Sexual Assault Policies, State Funding And More: A Conversation With UM System President Tim Wolfe

BY CAMILLE PHILLIPS

Listen to the interview:
http://cpa.ds.npr.org/kwmu/audio/2014/05/050114aweb.mp3

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe was our guest today on St. Louis on the Air. He oversees the management of the four institutions within the system: University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Missouri-St. Louis, University of Missouri-Kansas City and Missouri University of Science and Technology, and has held the position since February 2012.

Host Don Marsh began the conversation by addressing the “elephant in the room” – the UM System’s response to sexual assaults on campus in the wake of the suicide of Sasha Menu Courey and the new White House recommendations.

Sexual Assault Policy Changes

After ESPN published their story about the university’s failure to report the alleged rape of Menu Courey, the UM System hired St. Louis law firm Dowd Bennett to perform a third-party investigation.

“The conclusion of that report was that while she was on campus we dealt with her as best we could. Our mistakes that were made were in the reporting of the information that we received, most of it after she left the campus. The reporting and the investigative responsibilities defined by Title IX weren’t as clear as it should have been,” said Wolfe.

The university system is also in the process of conducting a three-phase internal investigation. First, the four campuses defined their policies and resources.

“Before the first phase was completed, it was clear that we were not consistent relative to defined reporting and investigative responsibility as it pertains to Title IX,” said Wolfe. “So I issued an executive order before the Dowd Bennett outside report was submitted that says we need to have that policy more explicit.”

Now in the second phase, the UM System has hired the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management as a consultant to assess the effectiveness of its policies and resources.
Wolfe said they expect to receive the recommendations from the consultant next week, upon which time they will merge the information into recommendations going forward.

“I’ve already pledged support, financial support, to invest in the areas that will promote more education, more training, more awareness, more prevention of an assault or a harassment, or resources for those people that have mental health illnesses,” he added.

He described the need for friends and bystanders to step in during dangerous situations and help, especially at times when judgment may be impaired, an idea the UM System is promoting during student orientation.

State Funding

In light of the tax cut bill that Governor Nixon has said he will veto, St. Louis on the Air host Don Marsh also asked Wolfe about the impact of state funding on the UM System.

“My thirty years of experiences from a business-side standpoint says I actually like tax breaks … but when I was thinking about locating a new business unit in a particular state I didn’t first say what are the tax breaks or the tax incentive. What I was looking for was the environment and did they have the workforce with the right skills necessary for what I was trying to get done,” said Wolfe.

“And that’s really what is concerning to me as the leader of higher education. We need the necessary resources, regardless of what tax policy is implemented, we need the necessary resources to provide a quality product and provide access to as many students as possible. We are not producing enough graduates right now based on the surveys that we’ve done with existing businesses, specifically in the area of our science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degrees.”

Other topics during the show included graduation rates, Obama’s proposed college rating system, diversity, and the unionization of student athletes.

MU business incubator receives tax credits to leverage investment

By Justin Willett

Saturday, May 3, 2014 at 2:00 am
The Missouri Department of Economic Development said this week it has awarded $76,466 in state tax credits to the University of Missouri Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place. The credits, known as small-business incubator tax credits, are meant to leverage private investment in the incubator by covering half of a donor’s contribution.

Jake Halliday, CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center, which operates the incubator, last year began a push to raise money for a new 3,000-square-foot space dedicated to business software innovation and venturing.

Halliday, who is retiring this summer, said there are three options for implementing the software center, with price tags of $600,000, $400,000 or $100,000. Earlier this year, the incubator was awarded a $75,000 grant from the Missouri Technology Corp.'s Missouri Building Entrepreneurial Capacity program for the software center.

With MIC and the incubator operating debt-free and consistently in the black, the Missouri Innovation Center board also authorized planning to begin on a 40,000-square-foot Phase II expansion of the incubator facility. The expansion is likely to cost between $15 million and $18 million, Halliday said.

MU to place more volunteers in state

Saturday, May 3, 2014 at 2:00 am

The University of Missouri's Alternative Breaks program is partnering with University of Missouri Extension to provide service to all 114 counties in Missouri in the next five years.

Mizzou Alternative Breaks, or MAB, sends groups of about 12 students on trips during Thanksgiving, spring and winter breaks to volunteer at places in need, according to the program's website. On the most recent trip, during spring break, students went to Taos, N.M. The website also lists several other locations students have gone including Jacksonville, Fla., New York, South Padre Island, Texas, Philadelphia and Boston.

Now, more of those trips will be in Missouri. One proposed project, for example, is to build a greenhouse in the Buchanan County MU Extension Center, Bryan Goers, coordinator for leadership and service, said yesterday.
Goers announced the partnership at MU Extension's centennial celebration this week.

"We are combining the firsthand knowledge of extension employees with the passion that we have in our students," he said. "This will lead to more rewarding work for students while at the same time fulfilling one of MAB's main principles: Serve don't help."

Echoes of Kent State still felt in Columbia 44 years later

Sunday, May 4, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

Anti-war demonstrators gathered on the Francis Quadrangle at MU on May 11, 1970. A week earlier, four people were killed during a war protest at Kent State University in Ohio. BY MAX HAVEY
COLUMBIA — On April 30, 1970, President Richard Nixon announced the expansion of the Vietnam War with the invasion of Cambodia, sparking anti-war demonstrations on college campuses across the country.

The most infamous of those was the May 4 protest at Kent State University in Ohio, where National Guard members fired on demonstrating students, killing four and wounding 11.

In days before the shootings, students at Kent State threw rocks through windows and burned the campus ROTC building to the ground. With a state of emergency in effect, tensions were running high at Kent State and at other colleges.

Paul Wallace, an MU professor who helped organized war protests, said Kent State marked an important point in American history.

"Kent State was a turning point for the U.S. in ending the Vietnam War," Wallace said.

When Wallace joined the MU faculty in 1964, he almost immediately became involved in campus protests.

"I was approached by the more progressive members of the faculty," Wallace said. "If there was a social movement, they were involved."

War protests at MU had been going on for some time before violence broke out at Kent State. The Committee of Concerned Students would hold teach-ins where speakers would talk to groups of students, educating them about the context of war and explore ideas on how to end the war. Wallace also stressed that the protests at MU were always a nonviolent effort.

Curtis Edwards, a sociology doctoral student at MU specializing in social movements, said the protests were more radical on the coasts than at MU.

"It seems to me that students were more active, in terms of violence and taking more radical steps, than was the case here in the Midwest," Edwards said.

Soon after the deaths at Kent State, students at MU began what would be a week's worth of protests beginning May 6 and lasting through May 13.

Wallace said Kent State hit a lot closer to home than many other anti-war demonstrations of the time.

"This wasn't Berkeley," he said. "It was right next door."
Wallace said the demonstrations were best described as agitated and feverish.

**Bill Wickersham, an assistant professor in recreation and park administration at the time, said the underlying reason for the student reaction to Kent State was the number of professors and students across the country who opposed the Vietnam War and military draft.**

"The fact that fellow students were killed while protesting was one of the underlying factors of the protest movement here," Wickersham said.

The week of protests at MU was sparked on the evening of May 4 when someone spray-painted "KENT STATE" across the bottom of two of the historic Columns on Francis Quadrangle.

On May 6, nearly 2,000 students gathered on Rollins Field, since renamed Stankowski Field, to listen to speakers and demonstrate against both the invasion of Cambodia and the deaths of student protesters at Kent State.

Things got heated that evening as students burned an effigy of Nixon and Molotov cocktails were thrown at the ROTC Building. A car was also driven through the crowd, striking one student.

The protests continued for days across campus, with students skipping classes and some professors canceling classes to allow students to demonstrate. **Locations included the campus residence of Chancellor John Schwada, Memorial Student Union, Schwada's Office in Jesse Hall and Francis Quadrangle.** Speakers included visiting TV newsmen Harry Reasoner and professors from the university.

The protesters had a list of demands for the university administration that included urging Nixon to withdraw from southeast Asia, abolishing credit for ROTC, avoiding disciplinary action against faculty supporting the protests, and offering amnesty for participating students.

During the May 11 demonstration on Francis Quadrangle, Wickersham was taken into custody for disturbing an educational assembly after using a bullhorn to address the crowd.

Wickersham got the chancellor's attention when he was released later that day, saying the demonstration would be defused in exchange for a negotiation of the protesters' demands.

Demonstrations on campus ended May 13 when Wickersham and the MU Faculty Council reached an agreement on the protesters' demands, according to an article in the Missourian. The joint statement, which protesters approved, included the creation of a subcommittee that the
university would consult before disciplinary action was taken against students participating in the demonstrations, along with addressing how professors could deal with students who missed classes for the protests and whether it would have an effect on their grades.

Professors who canceled classes to let students participate in the demonstrations were later sanctioned by the UM System Board of Curators with reduced salary for the days they canceled classes. Wickerson, who had been fired by MU, and the seven other professors whose pay was suspended filed a complaint with the American Association of University Professors.

Significant violence was avoided at MU, but the same could not be said for protests elsewhere. At the University of Kansas, the ROTC building was burned to the ground following a protest. At Jackson State in Mississippi, two student protesters were killed.

Edwards and Wallace both think the protests remain relevant today but in a different context.

Edwards said the tactics for subsequent protests have remained largely the same, even as recent as the occupy movement, but the social climate and issues have changed.

"It's not really anti-war anymore, but more like student loans or affordable housing," Edwards said.

Wallace saw echoes of the nonviolent protests serving as a sort of template for what became the anti-apartheid movement on campus in the 1980s. The movement involved a shanty town on Francis Quadrangle for several weeks as pressure mounted for the university to divest its holdings in companies doing business in South Africa. The UM Board of Curators in 1987 decided to divest its stock holdings in the nation.

Wickersham sees the legacy of the protests in the creation of the MU Peace Studies Program. What had started out as an Honors College class, Peace and World Order, that was taught by Wickersham and Donald Granberg became something bigger.

"When I was fired, Granberg picked up right where we left off and put together a curriculum," Wickersham said.

On May 5, 1971, a year after the demonstrations across the country, MU students held a dedication ceremony to rename McAlester Park on the north edge of the campus to Peace Park to commemorate those who died in protests at other campuses.
A peace symbol made of stones was placed along with a plaque bearing the names of those killed at Kent State, and later those in Jackson State, as a memorial. Though the plaque is faded and some bushes have grown into the peace sign, the memorial remains in Peace Park as a reminder of what happened 44 years ago.

Some of the historical details about the MU demonstrations in 1970 were drawn from Missourian archives.

FROM READERS: Pregnant college students deserve more support

Monday, May 5, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

BY JOANNE SCHRADER/MISSOURIAN READER

Joanne Schrader lives in Fulton.

During my first pregnancy, my husband and I frequented the University of California-Berkeley campus. It struck me that of all the other college age women I saw there, I was the only one visibly pregnant. It seemed like everyone else who was also pregnant then was either a teenager or much older than me. I felt oddly alone in my gestational condition.

I attended Quincy College during my second pregnancy. Larry and I began trying to conceive in August so that our baby would have a chance of being born after the spring semester. We were so successful on the first attempt that my due date was May 15. That school year, I was a pregnant full-time student as well as a part-time worker at my son’s daycare, wife, and mother.

It is a time in my life that presented some unique challenges, but one I will never forget. For instance, I was amazed how active my son would always be during my 11:00 am history class. For fear of going into pre-term labor as I did with my first born at 35 weeks, my midwife did not want me walking too much or climbing stairs. Thus, I obtained a temporary disabled parking permit and used the elevators to get to class.
All along, I was determined to finish school. At a May 4 check-up, I learned I was four centimeters dilated. I went ahead with my finals that week knowing that any minute this could be it. In fact, my second son was born at home 16 hours after completing my last exam. It was electrifying.

Why do I tell you this? Because I believe women should not have to choose between their unborn child and their education or job. (My birth mother dropped out of college during her pregnancy with me.) Unfortunately, pregnancy discrimination and pressures to abort are all too real. Women have a unique and important role as child-bearers.

Motherhood is a role that deserves to be celebrated and supported, not treated as taboo on a college campus. Ask yourself, is the only available reproductive information about countering one's natural fertility? Are pregnant students truly welcomed and supported? Are they given the means to succeed in both school and as moms?

Although college campuses are full of fertile young women who will become pregnant one day, they may not know where to turn when facing the question of being pregnant while in school. Pregnant students need pertinent and supportive social resources to counter discrimination or other challenges. Support can be found at resources such as http://pregnantoncampus.studentsforlife.org/. I also hope in the future, students can readily find positive materials on pregnancy, fetal development, and community aid at the Women's Health & Wellness Fair and the MU Women's Center.

Children's Grove dedicated at Stephens Lake Park

By Alex Schiffer

For Anne Deaton, Saturday afternoon was full circle.

Saturday’s dedication of the Children’s Grove at Stephens Lake Park was a long time coming for the former University of Missouri first lady, who initially developed the idea to raise awareness for children’s mental illnesses in light of the Sandy Hook school shooting a few years ago.
“It’s been remarkable,” said Deaton, who is a co-chair of the Children’s Grove project. “I’m just so grateful.”

Deaton approached Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid about her idea in December 2012 and McDavid’s wife Suzanne quickly joined her in the cause as a co-chair. The two thought they would need a public campaign to raise money, but that ended up not being the case.

“We actually first thought that we would be doing a public campaign to raise awareness for mental health and wellness in our youth and that was going to be fine, but the minute we started talking about this, people started calling and we raised the money in three months,” Deaton said. “Individuals, businesses, the social and mental health service agencies, they all were great.”

Despite the money being raised so quickly, cold weather that lingered into early spring postponed the planting of the trees that make up the grove.

“One of the challenges this year has been the weather, so really not until about a month ago, the ground was not ready for them to do the planting,” Deaton said. “So this has all occurred within the last month and they’ve done a beautiful job.”

The grove itself consists of 41 crabapple and magnolia trees with lilac bushes. Flowers will be planted in the near future.

The dedication itself featured concerts from the Missouri Symphony Conservatory Children’s Chorus and Junior Sinfonia and Young Artist’s Philharmonics Ensembles. Speeches were given by Deaton, Bob and Suzanne McDavid and Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Chris Belcher, among others.

“I see 41 trees standing together, representing a community,” Bob McDavid said.

Deaton’s husband Brady, the former University of Missouri chancellor, was in attendance along with top current university officials such as UM System President Tim Wolfe and current chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

“I know they plan on turning this into some kind of annual event,” Brady Deaton said. “To” Anne “this only the foundation.”

No selfies: some colleges cracking down for graduation events

May 02, 2014 9:39 am • The Associated Press

NO MU MENTION
TAMPA, Fla. • Toss your cap. Turn your tassel. Just don't snap that selfie.

Graduates at the University of South Florida and Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I., have been asked to refrain from taking self-portraits with their cell phones as they collect their diplomas. The seemingly simple directive is standing out for placing the slightest curtailment on a collective societal march toward sharing every waking moment on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and the like.

Kyra Ciotti, a 22-year-old mass communication major at USF, has taken selfies lying in bed, riding in a car, posing with her dog, taking a shot of tequila and whenever she feels her hair is having a particularly good day. She had planned to keep her arm extended as she walked across the stage at a ceremony Friday, capturing the moment for a sister in Australia.

Now, chastened by the university's admonition that it's improper and fearful of a threat to withhold diplomas, she'll keep her phone away.

"I didn't think it was that big of a deal," she said as she posed on campus in her cap and gown for some early graduation pictures. "But I don't want to be disrespectful."

For others, the simple act of outlawing selfies may have sparked the desire for one.

Anthony Sanchez, a 22-year-old microbiology major at USF, said he's only taken a few selfies in his life. But he's not ruling out another at this weekend's ceremony.

"It put the idea in my head," he said. "I wouldn't have thought of it until they said don't do it."

Self-portraits have been around since the early days of photography, but it was the growth of cellphone cameras that made them into a pop cultural phenomenon. A selfie host Ellen DeGeneres took at the Oscars this year became the most retweeted item in history, but the snapshots have become so widespread that they've been taken by everyone from President Barack Obama (who was criticized for one with other world leaders at the funeral of Nelson Mandela) to Japanese astronaut Aki Hoshide (who took an otherworldly shot outside the International Space Station.) Selfie was even declared the 2013 word of the year by Oxford University Press.

Administrators at both USF and Bryant said their intentions were far less dramatic than making a statement about a generation often accused of overshar ing. They said they were simply trying to keep already long ceremonies from dragging on even longer.

"It's your moment in the sun right next to everyone else's moment in the sun," said Michael Freeman, the USF dean of students who issued the guidelines saying selfies were banned along with marching, strolling and other fanciful methods of accepting a diploma. Freeman said a handful of graduates took on-stage selfies during the December commencement and he has noticed students growing more and more cavalier as they approach the university president. Aside from keeping the ceremony on time, he wanted to maintain decorum.

"I don't have an anti-selfie bent," he said. "I would just caution students to think there's a time and place."
Neither USF nor Bryant has issued a blanket ban on selfies. Students are free to take them throughout the ceremony, just not on stage.

Sheila Guay, the special events director at Bryant, said selfies would take away from the ceremony and ruin photos that family members try to capture.

She echoed Freeman, saying: "There is a time and place for them, and here is not one of them."

Most schools have taken no stance on the selfie craze, but some are staking a position opposite to USF and Bryant.

At Ripon College in Ripon, Wis., all of this year's graduation festivities are built around a theme of new media. The school is circulating a hashtag they're encouraging students to use to tweet throughout the celebrations. They're setting up a selfie booth with props, but also have no problem if students take one on stage, too.

"The college will not limit that kind of self-expression," said Melissa Anderson, the school's executive director of marketing and communications. "As a point of pride, we hope students take a lot of selfies."

Similarly, Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, is also eager to see its graduates' selfies. Kelly Bennett, the school's social media coordinator, said Miami would share students' selfies on Twitter and Instagram. She said graduates were just exhibiting their excitement and that other colleges should embrace it.

"I've never seen it disruptive," she said. "I think when you make a big deal out of it, then most people want to push the line."

Whether students will push the line remains to be seen. USF's warning that it might keep violators' diplomas has gotten the attention of many seniors on campus, but Freeman, the dean, had a confession.

"Between you, me and the wall, that's basically an empty threat," he said.