One of the benefits of message boards is that they are constantly available, so parents can communicate with other parents anytime. Instead of or after consulting with medical professionals, some mothers look for quick feedback from their e-cohort," said Ispa.

"High medical costs and waiting times for appointments may be contributing to mothers turning to the Internet for quick and practical solutions from their peers," added Ispa.

Although message boards provide accessible communication outlets for parents, the information available on the boards sometimes conflicts with information in other messages or from health care professionals and can be inaccurate, Ispa said.
A Degree Still Helps
January 10, 2013 - 3:00am

By Alexandra Tilsley

NO MENTION

Amid much public discussion about whether college degrees still help graduates, the Pew Economic Mobility Project released a report Wednesday attempting to shed light on whether college is really worth it.

The report, unlike many other attempts to address the value of a college degree, does not look at the cost of attending a four-year institution, but instead considers only whether or not a degree still helps people find better jobs and earn more money.

The simple answer is yes. And, as the study’s main finding suggests, the impact of a college degree has not been affected by the recession nearly as much as some reports – particularly those about college grads living in their parents’ basements – might suggest.

The report, “How Much Protection Does a College Degree Afford? The Impact of the Recession on Recent College Graduates,” drew from data from the 2003-2011 Current Population Survey by the U.S. Census, and used classifications from the Occupational Information Network (O*Net) to examine the employment trends of different populations. The study, which focused on recent graduates, compared the employment level and average wages of 21- to 24-year-olds with high school degrees, associate degrees, or bachelor’s degrees before, during, and after the recession, and found that while well-paid, college-level jobs have indeed been harder to come by since the recession, the effect has been significantly less severe for those with college degrees.

A few key facts:

• Prior to the recession, which the study defines as the period between December 2007 and June 2009, bachelor’s graduates were already more likely to be employed than were associate degree holders, who were more likely to be employed than those without any
postsecondary degree. After the recession, employment of college graduates dropped 7 percent, while associate degree holders experienced an 11 percent drop, and employment of high school graduates fell 16 percent.

- The decline in the number of people holding college-level jobs, which O*Net defines based on the most common level of education among people in a certain occupation over the course of the recession was only 3 percent for college graduates, half the size of the declines for both high school and associate degree holders.
- Average weekly wages fell 10 percent for high school graduates and 12 percent for associate degree graduates, but only 5 percent for four-year college graduates, over the course of the recession.
- The percent of people excluded from the workforce, meaning they were seeking work but couldn’t find it, rose 31 percent for college graduates, 37 percent for high school graduates, and 50 percent for associate degree graduates, though associate degree holders were still excluded at a lower rate than high school graduates.
- Enrollment in an educational program dropped for all three groups, contrary to the notion that many young people are waiting out the poor job market by seeking further academic training.

The findings echo the results of a report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, which found that four-year college graduates are unemployed and underemployed at lower rates and earn more than high school graduates.

Diana Elliott, research manager of Pew’s Economic Mobility Project, notes that according to the Pew study, associate degree holders also fare better than high school graduates.

The main takeaway, Elliott said, is that despite claims that the value of a college degree has been eroded, any amount of postsecondary education improves employment outcomes. “There are a number of press reports that have discussed children moving back in with their parents,” Elliott said. “Certainly this is not to discredit those individual stories, but what this does is it shows...that the trends over all do not find this to be the case for the nation as a whole.”

Read more: http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/10/employment-outcomes-still-better-college-graduates-despite-recession#ixzz2Ha7G07PF