MU community creates profile for next provost

By Kevin Modelski

COLUMBIA — MU community members said in an open forum they want to fill the open provost position with someone who will connect personally with MU’s faculty, staff and students, sustain the university’s interdisciplinary research and promote underrepresented voices.

Consultants from the Isaacson, Miller search firm met with members of the MU community Wednesday evening in the Bond Life Sciences Center to create a position profile of the type of person the university community wants to become the next provost.

The provost, also known as the executive vice chancellor for academic affairs, oversees all academic activities and policies. Former MU Provost Brian Foster retired in December. As chief academic officer, the provost has traditionally been the second-ranking administrative position on campus.

Consultants from the Boston-based firm sought opinions on what the incoming provost’s objectives, goals, qualifications and personal qualities should be.

Increasing student and faculty interest

When MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin arrived on campus earlier this year, Nancy West, director of the MU Honors College, said it was clear that Loftin was an advocate for students. She said she wants to view the provost in a similar, but different fashion.

"I picture the provost as someone who carries himself as a faculty advocate," West said. "We need someone to boost morale in disciplines that are under siege, such as the humanities."
Student representatives from the Missouri Students Association's Senate Committees provided insight on student issues.

"It’s important we don’t lose the student perspective as well," MSA academic affairs chairman Ben Vega said.

Jordan Bruening of MSA's Senate Committee said he’d like the provost to understand how students see faculty tenure.

"We’ve all had a teacher that has had tenure, and they weren’t necessarily the greatest teacher out there," Bruening said. "While that doesn’t mean they’re of any less value to the university, that would make it a lot better for students. We are paying to take that class, and somebody who isn’t a great teacher makes us feel we aren’t getting our money’s worth."

**Jack Schultz, director of the Bond Life Sciences Center, said the new provost should be invested in interdisciplinary research and communication skills, regardless of his or her professional background.**

"We need to be working together in new ways to get ahead," he said. "We need someone who knows how to bring people together."

**Promoting the underrepresented**

**James Cogswell, MU’s director of libraries, said he has a different idea of what the new provost should be. He said he wants to see female representation in the open position.**

"I can only say that in a lot of the meetings I attend, the testosterone level is quite high," Cogswell said. "I know the search committee cannot actively exclude anybody based on gender. I think it will be a good thing for this campus."

**Linda Blockus, MU director of undergraduate research, said she envisions a provost who understands the importance of staff members who work at the university.**

"Staff members get left behind." Blockus said. "Many staff members play an important role in success of this institution."

**For the future**
Judy Wall, curators' professor of biochemistry, molecular microbiology and immunology, is the leader of the MU search committee who will meet with Isaacson, Miller to create the position profile and a list of candidates. After the search committee has reviewed and approved the profile, the firm will share it with prospective candidates, Wall said. Wall said there is no set timetable regarding the naming of a candidate.

White House panel’s campus sexual assault report coincides with changes at University of Missouri

By ASHLEY JOST

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm

A White House task force charged with addressing sexual assault on college campuses released its first report Tuesday, including a few suggestions the University of Missouri is already addressing.

The task force report included a frequently-asked-questions document from the Department of Education and Office of Civil Rights with expanded guidance to colleges and universities on Title IX and sexual violence. The Office of Civil Rights released a letter to campuses in 2011 that addressed these issues, but without the new report’s level of detail.

Universities have some authority to interpret Title IX, which University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe recently used to tighten the way sexual violence is addressed on campuses.

"We appreciate the guidelines and recommendations that have resulted from the White House task force on sexual assault, which the University of Missouri System will utilize as another resource to help us improve the education, reporting and prevention of sexual assault on our four campuses," Wolfe said in an emailed statement. "Along with our own sexual assault and mental health resources task force, the executive order I issued strengthening our Title IX reporting policies, and the independent counsel’s report, the task
force report will help us ensure the safety and security of all students, faculty and staff on our campuses."

Two weeks ago, the University of Missouri heard from an independent counsel what it should have done to address the case of Sasha Menu Courey, who was allegedly raped in 2010 before she committed suicide in 2011. When administrators found out about Menu Courey's alleged rape after she was already dead, there was no university or campus policy that mandated they report it, according to the Dowd Bennett Law Firm that the Board of Curators hired to investigate how the university handled Menu Courey's situation.

Days before the Dowd Bennett report came out, Wolfe announced he would make every university employee a mandated reporter under Title IX, with the exception of those who are protected under confidentiality law.

Title IX is most often mentioned in the context of women's sports, but it covers a wide range of other activities.

New guidelines from the Office of Civil Rights say that a mandated reporter, or "responsible employees," is anyone "who has been given the duty of reporting incidents of sexual violence or any other misconduct by students to the Title IX coordinator or other appropriate school designee," among other qualifications.

The White House report included additional recommendations, such as a campus climate survey, which UM System officials said is being considered as part of the existing task force on sexual assault and mental health issues work.

Other recommendations included on-campus resources for victims, bystander intervention and training for employees, items MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is reviewing.

Promise Unfulfilled?

Students hope Title IX complaints will transform colleges’ response to sexual misconduct. So far the process has rarely met their expectations.
NO MENTION

In a recent surge of demands that colleges step up their response to rape, students have put their faith in the federal civil-rights law known as Title IX.

Meant to prohibit sex discrimination, the law requires colleges to investigate and resolve reports of sexual misconduct—including assault—whether or not the police are involved. It has inspired the name of an informal national network of self-described survivors (the IX Network) and a grassroots campaign to end sexual violence on campus (Know Your IX). Two women who filed a federal complaint against their university last year, alleging that it mishandled their cases, had the law’s Roman numerals tattooed on their ankles.

Since then, students and alumni around the country have filed dozens of complaints with the U.S. Department of Education—against the Universities of Chicago, of Colorado, and of Texas-Pan American, as well as Harvard—faulting institutions for inadequate responses to reports of rape and asking federal authorities to scrutinize campus policies.

But the power and influence that students attribute to Title IX to transform how colleges handle sexual assault might be more than the law’s enforcement process can deliver. A Chronicle analysis of Title IX complaints filed with the Department of Education shows that from 2003 to 2013, fewer than one in 10 led to a formal agreement between federal and college officials to change campus policies.

That fraction reveals a process that, for all the hope students place in it, can be fraught with confusion and conflicting expectations, and often brings unsatisfying outcomes. In the 10-year span, about three-quarters of Title IX complaints involving alleged sexual harassment, a category that includes assault, were dismissed or administratively closed. Sometimes that was because a student didn’t provide consent for an investigation, or filed the complaint after too much time had passed.

Yet the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights receives more Title IX complaints each year. The number of complaints against colleges involving alleged sexual violence has tripled since the office began tracking them, from 11 in the 2009 fiscal year to 33 in just the first half of 2014. Complaints of sexual harassment represent a growing share of all Title IX complaints: nearly 30 percent in the 2012-13 academic year, the Chronicle analysis shows.

Students who fault their institutions for mishandling reports say that filing a federal complaint can be a catharsis. They are telling their stories—and seeking justice. The appeal of the process, they say, is that it allows them to apply public pressure, hold colleges accountable, and push for change beyond their own experiences.

As the movement against sexual assault on campuses has gained momentum, the Obama administration has raised the bar on expectations for colleges. On Tuesday, a White House task force
released a set of stringent guidelines meant to help colleges combat rape on campus, and unveiled a website, NotAlone.gov, to provide victims with a "road map" in filing complaints.

White House officials are taking a closer look at the Title IX enforcement process, too. The administration has declared that federal agencies will work together in a more coordinated fashion to ensure that colleges follow the law. And they'll be more transparent in their efforts, sharing key documents and data with the public on the new website.

These promises come as students and college officials alike are questioning how the enforcement process works, and for whom.

Students say that the law lacks teeth, and that its enforcement tilts toward helping colleges comply with the law rather than punishing them. Some victims of assault say they see parallels between how colleges treat alleged perpetrators and how the Office for Civil Rights treats colleges: trusting that all parties acted in good faith and will do what’s right in the future.

Despite existing federal guidance, campus officials say they want a clearer sense of their legal obligations under Title IX before they, too, get hit with complaints from students or a "compliance review" by the department. Many colleges are hiring new staff—Title IX coordinators in particular—and turning to a burgeoning market of legal and risk-management consultants for help interpreting those obligations in practical terms.

Catherine E. Lhamon, the department’s assistant secretary for civil rights, believes Title IX has great potential to show colleges how they can improve the way they deal with sexual misconduct.

Enforcing the law, she says in an interview, can’t erase past trauma. "But we can say, 'This shouldn’t happen again in the future, and here are the steps to make sure those things don’t happen again.’ I’m a believer in the value of holding people to a promise about what they will deliver."

In the fall of 2012, Angie Epifano published a first-person account of her rape by a fellow student at Amherst College, where campus officials, she said, had brushed off her report. The article went viral.

Around the same time, Andrea L. Pino, a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who said she was assaulted there that year, was reading up on federal law, including colleges’ obligations under Title IX. Students aren’t aware of this, she thought. We don’t know Title IX guarantees us protection.

Ms. Pino soon linked up with Annie E. Clark, a recent graduate who also felt that university officials had not responded properly to her report of rape. In January 2013, the two joined several other women in filing a federal complaint and then got the "IX" tattoos. Elsewhere, other students were also soon drafting complaints against their institutions: Occidental College, the University of Southern California, the University of Connecticut.

"We can say, 'This shouldn't happen again in the future, and here are the steps to make sure those things don't happen again.'"
For many students, filing a federal complaint under Title IX seems like the best available option. The criminal-justice system can seem daunting, and prosecutors often decline to pursue cases involving one party's word against another. In civil lawsuits, courts generally adhere to a narrower interpretation of colleges' obligations under Title IX than the Education Department does.

Connected with one another by social media and a shared sense of urgency, sexual-assault victims on dozens of campuses have placed Title IX at the center of their strategy for change. Ms. Clark and Ms. Pino, presiding over the IX Network, the national alliance, have traveled around the country to meet with students and help many of them file complaints, too.

Several months after publishing her account, Ms. Epifano, who had left Amherst, learned that the college had hired a legal team to look into her allegations and a host of grievances that surfaced from other victims. Amherst had strong policies in place, the team concluded. But in some cases, like hers, those procedures hadn’t worked very well.

Jarred by the findings, which she interpreted as an attempt to characterize her case as an "outlier," Ms. Epifano began thinking that she might file a federal complaint. She had heard about Title IX’s promise, and also its flaws. In November 2013, she and an Amherst alumna jointly filed a 113-page federal complaint against the college.

Nearly six months later, Ms. Epifano is hopeful but realistic. For her, the outcome of the process is not the only value of filing.

"Maybe nothing comes from my Title IX complaint or any other Title IX complaint," she says. What matters is that it’s out there, she says, bearing a message to other students: "You don’t have to be silent."

Shifts in policy and politics, meanwhile, have opened the door to complaints. Education Department guidance in 2001 increased colleges’ responsibility to recognize and act upon reports of sexual misconduct; another round of guidance a decade later set a new, lower standard of evidence for campus sexual-assault cases and reminded institutions, in firm language, that they must investigate and resolve all reports.

When Ms. Lhamon was tapped to lead the Office for Civil Rights in June 2013, campus sexual assault had already begun to draw national attention. Almost a year into her tenure, it has become a marquee issue for the Obama administration.

Catherine Lhamon, assistant secretary of education for civil rights, urges colleges to act quickly to update their policies on sexual assault and improve the climate for victims. "I know we can do that together," she says.

"Colleges and universities can no longer turn a blind eye or pretend rape and sexual assault don’t occur on their campus," Vice President Joseph R. Biden said on Tuesday during the release of the latest guidelines for colleges. "Everybody has a responsibility to act, from college presidents to college students."
Two Democratic senators who pushed this year to reform the way the military handles sexual assault within its ranks have also taken notice. Before the White House released its report, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, of New York, and Sen. Claire McCaskill, of Missouri, called for additional funds for the Office for Civil Rights to expand its work on campus sexual violence.

Ms. Lhamon, meanwhile, has visited OCR’s 12 regional offices, given speeches at think tanks and colleges, and invited campus officials to share their questions and concerns. However, absent additional funds, she is leading an office that has been asked to do more with less.

Responsible for enforcing several civil-rights laws in educational settings, the office has 27 percent fewer staff members today than it did 20 years ago, to field three times as many complaints.

Ms. Lhamon acknowledges that the Office for Civil Rights expected an increase in complaints when it issued its policy guidance in 2011. Despite the heavier workload and smaller staff, she is working on new processes, she says, that allow for timely, "fulsome" investigations. The office now tries to "step back" from a particular complaint against a college, she says, and determine whether broader patterns of noncompliance exist. How has the institution responded to other, similar incidents? Does a hostile environment exist?

The message Ms. Lhamon and her office send to colleges is alternately collaborative and tough. In February, at a gathering of about 250 college presidents, Title IX coordinators, and student-affairs leaders at the University of Virginia, she urged them to act quickly to update their policies on sexual assault and improve the climate for victims. "I know we can do that together," she said. "And I also know that if you don’t want to do it together, I will do it to you."

Whether the civil-rights office investigates a complaint or initiates its own compliance review, it may work with campus officials to draw up a "resolution agreement" detailing how a college must change its policies. The agency may also issue a "letter of findings" after concluding an investigation.

Sometimes those two documents leave college officials wondering if they’re being punished or shown a way forward.

At Tufts University, perceived contradictions between a resolution agreement and a letter of findings led to a public standoff in April with the Department of Education. Tufts withdrew from a binding agreement after learning that the agency would include in a forthcoming letter of findings that the university was in violation of Title IX.

"I felt that I was sort of misled," said Mary R. Jeka, the university’s senior vice president and general counsel.

"We were working on the situation before us at our university. We weren’t trying to solve the rest of the world’s problems."

In another case, at the University of Montana at Missoula, officials from the Departments of Education and Justice—which jointly investigated the university’s handling of rape allegations against football
players—praised the ensuing agreement as a "blueprint" for colleges to prevent sexual harassment and assault.

Such agreements are specific to institutions and not technically directives from the Education Department meant for all colleges to follow. "But you’d be a fool not to be guided by them," says Peter F. Lake, a law professor and director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University College of Law. "That’s a confusing message for anybody to hear."

The enforcement process can mystify even colleges in the midst of an investigation. In Montana’s case, federal officials said they would produce two documents: a letter of findings and a resolution agreement specifying steps for the university to take to comply with federal law.

For several months, administrators collaborated with federal officials to craft the agreement, which codified many practices that Montana had recently put in place and also laid out new ones: developing a confidential tracking system for reports of sexual misconduct, for instance, and conducting annual "climate surveys" to gauge students’ familiarity with the process.

But university officials didn’t see the Department of Justice’s 31-page letter of findings until just before it was released. "We were in what I felt was a difficult position of signing off on a resolution agreement without ever seeing the findings," says Royce C. Engstrom, the university’s president.

There were other surprises, like the government’s use of the term "blueprint" to describe the policies set forth in Montana’s agreement as a model for colleges across the country.

One provision in particular, defining sexual harassment, sparked protests from civil-liberties advocates. Ms. Lhamon later said the settlement applied only to Montana and did not represent the official policy of the Departments of Education or Justice.

Royce Engstrom, president of the U. of Montana at Missoula, says university officials had to sign off on a federal agreement before knowing the full results of the government's investigation.

Mr. Engstrom shared that view. "We were working on the situation before us at our university," he says. "We weren’t trying to solve the rest of the world’s problems. We weren’t trying to put in place something that we felt applied to other institutions."

Resolution agreements often create more confusion than clarity for other colleges trying to understand their obligations under Title IX, says Brett A. Sokolow, chief executive of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, a consulting group and law firm. Federal officials "wait until the college screws up, they write a letter, they call it a ‘blueprint,’ and nobody knows what they are supposed to do," he says.

So they turn to him—and many other consultants who, offering training sessions and webinars, profess to have the answers. Mr. Sokolow’s Association of Title IX Administrators, for instance, offers a free sexual-misconduct model policy.
"This policy has helped hundreds of campuses as they strive to comply with Title IX ...," the website states. "Let it help yours."

As complaints have proliferated, word is getting around among students that the process can be taxing. For the 16 percent of sexual-harassment complaints that the agency fully investigates, resolution takes, on average, almost nine months. And only one in 10 of those investigations ends with a finding that a college was in violation of Title IX. In addition to the long period of waiting and uncertainty, some students say, there is plenty of legal and policy jargon to decipher, often without the help of a lawyer. Occasionally, filing a complaint requires difficult conversations with investigators about the details of an assault and its aftermath.

It can also mean not having a say in the final outcome. Alexandra Brodsky, a Yale University law student who was an undergraduate when she and 15 students and alumni filed a Title IX complaint against the university in 2011, says they were surprised and disappointed to realize that they wouldn’t be at the negotiating table as the Education Department and the university crafted a resolution agreement.

"We were a group of people who felt that we had been betrayed by an institution we had trusted," she says. "Then, to resolve that, we put our faith in another institution that betrayed us."

The resolution agreement in the Yale case called, among other things, for the university to conduct periodic assessments of the campus climate on sexual misconduct, and praised the university for "proactively" introducing new policies to create a safer, more supportive environment. The agreement did not, however, "constitute an admission that the University is not in compliance with Title IX," it stated. When it was announced, Ms. Brodsky says, Yale was able to frame that as a positive development. "It really halted the conversation," she says. "What most of the country heard was everything was fine in New Haven."

Sarah O'Brien, too, has doubts about the process. Ms. O'Brien, who graduated from Vanderbilt University in December, says she was assaulted in 2010. She filed a Title IX complaint against the university this past November, alleging that its response to victims of sexual assault was inadequate. The Office for Civil Rights is conducting a broader compliance review of the university.

Now, even as Ms. O’Brien leads campus workshops teaching students—male and female—about their rights under Title IX, she has left the IX Network and says she no longer advises students to file complaints under the law. Instead, Ms. O’Brien is pouring her energy into a nonprofit group she started to create an eventual home in Nashville where college-age victims of sexual assault can begin, as she puts it, a "healing journey."

Title IX enforcement is "a horribly broken process that needs to be re-evaluated," she says. "I don’t see these complaints making the changes that we want."
But the dozens of complaints now before the Education Department—and the heightened scrutiny from the White House—may spell change. Some complaints filed in this recent wave of activism have been pending for more than a year, and Ms. Lhamon says her staff is working to resolve them.

Student activists with the Know Your IX campaign, meanwhile, say they are encouraged by the White House’s new recommendations. But those steps, they said, still fall short, and don’t address a central tenet of students’ activism: that the Office for Civil Rights have the power to impose fines on colleges that run afoul of the law.

Ms. Brodsky, in particular, is troubled by flaws in the enforcement process and the low proportion of complaints that lead to change. She and other activists have pushed the Education Department to more forcefully compel colleges to comply with Title IX. They’d like to see the department involve complainants in negotiating resolutions, for example, and make public the names of institutions under investigation for alleged violations of the law. Ms. Brodsky is hopeful that such steps can achieve the kind of culture change that she and other victims want.

"There’s an incredibly affirming promise lurking in there," she says of Title IX. To students, especially survivors of an assault, she says, the law carries a weighty message: You have rights.

"We’re clinging to the promise," she says. "I don’t want to give up on Title IX."

MSU applauds call to survey students on sexual assault

SNL 6:32 a.m. CDT May 1, 2014

WASHINGTON – Mike Jungers, dean of students at Missouri State University in Springfield, said the White House's new proposal aimed at reducing rape on college campuses is full of promising initiatives.

Jungers and others focused especially on the benefits of one key proposal included in the recommendations, which were outlined Tuesday by a White House task force on campus sexual assault: a provision urging universities to conduct anonymous student surveys to measure the prevalence of sexual assault on campus and gauge student attitudes about such attacks.

One in five women are victims of sexual assault while in college, according to national estimates. But "we all know that sexual assault is severely underreported," Jungers said, and there's a lack of concrete data.
"It's just so apparent that we need to get a handle on the true extent of the problem," Jungers said.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., who has made this issue a priority, agreed that the "climate surveys" proposed by the White House are an important first step. She said they would help address two problems that prevent university leaders and policymakers from getting a handle on the real scope of campus rape.

First, many students don't want to report an attack for a variety of reasons -- because they blame themselves, they're afraid of being ostracized, they don't think the university will hold the perpetrator accountable. And second, McCaskill said, school officials are often reluctant to report rape statistics to federal officials.

"Acknowledging you have this problem is exposing your campus to negative publicity," McCaskill said, adding that such information could make parents worry about the safety of a school.

"If we can move toward a mandatory climate survey, then the universities are not going to be able to hide behind statistics that are not full and complete," McCaskill told reporters after attending Tuesday's White House unveiling of the report.

The survey provision was one in a series of recommendations unveiled by the Obama administration Tuesday in its effort to tackle the epidemic of sexual assault on college campuses. Vice President Joe Biden and other top officials highlighted elements of a 20-page report, the work of a task force on college sexual assault created by President Barack Obama in January.

The report said the federal government will also develop new sexual assault prevention strategies on college campuses and create new training programs to help university officials improve the way they investigate and adjudicate sexual assault cases.

On the climate surveys, the White House is calling on schools to conduct them voluntarily in 2015. Officials said they will explore legislative or administrative avenues to make the surveys mandatory in 2016.

"The first step in solving a problem is to name it and know the extent of it "" and a campus climate survey is the best way to do that,"" the task force report states. The report noted that providing such data can make a school look like ""a dangerous place,"" and ""a school might think it can outshine its neighbor by keeping its problem in the shadows."

But ""a school that is willing to get an accurate assessment of sexual assault on its campus is one that's taking the problem "" and the solution "" seriously,"" the report said.

Jungers said MSU would have to look at the details of the proposed survey, run it through the school's review board, and find the money to pay for surveying students.

"But yes, I would I want to see that survey done," he said. It could provide a more accurate picture of how many sexual assaults occur on campus, he said, as well as help to educate students about the problem of sexual assault.
There have been two recent reports of sexual assault on the MSU campus -- on March 30 and April 4. Jungers said there is no pressure at MSU to soft-pedal data on the school's sexual assault statistics.

Officials at Drury University and the University of Missouri at Columbia did not return calls for comment on Tuesday.

McCaskill is conducting her own survey with a slightly different focus. Through her post as chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, she has sent questionnaires to 350 colleges and universities asking how their schools handle sexual assaults--how such crimes are reported and investigated and how students are notified about available resources.

McCaskill turned her attention to this issue after pushing through a series of reforms to the way the military handles sexual assault.

She said the White House report is a "meaningful first step," but she wants to see a host of other steps, including stronger efforts to hold perpetrators accountable. "It's very important that colleges and universities understand they have a silent epidemic that's chewing away the character of education in this country," she said.

Parents raise concerns over closing of University Village day care center

BY HOPE KIRWAN

Naomi Clark, a doctoral candidate in the English department, began taking her children to the Student Parent Center in 2009. Over the past five years, Clark has completed her Master’s degree and will be getting her PhD this semester.

Clark said she would not have completed her degrees without the Student Parent Center and that many of her classmates feel the same way.

“The daycare has been really instrumental in making so many degrees possible, increasing retention and increasing the completion rate,” Clark said.
Clark said the Student Parent Center is a valuable resource because many graduate students begin their degrees while starting a family.

Other graduate students like Greg and Mimi Perreault have returned to school after already starting their careers and having children. The Perreaults are both doctoral students at the Missouri School of Journalism. They have one daughter, Evangeline, and another baby on the way.

“When I was applying to PhD programs, I applied to 11,” Greg Perreault said. “In talking to different faculty, there were a lot of things that came into play. We just saw that [the Student Parent Center] was an option here and it was definitely a selling feature for us.”

**But the daycare at MU was not just a convenience for the Perreaults.**

“It just made us feel like the University of Missouri had different priorities than some of the other places that we had looked at,” Mimi Perreault said. “It said ‘Families are a priority to us. We’re thinking about students who are coming from all different walks of life and time periods in their life.”

Greg Perreault said the availability of daycare is an important factor to attract professionals to return to school. He said the university benefits from these students because they are often utilized as professors for undergraduate classes.

However, these benefits may not be enough to offset the cost of the Student Parent Center. In an interview with the Columbia Tribune, MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university used $130,000 from student fees and the general operating budget to support the Student Parent Center.

While child enrollment fees for the center are not cheap (Naomi Clark estimates she spends about $6,000 per semester for her two children), Basi told the Tribune in March that these enrollment fees only cover about half of the daycare’s operating expenses.

In April, a group of students met with Chancellor Bowen Loftin to discuss the need for on-campus daycare. Clark was a part of that discussion and said Loftin seemed to be preparing parents for the worst.

“Instead of talking about his commitment to making some kind of on-campus daycare available, he reiterated the expense,” Clark said.

When MU announced it would close the center in June, the official release stated only 16 children of students were enrolled. But Mimi Perreault said this number doesn’t tell the whole story.

“We’re not the only family that has one kid there and there are two student parents,” Perreault said. “When you say the number 16 it doesn’t sound like a really big number but that could be 28 students who are producing four or five research projects for the university a year.”
Last year, the Student Parent Center served 47 children from 40 families. According to their 2013 annual report, 62% of these families were eligible for free or reduced price meals, which is a common indicator of low-income families.

Regardless of the numbers, Greg Perreault said he believed that closing the Student Parent Center will greatly affect a portion of the university’s students who are in need of support.

“This is a resource that really helped some of the most vulnerable,” Perreault said. “I’m thinking in particular of single moms. I’m thinking of international students who came here with a real deep need to have their kids watched so they can attend the world-class programs Missouri has to offer.”

After the official announcement of the daycare’s closing, the Family Friendly Campus Committee, a standing committee appointed by the chancellor, released a survey for MU students and faculty to record the need for childcare. The results of this survey were sent to Chancellor Loftin yesterday. Loftin is expected to make a decision in early May.

NO FUN, ALL JOY

BY CRYSTAL DUAN

APRIL 30, 2014

Students with children now face a wider range of obstacles due to the impending closure of the Student Parent Center. But for most, this bump in the road is just one of many that come with the rewarding struggle of being a parent.

The clothing is the first thing you see when walking into senior Danielle Walker’s apartment — a pink, mint green and black dress that partially covers the black cap and gown beneath it.

The outfits hang on her closet door, the dangling 2014 tassel visible even from a distance. Danielle will wear these outfits together when she walks across the graduation stage in a few weeks.
But first, she has to make it through the last stage of college: the dry weeks leading up to finals.

Tonight, she has placed her laptop on her bed, ready to view a two-minute news video for class, write a Blackboard blog post due at 11:59 p.m. and finish reading the BuzzFeed article currently filling her screen.

Like any other college student, Danielle has had her fair share of nightly assignments like these over the years. She’s sat in lecture halls, her hand cramping from extensive note-taking, her mouth occasionally indulging itself in a yawn, her eyes half-open relative to her concentration.

It has paid off — Danielle is set to graduate with a degree in interdisciplinary studies this spring.

It won’t be in psychology, like she originally planned, but that doesn’t mean she’s not on the road to success. She will be starting her master’s at MU, establishing a career with plenty of potential.

On the days Danielle is tired, the reasons are often the same as those of her peers.

She may have been up late studying to maintain the 3.0 GPA she currently has. She may have been engaged in one of many activities in the Columbia community in which she’s involved, which includes tutoring and mentoring underprivileged students preparing for their GEDs, as well as working as a Diversity Peer Educator.

But when Danielle is most tired, it’s usually because of her 3-year-old daughter, Janelle. When she’s happiest, it’s often also because of Janelle.

For every moment she’s worked her hardest, the efforts of which will culminate in her diploma this May, it has been for Janelle.

There’s a sparkly toy piano lying in the middle of the living room.

Attached to it is a pink microphone that, in place of actual melodies, produces scratchy feedback. It’s likely only music to the ears of whoever blows into it.
Janelle, a curly-haired toddler with a perpetual toothy grin, bounces into the apartment. She barely glances at her surroundings, the walls adorned with her pictures and the shelves stacked with her books and DVDs.

The piano and microphone are her focus, the object of her overwhelming enthusiasm.

Soon, the small apartment is filled with squeaky, amplified squeals and, most of all, Janelle’s overwhelming, larger-than-life presence.

Janelle is tall for her age. Janelle is perpetually wide-eyed. Janelle is articulate, with a curiosity to match her vocabulary. Danielle is currently trying to explain to her what “Eureka!” means, but Janelle will have to wait to hear back on that.

Tonight, Janelle is in a good mood. The biggest trial of the next few hours will simply be convincing her to take a bath, a task to which she eventually obliges.

But it’s not always easy for Danielle.

Danielle is reminded that tomorrow, Janelle might get sick. Janelle might fuss. Janelle might demand attention that Danielle can’t give. Janelle might be time-consuming and draining, an embodiment of the trials other college students see in their studies.

But Danielle also knows that Janelle is calming and refreshing. Janelle is thoughtful. She perceptively knows how to give love back — sometimes when Danielle is visibly stressed, Janelle invites her mother to lay her head in her little lap.

“If you’re having a crappy day, just be around Janelle for a couple of hours,” Danielle says.

Danielle is 24. Janelle will be 4 next month.

Danielle won’t have a graduation party. Janelle will have a birthday party, a celebration that Danielle has been busily planning in place of her own.

Both of them have fulfilling lives. Danielle just has to work to keep both in check.
It’s 5 p.m., and the Student Parent Center is quiet.

It’s going to be closed and torn down in June, in light of a collapse at the University Village apartment complex, which houses it. University officials and local news organizations know the SPC as the politically charged eye of the storm of university politics. Those who rally for MU to continue its day care services know it as an unjustifiably scarce resource.

Yet the kids, unaware of any brimming controversy, just know it as “school,” a place they stay until Mommy and Daddy come for them.

Families slowly emerge from the center. A little girl skips by, her father walking the slightest bit faster to keep up. Her friend calls to her from a swing, her mother pushing her skyward while huffing under her breath.

If there’s any hint of a figurative storm surrounding the physical facility, it’s the worry of the people that provide for these children.

“Hey honey, do you mind grilling the hamburgers right now?”

Waiting in the car outside the SPC, graduate student Naomi Clark is on the phone, her brow furrowed.

She is talking to her husband, Derrick, before going into the center to pick up their kids. The hamburgers are down in the freezer, she says, where she put them after preparing them that morning. If Derrick starts warming them up now, the children can eat as soon as they come home, making the rest of the evening go much more smoothly.

Naomi doesn’t get off easy when it comes to preparing a meal. Five-year-old Liberty and 20-month-old Barrett will eat what she eats, so instant ramen won’t cut it. Ensuring that dinner — an actual, complete meal — is ready by evening is yet another item on the list of many things she juggles every day.

That list stretches long most semesters to include the details involved in writing her doctoral dissertation, teaching undergraduate writing courses and working on Campus Writing Program projects. Yet Naomi doesn’t shirk from her responsibilities, especially those she has for children sitting at other dining tables.
Many an administrator knows Naomi as an MU child care activist — she speaks at public forums, sends strongly worded emails to university officials and passes out fliers in Speakers Circle, all urging people to support the continuation of university child care.

Naomi is graduating in May, taking a tenure-track assistant professor job at Loras College in Iowa. But she realizes the other children, who wave to her when she arrives at the center at 5 p.m. every evening, will soon have no place to go.

She says parents who cannot find — or afford — alternative options will be out of luck. They will soon have to schedule out every waking minute of the day, switch their majors or make other tiresome accommodations that can impede their careers if there is no SPC replacement.

But even as these parents leave classes and instructors behind, Naomi knows they'll never leave their kids behind.

With student parents like her, kids come first.

Danielle is separated from Janelle’s father, but Janelle goes to see him on occasion. Otherwise, Danielle primarily cares for Janelle.

By making meals for her daughter, Danielle has actually enhanced her own diet.

“It’s actually healthier for me too when Janelle’s around,” Danielle says, though some weekends, Janelle goes to Grandma and Grandpa’s house in St. Louis. “I eat (much less healthy) when I’m alone and she’s not around.”

Like Naomi, Danielle keeps her fridge stocked well with ingredients for at-home cooking. She buys healthy food in a manner counter to most college students’ diets, generally refraining from sweets.

Danielle is always conscious of setting a healthy example for Janelle. Dinner consists of green beans, white rice, salads, soup and baked chicken. In the mornings, making breakfast is the first thing on her mind, along with the secondary task of packing Janelle’s lunch for school.

Danielle didn’t get a spot in the SPC, so she takes Janelle to school at Green Meadows Preschool.
While Danielle sits in classes at MU, Janelle engages in activities such as painting pictures. Her artistic tendencies are reflected in the variety of handprint flowers that hang in her room.

Janelle’s active imagination also comes in handy other times. She enjoys “role playing” by herself, and while it’s too early to tell if she has a future in improvisational theater, Danielle can read into how people interact with Janelle based on how she imitates them.

“(Children) can imitate through play how they process a certain interaction or how people interact with them,” Danielle says. “I’ve seen Janelle pretend to be a chef, a CEO, an astronaut and a princess at the same time. It is amazing to watch her cognitive development and her creativity.”

As a result, “pretend time” provides Danielle with information outside parent-teacher conferences and school functions “Role playing gives me insight into her teachers,” she says. “I’ll see Janelle be firm with her stuffed animals, and I’ll ask, ‘Where did you learn that?’ And she says that is how one of her teachers talks sometimes.”

Danielle strives to be as involved in her daughter’s life as the other parents, even while she has studies and other tasks. One day, she was late to morning classes because she took extra time to fill Easter eggs with candy for a Green Meadows event.

Sometimes, when the preschool is closed — or simply when Danielle misses her — Janelle goes straight to school with Mommy.

Janelle is generally well-behaved, quietly napping or playing on her VTech tablet. People usually find her adorable. Stares only come when Janelle, in line with her 3-year-old self, fusses.

Otherwise, Danielle doesn’t broadcast the fact that she is a student parent. She maintains excellent attendance, gets good grades and generally doesn’t give any indicators that she has a little girl to prioritize.

“I’m really private about my personal life,” Danielle says. “It’s not like I’m like, ‘Hi, I’m Danielle and I have a 3-year-old daughter!’ Many professors were surprised (to find out) I even had a child.”
At a time when others were trying to figure out what they wanted to do with their careers, Danielle had to figure out what the next year alone would look like when she became pregnant at age 20, only a little while after she would have been labeled “that pregnant teen.”

Soon enough, bouts of morning sickness characterized each uncomfortable day. Danielle’s nose was consistently sensitive, her vomiting was constant and eventually she had to prioritize herself and the little girl she would soon have.

Danielle had to withdraw from all classes for fall 2009 and spring 2010, only returning in fall 2012. She didn’t enjoy leaving — Danielle liked going to class and working on her psychology degree. She was also as actively involved then as she is now, a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Express program and Legion of Black Collegians Senate.

Admitting defeat, however temporary, was not easy.

“I’m very competitive; I like being the best,” Danielle says. “At the time, it was really disheartening to see (everything) take a backseat to being pregnant.”

But now, Danielle thinks about it differently. As a self-proclaimed spiritual person, Danielle believes Janelle came into the world at exactly the right time.

She believes having Janelle in her 20s may actually be a better option for her. “I actually think, now, that it’s better (to establish) my professional career in my 30s,” she says. “Janelle will be older, more settled, when I finish school, which leads to a little more flexibility.”

As Naomi walks out of the center with Liberty and Barrett running ahead, she stops at the playground gate to talk to a fellow parent.

While her attention appears to be on the conversation, Naomi turns her body in the children’s direction.

Even while she has other matters to tend to, this attitude of kids-first, Naomi-later is consistent, especially throughout her mornings. The alarm clock goes off at 5 a.m., declaring the start of another morning of coffee and writing before Liberty and Barrett wake up.
“I know that once they’re up, they’ll want snuggles,” Naomi says. “They’ll say, ‘Mom, stop working, come play!’”

And then she won’t get any early morning work done.

The rest of the day entails an abundance of communication and compromises as she and Derrick alternate caretaking, or in her words, “relay parenting.”

Relay parenting extends past deciding who is picking up the kids from the SPC at 5 p.m. If Naomi’s doing laundry, Derrick will play with the kids. If Derrick wants to work out, Naomi will watch Liberty and Barrett.

Sometimes the differing needs of the individual children make for a “divide and conquer” approach, especially during the crucial bedtime period of 7 to 8 p.m.

“Once you settle one down, the other will want a drink of water,” Naomi says. “Some nights it goes back and forth ... like a see-saw.”

But the difficulties of caring for children can be balanced out. When Naomi comes home overwhelmed with all she needs to do, the children “give her perspective.” Their eagerness and innocence give her grounds to crack a tentative smile, reminding her that work isn’t the only thing important to her.

And Naomi knows the demanding days may pan out in time.

“I’m hoping that once I’m out of school, that we can actually be a family together,” she says of her upcoming May graduation. “And that we can spend more time doing fun things together — instead of so much relay parenting.”

On days when Naomi is on campus working in the Conley House as a graduate research assistant for the Campus Writing Program, she and Derrick drop the kids off at the SPC shortly before 8:30 a.m., leaving them there for the majority of the day.

Even when Naomi says she lost faith in the university’s ability to care for children in light of the University Village collapse, she continues to trust the staff she has come to know.
When they come home, Liberty will chatter about the nurturing influences of teachers like “Miss Emmy,” “Miss Jamie” and “Miss Stacy,” all of whom Naomi wants to retain jobs in the child care department.

Danielle is in support of Naomi’s cause. She also wants on-campus child care to continue, even though she didn’t experience the benefits firsthand.

Danielle says ease of access to continued on-site child care would make student parenting easier for all involved, and would even accommodate pregnant mothers deciding whether they will keep their children.

She and Naomi, along with several other parenting students, recently talked to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in a private meeting, where the chancellor revealed that he was also a student parent.

"My wife (Karin) and I had our first child as she was trying to complete her doctoral dissertation," Loftin said in an email. "Ultimately, we had a second child just prior to her receiving her Ph.D. It was a challenging time for both of us, but we worked together to take care of our children and were creative in finding appropriate child care for them."

Danielle hopes to inspire any curious students, regardless if they have children or not, to see the possibilities in balancing both roles.

“It was refreshing to see the chancellor has some personal experience,” she says. “I don’t want a message relayed that teenagers with kids can’t pursue education higher than community college. If someone has the drive to finish their degree, then resources should be allocated to help.”

Parenting is like taking an extra class at times — Danielle constantly has to do research. She has read books throughout Janelle’s development, noting when her daughter should have started crawling, walking, teething, talking.

Danielle’s also talking — talking to other student parents about how parenting in college works, even to those who do not want to keep their children because of a perceived misalignment with their goals.

“It’s a little disheartening,” she says. “Because it is doable.”
There were naysayers who weren’t exactly supportive of Danielle’s situation. She says her adviser told her to drop out of MU and go home to St. Louis.

The adviser didn’t think Danielle would be able to make it as a single mom and a student. She didn’t believe that Danielle’s ambition and determination, manifested in her academic goals and work ethic, would help her as a parent.

But Danielle has done it. In going through the worst, she has enhanced those skills and developed a routine for planning.

She is already eagerly anticipating her graduate studies at MU and thinking about the fall. Danielle and Janelle plan to move closer to campus and into a bigger house.

“I wanted Janelle to be away from the college town atmosphere,” she says of their current home, in which they have lived for three years. “The place I’m looking at now is in the Rock Bridge (area) ... for when Janelle goes to public school next year.”

Danielle doesn’t think Janelle will have siblings, considering she originally wasn’t even sure if she would have kids.

Regardless, Danielle does not regret any aspect of her journey with her daughter. She has taken curveballs one at a time, with the next one being balancing graduate school and an assistant position in the Multicultural Center.

The skills she’s learned from parenting will serve her well in this role, as they already have.

“I’ve learned to not take no for an answer, especially in social justice,” she says. “I also see that there are a lot of paths to solving a problem. It’s made me more creative with solutions and multitasking ... I’d say I’m more healthy and organized now.”

Most of all, student parenting has given Danielle perspective and helped her as far as character growth goes.
“This reconstructed my notion of what college life is about,” she says. “It gave me a greater perspective on how Janelle fits into it.”

Liberty doesn’t want cheese on the hamburger Naomi prepared for her. She wants ketchup, though.

Naomi wastes no time. She has that prepared too.

Barrett is crying at his high chair, gnawing on carrots in between gasping sobs. He wants to be heard.

“Shhhh, I know,” Naomi says.

Her tone is understanding in a way that overworked college students normally cannot maintain.

Even the small interactions, easily giving way to impatience, matter.

Making time for family is not easy. By the time the children are in bed at the end of a long day, Naomi says her brain is “usually fried.”

But the hard parts of parenting young children won’t last forever.

“Things are just here for a season,” Naomi says, feeding a carrot to Barrett. “You think it’s never going to be different. Leaving the house will always be this big production. But you adapt. The panic lessens. Things change, especially as their development progresses.”

Barrett is smiling in the next instant, cooing and clapping happily as if to illustrate Naomi’s point.

“Someone once said, ‘Parenting is no fun and all joy,’” she says, eyes tired but mouth crinkled.

Looking at her expression, it’s clear she believes just that.

“I need my chair,” Janelle suddenly proclaims. She’s rejected the piano and microphone, which sit downstairs. Now, in her room, she moves to sit in a Tinker Bell chair while unceremoniously pushing aside a Minnie Mouse doll.
Janelle boldly asserts her desires even in the realm of play. Stuffed animals are her own “babies,” which she feeds and puts to bed when she isn’t doing puzzles, playing Bingo or pretending to read books in a cramped corner adjacent to the wall.

Janelle plows through books within minutes. They have titles such as “Goodnight Moon” and “Chicka Chicka Boom Boom” in the collection Danielle is currently trying to teach her to read.

This summer will be devoted to meeting that goal. For now, Janelle continuously receives books in the mail, possessions she gets excited about as she stacks them in piles.

She plays by herself for a few minutes, paying no mind to Danielle, who simply watches from aside.

To perceive Janelle’s needs correctly, she must be quick to listen and slow to scold.

Both Danielle and Naomi have done a lot of that over the years. Regardless of age, putting someone else’s needs entirely before their own isn’t easy.

But when Janelle sings a scratchy rendition of “Let It Go” from the Frozen soundtrack into her pink microphone, Danielle displays her most patient side. She displays her most caring, most creative, most spontaneous sides.

She can wait for Janelle to come around on the matter of taking a bath. She can wait for Janelle to eventually understand why Mommy, head in lap, can’t always articulate her problems. She can even probably wait to read the BuzzFeed article.

But Danielle hasn’t waited to the point of missing out on having a fulfilling college career.

It’s just been fulfilling in a different way, she says. The responsibility of a child hasn’t diminished Danielle’s experience. If anything, she thinks it’s enhanced it.

“My undergraduate road has been the most challenging years of my life,” she says. “(But) Janelle has always belonged, and that has made all the difference.”
MU to recognize successful inventors

Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri will host an event to recognize faculty, staff or students whose research and entrepreneurship resulted in patents or royalties.

The ceremony will be from 7 to 9 a.m. tomorrow in the Columns Room of the Reynolds Alumni Center.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin; Hank Foley, MU senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies; and Steve Wyatt, MU vice provost for economic development, will all speak at the event.

"This event will recognize MU inventors who, as a direct result of their research, are creating impact through their contributions," Wyatt said in a statement. "The expectation is that in future years, we'll broaden our recognitions to encompass more of the economic development contributions by faculty, staff and students."

How Higher Education Policies Worsen Inequality

Author Suzanne Mettler says politics is failing higher education.

By Michael Morella May 1, 2014

Nearly three-quarters of students from families in the top income quartile get a college degree by age 24, but young adults among the bottom half of family earners lag far behind: Only 10 to 15 percent of them have completed degrees. In her new book, "Degrees of Inequality: How the Politics
of Higher Education Sabotaged the American Dream," Suzanne Mettler discusses how many changes in state and federal policies regarding education have only exacerbated inequality. Mettler, a professor of government at Cornell University, recently spoke with U.S. News about for-profit institutions' role in this divide and what policymakers can do to address the gaps. Excerpts:

What's your assessment of higher education today?

The United States as recently as a couple of generations ago was the international leader in terms of the percentage of young people who got four-year college degrees. But since that point in time, about 10 other nations have leapfrogged over us. While we have more students going to college than ever before, the college graduation rates are pretty unimpressive for people below the top quarter of the income spectrum. There are still plenty of people who go to college and are from less-advantaged backgrounds. They have real opportunity because of it. Yet for too many people who grow up in low- to middle-income backgrounds, they're not better off.

Why is this a political issue?

The fact that we are not managing to continue increasing the rate of college degree attainment across the income spectrum and ensuring that students are getting a quality education in college, particularly when they're funded by federal student aid, that's a political failure.

How do for-profit colleges come into play?

For-profit institutions are the most rapidly growing sector of American higher education. To their credit, these schools have managed to work outside of the box. The problem is that their outcomes appear to be quite poor. The vast majority of their students borrow to attend. Their graduation rates are very poor. Overall, this sector accounts for almost half of all student loan defaults. They're using now 1 in 4 federal student aid dollars, and yet they're serving students and American taxpayers poorly. They're not really expanding opportunity. At first blush it appears that they are because they take in mostly low-income students, but when you look at the outcomes, they're not producing.

What can lawmakers do to address this?

[For-profit colleges] are allowed to receive up to 90 percent of their revenues from the federal government. So they're very much subsidized by government. Because of that reason, and also for multiple other reasons, it's really the obligation of government to regulate them – to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent in a way that is a good investment and to make sure that the students that they recruit are actually receiving a valuable service.

What about private and public nonprofits?

I think the federal government needs to find ways to re-engage the states as partners in promoting higher education. In the 19th century, you had the federal government working hand in hand with states, giving them incentives so that they would develop their universities and colleges, and they responded in turn. It was happening through the middle of the 20th century. In the past few years, the federal government has actually invested quite a bit more in higher ed than it had for a long time, but the states are not following suit.
Could online education or community colleges serve as potential solutions?

There is great enthusiasm today for online education. It creates all sorts of new possibilities for teaching pedagogy and for reaching groups of people who are not traditional students. However, the enthusiasm for it is way out ahead of our understanding of best practices and what works well for learning. I think that community colleges are a big part of the solution, and that we ought to be investing much more in them. Borrowing to go to community colleges is very modest compared to what people borrow to attend for-profits.

How would you grade the Obama administration’s performance on higher ed?

The administration has actually done an exemplary job in the higher ed area in terms of student aid. Before Obama was elected, since 2007, we’ve seen the greatest increase in Pell Grants – their value in real terms – that we’ve had since the 1970s. Just before Obama was elected, Congress enacted the post-9/11 GI Bill, which was a big improvement. But the problem is that making changes in federal student aid alone is not sufficient. What’s very tragic to me is that now so much of that federal student aid money is going to the for-profit colleges … and it’s not being utilized well by those schools in terms of their outcomes. I would like to see different approaches that are more direct to students because they have a bigger impact.

HB 2122 would encourage donations to Missouri public colleges

By Joe Clougher

House Bill 2122 would match donations to university scholarship funds with state funding.

Though still on the legislative table, a bill sponsored by Rep. John Wright, D-Rocheport, would incentivize donations to public scholarship funds.

Existing state funding for higher education has declined by 30 percent since the 1990s, Wright said. To remedy that, House Bill 2122 would set aside $10 million every year to fully match private donations to public university and college scholarship funds, starting next year.

“Our state has been allocating more and more of its resources to different areas of state government by virtue of tax credits, as opposed to direct appropriations,” Wright said. “So if that is going to be part of the way that the state chooses to allocate its resources, I think it makes sense to allocate some of those resources to higher education, which is an area that has been underserved by the budget process over the last 15 years or so.”
So far, Wright said he has heard few negative responses from legislators and Missourians alike, and expects there to be bipartisan support for his bill when it comes up for vote.

Concern, though, was raised for smaller schools — colleges and universities that may not have donors as regular as those who patronize, among others, the University of Missouri System. As the bill’s appropriation would be capped at $10 million, the funds would be doled out on a first-come, first-served basis, potentially shutting out those smaller schools in favor of larger donation powerhouses.

But Wright said that his bill would provide new incentives for donors to any school, perhaps especially so for smaller ones.

“It’s encouragement for college development offices to get out and shake the trees within their own alumni networks,” Wright said. “It gives them a great selling point to their alumni networks, to say ‘hey, we’ve got a great opportunity here to magnify the impact of any contribution you might make to our scholarship programs.’”

**Tom Hiles, vice chancellor for university development and alumni relations, said he agreed.**

“My sense would be that if a donor already has an interest in philanthropy and has an interest in scholarships, this would have a great appeal,” Hiles said.

Though some donors may not know of Wright’s tax credit proposal, Hiles said the university intends to target a specific audience.

“Once we have the details, we would have the opportunity to market that to a certain group of donors who either traditionally support scholarships or we think would have an interest generally,” Hiles said.

**Last year, MU took in nearly $24 million in donations toward scholarship funds, Director of Advancement Services Tom Boren said in an email — a number that could crack $30 million should Wright’s bill become law.**

“We certainly encourage the legislature to consider this,” Hiles said.
Gay marriage at center of Missouri Republicans' bid to impeach governor

GOP lawmakers in Missouri on Wednesday are set to resume a hearing on a resolution to impeach Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon. It's a long-shot effort, but it amplifies their beef with the governor over an executive order dealing with gay marriage.

By Mark Guarino, Staff writer / April 30, 2014

Republicans in Missouri are trying to push through three efforts to impeach the governor in their state, a Democrat – a reflection of the polarized politics that has gripped the state since the 2012 election, when a GOP supermajority won control of the legislature.

A committee hearing on at least one resolution is set for Wednesday.

The impeachment bid is unlikely to succeed, say political watchers. Nonetheless, it will draw public attention to Gov. Jay Nixon's use of executive orders – especially one that cracks open the door to state recognition of gay marriage – and will give Missouri's GOP lawmakers an election-year platform for airing complaints about the governor's decisions.

Last week, Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee introduced a resolution to impeach Governor Nixon over his move last November to allow same-sex couples who were legally married in other states to file joint tax returns in Missouri. Nixon said the order aimed to comply with a US Supreme Court decision last summer that paved the way for same-sex couples to qualify for a broad array of federal benefits.

Republicans frame Nixon's move as a violation of the state constitution, which prohibits same-sex marriage. Last week, state Rep. Nick Marshall (R) told the Associated Press that Nixon had "usurped the people and their authority to determine their constitution and their restraints on government."

That resolution is one of three aimed at ousting the governor. The second resolution charges that Nixon did not fill vacant legislative seats in a timely manner, and the third alleges that he did not adequately punish public safety officials in 2013 for releasing to federal agents the names of thousands of Missouri gun owners who have conceal-carry permits.

Neither of the latter resolutions was heard last week, and it is not clear if they will be taken up during Wednesday's hearing.
Nixon dismisses the resolutions as politics as usual.

Republicans control both legislative houses in Missouri, but fewer than three weeks remain in the session. Impeachment requires a full House vote on a single article of impeachment, followed by a review and a trial by a panel of seven judges appointed by the state Senate to determine if the impeachment is justified.

The state constitution stipulates that elected officials can be removed from office only for “crimes, misconduct, habitual drunkenness, willful neglect of duty, corruption in office, incompetency, or any offense involving moral turpitude or oppression in office.”

Impeachment of statewide officeholders is rare in Missouri. A secretary of state was removed from office in 1994, and a state treasurer was impeached in the 1930s but not convicted.

The impeachment resolutions have no strong backing from the public and are merely tools for Republicans to “appeal to their conservative bases as primary season approaches and a way to go on record to object to some of the things the governor has done,” says Peverill Squire, a political scientist at the University of Missouri in Columbia. “They can push it as much as they want, but I don’t think there’s any political mileage.”

Nixon won reelection in 2012 and subsequently angered Republicans with his veto threat of a stalled “right to work” bill to curb labor’s organizational power in the state. Nixon also vetoed a broad tax-cut measure last year.

However, Nixon has also angered state Democrats, who say he did little to help state legislators in the 2010 and 2012 elections. “He does not have a lot of friends in the legislature, even among Democrats. He’s a fairly easy target,” Squire says.

Nixon is one of three Democratic governors in the US who currently serve alongside majority-Republican legislatures. By contrast, four Republican chief executives govern their states in concert with Democratic-led legislatures. The last governor to be impeached was Illinois’ Rod Blagojevich, a Democrat, in 2009, who has since been convicted of an array of federal corruption crimes and is serving time in federal prison.
MU Pride Parade attracts hundreds to support LGBTQ community
Wednesday, April 30, 2014 | 4:04 p.m. CDT
BY DOMINIQUE FELDMAN

COLUMBIA — More than 200 people marched across Francis Quadrangle on Wednesday afternoon, carrying rainbow flags and signs that read "MU Pride" and "Trans Rights Matter." As they briefly stopped in front of the MU Columns, the crowd broke into a loud cheer.

"Two, four, six, eight. Equality in every state."

Their words were among several cheers shouted out during Wednesday's MU Pride Parade, one of many annual Pride Month events sponsored and coordinated by the LGBTQ Resource Center.

"This is our biggest visibility-raising event," LGBTQ Resource Center Coordinator Struby Struble said. "We're here to show that we're supportive of our Tigers."

The parade started at noon outside the MU Student Center and ended at Tiger Plaza. Usually, 200 to 300 people attend the event, Struble said.

MU student Kelsey Burns came out to march in the parade as an ally of the LGBTQ community. A Chicago native, she said she is used to the enormous pride events in her hometown — in high school, she would go to events with her friends that drew thousands of people.

"Well, we are in the middle of Missouri," she said on Wednesday. "It's still up-and-coming here, so it's important to be here if you're a part of this movement."
COLUMBIA — Polite whispers, crossed legs and quiet hands had no place in MU’s Stotler Lounge on Wednesday. "This is not Sunday Mass," Dominique Christina said to the crowd before sharing her poetry.

She wanted hollers and palpable energy. She wanted snapping fingers and audible affirmation — she wanted a call and response.

Christina is one half of Sister Outsider Poetry, a spoken-word duo that performed at Wednesday night’s Pride Month keynote event. The event, sponsored by Queer People of Color and six other MU organizations, was the final event of the month and featured Christina and her poetry partner, Denice Frohman.

The performance ranged from humorous to somber, as the two shared poetry about barriers to education, the marginalization of non-English speakers and the horrors of the civil rights movement.

"(Poets) open their ribs up and risk being vulnerable," Christina said.

As more and more people walked through the archway of rainbow balloons before the 7 p.m. start time, the organizers realized something.

They needed more chairs.

Sequoyah Moore, the organizer of the event, looked around at the rows of students, shaking her head slightly.

"This is a bigger turnout than I could have ever expected," she said.
Indie Poets and SPEAK Community Theater, two MU student organizations that focus on poetry and performance, performed at the event as well.

This was the second year that the Pride Month keynote event has featured spoken-word poetry. Last year, poet Andrea Gibson took the stage.

"It's a really accessible way to learn more about tough issues," said Struby Struble, MU LGBTQ Resource Center coordinator.

The event was the last stop of Sister Outsider Poetry's first tour and is the first time that two Women of the World Poetry Slam Champions have teamed up. Frohman holds the 2013 title, and Christina holds the title for 2012 and 2014.

Their poetry focuses on social and political issues, "particularly around race, gender and sexuality," according to the Sister Outsider Poetry website. Although the topics were not light, the crowd shouted their approval and shared common silence during tough moments.

Just as Christina wanted.

AFTER DEADLINE
No pay for hard time
By ANDREW DENNEY
Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 5:26 pm

As they say, crime doesn't pay. But in the case of Reggie Griffin, the fourth person sentenced to death in Missouri and later exonerated, neither does proving your innocence.

Griffin was a featured keynote speaker last night at the University of Missouri School of Law. He walked his audience through the experience of being wrongfully convicted of murdering another inmate while he was locked up in the Moberly prison, being sent to death row for the murder and the long, difficult path he took to get out of prison entirely.

Griffin was no choirboy when he was sentenced to prison in 1981 and he admits it. He received a 20-year sentence after he was convicted of first-degree assault, robbery, and possession of drugs
and stolen property. He was 21 years old at the time and he said he was drawn to fast cars, fast money and fast women.

“I was in the street,” Griffin said last night. “I’m not going to lie to you and say I wasn’t in the street.”

About two years into his prison stint, Griffin was accused of murdering another inmate over a TV set. But Griffin was in his cell at the time that the victim, James Bausley, was fatally stabbed; no physical evidence put Griffin near the scene of the crime. In fact, Bausley’s real killer even admitted this in testimony, but Griffin was not released from prison for another two decades.

Griffin was stuck in place while the world moved on without him. When he was released on bond in 2012, he started trying to find employment, but even fast-food restaurants were turning him down. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that he lived in the suburbs of Kansas City and did not have a car to help him get around.

An attendee to Griffin’s talk asked him if has sought restitution from the state for keeping him in prison for a crime he did not commit.

“The state hasn’t given me a pair of socks, OK?” Griffin replied.

According to the Innocence Project, Missouri is one of 29 states that pays compensation to the wrongfully convicted (the District of Columbia also has a compensation program). If they qualify, Missouri’s exonerated get $50 per day. That’s slightly less than what a minimum-wage worker would earn after putting in an eight-hour shift, before taxes. But Griffin is not qualified to receive restitution. To qualify, an exonerated offender must have been proven innocent “solely” with the use of DNA evidence. DNA evidence was not a factor in the Missouri Supreme Court’s 2011 decision to vacate Griffin’s murder conviction.

During his extended incarceration, two striking facts emerged as Griffin was fighting his way through the appeals process: Prosecutors had mistakenly used the criminal file for someone with the same name as Griffin to bolster the case to put him on death row – an error that was corrected later – and minutes after Bausley was stabbed, a corrections officer found a sharpened screwdriver on an inmate who was leaving the scene, but that inmate was not charged in Bausley’s death.

It is impossible to know now if Griffin would have either served the full sentence for his 1981 conviction, been paroled earlier or committed another crime while in prison to make him stay longer. Chances are slim, however, that Griffin would have been charged with murdering Bausley had he not been in prison in the first place.
A series of mistakes – made by Griffin and by the state – led Griffin to where he is today. Griffin gave up years of his life to pay for his mistakes and gave more than what he owed. It seems fair for the state to offer Griffin something in return.

Tap Day reveals new 2014 inductees of MU secret societies

By Elizabeth Loutfi

The 87th annual Tap Day was held April 25 in Jesse Auditorium.

Tap Day was moved indoors for its annual installment, though the celebration went on undiminished.

April 25 marked MU’s 87th Tap Day, in which MU’s six secret societies revealed their 2014 inductees. This year’s event was held in Jesse Auditorium as opposed to its traditional location on Francis Quadrangle.

The inductees’ friends and families, as well as the MU community, were invited to a ceremony held to honor their achievements and contributions to MU, and their admission into one of MU’s secret societies.

The societies — Omicron Delta Kappa, the Rollins Society, QEBH, Mystical Seven, LSV and Mortar Board — spent the last several months of the school year initiating their new members. The initiation process differs from one society to another, but all are undisclosed to the public.

The students are selected based on their records of academics, leadership and service. Each society also “honor taps” a member of faculty whom they feel have significantly contributed to the experience of students at MU.

“Some of the secret societies have an application process, but Mystical Seven doesn’t,” Mystical Seven inductee Caitlyn Stevens said. “They found me. I can’t reveal anything about the process.”

Stevens said she was contacted by the society a few weeks ago. Since then, she has had to keep her induction a secret.
“I’m really honored,” she said. “I saw so many amazing people on stage today and hearing everyone’s descriptions next to me as I was holding their hands was just amazing.”

The ceremony began at 2 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs welcomed the students, friends, family and faculty to the event and introduced Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who gave the opening remarks.

“These societies … recognize a variety of talents among a very talented student body,” he said. “Among the things that have impressed me about this university in my eighty-four days … has been our student body. They are extraordinary in so many dimensions.”

The most difficult leadership role of all is leading a volunteer organization, and Loftin said he has seen MU students as very capable of successfully achieving this leadership role.

“We are recognizing at … Tap Day many such leaders here at this university,” he said.

Loftin’s remarks were then followed by the introduction of each society and the reveal of their 2014 inductees. The societies were revealed in order of their founding year, with the oldest society, ODK, revealed first.

ODK is one of the two societies that obtain members through an application process; the other is Mortar Board.

ODK inductee Megan Anderson said she heard about the applications through Mizzou Alternative Breaks.

“The rest is pretty secretive,” she said. “You get told, and then you go through an entire initiation process up until Tap Day. Then Tap Day comes and you get announced to everybody.”

Anderson said she found out she was accepted into the honor society earlier this semester.

“I’m taking it all in,” she said. “I’m so proud of everyone else who got into all the other societies, too.”

Mortar Board inductee Katie Youmans said she was only allowed to contact her parents so they could make travel arrangements.

“It was really hard to keep it a secret,” she said. “But I’m very happy. I’m just really proud to be a part of this.”
The closing remarks were given by Missouri Students Association President Mason Schara.

Schara addressed the fact that MU has a complicated history regarding race and sexual identity, both of which were represented on stage last Friday.

James S. Rollins, one of the founders of MU, was a slave owner and in 1964, Dean of Students Thomas A. Brady formed a committee to expel homosexual students from MU entirely.

“Looking at the collection of those honored today, it is easy to forget that such a diverse group was, at one time, unimaginable,” he said.

Schara said he especially saw humility as a major characteristic in all the students and faculty tapped this year.

“Students who might otherwise serve their peers in their university unrecognized are brought together and celebrated,” he said. “These … leaders have exceeded the mere requirements to graduate, and found within themselves the talent and the energy to serve the Mizzou community and change it for the better. Each one of them has demonstrated an attitude and an aptitude that more than merits the honor they (are receiving).”