University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe announced today that he has issued an executive order to strengthen the university’s reporting policies under Title IX.

The order states that every employee has an obligation to report sexual harassment and sexual violence perpetrated against students to the appropriate Title IX coordinator. All employees are considered “mandated reporters” except for those who have a legal obligation or privilege of confidentiality, including health care providers, counselors, lawyers and associated staff, according to the updated Collected Rules and Regulations.

“The mandated report must be made regardless of whether the person reporting the information to the Mandated Reporter (the “Complainant”) requests confidentiality and regardless of how the Mandated Reporter becomes aware of the offensive behavior (personal observation, direct information from the subject of the behavior, indirect information from a third party, etc.),” the rule states, adding that if the person who was assaulted requests confidentiality, the mandated reporter should warn them that they have to report “some information” to the Title IX Coordinator.

The information that the mandated reporter is required to release is “based on the employment status” of the individual. Supervisors must report every detail they have, including names, but non-supervisory employees must report the known circumstances of the harassing behavior, but not the names. The Title IX Coordinator will advise whether more information should be reported.

According to the news release, the purpose of the executive order is “to clarify the obligation of employees to report information about sexual harassment and sexual assault when perpetrated on a student, how to report and to whom, how a report will be processed and how requests for confidentiality will be handled.”
“In January, I directed the chancellors to lead comprehensive reviews of the resources, policies and practices on their respective campuses in terms of sexual assault education, prevention and reporting, as well as mental health services,” Wolfe said in the release. “Although the task force I established is currently evaluating those many resources, I did not want to wait for the recommendations from the task force to clarify what reporting obligations are for now. It is imperative that employees know what their obligation is now, because the safety and security of the students on our four campuses is our absolute priority.”

This announcement comes days before the Board of Curators meet in Rolla and are set to hear from independent counsel hired to investigate how the University of Missouri handled the case of Sasha Menu Courey, a former MU swimmer who was allegedly raped and later committed suicide.

Menu Courey reported the rape to health professionals and wrote in a diary that she told an athletic department staffer about the attack. Health professionals are generally required to keep confidentiality, and the university has said it had no evidence that anyone in the athletic department knew about a rape until after Courey’s death.

UM System adds employee obligations for reporting sexual assault

COLUMBIA — University of Missouri System employees not legally bound by confidentiality will now be obligated to report sexual harassment and assault against students.

The Title IX reporting requirement announced late Tuesday afternoon was made through an executive order from UM System President Tim Wolfe.

Before Executive Order 40, there was no reporting requirement or mandatory training for MU faculty or staff for handling Title IX incidents, such as sexual harassment or violence, according to previous Missourian reporting.

The order makes clear that all UM System employees — excluding health care providers, counselors, lawyers and their staffs — are obligated to report information about sexual
harassment or assault of a student to the appropriate Title IX coordinator. At MU, that is Noel English, director of the MU Equity Office and Title IX coordinator. Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on college campuses based on a person's sex.

Before Wolfe's order, if a student made a complaint that fell under Title IX, MU faculty and staff were encouraged to report the incident through an online form or to contact English.

But the guidelines determining which faculty and staff members were "responsible employees" were not defined by the university.

According to the 2001 Sexual Harassment Guidance by the Office for Civil Rights, "responsible employees" obligated to report are defined as any employee who:

- Has the authority to redress sexual violence
- Has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or other misconduct to the Title IX coordinator or school officials.
- A student could reasonably believe has this authority..

This definition allowed universities to have different interpretations of who their required reporters were. At one university, "responsible employees" could be seen as all employees, while another university might interpret the definition to mean only certain employees.

In an April 2011 letter, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights recommended that universities adopt a reporting requirement. Three years later, an ESPN investigation into the alleged sexual assault of former MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey highlighted the lack of a reporting requirement at MU.

According to the story, she was allegedly assaulted by three football players and told several university employees about the assault. She committed suicide in June 2011 after leaving MU.
A task force created by Wolfe after the ESPN report was released is still reviewing policies and procedures for the reporting of sexual assaults and the accessibility of mental health resources at the four UM campuses, system spokesman John Fougere said in March.

Last week, the MU task force, led by Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton, released a list of the school's sexual assault and mental health services.

"As we did the inventory of services on four campuses, this was an area that came up as one that could be strengthened," Fougere said.

But Wolfe said he did not want to wait for the task force to clarify the university's policy.

Are You Programmed to Enjoy Exercise?

By GRETCHEN REYNOLDS

It’s possible that some of us are born not to run. According to an eye-opening new genetics study of lab rats, published in The Journal of Physiology, the motivation to exercise — or not — may be at least partly inherited.

For years, scientists have been bedeviled by the question of why so few people regularly exercise when we know that we should. There are obvious reasons, including poor health and jammed schedules. But researchers have begun to speculate that genetics might also play a role, as some recent experiments suggest. In one, published last year, sets of fraternal and identical adult twins wore activity monitors to track their movements. The results indicated that the twins were more alike in their exercise habits than a shared upbringing alone would explain. Their willingness to work out or sit all day depended to a large extent on genetics, the researchers concluded.

But which genes might be involved and how any differences in the activity of those genes might play out inside the body were mysteries. So scientists at the University of Missouri recently decided to delve into those issues by creating their own avid- or anti-exercising animals.

They accomplished this task by inter-breeding normal rats that had voluntarily run on wheels in the lab. The male rats that had run the most were bred with the female rats that also had run the most; those that had run the least were likewise mated. This scheme continued through many
generations, until the scientists had two distinct groups of rats, some of which would willingly spend hours on running wheels, while the others would skitter on them only briefly, if at all.

In their first experiments with these rats, the researchers found some intriguing differences in the activity of certain genes in their brains. In normal circumstances, these genes create proteins that tell young cells to grow up and join the working world. But if the genes don’t function normally, the cells don’t receive the necessary chemical messages and remain in a prolonged, feckless cellular adolescence. Such immature cells cannot join the neural network and don’t contribute to healthy brain function.

In general, these genes worked normally in the brains of the rats bred to run. But their expression was quite different in the non-runners’ brains, particularly in a portion of the brain called the nucleus accumbens, which is involved in reward processing. In humans and many animals, the nucleus accumbens lights up when we engage in activities that we enjoy and seek out.

Presumably as a result, when the scientists closely examined the brains of the two types of rats, they found that by young adulthood the animals bred to run had more mature neurons in the nucleus accumbus than did the non-runners, even if neither group had actually done much running. In practical terms, that finding would seem to indicate that the brains of pups born to the running line are innately primed to find running rewarding; all those mature neurons in the reward center of the brain could be expected to fire robustly in response to exercise.

Conversely, the rats from the reluctant-running line, with their skimpier complement of mature neurons, would presumably have a weaker innate motivation to move.

Those results would be disheartening, except that in the final portion of the experiment the scientists had reluctant runners exercise by setting them on running wheels, while also providing some born-to-run animals with wheels. After six days, the unwilling runners had accumulated far less mileage, about 3.5 kilometers (two miles) per rat, compared to almost 34 kilometers each by the enthusiasts.

But the halfhearted runners’ brains were changing. Compared to others in their family line that had remained sedentary, they now showed more mature neurons in their nucleus accumbens. That part of their brain remained less well developed than among the naturally avid rat runners, but they were responding to exercise in ways that would seem likely to make it more rewarding.

What, if anything, these findings mean for people is “impossible to know at this point,” said Frank Booth, a professor of biomedical sciences at the University of Missouri who oversaw the study. Rat brains are not human brains, and rat motivations are at best opaque.

Even so, Dr. Booth said, his group’s data would seem to suggest “that humans may have genes for motivation to exercise and other genes for motivation to sit on the couch,” and over generations, one set of these genes could begin to predominate within a family. But predispositions are never dictatorial.
“People can decide to exercise,” whatever their inheritance, Dr. Booth said, and, as his study’s final experiment suggests, they could rewire their brains so that moving becomes a pleasure.

Columbia police release report related to MU’s Dorial Green-Beckham

April 8
BY TOD PALMER
The Kansas City Star

COLUMBIA — Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham is part of a Columbia Police Department investigation into an alleged burglary, according to a public information report released Tuesday by police, though his role is unclear.

The report does not name any person, so it is not known whether Green-Beckham is a suspect, victim or witness. No one has been charged in the case, and Green-Beckham has not been arrested. Police are expected to release a complete incident report in the next few days.

The report says a first-degree burglary was reported at 2:36 a.m. Sunday at the Brookside Townhomes, 310 Old Plank Road.

Residents told the Columbia Missourian that Green-Beckham was involved in an incident there around that time. One resident said he saw a woman hit a white Dodge Charger, driven by Green-Beckham, as it left the parking lot.

Green-Beckham was suspended indefinitely from the Missouri football team on Monday.

“Obviously, I have 126 players, and I’m responsible for every one of them,” Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said after Tuesday’s spring football practice. “I take that responsibility just like with the three kids that I raised. Obviously, I’m disappointed, frustrated. We run this program with integrity.

“We train and teach our players to be accountable, responsible people. When they make mistakes — and they’re going to make some mistakes — but when they’re serious
mistakes, obviously that stings. It stings me, it stings the players, it stings our fans. My job is to get that fixed, so that’s what I intend to do.”

This is not Green-Beckham’s first scrape with police during his time with the Tigers.

Green-Beckham and three teammates, including sophomore wide receiver Levi Copelin, were arrested for misdemeanor possession of less than 35 grams of marijuana in a parking lot near Memorial Stadium in October 2012. All four later pleaded guilty to second-degree trespassing.

Three months ago, Green-Beckham was arrested again on alleged possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute, a felony. He was riding in a car that was stopped for an expired tag in Springfield, and a search of the vehicle turned up nearly one pound of suspected marijuana.

Another passenger in the car said the marijuana was his, but charges remain pending as Springfield police await state lab results.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/04/08/4945460/columbia-police-release-report.html#storylink=cpy

**UPDATED: DGB HIT WITH INDEFINITE SUSPENSION**

By Dave Matter dmatter@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8508

*Updated 2:40 p.m. Tuesday*

**COLUMBIA, Mo. •** Columbia Police have released an information report of an alleged first-degree burglary that occurred at 2:36 a.m. Sunday on Old Plank Road at the Brookside Townhomes apartment complex. The suspect, victim and witnesses are all listed as confidential. The report lists the incident as forced entry. Listed under weapons used are “hands/fist/feet.”

The time and location matches the scene of an incident described in the Columbia Missourian as an altercation between Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham and an unnamed female. Witnesses quoted in the story, two male Mizzou students, said they heard shouting from the next-door apartment unit, then saw a white Dodge Charger speeding away as the girl hit the vehicle. The witnesses quoted in the story have not returned email messages from the Post-Dispatch.
The report is incomplete, and a City of Columbia administrative technician said the report should be finalized by the end of the week.

On Monday, Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel announced he had indefinitely suspended Green-Beckham for a violation of undisclosed team policies.

The suspension was made in consultation with athletics director Mike Alden. Green-Beckham, a junior this fall, will not practice during the suspension or take part in team activities, though he may use the academic resource center. Missouri has two weeks left of spring practices.

“It’s unfortunate, but it’s the right thing to do for our football program, for the athletic department, and also for Dorial,” Pinkel said in a statement. “We have high standards related to the expectations that come along with being a Missouri Tiger, and Dorial has not met those recently. Representing Mizzou and our fans is a privilege, and we’ll work with him during this process.

“It’s been disappointing to have this, and other issues which have taken place lately. It’s frustrating, because we work very hard to instill responsibility and discipline in our young men so that our program represents Mizzou the right way. These actions aren’t representative of those expectations, and we are addressing these issues head on.”

Columbia Police public information officer Latisha Stroer said Green-Beckham, 20, had not been arrested for a crime as of Monday afternoon and declined to comment on whether he was involved in a possible police investigation.

A week after the conclusion of his sophomore season, Green-Beckham was arrested in January in Springfield, Mo., on suspicion of felony distribution of a controlled substance. Charges have not been filed against Green-Beckham or two other men arrested.

Green-Beckham, John W. McDaniel, 22, and Patrick W. Prouty, 20, were arrested after police found a pound of marijuana and drug paraphernalia in McDaniel’s vehicle during a traffic stop. Attorneys representing Green-Beckham later revealed a search warrant affidavit that said Green-Beckham had cooperated with the police investigation.

Green-Beckham has not talked to reporters since the start of spring practices.

He was also arrested for marijuana possession in October 2012 and later pleaded guilty to an amended city violation of trespassing. He served a one-game suspension, along with teammates Levi Copelin and Torey Boozer, who were also arrested.

The 6-foot-6, 225-pound receiver from Hillcrest High School in Springfield started all 14 games last season, catching a team-high 59 passes for 883 yards and 12 touchdowns.

The suspension is the latest bad news for Mizzou athletics. Last week, basketball player Zach Price was arrested twice in one day on four counts of suspicion of assault stemming from two separate incidents. In March, basketball players Wes Clark and Shane Rector and football players Aarion Penton and Shaun Rupert were arrested for marijuana possession. Copelin was arrested in January for peace disturbance after an incident at the student union. Also in January, Columbia police launched a sexual assault
Local autism center enters partnership

Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders will partner with St. Louis-based Mercy Autism Center to expand clinical care, professional education and research for people and families affected by autism spectrum disorders, the university said in a news release.

Thompson Center Executive Director Stephen Kanne said the partnership will also allow the center to "further develop clinical care for those affected by autism in the St. Louis area and throughout the state."

Mercy Autism Center will adopt the Thompson Center's best practices for autism, and the two entities will collaborate on the use of the guidelines in the Missouri Autism Guidelines Initiative publications and use research findings to improve autism care.

April 7, 2014

Public Colleges Struggle for Ways to Evolve Amid Competing Demands

By Don Troop

NO MU MENTION
Nearly five years after the official end of the longest economic downturn since the Great Depression, plenty of colleges are still suffering, and not just the tuition-dependent private ones.

Even as some states have renewed their support for public higher education, a combination of long-term demographic change, governmental imperatives, and resistant stakeholders have forced layoffs at some institutions. Public colleges in Colorado, Maine, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania have all announced or proposed faculty cuts since the start of the academic year.

In addition to facing most of the same pressures as their private counterparts, public colleges increasingly have been getting their appropriations with strings attached, says Karen L. Kedem, vice president and senior analyst at Moody’s Investors Service, the credit-rating agency. "The public universities had to keep tuition flat or have only modest increases," she says. "Their arms were tied as it related to a lever they’re used to pulling when state funding is constrained."

Hardest hit have been regional comprehensive universities, generally second-tier institutions that offer low-cost graduate and undergraduate education aimed at meeting local work-force needs. Comprehensive colleges, which enroll more than two-thirds of all undergraduates attending public four-year institutions, are "the backbone of American higher education," says Alisa Hicklin Fryar, a University of Oklahoma political scientist who studies them.

But unlike flailing private colleges, public institutions rarely slip beneath the waves for good. Instead they further trim their already lean budgets, squeeze more efficiency from faculty and staff, extend their geographic reach using online delivery of niche programs, or add courses geared to local work-force needs. States are typically too "strongly vested" in the survival of public colleges to let them fail, says Susan I. Fitzgerald, a senior vice president at Moody’s.

They don’t die, she says. They just change.

**Most Beleaguered**
Among the most beleaguered of America’s public higher-education institutions is the University of Maine system, which is scrambling to make up a projected $36-million budget shortfall in the 2015 fiscal year.

Daniel J. Hurley, associate vice president for state relations and policy analysis at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, says Maine had "the worst combination of population emigration, a huge drop-off in high-school graduation, an economy in overall decline and state funding cuts, and a fiscally conservative governor—not a good recipe for long-term growth and sustainability."

Maine is one of a number of states that have imposed tuition freezes or caps on their public colleges in exchange for state dollars. Its seven-campus university system has also suffered steep enrollment declines, with individual campuses’ undergraduate head counts over the past five years dropping 5 percent to 22 percent.

In response to the systemwide budget cuts, four campuses announced the elimination of dozens of faculty and staff positions last month. The flagship University of Maine at Orono accomplished its faculty cuts through attrition, but the University of Southern Maine fired 12 full-time faculty members in seven departments. A spokesman for Southern Maine says the university has no plans for further faculty layoffs, although it will let go 10 to 20 staff members by the end of the current fiscal year, in addition to 14 staff members whose positions were already eliminated.

In Pennsylvania, another state hit by the one-two punch of falling high-school graduation rates and declining state support, four universities announced layoffs and program cuts last fall.

In a bond rating issued last year, Moody’s praised the 14-campus Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, known as Passhe, for its favorable operating performance and cash flow. But Moody’s cited among the system’s challenges "unionized faculty and staff, severely constraining Passhe’s ability to manage expenses in the face of challenged enrollment growth, as well as driving pension and health-care benefits that further pressure operating performance and balance-sheet revenue."
Georgia, which has seen rising enrollments, has dealt with state budget cuts by ordering a series of consolidations. It most recently called for Southern Polytechnic University to merge with Kennesaw State University, another regional comprehensive.

David A. Longanecker, president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, says both Maine and Pennsylvania score poorly on a checklist he devised to evaluate the vulnerability of public and private colleges in the current economic climate. His test weighs a number of characteristics, including state demographics (the number of high-school graduates), population density, and the strength of the university’s business model.

The plummeting number of high-school graduates in the Northeast and Midwest has been a concern of college administrators for some time. That concern is particularly acute at regional comprehensives, many of which are geographically isolated, serving nearby students by offering programs relevant to their local economies.

Dennis P. Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, points out that flagship institutions and urban-oriented colleges, like West Chester University, near Philadelphia, remain generally strong.

But he faults a "calcification of decision making" for the plight of some institutions. Colleges that postponed small cuts a few years ago are having to make drastic cuts today, he says, citing an old principle of engineering: "The more rigid the structure, the more likely it is to break when something hits it."

Colleges that haven’t adapted to the new demographic reality are "trying to live off of an 18-year-old student body when there ain’t any more 18-year-olds," Mr. Jones says. "You can be rural and succeed, but you can’t be rural and do things the way you’ve always done it and succeed."

‘Play to Your Strengths’

The University of Maine at Fort Kent is as about as far north as you can get in the contiguous United States without crossing into Canada. Despite its isolation and its state’s considerable head winds, the university has raised its credit-hour enrollment by 1.6 percent over the past
five years. "I wouldn’t call it gangbusters by any means, but given the demographics and the state economics, we’re pretty pleased with it," says John Murphy, vice president for administration and finance.

With a spring count of 1,058 students, Fort Kent has seen its enrollment drop by more than 10 percent over the past five years. But after identifying a growing need for nurses in New England and making that a focus, the university saw enrollment in its nursing program grow by nearly 40 percent from 2011 to 2013. Today the program’s 416 students, including 151 online, make up 46 percent of the campus’s degree-seeking students.

Terrence J. MacTaggart, a higher-education consultant who twice served as chancellor of the University System of Maine, says he advises presidents and their boards to both innovate and emphasize existing programs that have market potential.

"Play to your strengths," he says. "Remind the campus that they have a lot of value and they have things worth offering."

‘If You Love Teaching’

One regional comprehensive institution that has thrived in spite of geographic isolation is Colorado Mesa University. Located in Grand Junction, four hours west of Denver, it has seen a 35-percent growth in enrollment over the past five years. Last fall it had 9,676 students, mostly undergraduates who pay $7,200 a year in tuition and fees.

Tim Foster, Colorado Mesa’s president, says it built on its tradition as a teaching institution and has strong enrollments in nursing and business, work-force needs that are important to the local economy.

Faculty members at Colorado Mesa teach four courses per semester, and 90 percent of the classes have 40 or fewer students. Mr. Foster says he interviews all prospective faculty members and tells them: "If you love teaching, come. If you want a TA to grade your papers, and you want to do research and not be bothered, don’t. You’re going to be miserable."
Mr. MacTaggart, the former Maine chancellor, says that when he has assisted in presidential searches, leadership for change has usually been at or near the top of the list of desired attributes.

"Relatively few people in this business have been trained to do that," he says. "The legacy is more how to manage or cope with the variety of stakeholder and interest-group pressure on the presidency and less how to lead change."

He points to the example of North Dakota as a state that, given its oil-and-gas wealth, should be doing well. Instead, its State Board of Higher Education found itself last spring buying out the contract of its chancellor, Hamid A. Shirvani, after just 11 months in the post.

"You should factor in the quality of the leadership, both the board and the president," Mr. McTaggart says. "And I would throw in whether the faculty has leadership that is realistic and looking at the challenges rather than having its head in the sand."

Academic Gap in Athletics Spending

April 9, 2014

BY
Allie Grasgreen

NO MU MENTION

The University of Connecticut men’s basketball team boasts the worst graduation rate of any Division I program in the annual National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament. Last year, the athletes’ academic performance was so bad they were flat-out banned from the postseason.

On Monday night, they were crowned national champions.
Happily, for the Connecticut men, they attend an institution with a $63 million athletics budget and plenty to spend on supporting their academic pursuits.

It’s known that the colleges in the five biggest and wealthiest Division I conferences are winning a college sports “arms race” to attract the best coaches and build the best facilities and, in turn, attract the best recruits. But there’s also an arms race in athletic-academic spending, a new study suggests, and the poorest programs are losing out.

By a lot. From 2005-11, the average Bowl Championship Series team’s athletic support services budget increased 48 percent, to $1.1 million, according to a study by Scott Hirko, an assistant professor of physical education and sport at Michigan State University. Yet among the remaining Division I programs – those in the less lucrative Football Bowl Series – the average budget dropped 4 percent to just $160,000.

"Here’s the rub: those institutions that aren’t at the highest level don’t have the resources to be able to plug in those academic support services,” Hirko said. “They know that if they were to add more tutoring, they could improve. But they don’t have the money to do it.”

For teams that failed to meet a 925 Academic Progress Rate (which the NCAA says correlates to a graduation rate of 50 percent), academic support and tutoring budgets, as well as level of academic support staffing, were “strong predictors” of change in APR scores, Hirko found.

The results, which Hirko presented at last week’s American Educational Research Association conference, include 113 institutions (58 FBS, 39 FCS and 16 with no football) from 28 Division I conferences.

It’s not exactly shocking that programs with more money to pour into tutoring are seeing improvements in academic scores, Hirko said. The more startling point is exactly how much more they’re pouring in.

“The concern is worse, I think, than people had initially thought,” Hirko said, adding that the number of support staff might range from 1 at a low-resource institution to 15 at a well-off one.

NCAA officials have acknowledged that their academic reforms – most recently, raising the minimum APR from 925 to 930 – have hit “low-resource institutions” and historically black colleges and universities the hardest.

After the most recent APR report showed that 15 of the 18 teams penalized for insufficient scores were from HBCUs, NCAA Committee on Academic Performance Chair Walt Harrison admitted that the association’s $6 million pledge to help HBCUs meet the new standards is “certainly … not adequate.”

Yet on the whole, APRs are rising; the average APR in 2012-13 rose one point to a record-high 974.

“If you invest in academic support services, you will see an increase in their APR scores – if you can find the resources to invest,” Hirko said. “How can the others catch up, if they want to be competitive in putting academically prepared athletes on the field?... Those that don’t have access to those major areas of revenue generation [media contracts, ticket sales, etc.] have to find some other strategy to comply with the policy.”

Hirko noted the real possibility of colleges admitting more academically prepared athletes -- or, steering athletes toward easier courses and majors or redesigning curriculum to keep APR scores up.
But there are many unanswered questions in the data, said Jim Pignataro, president of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics and associate athletic director for student services at Michigan State.

Having less money and fewer staff certainly affects an office’s ability to track the day-to-day progress of athletes and keep the overall APR up, Pignataro said.

“When you have an operation at a low-resource school that has two or three folks, you can’t possibly track it at the level that they do at a larger program,” he said. While support staff may be able to work with coaches and other staff to keep their APRs up over the long term, half of maintaining academic performance is effective roster management, Pignataro said. A university with high individual athlete turnover (due to academic struggles or not) might see its APR suffer as a result. Same goes for a team with a negative coach or culture.

Regardless, the N4A is working with the NCAA on a grant program to bring officials from academically successful programs to help others assess and improve their work.

“I think there are many areas within intercollegiate athletics, between low-resources and high-resource institutions, that cause issues for competitive equity, and it’s not just in academic support,” Pignataro said. “We get bogged down in this notion of, what service should be provided? But at the end of the day…. only each institution can identify that.”

Senate committee adds funding for State Historical Society building

Building would get $33 million

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 1:55 pm Updated: 1:55 pm, Tue Apr 8, 2014.

JEFFERSON CITY — A new home for the State Historical Society of Missouri was the biggest item added to the state budget Monday as the Senate Appropriations Committee began rewriting the $26.6 billion spending proposal approved by the Missouri House.

The committee approved $33 million for the society to build a four-story research center and museum to replace its existing quarters in the basement of Ellis Library.
The project, years in the planning, is needed to protect the artwork and historical papers and artifacts in the society's collection, committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, told reporters.

"I think it is time … to build that facility and to make sure the priceless collections we've got now in the basement of the university library don't succumb to water damage or anything else and they are available for the public to enjoy," Schaefer said after the committee adjourned for the day.

The committee is working with a House budget that is about $1 billion less than the spending plan proposed by Gov. Jay Nixon in January. Schaefer and House Budget Committee Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, disagree with Nixon over the growth of state tax receipts, and the General Assembly is not including money for expanding Medicaid eligibility, as requested by Nixon.

As the committee worked through the budget under Schaefer's direction, it often chose the lowest proposed spending amount for each item. Where the House increased a line, Schaefer cut it to Nixon's figure. Where the House cut a Nixon proposal, that sum was used.

Some of the largest reductions were in public school transportation, where Nixon wanted to add $15 million to the $100 million program and the House added $25 million. In the Access Missouri scholarship program, Nixon proposed adding $8.5 million to the $53.6 million spending line and the House added $20 million.

"What we have seen from the governor, over and over, particularly in" public schools "and higher ed, where we appropriate over his recommendation, he just doesn't release the money," Schaefer said.

The House set aside money for a 1 percent pay increase for state employees. Nixon asked for a 3 percent boost.

"We had to go back and say, 'What really can be funded, and what was just a Christmas present that was put out there as an inducement to do Medicaid expansion?' Schaefer said when asked about the pay raises.

The exceptions when choosing the lower spending line were for the society and for state colleges and universities. The House proposed a 2 percent increase, with another 1 percent if Nixon's revenue prediction was correct. The appropriations committee's $43.4 million increase mirrors Nixon's proposed 5 percent boost for four-year schools and gives the same overall boost to community colleges. Nixon had sought a 4 percent increase for community colleges.

The University of Missouri System would receive $428.8 million in state aid in the coming year, up from $407.5 million this year. Like the House, the committee did not include Nixon's planned 3 percent permanent increase for science, technology, engineering and math education or his proposed funding to train mental health professionals.
The historical society has been working for several years on a plan for its new building. Director Gary Kremer said a consultant's report puts the total cost at more than $37 million. The building would help it preserve its collections and put more of them on display.

"We can display less than one-half of 1 percent of our collection now because of space issues," Kremer said.

The historical society's board of trustees has identified the downtown block bounded by Sixth, Seventh, Elm and Locust streets, now the site of a parking lot and the University of Missouri's Heinkel Building, for the new building.

Schaefer's move to include the building project in the operating budget for higher education is unusual. Lawmakers generally consider construction spending in a separate bill. If lawmakers can work out a list of projects to build in the coming year, the money could be shifted to a different bill, he said.

"They need to have the new building," Schaefer said. "The question is how to fund it."

Successful and Unemployed

April 9, 2014

BY

Todd K. Platts

In my weakest moments I have broken down emotionally. Like many recently minted Ph.D.s I am witnessing the shattering of my dreams of becoming a full-time college professor by the vagaries of an academic job market destroyed by a fledgling economic system. Balancing the heartache and disappointment with the repeated failure to find gainful academic employment is not easy. How could it be? I have dedicated my whole adult life to this. In the past two years I have sent out hundreds of applications, mostly to small liberal arts institutions, community colleges, and private religious colleges in the hopes of landing a position as a fulltime sociology instructor – somewhere, anywhere.
Reading the recent, moving piece by a struggling new Ph.D. in the humanities, and the conversation that followed, made me want to share my experience. Sadly, in the social sciences, things aren’t much better for many of us. This is my story.

I put a little piece of myself into every job packet. I become acquainted with the curriculum of a department, seeing how I might fit in. I check the publications of faculty members, seeking the potential for collaboration. I try to look up an institution’s student organizations with a mind toward being a faculty sponsor or even starting a new club. I often include a plan specific to a particular school in my C.V. I sometimes send sample syllabuses with policies consistent with the college to which I am applying.

I have come up empty-handed every time. To date, only five institutions have responded with further interest – three phone interviews and two requests for additional materials – only two of which happened in the past year. Other than these five slivers of hope, the only other contact I have received from prospective employers is acknowledgement that my materials were received and rejection letters. I have never been a finalist. I have never visited a campus. I am devastated.

In contrast to other disciplines, sociology still offers a fair share of opportunity for tenure-track employment. Indeed, spending 40 hours a week on employment dossiers is not uncommon for me. Moreover, most of my friends were able to land jobs before defending their dissertation even in the bleak job market. I am happy for them, but it makes my inability to find work sting harder.

My job market struggles are made all more the inexplicable by the fact that I maintain an active publication track in a hot field of study – zombies. In the past year alone I have published three articles, and I have an additional three under review, and numerous projects in the pipeline.

While my research on zombies may be an odd topic for sociologists to tackle, my scholarship garners much interest. My first sole-authored article “Locating Zombies in the Sociology of Popular Culture,” for instance, can net 100+ downloads in a day on my academia.edu webpage. The same piece has been quoted in numerous press outlets, elicits interview requests, and even gets me open invitations to present at professional conferences that, ironically, I cannot afford to attend.

One of my "under review" articles “The New Horror Movie” is required reading for a graduate seminar taught by a friend at Aarhus University in Denmark. While some in sociology may be turned off to my research on zombies (something they do without reading it), I have also published and received grant money in the sociology of race – a topic of perennial sociological interest.

Perhaps I am a capable scholar, but a lousy teacher. Not so. My instruction receives high marks – the evaluations are posted on my website. I can say that one of my proudest professional accomplishments has been achieving racial parity in student performance. With the encouragement of my former adviser, I translated my techniques into a brief pedagogical piece that will soon be sent out for review. If I ever find employment, one of my goals will be to develop a workshop for fellow instructors on how to reduce stereotype threat in the classroom.

While my academic and teaching successes have made my job market failures confusing, a series of setbacks and struggles have made them nearly insufferable. Prior to 2011, my position as a graduate student in the University of Missouri’s department of sociology had been gaining steam. I was the second graduate student selected by the faculty to present at the department’s colloquium series. I was also invited to deliver a talk on white privilege by the black studies department. Both engagements went well. I even presented a paper at the
Midwest Sociological Society that would become a book chapter. A series of health scares in 2011 halted my momentum. I passed two kidney stones and began experiencing a number of gastrointestinal problems. My health issues would inevitably delay the completion of my dissertation.

After careful consideration, I moved to Pennsylvania to be close to family. We feared something might be seriously wrong with me. Eventually I would require surgery. I’ve physically recovered, but I had to fight my insurance company for six months to cover any of the surgical fees. Even with some of the costs defrayed, my medical bills mounted and I was forced to move in with my 62-year-old mother, something, despite her kindheartedness, I found embarrassing, humiliating, and degrading. I’ve been scraping by as an adjunct instructor ever since, never knowing if I would be teaching from one semester to the next. I made the sacrifice in the hopes that I could finish my dissertation and fulfill my dream. I did the former, now I’m praying for the latter.

Right now, I’m unemployed and desperately (perhaps quixotically) clinging to the hope that I will get any kind of college teaching position. I don’t like looking back and asking what could have been, but I am tempted to imagine where I would be had I not experienced any health scares. In my faint glimmers of optimism, I like to imagine what I could do if I had stable employment, stable income, and a collegial work environment. I established an impressive track record with almost nothing. I am afraid I will never know what I could be. If something does not happen soon, I will have to walk away from the discipline I love. I cannot afford to stick it out for another year. I have poured my heart and soul into sociology. I feel I have received so little in return.

BIG WIN BUT A LONG ROAD AHEAD FOR COLLEGE UNION

By TIM DAHLBERG

NO MU MENTION

The road to a union for college athletes faces a long legal process.

Northwestern University has a Wednesday deadline to ask the National Labor Relations Board to review a decision classifying football players as employees of the university. That decision opened the door for players to let a union represent them.

Many legal experts believe the case could ultimately wind up before the U.S. Supreme Court, and it may take years to get there.
The football team has a vote scheduled for April 25 on whether to let a union bargain for better health insurance, scholarships and other matters. But it's not clear if they will do so — some players have said they don’t support the union concept.

City council tables pot-cultivation ordinance to allow for further review

Opponents testified against the measure, citing harm to youth.

By Andrew Denney

Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 1:55 pm Comments (26) Updated: 1:55 pm, Tue Apr 8, 2014.

The Columbia City Council voted at its regular meeting Monday night to table for four months an ordinance to decriminalize small-scale marijuana cultivation to allow the city's Board of Health and Substance Abuse Advisory Commission to review the proposal.

If passed, people caught growing as many as six marijuana plants in the city by Columbia police would receive a $250 fine. The ordinance also directs police to take offenders to municipal court before taking them to state court. Seriously ill people would not be subject to a penalty for possessing up to six plants if they have obtained a physician's recommendation to use marijuana.

However, growing marijuana would remain a felony under state law, punishable by a minimum term of five years and a maximum penalty of life in prison if the offense takes place within 2,000 feet of a school or a school bus.

The motion to table the ordinance until at least August and send it for further review was approved 5-2.

"I think this topic has the potential for being another one of those controversial issues," said Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala, who proposed tabling the measure. Skala noted that last year the council submitted water fluoridation — which stirred up strong feelings on both sides of the issue — to the Board of Health for review.
Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe, who sponsored the marijuana cultivation legislation, and Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp voted against the tabling. After the vote, the council allowed attendees to offer testimony.

Dan Viets, a local attorney and longtime marijuana decriminalization proponent who submitted the bill, called the ordinance a "relatively modest change and a relatively modest proposal."

"The only people who would be hurt, frankly, are the people who are making money selling marijuana," Viets said last night in testimony before the council.

In 2004, Columbia voters approved ballot measures drafted by Viets to allow seriously ill patients to possess marijuana with permission from their physicians and to punish possession of up to 35 grams of marijuana with a $250 fine. Voters approved the measures with 69 percent and 61 percent of votes, respectively.

Advocates for drug abuse prevention at last night's council meeting — including Kim Dude, director of the University of Missouri Wellness Resource Center and a member of the Substance Abuse Advisory Commission — praised the council's decision to send the proposal to committees. They said the measure would reduce the perception of harm from marijuana for youths and lead to increased use.

"This is not in the best interest of young people in our community," said Heather Harlan, a prevention specialist for Phoenix Programs. "It puts them at risk."

In an interview today, Viets said he did not see further review as a necessary step and said he doubts the Substance Abuse Advisory Commission — which he said is made up of "anti-drug zealots" — will take an objective look at the ordinance.

Commission member Teresa Stephenson said she did not agree with Viets' label but said members of the commission strive to push for policies that result in decreasing substance abuse and would view passage of the cultivation ordinance as a step backward in that effort. "I believe we do have that common interest and goal," Stephenson said.

Mitch Moore, a local attorney who also serves on the commission, said the proposed ordinance is a "step in the right direction" but does not go far enough; he said he supports full legalization of marijuana for use by adults. He said legalization would give money to the "above-ground economy" rather than the black market.

"We're going to have to go through a wave of misinformation and scare tactics and all that stuff," Moore said.

The commission meets at noon tomorrow at City Hall. The marijuana cultivation ordinance is not on the commission's agenda, but Stephenson said the matter will likely come up for discussion.