University of Missouri system hires consultant to help sexual assault task force

April 16

BY TOD PALMER
The Kansas City Star

University of Missouri system president Tim Wolfe announced Wednesday that a risk management consultant had been hired to assess the issues raised by the investigation in the alleged sexual assault of former Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey.

The university system hired the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management group “to provide a third-party assessment of the materials collected by the sexual assault and mental health services task force,” according a release from Wolfe’s office.

The risk management group is expected to review the sexual assault reporting and mental health services at each of the system’s four campuses with the goal of creating a more “safe, secure and respectful campus environment.”

The group also will assess the information from the Dowd Bennett Law Firm’s independent investigation into MU’s handling of the Menu Courey situation and make its own recommendations.

Menu Courey alleged that she was raped by at least one football player in February and subsequently committed suicide, but Dowd Bennett report found that the university lacked adequate policies regarding the reporting of sexual assault and failed to launch an investigation in a timely manner.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/04/16/4963638/university-of-missouri-system.html#storylink=cpy
UM System hires company to help with sexual assault, mental health assessment

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at 1:40 pm Comments (3)

The University of Missouri System announced today the hiring of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management to provide an assessment of materials collected by a sexual assault and mental health services task force on all four campuses.

The task force was created a few months ago by UM System President Tim Wolfe in response to the case of Sasha Menu Courey, a former University of Missouri swimmer who was allegedly raped more than a year before committing suicide. The case came to light and reports from ESPN questioned the university’s handling of the situation. Menu Courey also struggled with borderline personality disorder.

The duty of the task force was to inventory all existing sexual assault and mental health resources and services on each of the four campuses. Phases two and three of the task force’s work involve assessing what was collected and figuring out what holes exist and how to fill them.

The National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, a Pennsylvania-based company, is a law and consulting practice that currently represents 35 colleges and universities across the country as legal counsel or adviser. The center focuses on high-risk campus health and safety issues, including sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, Title IX and student suicide, according to a news release.

“I think they want to do it all better,” Brett Sokolow, president of NCHERM, said. “They want to be models for the best practices can be demonstrated.”

NCHERM will review and address the resource materials provided by the task force, and will provide “an independent analysis” of the resources, which will be used in the task force’s final recommendations.

Sokolow said the center will start by deciding whether the assessment is accurate. If it is, Sokolow and his coworkers will work toward the next steps. If not, members of the center will “create a dialogue with the system” about why it’s inaccurate and how it can be fixed.
“Then we make recommendations for how campuses move to full compliance,” Sokolow said.
“We’ll make substantive recommendations for changes to policy, procedure, training and those
types of things.”

Sokolow said the center has a 20-page template of criteria that will be used in the assessment
process. The template includes looking at how the university deals with hearings and
investigations and interactions with law enforcement, among other issues.

Wolfe has instructed the campuses to finish up the second and third phases of the task force work
by the end of the semester in May. On multiple occasions, Wolfe added that he is willing to
provide resources in areas of need in these areas for all four campuses.

Steve Owen, general counsel for the UM System, said in a news release that the goal of the self-
examination is “to make the University of Missouri a model of safety on our campuses and on
Title IX reporting and compliance, and have other universities to look to our university as the
standard of how to approach these difficult, societal issues.”

Today’s announcement from Wolfe comes on the heels of a report released last Friday from the
independent counsel hired by the Board of Curators to investigate MU’s handling of Sasha Menu
Courey. The counsel, the Dowd Bennett Law Firm, found that the university should have had a
reporting structure in place and should have acted on information that it had after Menu Courey
died in 2012.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin sent out a media notice Tuesday that explained a few internal
changes he is considering, including creating an independent committee with special training to
handle sexual assault issues in the Office of Student Conduct. Loftin also mentioned the
university has “identified areas for improvement” in its sexual reporting policies and procedures.
Prior to Wolfe’s executive order from last week, there were no campus-specific guidelines on
reporting sexual assault. The previous reporting structure was based on Title IX mandates.

UM System hires risk management firm to address sexual assault policies
Wednesday, April 16, 2014 | 5:48 p.m. CDT; updated 6:42 a.m. CDT, Thursday, April 17, 2014

BY ELIAN PELTIER, KEVIN MODELSKI

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri System has hired a higher
education risk management consulting firm to look at how each campus
handles sexual assault and mental health issues.
UM System President Tim Wolfe announced Wednesday that the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management Group, based in Pennsylvania, will assess the "inventory" the UM System task force completed as part of Phase I. For MU, that inventory was a list of campus resources for students with mental health problems or who have been the victim of a sex offense.

The task force was established in February after the Dowd Bennett law firm was hired to conduct an independent investigation into whether MU acted consistently with the law and university policy in reporting the sexual assault of Sasha Menu Courey. Menu Courey, a former MU swimmer, took her own life in 2011 after leaving the university and a year after she was allegedly raped by at least one football player.

On Friday, Dowd Bennett released a report concluding that MU's actions in the Menu Courey case did not violate the law, but were not in compliance with Title IX reporting guidelines.

As part of Phase II, the Pennsylvania firm will provide an independent analysis of each campus' sexual assault and mental health resources, UM System spokesman John Fougere said via email. That analysis will be used to make the task force's final recommendations in the first week of May — Phase III of the process.

The UM System will pay the firm $40,000 from the system's budget, Fougere said via email. He added that Wolfe would supplement the cost with funding from the UM System, if necessary.

In a UM System release, Brett A. Sokolow, president and CEO of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management Group, said: "Every college and university in the country is facing challenges with prevention and response to campus sexual violence."

He said in a phone interview Wednesday that the firm had already started working for the UM System.

According to its website, the firm provides colleges and universities with risk assessment services to improve campus safety and reduce insurance claims and casualty losses. Other services include:

- Equipping campuses with violence and harm prevention mechanisms;
• Fostering a culture of risk management;

• Reducing lawsuit risks and enhancing the chances of winning lawsuits;

• Reducing negative publicity of failed risk management efforts.

The risk management group represents 350 universities and colleges, including institutions such as Tulane University and Texas Tech University.

Last week, Wolfe issued Executive Order 40, which made MU employees responsible for reporting Title IX incidents such as sexual assault. Before, there was no reporting requirement or mandatory training for MU faculty or staff for handling such incidents, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., launched a national survey on Tuesday to evaluate how colleges and universities handle rape and other kinds of sexual assault. She expected 350 universities and colleges to complete the survey, which covers Title IX, the mechanisms for students to report sexual assaults, and how universities investigate reports.

"This survey will give us an unprecedented look into exactly how our colleges and universities act – or sometimes, fail to act – to protect students, and bring perpetrators to justice," McCaskill said in a news release.

McCaskill said approximately 19 percent of undergraduate women have been the victims of sexual assault and less than 5 percent of them report their attack.
The University of Missouri system announced Wednesday it is hiring an outside consultant to review the school’s policies and materials concerning sexual assault and mental health services.

The move is the latest action in response to the highly publicized case of Sasha Menu Courey, a student at the Columbia campus who committed suicide in 2011. After her death, information emerged that she had said she was sexually assaulted more than a year before, possibly by one or more members of the Mizzou football team.

University President Tim Wolfe, who last week issued an executive order strengthening the system’s Title IX reporting procedures, said that the hiring of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management would provide important third-party assessment of the procedures and policies on the university’s four campuses.

Wolfe said in a statement that the center’s “credible, independent analysis of our current resources will help us to improve in the way we serve people on our four campuses in terms of sexual assault prevention, reporting and education, and mental-health service delivery.”

The university said the center currently represents 35 college and universities as outside counsel and provides consulting services to more than 3,000 clients. Its president and CEO, Brett A. Sokolow, said he hoped to help the university system and its campuses “become exemplars not just of compliance, but of excellence, in the face of this challenge.”
He added: “Every college and university in the country is facing challenges with prevention and response to campus sexual violence.”

A university spokesman said the center’s work would begin immediately and it is scheduled to submit a written report on May 5. It will be paid $40,000, with the funds coming from the system’s budget as part of a commitment Wolfe has made to improve safety on campus.

Police in Columbia are continuing an investigation into Courey’s case.

**Law firm’s report**

Besides the hiring of the consultant and the executive order, Wolfe also directed the university’s campuses to review resources available in sexual assault cases. And the Board of Curators hired the St. Louis law firm of Dowd Bennett to look into the university’s handling of the Courey case.

Its report, presented to the university’s Board of Curators last week, found that the school “did not have policies in place for its employees addressing how university employees should handle information of a possible sexual assault upon a university student and what procedures should be followed by the university to investigate and ensure compliance with Title IX once the university receives notice of such allegations.”

The report, based on interviews conducted by the firm, said that the language of Title IX and its corresponding regulations do not deal directly with sexual assault. In its investigation of the handling of the case, the law firm said, “because of the uniqueness of these particular facts, and because of the lack of specificity, clarity and precision within the actual statute and regulations as would be applied to these facts, it would be fairly easy to craft reasonable arguments that the university’s actions did not ‘violate the law.’ However, we do not believe such legal debate is worthwhile for the purposes of advising the board.”

The report concluded:

‘Therefore, while we do not conclude that the university 'violated the law,' we do conclude with certainty that the university, as set out above, acted inconsistently with the Department of Education’s guidance about the requirements of Title IX and did not act in accordance with what would be expected of a university with a robust Title IX compliance program.”

Reaction to the report has come from a variety of sources.
On sashbear.org, a website dedicated to Courey, a statement posted this week by her “family and friends” were “pleased with the results of the independent investigation.”

The site noted that “Wolfe contacted Sasha’s parents personally, to offer his deepest sympathy and confirmed that they will be taking action to strengthen the university’s policies to ensure students are safe on campus. We are hoping the transformation in their support system will make a difference and become a model for other universities.”

The posting also said that the findings of the investigation could be put to positive use.

“Our daughter Sasha went through a perfect storm of unfortunate events that led to her suicide. Although we cannot change the past, we hope that the lessons learned from the investigation will lead to positive changes for future athletes and students. We hope to see a transformation of the processes that colleges and universities have in place to deal with students struggling with mental health issues and sexual assaults, whether they are athletes or not. This will never bring Sasha back, but we are hoping the changes will prevent another situation like this from occurring again.....

“To transform this tragedy into a message of hope, our efforts today continue to be on mental health awareness. Whether a rape victim, someone born with a disorder, or just going through a tough time, one in four will need mental health support at some point in their life. It is time that support is available when it is needed, without having to languish on a waiting list.”

Also responding to the report this week was Mizzou Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who became head of the campus earlier this year and was not in Columbia at the time of the events involving Courey.

“I accept the findings.” Loftin said in a statement, “and acknowledge that we have a responsibility as a university to ensure that we are stronger in the future.”

He noted that Athletic Director Mike Alden has created a panel to look into how his department handles “student incidents and concerns.” The task force includes an independent prosecutor, the Mizzou campus sexual assault coordinator and the associate dean of the law school.

Loftin added:
“Not unlike our peer institutions around the country, we must continue to examine our policies as they relate to alcohol and our enforcement of those policies. Missouri is not immune to the damaging consequences when alcohol and our young people mix.”

On a personal note, Loftin said, “I am the chancellor, but I am also a professor, a husband, a father of two and a grandfather of three. I take my responsibilities in all of my roles with the utmost seriousness, and I am committed to ensuring that we are a stronger community moving forward. We owe it to Sasha, her family and to all those entrusted to us.”

U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., noting that she is a former sex crimes prosecutor, announced what she called an “unprecedented congressional survey” of 350 colleges and universities to learn how sexual assaults are reported and handled on their campuses.

“This survey will give us an unprecedented look into exactly how our colleges and universities act — or sometimes, fail to act — to protect students, and bring perpetrators to justice,” she said in a statement.

“Just like the challenges we grappled with in confronting sexual assaults in our military, we need to ensure we have a firm grasp on the policies in place, and the reality on the ground, to inform any specific solutions. This survey is an important part of that effort.”

A draft of the survey includes questions about how many investigations of sexual harassment and sexual assault schools have conducted in the past four years. It also seeks information on whether students know how to file a Title IX complaint and whether schools try to determine the climate on campus regarding issues involving sexual assault.

Other questions ask about staff and faculty training in the area of sexual assault, reporting procedures and statistics for cases such as the use of “date rape” drugs.

McCaskill will be at Saint Louis University Thursday to take part in a training session on campus-based sexual assault policies and Title IX training.
**Loftin sets deadline for child care input**

Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at 2:00 pm

*University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin has set an April 30 deadline for input on the need for child care on campus so he can make a final decision on whether to work toward a new center by early May.*

Loftin met yesterday with student parents who have been advocating for the need for on-campus childcare since the announcement last month that University Village and the Student Parent Center will be demolished after June 30.

After the meeting, Loftin said he asked Gary Ward, interim vice chancellor for administrative services, to explore the financial and space options associated with a new child care center on campus or building a new center. Loftin said Ward will report back by April 30.

The chancellor also previously charged student, faculty and staff groups to gauge the need for on-campus child care. Several of those representative organizations, such as the Graduate Professional Council and Missouri Student Association, are reporting to the administration input gathered from constituents.

During yesterday's meeting, parents showed Loftin a petition they have been circulating, which has received more than 1,100 signatures.

**Column: MU has many LGBT pride points, still room to improve**

By Shannon Greenwood

*We are in the heart of Pride Month at MU, and we certainly have a lot reasons to be proud.*

Our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students have made strides so impactful in the past year alone that they have changed our university in ways that will last long after they have graduated.
In the fall, Josie Herrera, a genderqueer senior, ran for homecoming king and brought a wave of inclusivity to our campus and returning alumni. Shane Stinson, a transgender junior, chose to openly document his transition and has used the media as a means of starting a conversation about what it means to be transgender. Michael Sam made history with his decision to come out right before the NFL combine, which put him on course to become the NFL’s first openly gay player.

And of course there is everyone in between — the first-time performers in the “Let’s Get Loud” Drag Show, the veteran participants in Queer Monologues, the MU LGBTQ Resource Center staff, the Catalyst Award winners and the Lavender Graduation seniors — who have all helped make our university the most inclusive it has ever been.

Buzzfeed even took notice and wrote an article titled “9 Ways Mizzou Stands With Sam,” which lists the things we should be proud of — Herrera, Stinson, Sam, an LGBT-specific Alternative Spring Break, LGBT-identified Missouri Students Association and Panhellenic Association presidents, a student body that defends its own and a university more than willing to lead change.

But reading over that list, I cannot help but notice all the things still missing.

Gender identity is not included in our school’s nondiscrimination policy, and gender-neutral housing, which would greatly impact our transgender and queer students, remains unavailable. Our updated course evaluation forms reveal our school’s apparent lack of education on the transgender community. There is still no easy way for gender non-conforming students to change their name on myZou.

The Stand With Sam rally saw thousands of students link arms in solidarity, but the Facebook event choose to focus on school spirit more than LGBT inclusion. And even Buzzfeed’s list of ways we stood together doesn’t necessarily offer an accurate reflection of how Missouri treats its LGBT-identified students.

The reason I keep pushing the boundaries of Missouri’s inclusivity because I can see all the potential our university has if I keep doing so — if we strive to be not only the most welcoming school for LGBT students in the Southeastern Conference but in the nation. All we have already done shows we certainly have the means, now we just need to solidify the way. And hopefully, in a year’s time, when we are celebrating Pride Month once more, we can look back and have even more reasons to be proud.
Does laziness run in your family? Study suggests it could be hereditary

Researchers from the University of Missouri found that there is a genetic predisposition to laziness — at least among rats. The rodents bred from ‘super runners’ ran 10 times longer each day than those from a line of ‘couch potatoes,’ according to a new study.

Could genes be to blame for a lack of motivation to hit the gym? A recent study conducted at the University of Missouri suggests this could be the case.

By studying a population of rats over ten generations, researchers came to the conclusion that there is such a thing as a genetic predisposition to laziness, at least among rodents. The study was conducted by Franck W. Booth and Michael D. Roberts of the University of Missouri’s College of Veterinary Medicine and the results were published in the latest issue of the American Journal of Physiology.

Around 50 rats were placed in cages with running wheels. Over a period of six days, researchers recorded the amount of time each rat spent willingly running on its wheel. The rats were then separated into two breeding groups, so that the 26 most active rats bred only amongst themselves, and the 26 least active bred only with each other. The process was then repeated over ten generations.

At the end of the experiment, the researchers observed that the rodents from the "super runners" line willingly ran 10 times longer per day on average than those from the "couch potato" line.
To find which traits predisposed the active rats to working up a sweat, the researchers looked at several factors, including body composition and mitochondria content in muscle cells. But the most significant difference between the two populations was in their genes.

"Out of more than 17,000 different genes in one part of the brain, we identified 36 genes that may play a role in predisposition to physical activity motivation," Roberts noted.

It remains to be seen, of course, whether such a gene exists in humans and how crucial it might be.

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**Lawyers help people fill out living wills at nursing homes**

By Blythe Bernhard bbernhard@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8129

Helen Henzler filled out a living will on Wednesday because she wants to make sure her end-of-life wishes are followed.

“I don’t want to live after I’m dead mentally,” said Henzler, 85, of Lemay. “I’m trying to protect myself.”

Henzler participated in a free service offered at nursing homes across St. Louis as part of National Healthcare Decisions Day. Attorneys donated their time to help residents, staff and family members fill out and certify advance directive documents that were provided by the Missouri Bar.

Advance directives are legal documents that designate power of attorney and end-of-life treatment preferences also known as a living will. Most people don’t think about the decisions until after they experience a heart attack, serious accident or other life-threatening event. Fewer than one-third of Americans are thought to have completed the legal documents.

The documents allow for the designation of a decision-making representative and two alternatives if a patient loses the ability to communicate. Another section indicates what measures should or shouldn’t be taken to prolong life, including feeding tubes, ventilation and surgery. The forms also include questions about autopsy, organ donation and medical research after death.

The event Wednesday was also sponsored locally by the University of Missouri, which received a $15 million federal grant to study ways to reduce repeat hospital visits among nursing home residents. Living wills are particularly important during transitions from nursing homes and hospitals.

“What sometimes happens is that people get transferred from the hospital to a skilled nursing facility or vice versa, and the communication about their advance directive doesn’t follow them,” said Colleen Galambos, a professor of social work at the University of
Missouri who helped organize the clinics. “They get treatment they don’t want or don’t get
treatment they said they wanted. The conversations have to be continuous.”

Mike Roth, president of Alexian Brothers Sherbrooke Village in south St. Louis County, said he wanted to
host an advance directive event as part of the skilled nursing facility’s end-of-life programming.

“It’s very much needed, and it’s not understood very well,” Roth said. “Nobody wants to face those issues.”

Roth encouraged employees to participate as well. Linda Amoroso, life enrichment coordinator at the
facility, said she has seen families try to make decisions in crisis situations and wanted to make it easier
for her children by filling out the documents.

Amoroso worked at a now-closed local hospital where Christine Busalacchi stayed. Busalacchi was in a
persistent vegetative state after a 1987 car accident. Her father battled the state of Missouri for years to
have her feeding tube removed. She died in 1993 after then-attorney general Jay Nixon said the state
would stop pursuing the case.

“Nobody wins in that fight,” Amoroso said.

Tiffany Nelson, an advanced practice nurse at Sherbrooke Village, served as a witness for people signing
their advance directives. She said the documents can relieve feelings of guilt for grieving families because
the end-of-life decisions have already been made.

“It’s hard for families,” Nelson said. “They want to do the best for their loved ones but they don’t know
what the best is.”

Galambos said it’s important for families and health care providers to normalize
discussions about death by easing into them until it becomes more comfortable.

“We look at making a discussion about what you want for your life to be part of the normal
process of health care,” she said. “If all of a sudden the family is called to the ER because
mother has a heart attack, that’s a very difficult time to start making these decisions.”

A crucial part of the process is designating power of attorney, or an agent to carry out the living will, said
attorney Brigid Fernandez of Martha C. Brown and Associates, who helped find the 15 lawyers who
volunteered locally.

“Everyone hopes that they’re able to communicate their needs until the very end, but it doesn’t always
happen that way,” Fernandez said. “It’s important to start the conversation and educate people about
their options.”
Fossil embryos ‘frozen’ for 500 million years

Posted by Jeff Sossamon-U. Missouri on April 16, 2014

The Cambrian Period was a time when most phyla of marine invertebrates first appeared in the fossil record. Also called the “Cambrian explosion,” this era’s fossil record provides glimpses into evolutionary biology when the world’s ecosystems rapidly changed and diversified.

Most fossils show the organisms’ skeletal structure, which may or may not give researchers accurate pictures of these prehistoric organisms.

Now, researchers have found rare, fossilized embryos they believe were undiscovered previously. Their methods of study may help with future interpretation of evolutionary history.

“Before the Ediacaran and Cambrian Periods, organisms were unicellular and simple,” says James Schiffbauer, assistant professor of geological sciences at the University of Missouri.

“The Cambrian Period, which occurred between 540 million and 485 million years ago, ushered in the advent of shells. Over time, shells and exoskeletons can be fossilized, giving scientists clues into how organisms existed millions of years ago. This adaptation provided protection and structural integrity for organisms.

“My work focuses on those harder-to-find, soft-tissue organisms that weren’t preserved quite as easily and aren’t quite as plentiful.”

Schiffbauer and his team, including Jesse Broce, a doctoral student in the geological sciences department, are studying fossilized embryos in rocks that provide rare opportunities to study the origins and developmental biology of early animals during the Cambrian explosion.

Broce collected fossils from the lower Cambrian Shuijingtuo Formation in the Hubei Province of South China and analyzed samples to determine the chemical makeup of the rocks.

Soft tissue fossils have different chemical patterns than harder, skeletal remains, helping researchers identify the processes that contributed to their preservation. It is important to
understand how the fossils were preserved, because their chemical makeups can also offer clues about the nature of the organisms’ original tissues, Schiffbauer says.

“Something obviously went wrong in these fossils,” Schiffbauer says. “Our Earth has a pretty good way of cleaning up after things die. Here, the cells’ self-destructive mechanisms didn’t happen, and these soft tissues could be preserved.

“While studying the fossils we collected, we found over 140 spherically shaped fossils, some of which include features that are reminiscent of division stage embryos, essentially frozen in time.”

The fossilized embryos the researchers found were significantly smaller than other fossil embryos from the same time period, suggesting they represent a yet undescribed organism. Additional research will focus on identifying the parents of these embryos, and their evolutionary position.

Schiffbauer and his colleagues published this and related research in a volume of the *Journal of Paleontology*.

The National Science Foundation funded the work.

MU alumnus Shawn Askinosie sweetens humanitarian efforts with chocolate business

BY ABBY KASS

COLUMBIA — *After 20 years as a successful criminal defense lawyer in Springfield, Shawn Askinosie knew he had to make a change.*

"I loved that, but I needed to love something else," the MU alumnus said Wednesday afternoon to a group at the MU School of Law, as attendees nibbled on samples of his chocolate.

So Askinosie embarked on a mission to find the perfect hobby. He first attempted grilling, then baking cupcakes.
"I made thousands of cupcakes. I thought that might be my future," Askinosie said. 

But they weren't quite right for Askinosie. Through his daily prayers, he realized he wanted to be a chocolate maker.

Now eight years after his decision, Askinosie has created a successful chocolate business that sells to thousands of stores worldwide. Askinosie Chocolate works directly with farmers around the world to produce the highest quality chocolate while supporting the people who make its ingredients.

**Direct involvement**
Unlike most chocolates that have a long list of ingredients, Askinosie's line is composed of almost entirely cocoa beans and sugar. But instead of buying his beans from a distributor, Askinosie buys directly from the farmers in the Philippines, Tanzania, Honduras and Ecuador.

In order to get the best chocolate, Askinosie wanted to develop a relationship with the people growing the beans and help them develop the best-tasting bean.

"You can tell more about what the beans are going to taste like by looking at it than if I were to put it in my mouth," he said. Directly trading and importing beans is the biggest and most rewarding challenge of his business, he said.

"The thing about the law is the case ends at some point," Askinosie said. "But business never ends. There's no verdict."

Every farmer and employee not only benefits from the sale of the bean, but also from the profits the company makes.

This principle, which Askinosie adopted from the Open-Book Management system, includes every employee in a profit share. When Askinosie returns to the farms, he translates his financial statements and calculates the farmer's share of the company's profit in front of them.
"I thought it was important too for everyone to understand the financials of the business," he said.

Once Askinosie buys the beans, they are shipped back to his store in Springfield. From there, they are roasted, ground up and made into chocolate bars at the store. Along with dark and white chocolate, Askinosie Chocolate makes "CollaBARation" bars that have different foods added to the chocolate, including one with black licorice and Anise seed, and another with Ancho chile and pistachios.

**Humanitarian Efforts**

The Missouri Hotel, the largest homeless shelter in Springfield, is only one block from Askinosie's shop. Askinosie works with the kids who live in the shelter, teaching them about being a global citizen and solving world problems through business.

"By the end of the year, I want (the students) to feel like they're part of the business," Askinosie said.

Another part of Askinosie's business is the Bean to Bar immersion program, part of his company's Chocolate University, which teaches kids of all ages about global business. Through a partnership with Drury University, every year, 12 outstanding high school students spend a week at the university learning about cocoa beans before visiting Tanzania with Askinosie.

"The students get a front row seat to business transactions," Askinosie said.

Allison Yoakam, now a freshman at MU, was part of the second Bean to Bar immersion program. She heard about it through promotions in her high school and was interested in a chance to travel to Africa.

"I enjoyed working with the school and the kids," Yoakam said. "I latched on to the business aspect of it."

Since her trip, Yoakam has stayed in contact with Askinosie. She has even started a scholarship fund, [Kyela Student Foundation](https://kyela.org) to sponsor education for Tanzanian children.
While in Tanzania, the students are not just business tourists, but they also raise money to help the community. During previous trips, they have helped provide a clean water supply, raised money to buy textbooks for local schools and supported Empowered Girls, which teaches girls self-confidence and self-worth.

Askinosie knew that his work, in his business and humanitarian efforts, would be a success when one of the students on the Bean to Bar immersion trip sent a text message to his mom about how much the trip meant to him.

"I didn't need a study to tell me, when a 17-year-old guy says that, 'This is the best day of my life,' I'm on to something," Askinosie said.

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**Column: MU has many LGBT pride points, still room to improve**

By Shannon Greenwood

We are in the heart of Pride Month at MU, and we certainly have a lot reasons to be proud.

Our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students have made strides so impactful in the past year alone that they have changed our university in ways that will last long after they have graduated.

In the fall, Josie Herrera, a genderqueer senior, ran for homecoming king and brought a wave of inclusivity to our campus and returning alumni. Shane Stinson, a transgender junior, chose to openly document his transition and has used the media as a means of starting a conversation about what it means to be transgender. Michael Sam made history with his decision to come out right before the NFL combine, which put him on course to become the NFL’s first openly gay player.

And of course there is everyone in between — the first-time performers in the “Let’s Get Loud” Drag Show, the veteran participants in Queer Monologues, the MU LGBTQ Resource Center staff, the Catalyst Award winners and the Lavender Graduation seniors — who have all helped make our university the most inclusive it has ever been.

Buzzfeed even took notice and wrote an article titled “9 Ways Mizzou Stands With Sam,” which lists the things we should be proud of — Herrera, Stinson, Sam, an LGBT-specific Alternative
Spring Break, LGBT-identified Missouri Students Association and Panhellenic Association presidents, a student body that defends its own and a university more than willing to lead change.

But reading over that list, I cannot help but notice all the things still missing.

Gender identity is not included in our school’s nondiscrimination policy, and gender-neutral housing, which would greatly impact our transgender and queer students, remains unavailable. Our updated course evaluation forms reveal our school’s apparent lack of education on the transgender community. There is still no easy way for gender non-conforming students to change their name on myZou.

The Stand With Sam rally saw thousands of students link arms in solidarity, but the Facebook event choose to focus on school spirit more than LGBT inclusion. And even Buzzfeed’s list of ways we stood together doesn’t necessarily offer an accurate reflection of how Missouri treats its LGBT-identified students.

The reason I keep pushing the boundaries of Missouri’s inclusivity because I can see all the potential our university has if I keep doing so — if we strive to be not only the most welcoming school for LGBT students in the Southeastern Conference but in the nation. All we have already done shows we certainly have the means, now we just need to solidify the way. And hopefully, in a year’s time, when we are celebrating Pride Month once more, we can look back and have even more reasons to be proud.

FROM READERS: Peace Studies offers look at Vietnam protests

Thursday, April 17, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY JOHN KULTGEN/MISSOURIAN READER

John Kultgen is an MU philosophy professor and co-president of the Friends of Peace Studies.

When I joined the University of Missouri faculty in 1967, demonstrations against the Vietnam War were occurring on college campuses across the country as the draft interrupted the education of many young men. Things were relatively quiet at MU until the killings at Kent State and Jackson State aroused large demonstrations by students. Faculty were involved in an advisory capacity and helped assure that the demonstrations would be peaceful and would not interfere with class attendance by students who did not participate.
I did not take part in the demonstrations but was interested in them. I had been active in the civil rights movement during my tenure at Southern Methodist University in Dallas through my membership in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in collaboration with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). I remained a member of ACLU and AAUP when I came to Missouri and in that capacity I was asked to address two rallies on the campus to protest restrictions and penalties imposed by the university administration on the demonstrators and to urge it to respect the rights of assembly and speech of all students and faculty.

Time has shown that the demonstrators were right about the war. They helped persuade the nation to change its policies and in the process moved the university to establish more effective guarantees of the right of students and faculty to express their political views freely on campus. The demonstrations contributed to my own decision several years later to become involved in the Peace Studies Program on campus, develop a course in Philosophies of War and Peace, and devote many of my publications to issues of peace and justice. I also participated in the Arts and Science Peace Studies policy committee for many years and am now active in the Friends of Peace Studies, a community group which provides funds for public programs on campus.

All of this is to explain why I am looking forward to a program to be offered on campus by Peace Studies:

Vietnam War Protests @ Mizzou: The Legacy of the Kent State and Jackson State Killings. Monday, April 21, 7:30-9:00 p.m. 18 Tucker Hall (free and open to the public).

The program will explore the long term impact of the anti-Vietnam demonstrations on the university, Columbia and Missouri. A panel composed of faculty members who participated in the demonstrations, Bill Wickersham and Paul Wallace, and two scholars who have studied their effect, Musa Ilu and Curtis Edwards, will discuss what the demonstrations and student action groups at the time of Vietnam accomplished. After remarks by the panel, the audience, especially anyone who was involved in the 1970 demonstrations, will be invited to share thoughts and experiences.