What Graduate Students Should Know About the Sequester

Admissions criteria will change at some schools because of sequestration.

By Delece Smith-Barrow

Research universities and graduate assistants across the nation are starting to feel the sequester’s impact. The across-the-board, $85 billion in discretionary spending cuts began just one month ago.

"My NIH grant has already been affected. Our budget has been altered because of it," says Thomas Brown, a professor and vice chair of research for the Department of Neuroscience, Biology and Physiology at Wright State University.

Brown is using a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health to research pregnancy-associated disorders, such as preeclampsia, and figure out how to treat them. This year he has seven people working with him. Because of the sequester, his budget has shrunk.

"We've already done this math and we're going to have to go from seven to five. At least for the foreseeable next six months or so," he says.

In his lab, and the hundreds of other labs at research universities in the U.S., many of the employees are graduate school students who serve as teaching or research assistants. Much of their salaries, and their ability to study topics within science, technology, math and engineering (STEM), come from federal grants.

"Right now it's sort of the termites in the wall rather than the tornado that comes in and destroys the home," says Barry Toiv, vice president for public affairs for the Association of American Universities, when discussing the sequester's impact. "It's going to gradually eat away at these universities' capabilities to carry out this research."
Universities in the United States perform 31 percent of the nation's research, according to a 2011 report from the association.

No one can accurately predict the sequester's long-term effects, but graduate students with research positions, and those planning to enter master's and Ph.D. programs dependent on federal financing, should expect short-term changes to their industry.

One of the most apparent changes will be in admissions rates for some schools.

"Vanderbilt University is reducing the number of graduate students that are going to gain admission next year," says Sandra Rosenthal, who leads select research initiatives at the school. "With fewer grant dollars there are fewer stipends. There's gonna be less money to support research assistants."

Robert Duncan, vice chancellor for research at the University of Missouri, echoes Rosenthal's beliefs.

"Future students will be added to a research grant at a much, much slower rate," he says.

The university has about 3,500 grants and contracts active at any one time and most are federally funded, Duncan says.

"If sequestration stays on track," he continues, "we'll be able to fund and support many fewer student than we do today."

The reaction from graduate students is a little more varied.

Renee Albers, a 24-year-old graduate teaching assistant at Wright State, is optimistic that her research opportunities as a student and employment options once she graduates will not be marred by the sequester.

"When you're really motivated by your research, you're more focused on that" instead of the budgetary concerns, she says. "I have a sufficient amount of training that I should be able to still acquire a job."

Scott Niezgoda, a graduate research assistant at Vanderbilt, is more wary.

"Anytime you hear about huge budget cuts it's a little disconcerting," the 24-year-old says. "I can't say I have worries. I have reservations."

Toshia Wrenn, 25, is worried. The Vanderbilt student anticipates graduating with her doctorate of philosophy in chemistry in 2014, pending the extent of the sequester's effects on her area of research.

"If it takes me longer to get the funds, to get the materials I need, then it takes me longer to graduate," she says.
Her career goal is to teach at a university and take on a research professorship, she says, but she will need to secure resource funding.

"If I am not able to get a grant, then I'm stuck," Wrenn says. Her plan B is to go into an industry where a private enterprise funds the research. She hopes to never take that route.

"My heart is definitely not there," she says. "I want to teach students. I want to ignite the desire to learn with other people."
Sequester Will Force Universities to Scale Back Scientific Research

By Jim Malewitz, Staff Writer

Marian Alicea, an engineering student who is slated to graduate from college this spring, needs a doctorate degree to achieve her lofty career goal of becoming a White House environmental adviser with scientific expertise. But the budget battle in Washington is complicating her plans for getting there.

In normal times Alicea, who attends Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Ga., would likely be a shoo-in for a full research stipend. She is an honors student who has snagged several prestigious internships. And as a Latina she belongs to a minority group that is underrepresented among engineers.

But because of the sequester—the automatic federal budget cuts that went into effect March 1—some of the schools that want Alicea can’t offer her the financial aid she needs.

Federal agencies pour billions each year into university research, largely through grants that allow student researchers to pay their bills as they work. With less federal money to spend, some Ph.D. programs are delaying admissions decisions, while others have already cut positions amid the uncertainty.

In 2011, federal money accounted for more than $40 billion of the $65 billion universities spent on research. At several large research universities, including Johns Hopkins, the University of Washington, the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard, federal dollars comprised 80 percent of research spending.
Like most other federal agencies, the National Institutes of Health must cut 5 percent of its budget to comply with sequestration. Because NIH funnels about 85 percent of its budget to university researchers, it is already scaling back some grants, according to director Francis Collins.

Meanwhile, the National Science Foundation, facing similar cuts, estimates it will give out about 1,000 fewer research grants and awards this year, affecting as many as 3,000 researchers.

Researchers and university officials worry the lost funding will slow or halt research on everything from cancer treatments to contaminated soil and water. They also fear it will dissuade young scholars from pursuing scientific careers.

“It will be profoundly devastating for this generation of students,” said Michael Reid, head of the physiology department at the University of Kentucky’s College of Medicine.

Alicea was accepted into four of the dozen programs she applied to, but only two—Virginia Tech and Auburn—offered her financial help. The other universities, Maryland and Illinois, said they could not guarantee her money because the sequester had muddled their budgets.

“Chilling effect”

Enrollment in graduate schools was already lagging amid growing concerns about student debt. Between 2010 and 2011, first-time U.S. enrollment across programs fell by 1.7 percent, following a decade of gains, according to a survey by the Council of Graduate Schools.

“This financial stress on institutions comes at a really tough time,” said Debra Stewart, the council’s president. “It has a chilling effect on what was already a chilly situation.”

For all university students, sequestration will mean higher fees on Stafford Loans and reduced payments from some grants, including federal work study. Some educators worry that the prospect of amassing higher debt will scare students away, particularly as institutions hike tuition amid eroding state funding. But the economic forecaster Moody’s expects universities as a whole to face only “minimal” immediate effects from sequestration as they turn to other revenues.

For graduate students in the sciences, the impact will be more dramatic.

A lack of federal money prompted the University of Kentucky’s College of Medicine to admit about a third fewer students to its Ph.D. program in physiology, according to department head Reid. “There were a number of qualified candidates we had to turn away,” he said.

Reid, who oversees a lab studying how chronic disease, such as cancer, speeds up muscle deterioration, said one of his lead doctoral students will lose his grant if sequestration continues, threatening to halt his education and dramatically slowing down the line of work.

If the politicians in Washington can craft a budget deal that replaces the sequester, Reid’s lab could immediately resume some of its stalled research, he said. But when it comes to genetically engineering mice, a process that can take years, it would likely have to start from scratch.

When that type of research is halted, Reid said, “That’s it. You’re toast.”

A “grim fate”

Alicea has no qualms about taking the offer from Virginia Tech, but she is frustrated by her constricted choices and
troubled by what it says about lawmakers' support for the sciences. Experts consider investment in those areas to be essential for the country's economic competitiveness and ability to improve health and technology.

Consider Lucas Arzola, founder and head of Inserogen, a biotechnology startup that uses tobacco leaves to speed up the development of human and animal vaccines. He originally developed the technology as a Ph.D. student at the University of California-Davis, largely supported by federal grants.

If Congress doesn't act, "how many graduate students will no longer have the support to make that next critical discovery?" Arzola said in a video testimony shortly before sequestration took effect.

Major drug, energy and engineering companies are increasingly relying on universities to build on their research and develop new products, said Robert Duncan, vice chancellor for research at the University of Missouri. Duncan says sequestration "is terrible for U.S. competitiveness," pointing to a 2010 National Academies of Sciences study that showed the U.S. has begun to lag behind other countries in math and the sciences.

"In spite of the efforts of both those in government and the private sector, the outlook for America to compete for quality jobs has further deteriorated," the authors concluded. They called for more spending on research and education.

Furthermore, many economists argue it is misguided to curb research spending to address the nation's budget crisis, because several studies have shown such spending spurs economic activity far greater than what is invested.

Last fall, an analysis by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a non-partisan think tank in Washington, estimated cuts to research and development funding under sequestration would reduce GDP by as much as $860 billion over nine years.

"If we want to see our still somewhat lagging economy pick up again, (investing in research) is one of the major ways to achieve it," said Collins, the NIH head.

At NIH, the cuts follow a decade in which funding stayed static despite inflation, and could result in the elimination of as many as 20,500 U.S. research jobs, according to an analysis by United for Research, a coalition of research institutes and patient advocates.

"It is a paradoxical thing that we are both at a time of remarkable and almost unprecedented scientific opportunity," Collins said, "and we're also at a time in the United States of unprecedented threat to the momentum of scientific progress."

**Issues:** Revenue and Spending, Federal Impact, Higher Education

**States:** National

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

New radiation therapy puts cancer into remission in mice

WASHINGTON: Scientists have developed a new form of radiation therapy that successfully put cancer into remission in mice, without producing harmful side-effects of conventional chemo and radiation cancer therapies.

Scientists from the University of Missouri found that mice treated with the radiation therapy showed no signs of cancer afterwards.

"Since the 1930s, scientists have sought success with a cancer treatment known as boron neutron capture therapy (BNCT)," said lead researcher Professor M Frederick Hawthorne.

"Our team at MU's International Institute of Nano and Molecular Medicine finally found the way to make BNCT work by taking advantage of a cancer cell's biology with nanochemistry," Hawthorne said.

Cancer cells grow faster than normal cells and in the process absorb more materials than normal cells. Hawthorne's team took advantage of that fact by getting cancer cells to take in and store a boron chemical designed by Hawthorne.

When those boron-infused cancer cells were exposed to neutrons, a subatomic particle, the boron atom shattered and selectively tore apart the cancer cells, sparing neighbouring healthy cells.

The physical properties of boron made Hawthorne's technique possible. A particular form of boron will split when it captures a neutron and release lithium, helium and energy.

Like pool balls careening around a billiards table, the helium and lithium atoms penetrate the cancer cell and destroy it from the inside without harming the surrounding tissues.

"A wide variety of cancers can be attacked with our BNCT technique," Hawthorne said.

"The technique worked excellently in mice. We are ready to move on to trials in larger animals, then people. However, before we can start treating humans, we will need to build suitable equipment and facilities. When it is built, MU will have the first radiation therapy of this kind in the world," Hawthorne said.
MU surprises 3 more professors with Kemper Fellowship awards

Four of five honors have been awarded.

By Karyn Spory

It's a good thing University of Missouri Professor William Horner didn't dismiss his class early on Tuesday, or else he might have missed the surprise of a lifetime.

Horner, associate professor of political science, was awestruck as MU Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton and Commerce Bank Chairman Jim Schatz, along with reporters and a camera crew, burst into his classroom to award him a 2013 Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, which comes along with a $10,000 check.

"Wow, and to think we almost ended early," Horner said.

Horner, who has been at MU since 2000, is well-liked by his students and actively involves them in the classroom as well as connecting with them on a personal level, Middleton said.

"I just learned he teaches about 1,000 students a year, so he's a teaching machine," Middleton said.

The fellowships were established in 1991 with a $500,000 gift. Their namesake, William T. Kemper, was a 1962 MU graduate and well-known civic leader in Kansas City. He died in 1989. His 52-year career in banking included top positions at banks in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Commerce Bank manages the trust fund.

This year, MU is awarding five fellowships. The first was presented Monday to Tim Evans, an associate professor of toxicology in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Evans, who has been a member of the MU faculty since 2001, is well-known around the vet school for his superhero alter-ego The Antidote and lectures about how to treat animals that ingest toxic materials.

Two other professors were awarded the fellowship yesterday, and the final recipient will be announced later this week.
Yesterday, Cheryl Black, an associate professor of theater, was surprised by the awards crew as she was seated around a long, rectangular table with eight students. Black has been a professor at MU since 2005 and is known for her use of experimental and active learning techniques.

"I'm going to try to live up to" the award, Black said as her students and colleagues applauded.

Black said she had to thank each and every one of her students because she didn't know how anyone could "fail to get a teaching award with the students" she's had.

Middleton said Black deserved the credit because she "brings a lot of creativity" into the classroom with her unique teaching style.

Betsy Baker, a professor in the department of learning, teaching and curriculum in the MU College of Education, was the fourth award recipient. Baker has been at MU since 2002 and has worked to help teachers transform their students' lives through literacy.

"Betsy's innovative use of technology, integration of cases into teacher education and emphasis on assignments are useful to her students beyond her courses and have all led me to reflect on my own teaching practices in important ways," Deborah Hanuscin, an associate professor at the UM Science Education Center, said in a prepared statement.
House panel advances state bond issue proposal

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — With a unanimous vote, the House Budget Committee sent a $1.2 billion bond issue to the full chamber for debate, advancing a major priority for local lawmakers.

The measure would support construction of four buildings for the University of Missouri, finance rebuilding of Fulton State Hospital and pay for at least $40 million worth of improvements in state parks. Lawmakers also added language allowing them to use a portion of the proceeds for water projects and port facilities.

The unanimous support shows agreement that the state needs the money that would be generated and that now is the time to borrow, Rep. Chris Kelly said after the vote. Kelly, D-Columbia, is sponsoring the bond issue in partnership with House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka.

"Budget Committee people are more apt to understand the long-term needs of the state," Kelly said after the vote.

If approved by lawmakers, the bond issue would appear on a statewide ballot as a constitutional amendment. The timing of that vote would be up to Gov. Jay Nixon, but Kelly has said he would prefer that voters act on it this year.

The University of Missouri expects to have four major projects, at an estimated total cost of $232.1 million, funded by the bond issue. Those are:

PRenovation and expansion of Lafferre Hall on the Columbia campus, $68.4 million

PRenovation of Benton/Stadler Hall at UMSL, $60 million

PRenovation of the School of Medicine and expansion of the Health Sciences Building at UMKC, $75.8 million

PRenovation of the Chemistry and Biological Science building in Rolla, estimated to cost $27.9 million
The bond issue would require that campuses fund at least 10 percent of each project.

Water projects were included in the bond proposal at the request of lawmakers from northern Missouri who fear a return of drought conditions.

"There are few issues more pressing on folks than water resources and drought mitigation," said Rep. Casey Guernsey, R-Bethany. "We need to have some critical infrastructure needs met along the line."

The House Committee on Appropriations for Infrastructure and Job Creation, chaired by Kelly, is working on a resolution outlining the major projects that would be funded by the bond issue. Along with college buildings, Fulton State Hospital and parks, Kelly said that list will include work on the eroding foundation of the Capitol and a fund to support loans to school districts.

"We can't do everything that needs to be done in the state of Missouri, but we can do a lot," Kelly said.

The bond issue originally was proposed to total $950 million. That was an artificial number, Kelly said, used in part to avoid any political problems from the use of the word "billion."

"It was just a political calculation," he said. The proposal has grown to reflect the strong support and clear needs, he said.

"You don't get many chances to do what we need to do," he said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU faculty vote to give voting rights to nontenure-track faculty members

By Katie Yaeger
April 3, 2013 | 7:30 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Nicole Monnier called it momentous. Clyde Bentley called it a great feeling.

They were talking about the results of a vote to expand the definition of faculty at MU. Pending approval next week by the UM System Board of Curators, this will allow nontenure-track faculty members to vote on campus issues except those exclusively concerning tenure or faculty who are tenured and tenure-track.

"For a lot of NTT faculty on campus, it's a real morale boost," said Monnier, an associate teaching professor of German and Russian studies. She and Bentley, an associate professor of journalism, were among those pressing for the change.

Only tenured and tenure-track faculty members were allowed to participate in the vote, which began March 19 and ended at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday.

Sixty-five percent, or 396 votes, were in favor of the proposal, Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said in an email announcing the results. Thirty-five percent, or 212 votes, were against it. Ten ballots cast did not have a vote registered and were not counted.

Nontenure-track faculty members teach 24 percent of credit hours at MU. They are full time, have a title that includes the word "professor," cannot receive tenure and, depending on their academic affiliation, are hired under one- or three-year contracts. Most of the Missourian's editors are nontenure-track faculty members.

The four nontenure-track faculty members on Faculty Council have not been allowed to vote in campuswide issues. There is not another council at MU on which nontenure-track faculty members are represented.

About 50 percent — 618 of 1,235 — of the tenured and tenure-track faculty members voted, said Monnier, who chairs the council's Academic Affairs Committee.
The voting turnout was high, Bentley said. By way of contrast, about 35 percent of tenured and tenure-track faculty members voted on a proposal to introduce a diversity requirement in 2011.

The recent vote was administered electronically using the Qualtrics survey software through MU’s Division of Information Technology. This is the first campus vote that has been administered electronically, Monnier said.

A ballot oversight committee formed by Faculty Council handled a few minor issues with the election, but the issues would not have affected the result of the vote, Tyrer said.

The proposal passed does not affect tenure, Bentley said.

**History of the proposal**

Bentley has worked to get nontenure-track faculty representation since he joined the Faculty Council six years ago. He took the position because the person elected to represent MU’s School of Journalism was a nontenure-track faculty member and could not serve.

Bentley said he took on the issue because he thought the lack of nontenure-track faculty representation was a diversity issue. He thought tenured and tenure-track faculty and nontenure-track faculty performed similar duties and found it unfair that nontenure-track faculty couldn't participate in shared governance.

A resolution was passed to allow four nontenure-track faculty members, who observed council meetings, to sit at the table with the tenured and tenure-track faculty and participate in discussion. Missourian city editor Katherine Reed is among the four.

They still were not allowed to vote on campus issues, though, because MU’s Collected Rules and Regulations did not include nontenure-track faculty members in its definition of faculty.

The council’s Faculty Affairs Committee has made creation of the proposal a priority since 2011. Bentley chaired the committee in 2011-12.

The proposal was introduced at a council meeting in October, and council members supported it. The council approved it at a meeting Nov. 8.

**Concerns about the proposal**
The proposal was not popular with some tenured faculty, Bentley said.

A letter to nontenure-track faculty members after the Nov. 8 meeting listed the following concerns:

- Nontenure-track faculty might be more vulnerable to pressure from administrators.
- Including nontenure-track faculty would decrease faculty and Faculty Council authority.
- Considering nontenure-track faculty as faculty would increase faculty numbers in some schools and colleges, increasing their influence in campus elections and eventually on Faculty Council.
- Clinical faculty are not truly teaching faculty and have less of a claim on faculty status.
- Nontenure-track faculty have more specialized duties and thus do not have the same broad insight into campus issues as tenured and tenure-track faculty.
- Forming a separate nontenure-track council might be better.
- If the faculty defeated the proposal, it could be difficult for a similar proposal to be passed in the future.
- Nontenure-track faculty might eventually want more than four representatives on Faculty Council.
- People being hired for designated ranked nontenure-track faculty positions might not always fulfill the requirements for that position.

The council held a forum in February so faculty members could learn more about the proposed changes. Nearly all faculty members who spoke at the forum were in favor.

The election was scheduled to be held March 4-8. The council voted at its Feb. 28 meeting to postpone the vote until the week of March 11 to examine ways to tighten the voting process and re-examine the ballot language.

The election then was postponed another week because council members were still determining which online system to use.

**Beyond MU**

Final approval of this proposal would make MU the second campus in the University of Missouri System to allow nontenure-track faculty members to vote on campus issues.
The University of Missouri-Kansas City also allows nontenure-track faculty members to vote, Deputy Provost Ken Dean said at February’s forum.

Although the discussion about allowing nontenure-track faculty members to vote might almost be over at MU, similar discussions continue across the country.

In November 2012, the American Association of University Professors released a report that recommended that nontenure-track faculty members be included in the definition of “faculty” and that they be allowed to vote on campus issues.

On March 18, New York University’s College of Arts and Science faculty voted, for the first time, to not allow nontenure-track faculty members to vote in the college’s faculty meetings, according to an article in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Nontenure-track faculty members can vote on most governance issues within 11 of the university’s colleges and schools, but they have never had any standing in the universitywide Faculty Senators Council.

What’s next?

UM System curators must approve the proposed change at their April 11 meeting, Monnier said. If it is approved, the four nontenure-track faculty members on Faculty Council will be able to vote in future meetings.

Monnier said as a nontenure-track faculty representative on the council, she has always felt she was part of the discussion process. She said it will be satisfying, though, to be able to vote, especially on issues regarding the Academic Affairs Committee. But the biggest change is being recognized as a faculty member by the Collected Rules and Regulations, she said.

Monnier said she thinks the next question will be whether to give nontenure-track faculty members a greater voice that’s more proportionate to their representation. Another future discussion might be about nontenure-track faculty contract lengths.

Bentley said he thinks there’s more work to be done about nontenure-track faculty rights, including allowing departments to choose to elect nontenure-track faculty members as regular Faculty Council representatives. But on Wednesday, he was elated.

"I am proud to be a member of the School of Journalism faculty, period," he said. "And I am proud to be a member of the University of Missouri faculty, period."

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
Psychiatric center patient faces charge

A 26-year-old patient at Missouri Psychiatric Center was arrested on suspicion of committing a hate crime after he allegedly yelled racial slurs while assaulting a staff member on Monday at the center.

Joshua Mazelin of Lebanon, Mo., was arrested by the University of Missouri Police Department on suspicion of a hate crime, third-degree assault and a probation-and-parole violation.

Capt. Brian Weimer of MUPD said Mazelin assaulted one of the psychiatric aides. "While doing so, he was yelling racial slurs," Weimer said. The aide is black, he said.

Mazelin struck the aide in the right eye with his elbow, Weimer said. The aide did not suffer serious injuries. The fight was quickly broken up by hospital staff, Weimer said.

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Randy Wallace, 50, is one of three men who keep Jesse Hall looking its finest. Randy has worked as a custodian at Jesse Hall for the past five years. He does carpets, floors and windows.

“I try to keep the building looking as good as possible. If I have extra time, I’ll take it upon myself to go around and wash the windows and do whatever,” he said.

“What I like about it is the people there are extremely nice. It’s a 125-year-old building, so I take pride in keeping it looking just like it is. Everything in there is almost original, so we put a lot of work in it to keep it how it is now.”

When Randy began working for the university, he started at Mizzou Arena.

“First I started at the basketball area, cleaning the arena up after the games. I cooked across the street for the athletes — basketball players, baseball players, football players,” he said.

Randy came to Columbia looking for surveying work after working for 13 years for surveying companies in Memphis. But his real love was barbecue.

“I came here in 2000. My reason for coming here was to open up a barbecue and soul food restaurant. That was my reason,” he said. “I do catering and stuff now.”

Randy is looking for a building to open his restaurant, which he calls Wallace & Wallace Soul Food and Barbecue.

“I come from Memphis, and it’s some of the best barbecue you could ever eat,” he said. “You can get a good home-cooked meal. I do it now for friends who want me to barbecue.”

Randy learned his trade while operating a business called Big Mama’s Restaurant in Memphis. He would enter the barbecue competition at the Memphis in May International Festival, where he polished his barbecue skills.
Like all good cooks, Randy has a secret recipe for his barbecue sauce.

“It’s been in our family for a hundred years. My mother passed it down to me. It’s just me and her that knows the recipe,” he said. “I’ve got a little special stuff I do to it.”

Randy cooks his sauce, but the only ingredients he will reveal are lemon and honey.

“I’ve ate at every barbecue place that they’ve got down here, just to see,” he said. “I’m not braggin’ or anything, but I think if I can get mine out there, I probably won’t have enough room.”

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Posted in Our Town on Tuesday, April 2, 2013 2:00 pm.
Many Colleges Could Lose Federal Aid Eligibility Under New Interpretation of Rule

By Allie Bidwell

NO MENTION

Under a new interpretation by the Education Department of its "state authorization" rule, many colleges around the country could risk losing their eligibility to receive federal student aid.

Under the federal regulation, colleges must receive authorization from the states in which they enroll students before they may receive federal student-aid funds. The department is currently interpreting a portion of the regulation in a way that would disqualify institutions that achieved state approval based on their accreditation status. That interpretation could affect hundreds of colleges that are licensed through this process—and thousands of students who receive financial aid at those colleges—in 10 states, according to Gregory Ferenbach, a lawyer at Dow Lohnes who specializes in state education regulations.

If those institutions don't resolve the issue by July 1, they will lose their eligibility to receive federal financial aid. Although the rule took effect in 2011, the department said states would have until June 30, 2013, to amend their laws to comply with it.

The problem stems from the part of the definition of the "on-ground" provision of state authorization that requires colleges to be "sufficiently authorized by a state" in order to receive federal aid funds.

Under the department's unofficial interpretation, institutions that received state licensure by means of accreditation—which enables an institution to avoid the standard state-approval process by citing its accreditation status—would be disqualified.

The department issued letters to several Florida colleges in February, for example, warning them that their state approval did not comply with the federal regulation because it believed that the licensure-by-means-of-accreditation process provided such institutions with an exemption from the ordinary licensing procedure.
A spokeswoman for the department declined to comment on the Florida cases or broader questions of its interpretation of the rule.

But Florida’s process does not actually exempt institutions from the licensure procedure, according to Samuel L. Ferguson, executive director of the state’s Commission for Independent Education. The colleges must still apply for state approval, but they may submit the same information used in the accreditation process, so as not to double up on paperwork, as long as the state commission has found the accrediting agency to “meet or exceed” state requirements, Mr. Ferguson said.

Though the department resolved the dispute over Florida’s licensure procedure on Tuesday, Mr. Ferenbach said that interpretation of the rule could have significant consequences for institutions in 10 other states.

According to Mr. Ferenbach, Alaska, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Utah have similar processes and may not meet the federal regulation.

"The issue revolves around the fact that some states just simply accept accreditation," Mr. Ferguson said. "And that doesn’t meet the federal requirement."

A big concern, Mr. Ferenbach said, is that states may have to scramble to amend their laws to comply with the federal regulation by the July 1 deadline, should the department find their laws to be insufficient. When the department first issued the state-authorization rule, in late 2010, states were responsible for determining whether they did or did not have to amend their laws, he said.

"From the state perspective, that was the end of it," Mr. Ferenbach said. "To be second-guessed a couple years later is a bit of a surprise."
MU prof skewers multiculturalism

By WALTER WILLIAMS

Professor Craig Frisby is on the faculty of the University of Missouri's Department of Educational, School and Counseling Psychology. His most recent book is "Meeting the Psychoeducational Needs of Minority Students." It's a 662-page textbook covering a range of topics from multiculturalism and home and family influences to student testing and school discipline.

There's no way full justice can be given to this excellent work in the space of this column, so I'll highlight a few valuable insights he makes that would help educators do a better job with minority students.

"Quack multiculturalism" is the name Frisby gives to the vision of multiculturalism that promotes the falsehoods and distortions that dominate today's college agenda, sold under various names such as "valuing diversity," "being sensitive to cultural differences" and "cultural competence." He identifies different brands of multiculturalism such as boutique, Kumbayah, light-and-fluffy and bean-counting multiculturalism. Insider language used to promote multiculturalism includes terms such as "practice tolerance," "celebrate diversity," "equity with excellence" and "differences are not deficits." Escalating costs and budget crunches don't stop colleges from hiring vice presidents, deans and directors of diversity.

Multiculturalism teaches that one set of cultural values is equal to another. That means if black students talk, dress and comport themselves in a certain way, to criticize them is merely cultural imperialism. Frisby cites college textbooks that teach: "Racism is what people do, regardless of what they think or feel," and "Institutional racism is characterized by practices or policies that systematically limit opportunities for people who historically have been characterized as psychologically, intellectually, or physically deficient," and "One can view the clock as a tool of racism that the monochromic dominant society uses to regulate subordinate groups."

All of this boils down to teaching undergraduate and graduate students and professionals in the fields of psychology and education to be noncritical and feel sympathy for blacks and other minorities. I might add that such sympathy doesn't extend to Japanese, Chinese and Jews, who are even more of a minority.
Frisby gives many examples of multicultural lunacy. One particularly egregious one was the 12th annual White Privilege Conference held in 2011 in Minneapolis, Minn., and sponsored by the University of Colorado's Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity. The WPC is "built on the premise that the U.S. was started by white people, for white people." Among the 150 workshops offered during the conference were "Making Your School or Classroom a Force for Eliminating Racism," Helping Non-White Students Survive Academia — The Pinnacle of White Dominance" and "Uprooting Christian Hegemony." This vision of the mission of education might help to explain why students, particularly minority students, emerge from high school and college with little reading, writing and thinking ability.

Frisby turns his attention to school discipline and criminal behavior. He discusses the atmosphere at one New York school, which is by no means unique among schools. Teachers experience being pushed, shoved and spit upon by students. A male teacher transferred to another school after a student threatened to rape his wife. In this kind of atmosphere, should anyone be surprised that only 3 percent of the students were at grade level in English and only 9 percent in math?

The fundamental problem crippling low-income minority students is school behavioral disorder. Its visible manifestations are graffiti, broken and vandalized furniture, fights, sexual activity, drug use in the bathrooms and rowdy behavior. Frisby says we should tell students exactly how to behave and tolerate no disorder. That's not rocket science, except for today's liberal establishment who run our schools and colleges.

You say, "Williams, what Frisby says simply reflects the insensitivity of privileged white people." But what if I told you Professor Craig Frisby is a black professor at the University of Missouri who has a record of fine scholarship? My read of his book is that it supplies more evidence that the actions of soft-minded, guilty white liberals have done far more harm to black people than racists of the past could have ever done.

Walter Williams is an economics professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.
Thai new year's festival opens April 11 at MU

By Peter Kampshroeder
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COLUMBIA — MU will celebrate the Thai new year next week with food, music and — if all goes according to plan — a water fight. The Thai Student Association expects more than a 1,000 people to attend the festival.

The MU Thai Student Association will have its eighth annual Songkran festival from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 11 at the Mel Carnahan Quadrangle. Songkran is the traditional Thai celebration of the new year and the most important holiday on the Thai calendar. The celebration in Thailand is a three-day national holiday. It’s a time for religious celebrations, family gatherings and partying with friends. Its length and religious nature make it most similar to the Christmas holiday.

"I would say it's the most important holiday in Thailand," said Ploisongsaeng Intaratip, president of the Thai Student Association. Part of the traditional Thai news year's festivities is to throw water on people. April is during the summer in Thailand, so throwing water on each other is a way to cool off and celebrate the new year.

"We throw water at each other like crazy," Intaratip said. "We're all gonna get wet." The biggest problem that may arise is weather. In the event of rain, the festival will have to be held indoors in Stotler Lounge, and the water fight might be canceled. Anne Deaton will make opening remarks at 11 a.m. and will then join other MU administrators and senior members of the Thai community in having water thrown on their hands by Thai students as a sign of respect and blessing.

Starting at 11:30 a.m., food will be served from Thip Thai Cuisine on a first-come, first-served basis, while audience members can enjoy traditional Thai song and dance performances. At 3 p.m., after the rest of the activities are over and while everyone cleans up, the traditional water throwing will begin.

Admission is free and the public is invited to take part in the festivities.