Independent report on MU’s handling of Menu Courey case to be released April 11

April 2

BY TOD PALMER

The University of Missouri and the state’s three other land-grant colleges have completed the first phase of a system-wide review of resources for sexual assault victims and the mentally ill.

University of Missouri system president Tim Wolfe called for the detailed inventory of current resources, policies and practices related to incidents of sexual assault as well as access to mental health services at each of the state’s four campuses. The review was started in response to concerns about the handling of former MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey’s sexual assault allegations.

Menu Courey sought on-campus treatment after an alleged sexual assault by members of the Missouri football team in February 2010, but the incident was not reported due to privacy laws. She subsequently committed suicide in June 2011 and the allegation went public after her parents read about it posthumously in her journal.

Wolfe called for the MU system’s schools to “take the lead in making sure our campuses take an active role in addressing sexual assault and mental illness to help promote a campus culture of respect and safety for our students, faculty and staff,” he said in a statement.

Wolfe also reiterated his commitment to providing the resources and funding “to educate the campus community about sexual assault prevention as well as an effective process for reporting such incidents, plus adequate capacity to address mental health issues.”
An independent firm hired to review MU’s response to Menu Courey’s allegations will present its findings to the university system’s Board of Curators during its April 11 meeting in Rolla.

UPDATE: Task force completes first phase of post-Menu Courey evaluation

Wednesday, April 2, 2014 | 7:07 p.m. CDT; updated 12:09 a.m. CDT, Thursday, April 3, 2014
BY KEVIN MODELSKI

COLUMBIA — Nearly seven weeks after a task force was created to evaluate the sexual assault policies and resources on all four University of Missouri System campuses, MU announced Wednesday it had completed the first phase of the process.

It sent out a list of 10 campus organizations that in some way support sexual assault victims.

In an email, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin called Phase I an "inventory" of the sexual assault resources at MU and encouraged the campus community to take advantage of them.

Loftin’s email also said Phase I encompassed ensuring "that each campus has an effective process for reporting (sexual assault) incidents; and that each campus has an adequate capacity to address mental health issues among our students, faculty and staff."

However, the email did not indicate what the results were of an evaluation of reporting or MU’s response to mental health issues. It also did not indicate whether those two areas were addressed by the task force.

Loftin did not respond to requests for an interview Wednesday, and interim MU News Bureau director Christian Basi said no further information was available about the task force’s work in the first phase.
UM System President Tim Wolfe formed the task force with members from the four system schools to review each school's policies on reporting sexual assaults and the availability of mental health services in the aftermath of an ESPN "Outside the Lines" story about former MU athlete Sasha Menu Courey. The story said she was assaulted by three football players and that she told several university employees about the assault. She took her own life in June 2011 after leaving MU.

The UM Board of Curators also hired the Dowd Bennett law firm as an independent counsel to determine whether MU employees acted consistently with university policy and legal statutes in the Menu Courey case.

The Columbia Police Department said Wednesday that it has not been able to make progress in its investigation of the case, which city police began looking into after the ESPN story was published in late January. MU Police passed the investigation over to Columbia Police and have said that Menu Corey never reported the incident to them. The case would have been out of campus police jurisdiction because it was alleged to have occurred off campus.

Assistant Columbia Police Chief Jill Schlude said via email that police were still trying to contact people connected to the case, including Gil Moye. The ESPN story alleged that Moye was present when Menu Courey was assaulted.

"We have been trying to speak with Gil Moye in reference to this case but have not been able to get in contact with him," Schlude said. "We believe he is aware that we are trying to contact him, and we hope he will return our calls."

Schlude also said police were trying to locate the video or speak with anyone who had seen the video that the ESPN story references. It is described in the story as showing the assault as it took place.

The ESPN story about Menu-Corey also alleged that Menu Courey had told at least one MU athletics department employee that she'd been sexually assaulted. That allegation was denied by the employee, Meghan Anderson, the athletics department academic adviser.

"We have completed this initial phase of the review for MU, and I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the important resources that we have available for those who have been victims or wish to report a sexual assault, or who have mental health issues," Loftin said in the email.
The task force for the UM System is led by Deborah Noble-Triplett, who is the assistant vice president for academic affairs for the system. MU’s representative is Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton.

Loftin listed the following campus resources in his email:

- **MU Counseling Center** 882-6601 or counseling.missouri.edu
  Offers individual, group and crisis counseling to students who have mental health concerns.

- **Employee Assistance Program** 882-6701
  orumsystem.edu/totalrewards/benefits/eap — It is a confidential, professional service provided to all employees, their families and retirees to assist with personal concerns or mental health.

- **Family Violence Clinic** 882-7750 or law.missouri.edu/fvc — It provides legal consultation from MU law students for abused women and parents. Student representation is available for women who are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

- **LGBTQ Resource Center** 884-7750 or lgbtq.missouri.edu
  — It offers support, provides education and conducts training programs on issues facing the LGBTQ community. The center also has information on services for people seeking help for mental health or sexual assault.

- **MU Police Department** 882-7201 or mupolice.missouri.edu
  — It has jurisdiction over any crime committed on MU property. Officers are responsible for the safety and security of the MU campus.

- **Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center** 882-7201
  or http://rsvp.missouri.edu — It is a comprehensive education and resource center that serves MU students who have experienced relationship or sexual violence.

- **Office of Student Conduct** 882-5543 or conduct.missouri.edu
  — It is responsible for upholding disciplinary policies and procedures for both on- and off-campus incidents. Students found guilty of violating policies and procedures, which include endangering or assaulting another student, may be issued sanctions ranging from a verbal warning to expulsion from the university.

- **Student Health Center (Mental Health Services)** 882-1483
  or http://studenthealth.missouri.edu/services/mental.html — It has health
professionals to assist students with mental health issues and victims of sexual assault.

- **Student Legal Services** 882-9700 or sls.missouri.edu — It provides legal education and consultation to MU students to help resolve legal conflicts and disputes students may be facing.

- **Women's Center** 882-6621 or women.missouri.edu — It offers help to students in crisis and provides educational resources and programs to students, staff, faculty and community members.

The UM System will report the first phase of the task force and Dowd Bennett's findings at next week's curators meeting in Rolla, according to a Wednesday news release.

"We will ensure that our campuses have the necessary resources to educate the campus community about sexual assault prevention as well as an effective process for reporting such incidents, plus adequate capacity to address mental health issues," Wolfe said in the release. "Today is the latest step in that process."

Wolfe said he plans to provide additional resources and funding from the budget if the task force finds deficiencies.

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**Task force completes first step in inquiry**

*Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 2:00 pm*

**University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe announced Wednesday in a news release that the "first phase" of a task force's investigation into sexual assault and mental health service policies and practices is complete.**

The system's four campuses have completed an inventory of resources, policies and practices, the university said in the release. The task force work is in addition to a university review of the findings of an independent counsel hired to investigate Sasha Menu Courey's alleged rape and
how the situation was handled. Those findings are scheduled to be reviewed by the board of curators at their meeting next week in Rolla.

Loss of Student Parent Center disruptive to graduate-level studies

Wednesday, April 2, 2014 | 7:39 p.m. CDT; updated 10:00 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 2, 2014

BY MADISON FELLER, REBECCA MCGEE

COLUMBIA — Dustin McGowen says he will have to sell his car so he can send his daughter to preschool and finish his master's degree.

As a graduate student at MU and a parent, one of the reasons McGowen decided to study at the university was because of the option to send his daughter to the Student Parent Center, a campus-owned and operated day care facility located at University Village.

But now that the Student Parent Center will be closing on June 30, McGowen's day care costs are going to double. Instead of paying $2,000 a semester at the Student Parent Center, he's going to pay $1,000 a month for care at Green Meadows Preschool. To make up the difference he's selling his car.

“We've had to make a lot of sacrifices,” he said.

McGowen is just one of the more than 30 graduate students who attended MU Graduate Professional Council’s public forum. Graduate and professional students were invited to share their comments and concerns surrounding childcare.

Moving the Student Parent Center or the university subsidizing day care some place else are the best options McGowen said he could think of.

The Student Parent Center, located in University Village, will be demolished shortly after it closes. No clear decision has been made regarding the day care's future.
The university will also close University Village Apartments on June 30 and demolish it later.

A forum for graduate and professional student housing will be at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in Stotler Lounge in Memorial Union.

Jake Wright, president of MU Graduate Professional Council, said he felt Wednesday's forum was very productive, and he now has a clear understanding of what the university’s graduate and professional students think is important.

“We need safe, affordable, flexible childcare,” Wright said.

Wright plans to bring these concerns to senior MU administration in order to discuss short- and long-term goals for the graduate and professional students. He has a meeting with MU Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs in a week and a half to discuss the opinions voiced at the forum.

Naomi Clark, a doctoral student and parent, said the impending closure of the day care is disruptive to the students’ work. She said that graduate students who teach and conduct research have to stop their work in order to find an alternative to the Student Parent Center.

MU senior Danielle Walker and graduate student Tiffiny Jones both said they feel as though they as student-parents are being treated differently than the traditional students. For Walker, it’s about her rights as a student-parent, a group she feels the university is discriminating against.

“I want to be a Tiger. I want to graduate. I need proper services for my success,” Walker said. “And this isn’t a ridiculous request.”

Jones said she thinks the university isn't giving students with children enough attention. She said she felt that student-athletes receive more resources and options than the student-parents.

“I want the University of Missouri to be more inviting to student-parents,” she said.

Doctoral student Matt McCune said that student after student at the forum got up to say he or she wouldn’t have come to MU without the option of the day care center.
“The university provides all these other services,” he said. “How can day care not be one of them?”

Although he and his wife, Sarah Lirley McCune, also a doctoral student, are not parents, they recognized that the center is an important resource. Sarah Lirley McCune said that by losing this resource, the university will also lose out on some excellent students who choose to be in school during typical child-bearing years.

The option of sending a child to the Student Parent Center gives students peace of mind and allows them to be productive, she said.

“It’s a resource we all need,” she said. “To lose that is a tragedy.”

*Additional reporting contributed by Joe Guszkowski.*

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**University of Missouri’s Manor House apartments might get renovations**

Work could start in 2015.

By *Ashley Jost*

*Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (1)*

*University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin charged student, faculty and staff groups with gauging the need from the campus community on graduate student housing when he announced the decision to demolish University Village apartments last month.*

Whatever comes from the discussions about that graduate student housing could determine whether the Office of Residential Life at MU will move forward with a plan to close Manor House apartments next summer for renovation, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

For several months now, Basi said, a note on the top of Manor House's page on the Residential Life website has indicated MU's plans to close the complex in May 2015 for renovation. Manor
House is one of four university-owned apartment complexes for graduate students or students who are married, have children or are older than 21.

The renovation was included as a recommendation in the Residential Life Master Plan from 2012. The plan contains two renovation recommendations.

One recommendation would "address identified deficiencies and … convert the hall to undergraduate beds, providing 210 additional beds and increased revenue," the plan says.

In the plan, this shift to 210 undergraduate beds is projected to generate about $1.4 million, which is "substantially higher than the $516,815 projected annual revenue" of the second proposal.

Manor House has 38 studios, eight one-bedroom apartments and 32 two-bedroom apartments right now. The second proposal in the 2012 master plan would shift it to 23 studios, 48 one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom apartments. The plan says the shift in increasing one-bedroom options is because they are in "higher demand by upperclassmen and graduate students."

The Manor House renovation is not related to any concern about safety issues, Basi said.

In the 2012 master plan, Manor House is listed as needing new windows and elevators and said to have inadequate ventilation and failing plumbing. The plan also says the complex needs "major electrical service upgrades" and a full sprinkler system.

A recent report from Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc., a structural engineering company hired to inspect all of the MU-owned buildings after a partial walkway collapse that killed a firefighter at University Village, lists the only observed issues at Manor House as being loose stone window lintels, which are part of the window framing.

The THH report suggests lintels be evaluated and re-grouted if they're loose.

Basi said the plan for students displaced from Manor House and from University Village, slated for demolition this year, will be decided after student groups report back to the chancellor on the need for graduate student housing.
The University of Missouri Peace Studies Department is hosting a panel discussion on Vietnam War protests later this month. The panel is scheduled for 7:30 to 9 p.m. April 21 in Room 18 of Tucker Hall, 612 Hitt St.

Protests on college campuses across the country during the Vietnam period reached the MU campus, and the panel will address the significance of those events and the effect on MU culture and policy, according to a news release.

The panelists include Bill Wickersham, adjunct professor of peace studies who worked at MU in 1970; Paul Wallace, professor emeritus of political science who also taught at MU in 1970; Musa Ilu, a University of Central Missouri professor who was a graduate student involved in the anti-apartheid movement at MU in the 1980s; and Curtis Edwards, MU graduate instructor who is researching how social movements affect public policy.

MU alumni from 1970 are invited to share their stories and insight as well. The event is free and open to the public.
Default Data on Parent PLUS Loans

April 3, 2014

BY
Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

The national default rate for Parent PLUS loans has nearly tripled in recent years, but it remains well below the default rates for other federal student loans, according to data released for the first time last week by the U.S. Department of Education.

Of all parent borrowers whose PLUS loans entered repayment in the 2010 fiscal year, the data show, 5.1 percent were in default three years later. That figure has risen steadily from the 1.8 percent default rate for the cohort of borrowers in the 2006 fiscal year.

Breaking down the 2010 figure by type of institution, for-profit colleges had the highest default rate, at 13.3 percent, compared with 3.4 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, at private nonprofit and public institutions. The data do not distinguish between two- and four-year institutions or types of degree.

The release of new information about the performance of PLUS loans comes as the department is considering changes to the eligibility criteria for such loans. In 2011, the Education Department touched off a wave of controversy when it tightened the standards for those loans, which led to large numbers of students and their families being denied PLUS loans.

The new data confirm that the department’s changes to the PLUS loan credit check, which involved taking a more expansive look at a prospective borrower’s credit history, fueled those loan rejections. In the past two years, the reason for the majority of PLUS loan rejections has been that a borrower either has an account in collection or has had a recent charge-off. Before the department starting including those measures, prospective borrowers were most frequently rejected for having an account that is greater than 90 days delinquent.
Under pressure from the presidents of historically black colleges and universities, who said their students were disproportionately affected by the changes, the department said it would reconsider loan applications on an individual basis.

Many black college presidents and several members of Congress have said that the appeals process is insufficient and have called on the Education Department to roll back the 2011 changes and loosen the eligibility criteria for Parent PLUS loans. Just last week, the UNCF issued a report calling the PLUS loan problem a “crisis” that is limiting students’ access to higher education.

Some consumer advocates and think tanks, meanwhile, are pushing the department to keep the credit standards -- or even tighten them further -- so that parents aren’t saddled with large amounts of debt that they cannot possibly repay.

The Education Department has not indicated what types of credit standards it wants to include into the new PLUS loan rules that a rule-making panel is considering this spring.

But David H. Swinton, the president of Benedict College, said that the default rate data vindicate the position of black college leaders who are seeking the looser PLUS loan standards.

“From my point of view, the data made it clear that there is no need to tighten any criteria,” said Swinton, who is also representing minority-serving institutions on the department’s negotiating panel. “It makes clear that there is no significant default problem with the PLUS loan program.”

The most recent Parent PLUS default rates released by the department are lower than the default rates on other federal student loans -- a figure the department releases annually. The national three-year default rate for the 2010 fiscal year was 14.7 percent. The Parent PLUS loan rate for the same period of time was 5.1 percent.

Swinton said that the 2011 changes to the PLUS loan program had “a major impact” on his campus, with an initial 75-percent reduction in approvals. While that decline improved somewhat through the department’s appeals process, he said, it still led to overall enrollment drops at his institution in the past two years.

The goal of the Parent PLUS loan program, Swinton said, is to provide access and freedom of choice to students. He added that it was “patronizing” for people to suggest that families seeking those loans cannot judge for themselves whether it’s appropriate to take on such debt.

Advocates of tighter eligibility requirements for PLUS loans, on the other hand, say there are real problems with the program that need to be addressed.

“We absolutely should be concerned about defaults in the PLUS loan program,” said Rachel Fishman, a policy analyst at the New America Foundation who has criticized institutions for using PLUS loans to mask their prices and skirt accountability measures.

“The rates in aggregate don’t look so bad,” she said. “But they’re not telling the whole story.”
Because PLUS loans are subject to some credit screening, Fishman said, it makes sense that the entire pool of PLUS loan borrowers might perform better than other do federal college loan programs that are open to everyone regardless of credit history.

Fishman said the federal government needs to be more careful about which families it allows to take on Parent PLUS loan debt, particularly since the loans are so difficult to discharge in bankruptcy, do not qualify for income-based repayment (unlike most other federal loans for college), and can trigger garnishment of Social Security checks.

Another problem, Fishman said, is that the PLUS default rates at any individual college may be egregiously high without any consequences for that institution. Unlike the default rates on other federal student loans, the Education Department does not publish campus-level PLUS loan default rates or punish colleges where large numbers of PLUS loan borrowers default.

The data released last week by the department break down PLUS loan defaults only by three types of institutions: for-profit, private nonprofit, and public. But the department has said that institution-level information is not available for PLUS loans.

The department does not publish such information about PLUS loans because there is no process for institutions to review or appeal that data, a department official said Monday. The department feels relatively confident about the sector-by-sector analysis it produced last week, though, because the errors in the PLUS loan default data at any one institution are likely to be canceled out, from a statistical standpoint, by errors in the data at another institution, the official said.

Further, the official added, the department is in ongoing discussions about whether it should provide such information in the future, even if it is not mandated by Congress.

The rule-making panel on PLUS loans, as well as on other financial aid “program integrity” issues, will resume its third set of negotiations later this month.

CAMPUS CORNER

Mizzou will seek fan input for new additions to Memorial Stadium
Missouri will seek fan input in naming the new additions to Memorial Stadium, including the upper deck and club area on the stadium’s east side as well as a new tailgate area.

Athletic director Mike Alden made that pronouncement Wednesday during a Google Hangout on GaryPinkel.com.

Alden said Missouri will ask the fans to submit suggestions “in the not too distant future” for what to call the new additions.

Among other highlights, Alden also said the Tigers continue to hold out hope for a resumption of the Border War with Kansas.

“At some point, we’ve got to keep moving forward, which is what we’re doing,” Alden said. “Our hope someday is that the University of Kansas, who we have a high regard for, is going to say let’s go ahead and play again. They know that we’d like to be able to do it. Hopefully, it will happen, but we certainly have reached out and continue to reach out to make that happen.”

Of course, Missouri is enjoying its honeymoon period in the Southeastern Conference for now and looks for to the launch of the ESPN-backed SEC Network in August.

“The impact that it’s going to have on the entire University of Missouri is something unlike anything we’ve ever seen before,” Alden said.

The national distribution base, which will spread the Mizzou brand well beyond the state’s borders “is going to be great for the recruiting of students,” he said.

Alden said ticket sales for the new seating sections being built at Memorial Stadium are going well, but he also emphasized that Missouri isn’t finished with infrastructure upgrades.

“We’ve got to continue to invest in our facilities for all of our sports,” he said.

For football, the next phase might include continued expansion at Memorial Stadium, a new indoor facility and upgrades to the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex.

“Everything’s changed, but you have to and you have to invest,” Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel said. “Everybody’s competing with other schools and all that they have going facility-wise and all that they have to offer. ... Facilities are a visual aid for commitment and recruits compare them. It’s so very important.”
Still, he said Missouri’s people are even more important — the academic support staff, training staff, strength coaches, equipment managers and food service staff.

“All these people help our players be successful and they want to be the best,” Pinkel said. “I want the cook here to want to be first-team All-SEC.”

Aside from football, Alden also lauded the accomplishments Missouri has made this year in non-revenue sports, including an SEC championship in volleyball, the softball team’s ongoing success and a 16th-place finish for the Tigers swim team last week at nationals.

Of course, freshman wrestler J’den Cox dominated that conversation. Cox won the 197-pound title at the NCAA Division I wrestling championships March 22, becoming the first Missouri wrestler and 14th true freshman in NCAA history to strike gold.

“I just don’t know if (Cox) has any football eligibility left,” Pinkel joked.

Pinkel also touched on the evolving role of the student-athlete in the brave new world of social media.

“Our players, we pretty much tell them it’s a press release” any time they post something on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, Pinkel said. He also reminds players that they always represent Missouri, too.

Of course, it’s also a brave new world for the coaches — including Pinkel, who’s post-Cotton Bowl locker room dance went viral and drew plenty of mostly amusing commentary from fans and players alike.

“When you’ve got 126 players, you’ve got a lot of opinions,” Pinkel said. “Would I have done that five years ago? No, there’s not in a million years I would have done that.”

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Airport's new flight to Chicago takes off

By Andrew Denney

Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 2:00 pm
Columbia Regional Airport's second daily flight to Chicago O'Hare International Airport took its maiden voyage early Wednesday morning, departing on time with a full passenger load on a 50-seat plane, said Steve Sapp, a spokesman for the city's Public Works Department.

The addition of the second flight to Chicago, which is scheduled to depart at 6 a.m. daily, expands its offering to four daily departing flights and is intended to allow passengers to reach O'Hare earlier in the day to give them a wider selection of connecting flights, which airport officials hope will be a draw for business-class travelers.

"We've heard from a lot of fliers that they want to be able to get up to Chicago a lot earlier in the morning," Sapp said.

Since American Airlines began providing service to the airport in February 2013, the air service provider has offered one flight to Chicago that departs in the early afternoon and two flights to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, one in the early morning and one in the early afternoon.

The addition of the second flight to Chicago is another mark of success for an airport that six years ago went an entire month without commercial service. Sapp said American Eagle commuter jets, which provide service to the airport, counted an 86 percent load factor for March.

"That's an extremely high load factor for any market," Sapp said.

The city attracted American in part with the offer of a two-year, $3 million revenue guarantee made up of commitments from the city, Boone County, the University of Missouri, Cole County, Jefferson City and a group of private investors.

If the airport can't fill enough seats on American's planes, the city must pay up from the revenue fund. But it has had to do so only once; the city paid $22,265 because of light passenger loads on three flights during the first weeks of service.

The city took criticism from some residents when it first struck the deal with American to set up the revenue guarantee. But Greg Cecil, chairman of the city's Airport Advisory Board, said the fact that the guarantee has gone untouched for more than a year shows that it was a good investment.

"We really can't afford not to have something like that in place," Cecil said.
Chuck D discusses hip-hop as ‘high art’ at MU appearance

Seminal rapper comes to town.

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 2:00 pm

For 22 years, Chuck D has spoken to anyone who will listen about the "misnomers and misunderstandings" about hip-hop music.

The co-founder of Public Enemy, a rap group that started in the early 1980s and was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Chuck D spoke last night at the Missouri Theatre about "Race, Rap and Reality." The artist, whose birth name is Carlton Douglas Ridenhour, is known for giving talks around the country about music with a message and the ties that rap and hip-hop have with broader culture.

"I always thought you could be beyond the music; especially as a former college student, I understood the quest for learning about what music can do," he said before his lecture with the Columbia audience.

Rap culture, he said, changes every year and has for decades. The difference between rap music now and rap in the 1980s when he first started is "the teaching of it hasn't been thorough." People "think they know" what rap and hip-hop are but don't understand the historical context of blacks expressing themselves through music — their only option in pre-Civil War America, when most were slaves. That music lives on through hip-hop, he told the audience.

His main message was that "rap and hip-hop can be considered high art."

Chuck D's lecture was a postponed part of the University of Missouri's Black History Month celebration after a snowstorm in early February.

He spoke on an array of issues, from the importance to education to his personal views and experiences.

"For the longest period of time, hip-hop has been my religion, and rap is my military," he said.
As a student interested in going into hip-hop and public relations, Maiya Putman said she enjoyed getting the chance to hear from Chuck D and found many of his messages to be "really interesting."

"Old-school rap and hip-hop is my favorite," she said.

Tunde Odunleye, another MU student, said one of the most interesting portions of Chuck D's talk was about jail culture and how today's "gangster rap" can carry messages about that culture.