Police release name of man found dead after manhunt

By Alan Burdziak


Columbia police on Sunday identified a man found dead of an apparent suicide this weekend after leading authorities on a large-scale manhunt as Zane S. Black, Officer Latisha Stroer said in a news release.

Black worked as a staff nurse in the operating room at University Hospital, according to MU’s directory.

Student workers found Black, 36, dead around 11:45 a.m. Saturday in a hallway at the University of Missouri’s Trowbridge Livestock Center on Ashland Road. Police on Saturday said he was the man who led law enforcement on a large manhunt Friday night that included Columbia Police Department officers, Boone County sheriff’s deputies, MU police officers, canine units and a Missouri State Highway Patrol helicopter. But he wasn't named until Sunday. Black was wanted in connection with several recent incidents of burglary and sexual assault.

The search began Friday evening near Rock Quarry Road when Columbia police attempted to make contact with Black after a woman reported a May 1 incident in which she said he was peering into her window. Black was seen near an apartment complex on Rock Quarry and fled into the nearby woods. Authorities scaled down their search about midnight, after about four hours, though some officers continued their search into Saturday.

Columbia police said Friday afternoon there were six incidents since May 1 — including one sexual assault — they believe are connected as well as nine crimes that happened last summer and fall in downtown Columbia and the East Campus neighborhood that fit the pattern. One woman was raped in October and Stroer said Saturday police are working to determine how many crimes Black was allegedly responsible for.

The incidents had several similarities: the man entered through unlocked doors and went into women’s bedrooms and in some cases got into bed with them or stood near them. The assailant
would flee when the women woke up in some cases. He also threatened women with knives in a couple of cases. The man had been described in each occurrence as about 6 feet tall with a muscular build and either white or of Middle Eastern descent.

Black, according to a LinkedIn profile, also attended MU and previously worked at the Mentor, Ohio Fire Department.

UPDATE: Overnight manhunt ends with suspect's suicide

Saturday, May 10, 2014 | 10:03 p.m. CDT; updated 4:04 p.m. CDT, Sunday, May 11, 2014

BY JOE GUSZKOWSKI

This article has been updated to include the suspect’s name and age.

COLUMBIA — **MU students on Saturday found the body of the man whom police said led them on an overnight manhunt through the woods after a series of violent break-ins and sexual assaults.**

Police identified the man as Zane S. Black, 36, of Columbia. He was reported missing May 8, according to the Missouri State Highway Patrol's missing persons list.

His death appears to be a suicide, and no foul play is suspected, according to an MU news release.

Around 11:45 a.m. Saturday, students working at Trowbridge Livestock Center at MU called police because they had found a body in a hallway, said Capt. Brian Weimer, an MU Police Department spokesman. The body matched the description of Black, whom law enforcement had been pursuing Friday night.

On Friday afternoon, the Columbia Police Department issued a news release detailing a series of break-ins and sexual assaults that occurred in Columbia beginning on May 1 that were believed to be related.
Later Friday, police received a report of a peeping Tom incident that had taken place on May 1 in the 2500 block of Bluff Boulevard, said Latisha Stroer, a spokeswoman for the Columbia Police Department. The woman said a man had looked through her bedroom window as she was getting dressed after a shower. She was able to identify the man for police.

Columbia police made phone contact with him Friday afternoon and told him the police wanted to speak to him about that incident and others in the area, according to a Columbia police news release Saturday. Stroer said the man knew officers were looking for him but made no further contact with police after the phone call.

Later Friday, police received a call about a suspicious man near the 3100 block of Rock Quarry Road shortly before 8 p.m., Stroer said. Police believed he was the man they had spoken to on the phone earlier. When officers responded to the area, the man ran into the woods, and police pursued him on foot.

This set off a large-scale manhunt that involved a series of public alerts, K-9 tracking teams and a helicopter search of the area.

Law enforcement established a perimeter around the wooded area the suspect ran into. MU police, the Boone County Sheriff’s Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol aided in the mass search, which lasted for four hours.

Abdullah Arish, a resident of The Grove, said he saw police with handguns and flashlights combing the woods behind his complex's parking lot as he walked to his car between 9 and 10 p.m. Friday night.

As he and his friend Hassan Almajed drove out of the parking lot toward downtown, they saw six or seven Columbia Police Department cars parked along Rock Quarry Road.

"When (Arish) told me that he saw police officers with guns, we thought it was serious," Almajed said.

Around 10 p.m., MU police released a notice that said the suspect was last seen near the Hinkson Creek area south of campus and was headed toward campus. By midnight, law
enforcement had scaled back the search, though both MU police and Columbia police continued to search for him in reduced numbers.

The man was described as wearing a black shirt and khaki shorts or pants, Stroer said. According to the release from MU police, he was in his 30s and stood 6 feet to 6 feet 2 inches tall. He had an athletic build.

Around 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Columbia police said in a release that the search for the suspect was over after they confirmed that the man whose body had been discovered Saturday was the same man they were looking for. The livestock center is about 1.5 miles away from the area the man originally fled from.

Police released Black's name Sunday afternoon after they contacted his next of kin, according to a release.

He was being sought in connection with the series of increasingly violent break-ins in southeast Columbia. The most recent occurred early Friday morning, when a man with a knife entered a residence through an unlocked door and sexually assaulted a woman.

Police said the incidents are similar to the nine break-ins that happened between June and November of last year, according to a release. In some of those incidents, the suspect entered unlocked homes while the residents were sleeping. One of the victims said he jumped on her bed and hit her in the chest; another said he threatened her with a sharp object then sexually assaulted her.

The Police Department's investigation is still ongoing, Stroer said Sunday in a text message.

Columbia suspect found dead on campus in apparent suicide

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, Mo. • University of Missouri police say a man believed to be a suspect who led police on a chase has committed suicide.
Police say the suspect was found dead Saturday of an apparent suicide on campus. Police said student workers found the man's body in a hallway at the livestock center.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that authorities haven't said how the man died. An autopsy is being conducted.

The death follows a police pursuit Friday night near the university campus after a report of a peeping tom.

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**Police link suicide on MU campus to sexual assault, burglary suspect**

By Covey Eonyak Son

MU police responded to a report of a deceased person at approximately 11:45 a.m. Saturday at the Trowbridge Livestock Center.

 Authorities believe the death to be a suicide, as no signs of foul play were discovered.

The deceased was identified by Columbia police as Zane S. Black, 36, of Columbia. A CPD media release also stated Black was identified by a female victim as the sexual assault and burglary suspect that prompted a manhunt Friday night.

The victim reported an incident from May 1, in which Black looked into the victim’s bedroom window as she was getting dressed after a shower.

After officers attempted to make contact with Black Friday night, he fled into a wooded area near Rock Quarry Road. Black was last seen in the Hinkson Creek area, moving toward the MU campus.

CPD is currently investigating whether Black is connected to previous incidents, including incidents in 2013. A CPD media release said there are no additional information at this time.
University of Missouri lays off 8 employees

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri laid off eight employees this week in grant writing and research offices.

Six of the employees work in the Office of Grant Writing and Publications and the two others are in the Office of Research. They will be given eight weeks to find other employment at the university.

Hank Foley, senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies, said the cuts were necessary because the office lost $714,000 this year.

Heather Brown, director of grant writing and publication, says the only two employees left in that office are a senior editor and a web designer.

Decks at Tara Apartments closed after engineering firm's report

COLUMBIA — An engineering firm hired to evaluate all MU structures sent a letter to Larry Hubbard, director of campus facilities, in March to "strongly recommend" that access to the rear decks of all 16 buildings at Tara Apartments be closed off.
According to the letter, engineers from Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc. looked at the decks from the ground during its campuswide evaluation and noticed that the supporting beams had "lost some of their original capacity due to age and exposure to the elements."

One deck was able to support three adult men, according to the letter, but there was enough "deflection" — or give — that the firm recommended sealing off the decks to allow time for further inspection.

The decks were sealed beginning March 21, per the firm's recommendation. An email sent to residents said engineers would evaluate the decks for signs of weathering, according to an email sent to Tara residents on March 20 that was forwarded to the Missourian.

**The decks remained sealed as of Friday, and the university was still waiting for a final report from the firm, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.**

The firm completed an inspection of buildings on campus after the University Village collapse in February.

Tara Apartments is one of four university-owned apartment complexes, including University Village, designed to house graduate students and students with families. The 16-building complex is located on Ashland Road off Stadium Boulevard. It was built between 1982 and 1984, Basi wrote in an email Thursday.

MU does not perform regularly scheduled structural inspections of its buildings, according to previous Missourian reporting. The buildings are checked by maintenance workers during routine work requests made by residents, Basi said in February.

Former Missouri football player arrested, suspected of rape
COLUMBIA — An MU student and former Missouri football player was arrested early Saturday morning on suspicion of first-degree rape.

A woman told MU police that an acquaintance, David Mikhail Sowell, raped her in his Campus View apartment, Capt. Brian Weimer said. Police do not believe alcohol was involved.

MU police were dispatched to Campus View Apartments at 11:58 p.m. Friday, where they made contact with Sowell. He was taken to the MU Police Department for an interview, and police arrested him around 4:30 a.m.

Sowell is a sophomore who played defensive back on Missouri's football team after walking on in Spring 2013, said Chad Moller, a spokesman for the Missouri Athletics Department. He was later dismissed from the team for "internal reasons," said Moller, who cited a violation of team rules but would not elaborate.

"He's not a part of the team," Moller said. "He hasn't been part of the team for 9 months."

On Sunday afternoon, he was being held at Boone County Jail on a $100,000 cash-only bond.

**The Maneater**

**Former walk-on corner back arrested on rape charges**

By Aaron Reiss

David Sowell, a former walk-on corner back on the Missouri football team, was arrested Saturday night, for first-degree rape, according to a news release by the MU Police Department.
Officers were dispatched to 301 Campus View Drive, according to the release, the address of the Campus View Apartments. The release said the police contacted the female victim who reported that Sowell, an acquaintance, had raped her.

Sowell was taken to the University police station, where he was interviewed and then arrested at 4:30 a.m. Sunday morning, the release said. He was then sent to Boone County Jail.

Sgt. George Gresham of the Boone County Jail said Sowell is still in custody. His bond is $100,000, Gresham said.

The University directory lists Sowell as a sophomore in the college of business.

David Morrison of the Columbia Daily Tribune reported Sunday that Sowell was with the football program last spring, and going into the fall of last season.

According to Morrison, football team spokesman Chad Moller said Sowell was dismissed from the program in August 2013. Morrison reported that Moller said the dismissal did not stem from legal issues.

Moller could not be reached for comment by The Maneater.

May 12, 2014

In Sex-Harassment Cases, No One Is Happy With Colleges' Response

By Robin Wilson

NO MU MENTION

A professor who woke up with a student in his bed lost little more than a pay raise at one university. At another, a faculty member who held a student’s hand and sent sexually suggestive email messages was shown the door.
For more than a generation, colleges have tried to police relationships between professors and their students, but rarely is anyone happy with the results. Punishments vary widely from campus to campus, and colleges are caught in conflicting roles.

"The university has to be the prosecutor of the offender, it has to be the defense attorney for the victim, and it has to be the judge in a case in which its own interest is at stake," says Billie Wright Dziech, a longtime professor of English at the University of Cincinnati, who wrote a landmark 1984 book on sexual harassment, The Lecherous Professor: Sexual Harassment on Campus.

Colleges have beefed up their policies and their enforcement in response to increased federal scrutiny of how they handle sexual misconduct. The scare over administrators’ culpability in the Jerry Sandusky child-sex scandal, at Pennsylvania State University, has also prompted reassessments.

Prominent cases involving charges of sexual harassment in three philosophy departments over the past year show the widespread dissatisfaction that has resulted from colleges’ handling of such cases. Fewer than 20 percent of philosophy professors are female, and women in the discipline have long complained of being mistreated, but still, the cases are emblematic of those across disciplines.

At Northwestern University, faculty members and students say administrators went too easy on a professor whom the university found guilty of sexual misconduct in 2012. At the University of Colorado at Boulder, professors accused administrators of punishing the entire philosophy department in response to a few cases of alleged harassment. The University of Miami received accolades from some female philosophers last summer when it pressured a professor to resign, but a female graduate student has filed a federal complaint saying the university put its own interests above hers by simply encouraging him to leave rather than charging him with sex harassment.

In all three situations, administrators’ actions have been met with protests: student picketing and a faculty petition, in addition to a costly lawsuit at Northwestern; a federal complaint at Miami; and criticism from the American Association of University Professors at Boulder.
"I can’t recall anything like this ever in the last 20 years of academic philosophy," Brian Leiter, a professor of law at the University of Chicago, says of the number of sex-harassment cases in the discipline. Mr. Leiter, who directs the university’s Center for Law, Philosophy, and Human Values, publishes a popular ranking of philosophy programs, and a blog on which he comments on the discipline.

"What this means," he says, "is women have become less tolerant of this stuff, and universities are now much more sensitive to the fact that they need to act."

The image of a seasoned professor seducing an undergraduate is a standard academic cliché, depicted in jokes, movies, and books. Jane Gallop, a 68-year-old professor of English at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, has written about her own history of sexual relationships with both her male professors and her male and female students.

"These relationships have been going on since before any of us were alive," says Ms. Gallop, who has said that her relationships were natural, not nefarious. In 1992, though, a female student disagreed and charged Ms. Gallop with sex harassment. Wisconsin eventually dismissed the complaint but found that the professor had inappropriately engaged in an ''amorous relationship'' with the student, whom she supervised, and put a letter stating as much in her personnel file.

Interactions between professors and students that start off professional and become personal have become the source of most sex-harassment allegations, say campus officials and others who deal with such issues. That’s a change from when Ms. Dziech wrote her book about lecherous professors.

Rarely, she says, do professors now tell students, "You have to sleep with me or else." That kind of harassment, says Ms. Dziech, has virtually disappeared.

Harassment charges that evolve from professors’ getting too close to students, however, can be the hardest to police. What can seem consensual to a professor might not to a student. And what may seem right for a while to a student can later come to feel wrong.
Some professors argue that the power imbalance between professors and students means that such relationships can never be mutual.

"The more powerful the faculty member is, and the more central they are to the student’s success, the less likely there is to be any chance of consent," says Heidi Howkins Lockwood, an associate professor of philosophy at Southern Connecticut State University, who says she was in what she calls an inappropriate sexual relationship with her adviser, but didn’t complain, when she was a graduate student 15 years ago. "There should be a blanket don’t-touch policy, just as there is with doctors and analysts," she says.

Colleges take a range of approaches to try to stop these relationships from going too far. Some simply recommend that professors stay out of sexual or amorous relationships. Others tell professors that they must report such relationships with students they supervise and remove themselves from supervision. Some institutions have begun banning professors from having sexual contact with any undergraduates, and instructing professors who violate that ban that they can be fired.

Colleges have been stiffening their policies in part as a reaction to a "Dear Colleague" letter the U.S. Education Department issued three years ago, laying out institutions’ responsibilities in responding to sexual assault and signaling stepped-up enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the federal law barring sex discrimination at institutions that receive federal funds. Meant to prohibit sex discrimination, the law requires colleges to investigate and resolve reports of sexual misconduct whether or not the police are involved.

"This was the dawn of a new awakening," says Saundra K. Schuster, a lawyer for the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, which consults with colleges on sexual-misconduct investigations.

While most of the attention on campuses related to Title IX centers on problems between students, the letter also put colleges on notice that they must fairly handle students’ complaints against professors. Institutions must respond to those in a uniform way, says Ms. Schuster, one that attempts to support students who complain, stop any misbehavior, and prevent it from recurring.
Despite colleges’ efforts, sexual interactions between professors and students may seem more acceptable now, not less, Ms. Dziech says: "We are in a sex-saturated culture, which has normalized the hook-up in students’ minds."

Meanwhile, contemporary faculty life may discourage professors from thinking about the consequences of sexual relationships with students. Individual scholars often identify more with their own discipline than with their institution, say faculty members, leading professors to feel less concerned about how their behavior might affect their university’s image and reputation.

Professors also typically have a hands-off attitude when it comes to their colleagues’ behavior and can be reluctant to call one another out even if they see what looks like an inappropriate relationship between a colleague and a student.

"We work together, read each other’s papers, debate and discuss and drink at conferences," says Ms. Lockwood. "To censor and cast a faculty member out of the community is as serious as a decision to label a family member a black sheep."

Bonnie Honig, a professor of political science and of modern culture and media at Brown University, says academic culture encourages close relationships between professors and students, including collaboration and debate, which often blur the lines of authority. "There is a generationlessness to the academic setting," she says. "With smart students, there is a sense of equality. I have stuff to teach them. They have stuff to tell me, too."

At Northwestern, Peter Ludlow drove a female undergraduate to an art exhibit in February 2012 after she had taken his class on the philosophy of cyberspace. Soon after that evening, the student complained to the university's Sexual Harassment Prevention Office that Mr. Ludlow, a star professor who was then 55 years old, had refused to return to the campus after they had visited the exhibit and had instead taken her to several bars, where he bought her drinks and she became intoxicated.
He took her back to his apartment, she says, where he touched her inappropriately. The next morning, she says, she woke up in his bed.

Mr. Ludlow has denied that he harassed or assaulted the student or refused to take her home, saying the physical contact they had was mutual.

But the university found that Mr. Ludlow had made "unwelcome and inappropriate sexual advances," denied him a pay raise in the 2012-13 academic year, and stripped him of his named professorship.

The case, however, is far from over. Students and faculty members have protested, saying the university was too lenient on Mr. Ludlow. When students announced that they would stage a sit-in last term in his classroom, with placards calling for him to be fired, the professor canceled a class meeting. The university eventually removed him from teaching for the remainder of the academic year.

Mr. Ludlow, whose specialty is the philosophy of language and who is well known for his writing and teaching on cybernetic rights and virtual worlds, is due to start a new faculty job at Rutgers University in the fall, but Rutgers students have protested, and the university has refused to comment on whether his appointment will go forward.

In the wake of the Ludlow case, Northwestern has banned all sexual contact between professors and undergraduates. A university committee that handles Title IX complaints has said that Northwestern should specify that faculty members who violate its sex-harassment policies can be fired, something that is not currently spelled out.

The changes were endorsed by professors, including in an online petition, prompted by the Ludlow case, that has been signed by more than 1,600 academics and others. But the panel that handles Title IX disagreed with the petition’s recommendation that Northwestern establish an independent office to investigate sex-harassment complaints.

The university insists that, in Mr. Ludlow’s case, it did everything right. "Northwestern complied fully with its procedures, conducted a prompt and thorough investigation of all of
the allegations made by the student to the university, and took a number of corrective and remedial actions in this matter," a university spokesman said in a statement.

Mr. Ludlow declined to answer questions from The Chronicle.

Ji-Yeon Yuh, an associate professor of Asian-American history at Northwestern, says Mr. Ludlow was guilty of sexual assault and should have been fired. But institutions have an interest in avoiding assault charges, she says. "Universities want statistics on sexual assault to be as low as possible, because those must be reported," says Ms. Yuh. "It is similar to the Catholic Church—the institution believes it’s in their interest to hush it all up."

Jacqueline Stevens, a political-science professor at Northwestern, says colleges simply aren’t set up to handle serious cases like the one involving Mr. Ludlow. As a result, she says, the outcome is bound to be viewed as inadequate by some.

Sex-harassment offices were established to process civil violations, she notes, in part to save students from pursuing costly lawsuits over matters that don’t amount to a criminal offense.

"But what ended up happening is that these offices drew much more serious criminal complaints like this one," Ms. Stevens says of the one involving Mr. Ludlow. "So, by handling these themselves, universities are deterring the reporting of criminal allegations and turning potential criminal matters into civil ones."

Officials at the University of Miami may have known full well the limitations that colleges face in handling serious cases of harassment—particularly when the charges involve tenured professors who can be difficult to punish, much less fire. When a female graduate student complained in 2012 about Colin McGinn, an eminent professor of philosophy there, university officials interrupted the normal procedure for handling allegations of sexual harassment and pressed him to resign. The student had accused Mr. McGinn of sending her sexually explicit emails and texts, of touching her hands and feet, and of suggesting that they have sex.
If the charges had worked their way through the entire procedure, the university’s Faculty Senate would have had to hear the case and issue a recommendation. Because Mr. McGinn did not have sex with the graduate student, administrators at Miami were apparently concerned that the senate would find in his favor. The university’s president has the final say in such cases, but forcing Mr. McGinn out without the faculty's approval could have caused an uproar and possibly a legal battle.

So they pushed Mr. McGinn, who is 64, to resign—which he did in December. The philosopher, whose specialty is philosophy of the mind, says Miami told him he was guilty of violating its policy requiring professors who have romantic relationships with students they supervise to report those relationships and sever the supervisory ties. But he says he didn’t believe the policy applied in this case, because the relationship didn’t involve sex.

In the end, says Mr. McGinn, who continues to write books and deliver talks, he decided it wasn’t worth the money it would have cost him to fight the university, and so he agreed to leave. He believes he was the victim of a "witch-hunt mentality."

"Ten years ago," he says, "this wouldn’t have been made much of. But at the moment there’s a hysteria."

The situation at Miami may show just how ineffective college harassment policies are if officials there felt that they had to take Mr. McGinn’s case into their own hands to get the outcome they thought was right. Or perhaps they simply wanted to avoid a costly legal battle with Mr. McGinn, who may have sued if Donna Shalala, the president, had dismissed him without the faculty’s consent.

"Senior administration became involved and determined that an immediate resolution would be the most prudent approach," Eric D. Isicoff, the university’s lawyer, said in a written statement to The Chronicle. "The entire situation was concluded over a period of only a few months and was deemed by the university to be an appropriate and prompt resolution of the matter."
Female philosophers who have pushed for the discipline to clean up its act and be more welcoming to women applauded Miami for getting Mr. McGinn out the door fast. But the female graduate student in the case believes that in an effort to protect its own interests, the university ended up doing her wrong. In March she filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accusing Miami of discriminating against her by allowing Mr. McGinn to leave rather than pursuing sex-harassment charges against him.

"Some smart lawyer said, ‘We got the guy out,’ " says Ann Olivarius, the student’s lawyer. "But he got out on a lie. There was no affair, no romance, no consent. It’s a cover-up. This was a classic case of sexual harassment."

At the University of Colorado at Boulder, it isn't clear how many philosophy professors have been accused of sexual harassment. A review panel of the American Philosophical Association’s Committee on the Status of Women issued a report saying the Boulder department was rife with "inappropriate sexualized unprofessional behavior." But instead of punishing only those it found responsible, Boulder administrators shocked the department in January by removing its chairman and suspending graduate-student admissions for the coming academic year.

When the university announced its action, women in the profession hailed the decision. "It is absolutely breathtaking that they did this," said Hilde Lindemann, a professor at Michigan State University who is chair of the philosophy association’s Committee on the Status of Women.

But both the American Association of University Professors and some Boulder professors now say the university went too far, violating principles of faculty governance and unfairly tarnishing the reputation of all the university’s male philosophers.

"It went way overboard by not only dealing with the problem people but by threatening the entire department and besmirching the reputations of many innocent men," says Carol E.
Cleland, who has been a philosophy professor at Boulder for nearly 30 years. She says she considered leaving for another university this spring because of the controversy.

The review panel found that since 2007 the university had received 15 sex-harassment complaints about philosophers at Boulder, but that the department had done little to deal with the problems. Ms. Cleland, however, says that most of those complaints involved the behavior of just a couple of professors, and that there was very little their faculty colleagues could do.

The university did punish at least one philosophy professor this year by putting him on unpaid leave after finding that he had written email messages asking a female assistant professor and a female graduate student to have sex with him, other faculty members say. The male professor hasn't been named publicly.

As soon as students file complaints with the university’s Office of Discrimination and Harassment any investigation and other proceedings are confidential. "They blame us, and they say, you better clean this up," says Ms. Cleland. "This is a very highly ranked philosophy department, and it’s being destroyed and damaged even though there are many innocent people."

Michael Tooley, a professor of philosophy at Boulder since 1992, agrees, saying all of the men in the department now feel suspect.

"People wonder what will happen when they go give a talk, what are people in the audience going to be thinking about me now coming from the University of Colorado," he says. An untenured professor at Boulder was so worried about the department and his own future, Mr. Tooley adds, that he had to be hospitalized.

Bronson R. Hilliard, a Boulder spokesman, says the university responded strongly to the report of harassment because it wanted to be a "national leader" in cleaning up the philosophy profession. "This has obviously been a well-documented national problem in philosophy departments, and the dean and the chancellor felt it was time to take a definitive
set of actions to set this department on the proper course," he says. "The point is to tackle this problem head-on and change the entire culture of the department."

Ryan Huff, another spokesman for the Boulder campus, says the university took action not to punish the department but to ensure that it wasn’t bringing in new students before problems regarding sex-harassment had been solved. While sex harassment may be the fault of individual professors, he says, the entire department in this case had a hand in the setting the tone.

"People who have committed violations of the sex-harassment policy have been punished," he says. "But there is an overall climate concern in the department, and this is something we want to improve."

Last month the university held an off-campus retreat for Boulder's philosophy professors. A facilitator urged them not to keep bad behavior a secret and to call out and report colleagues who they believe act inappropriately with students.

But none of the professors will say much about what went on at the retreat. At the facilitator’s suggestion, they voted on how much of the proceedings to discuss among themselves and how much with others afterward. The vote was for secrecy.

May 12, 2014

To Curb Sexual Assault on Campuses, Surveys Become a Priority

By Taylor Harvey

As the national conversation about campus sexual assault escalates, so has the idea of using "climate surveys" to help combat it.
Gauging students’ experiences and perceptions can inform colleges of common problems and how often they occur, guiding efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence. That is the thinking behind surveys’ recent attention, including as a major recommendation last month by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.

A legislator in Maryland proposed a bill last year requiring campuses to administer surveys and report results, and Rep. Jackie Speier, Democrat of California, announced plans last month for a similar measure in the U.S. House of Representatives. Several U.S. senators have expressed interest in anonymous, standardized campus surveys, while federal agencies have compelled colleges to administer them in recent settlements of investigations under the gender-equity law known as Title IX.

Sexual assaults usually go unreported. Only 12 percent of victims come forward, according to a recent White House report, which can leave college officials unaware of how often such assaults take place. Survey data, experts and advocates agree, is an important first step to help colleges understand the problem and work to solve it.

"If the whole idea behind Title IX is to be able to address systemic climate issues, we can’t do that unless we know what they are," says Brett A. Sokolow, chief executive of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, a consulting and law firm that advises colleges. "We can’t assume what they are, because we may not be accurate."

Colleges already collect and report crime data under federal law, but because of underreporting of sexual assault, survey results may better reflect reality, says Nancy Chi Cantalupo, a research fellow at the Victim Rights Law Center and an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University. Some supporters of surveys say simply administering them creates a safer culture: It elevates awareness and gets people talking.

The White House task force has called on colleges to conduct surveys as early as next year, and it released a 37-page guide on how best to phrase questions, generate responses, and publish results. The task force plans to work with Rutgers University’s Center on Violence Against Women and Children to craft, test, and eventually release a survey that White House officials said could become mandatory on all campuses by 2016. (The three military-service
academies have been required by Congress to conduct similar annual surveys since the 2005-6 academic year.)

But some administrators aren’t so sure surveys will help. The root of the problem is underreporting, and surveys won’t necessarily encourage more students to come forward, says Deb Moriarty, vice president for student affairs at Towson University.

"We already know the extent of the problem," Ms. Moriarty says, citing national data. And many campuses collect sexual-health information, she points out, by surveying students through the American College Health Association. She doubts that anonymous climate surveys would generate reliable data and argues that colleges should instead direct resources into prevention and education programs.

At a legislative hearing in January, Ms. Moriarty testified against the Maryland bill on behalf of the University System of Maryland. "It seems like an oversimplified solution," she says, "to a very complex problem."

A Longstanding Model

The University of New Hampshire has been asking students about "unwanted sexual experiences" for more than 25 years, since a rape in a dormitory prompted research by four professors. Was this an isolated incident, or something that occurred regularly but went unseen?

Among the concerned faculty was Sally Ward, a professor of sociology. Because of underreporting, they did not think it was useful to rely on crime statistics, she says, so they created a survey to measure students’ experiences with, attitudes about, and knowledge of sexual assault. The incidence was alarming, she says: "We thought it was a problem on campus." With the data collected, the researchers urged the university to devote more resources to prevention.

After that first survey—administered in randomly selected classrooms in 1988—the university polled students again in 2000, and every six years since. That frequency lets researchers examine trends over time, says Ms. Ward, but doesn’t oversaturate the campus.
In 2006, the university added an online component. And in 2012, 40 percent of undergraduates, or 4,406 of them, responded to the 70-question survey.

To avoid labels with varying interpretations, the survey excludes such terms as "rape" and "sexual assault," instead asking, for instance, "During this school year, how many times has someone had sexual contact with you when you didn’t want to?" Core questions have remained the same to allow for comparison, while new questions have been added. One seeks to measure, for example, stalking and intimate-partner violence, reflecting categories that federal law recently began requiring colleges to include in annual crime reports.

Last year, when the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice settled a high-profile investigation of sexual assaults at the University of Montana at Missoula, the binding agreement laid out many requirements of the university, including that it conduct a regular climate survey. Christine Fiore, an associate professor of psychology at Montana charged with designing the survey, turned to the University of New Hampshire for advice.

Ms. Fiore examined other research instruments, too, including the psychologist Mary P. Koss’s Sexual Experiences Survey (the gold standard, Ms. Fiore says) and the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, which measures how misperceptions of rape influence the term’s cultural meaning.

Montana conducted its first survey this past fall and plans to administer two more, one this fall and another in 2015. After that, Ms. Fiore says, the university will most likely administer a survey once every three years.

"We want to know how we are doing in terms of the population we are trying to serve," says Lucy France, general counsel at Montana. "I can sit here in my office and think about what I think needs to be done, but we want to find out and get feedback from the students themselves."

Montana’s and New Hampshire’s surveys are both voluntary. And because students are already heavily surveyed, the universities have offered incentives, such as entering
respondents in a raffle for Amazon gift cards. Nearly 2,700 students responded to Montana’s first survey, surpassing Ms. Fiore’s goal of 2,500.

She believes strongly that the surveys should be voluntary, as they can take up to 40 minutes to complete and ask difficult questions about sexual experiences and relationships.

But some advocates feel otherwise. "Having it be mandated gives you the entire spectrum of the experience," says Tucker Reed, a self-described sexual-assault survivor who, with other students, filed a federal complaint against the University of Southern California last year. The 100-page complaint says the university mishandled the students’ cases in violation of Title IX. It also includes findings from a student group’s climate survey and recommends that the Education Department require the university to administer a regular sexual-experiences survey.

"Why are they not doing this everywhere?” Ms. Reed says. "This helped us so much."

Students at Princeton University have also been eager to learn more about their peers’ experiences. When the campus newspaper there recently found that the results of a 2008 survey had not been published, students petitioned the administration to conduct another one.

**Using Data**

If administering climate surveys is one step in combating sexual assault on campuses, using the data effectively is another.

"There’s so much of it," says Ms. Fiore, who is still sifting through the results of Montana’s first survey. Most victims, she has found, opt to tell close friends about assaults rather than reporting them formally to authorities. In interpreting the data, her goal is to improve education programs to dispel myths and confusion surrounding sexual assault.

The University of New Hampshire publishes and distributes the results of each survey to its campus community. The findings have led to the expansion of the Sexual Harassment & Rape Prevention Program and to closer ties between prevention educators and campus police
officers. And the university’s violence-studies researchers have received outside grants to conduct further studies and training.

The researchers at New Hampshire have been able not only to determine the scope and dynamics of the problems on their campus, says Ms. Cantalupo, of the Victim Rights Law Center, but also "assess the quality and effectiveness of different responses they’ve adopted to the violence."

Ms. Ward, the sociology professor at New Hampshire, says findings there don’t necessarily reflect the reality on other campuses. Colleges and student populations differ widely, she says: rural and urban, residential and commuter. And questions should be customized to a certain degree, Ms. Fiore says, to generate relevant responses.

In its recommendations last month, the White House task force offered 15 pages of sample survey questions for colleges to either use or adapt. But some advocates argue that survey design should be up to Education Department officials, not colleges.

"It should not be left to schools," says Laura L. Dunn, a law student at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and a leader in the movement against campus sexual assault. "It has to actually be a proper victimization survey," she says. "Educational agencies should be assisting them in this."

The more information colleges and students have, the better, proponents of surveys say. As expectations rise for colleges to improve their response to and prevent sexual assault, they may need to try new strategies and show results. If they don’t decide to conduct surveys themselves, they may see new laws that compel them to.
The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault released last month many recommendations for colleges to identify, prevent, and respond to sexual assault.

Among its instructions was a 37-page guide to conducting "climate surveys." The questionnaires are meant to measure students’ knowledge about campus sexual-assault policies and procedures, attitudes surrounding the issue, and experiences with sexual violence.

Research shows that detailed questions produce accurate results, the guide says. Surveys should ease into questions about sexual violence, it says, asking for demographics and general climate information first.

Here are some sample questions from the White House guide.

- If someone were to report a sexual assault to a campus authority, how likely is it that:
  - The university would take the report seriously.
  - The university would take steps to protect the safety of the person making the report.
  - The university would take corrective action against the offender.

(Options are very likely, moderately likely, slightly likely, and not at all likely.)

The following are yes/no questions.
- Have you received training in policies and procedures regarding incidents of sexual assault (e.g. what is defined as sexual assault, how to report an incident, confidential resources, procedures for investigating)?
- Has anyone had sexual contact with you by using physical force or threatening to physically harm you?
- Has anyone attempted but not succeeded in having sexual contact with you by using or threatening to use physical force against you?
- Since ________ (insert time frame), has someone had sexual contact with you when you were unable to provide consent or stop what was happening because you were passed out, drugged, drunk, incapacitated, or asleep? This question asks about events that you think (but are not certain) happened.

"Yes" answers direct respondents to check-all-that-apply questions about the specific type of sexual contact (forced touching of a sexual nature, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex, sexual penetration with a finger or object, don’t know), as well as other follow-up questions.

- Just prior to (the incident/any of the incidents), had you been drinking alcohol? Keep in mind that you are in no way responsible for the assault that occurred, even if you had been drinking.
- If yes, were you drunk?
- Who did you tell about the incident? Circle all that apply (no one, roommate, close friend other than roommate, parent or guardian, other family member, counselor, faculty or staff, residence hall staff, police, romantic partner [other than the one who did this to you], campus sexual assault advocate, other).
- If you did not tell anyone, why? (25 options include ashamed/embarrassed, didn’t want the person who did it to get in trouble, fear of retribution from the person who did it, fear of not being believed, didn’t know reporting procedure on campus, I thought nothing would be done.)
- Did university formal procedures help you deal with the problem?

(Options are didn’t help me at all, helped me a little, helped, but could have helped more, helped me a lot, completely solved the problem.)
The following sample questions ask students to answer on a scale of 0 (strongly disagree/not at all true) to 5 (strongly agree/very much true).

- I don’t think sexual violence is a problem on this campus.
- Doing something about sexual violence is solely the job of the crisis center.
- I think I can do something about sexual violence.

OCR Stays Busy on Sexual Assaults

May 12, 2014

BY
Michael Stratford

NO MENTION

The U.S. Education Department's Office for Civil Rights had a busy Friday afternoon in its stepped-up campaign to combat campus sexual assault, announcing a striking set of findings at the Virginia Military Institute and resolving an unusually public dispute with Tufts University.

Regarding VMI, the civil rights office announced that the military institute had violated federal law in how it handled sexual harassment and assault cases and by requiring pregnant cadets to leave the institution.

Federal investigators determined that “female cadets were exposed to a sexually hostile environment” at VMI and that the institute did not promptly and equitably resolve cadet complaints about sexual harassment and sexual assault, as it is required to do under the federal anti-discrimination law known as Title IX.
The institute’s policies also illegally required that pregnant and parenting cadets resign or face separation from VMI, the department said in a statement, adding that the OCR has already negotiated changes to those policies.

The civil rights office and VMI have entered into a resolution agreement to resolve the Title IX complaint. Under the agreement, VMI will be required to, among other things, conduct annual climate assessments concerning sexual harassment and assault, provide annual training on sexual assault prevention, and revise its tenure and promotion policies.

VMI said in a statement it was “profoundly disappointed with OCR’s findings.”

“We signed this agreement not because we feel the findings are representative of the VMI environment; but rather, it is in the best interest of the Institute to cooperate with OCR and put an end to this six-year investigation,” the statement said. It continued: "VMI is committed to providing a safe environment in which cadets can learn, in which faculty members can teach, and in which staff members can support the Institute's mission."

VMI has a long history of conflict with federal officials over its approach to women, as the federal government went to court two decades ago to force the formerly all-male institution to admit women.

Toe to Toe with Tufts

The civil rights office also announced Friday that it had reached agreement with Tufts to resolve an unusual dispute over how to settle a finding that the university’s handling of sexual assault cases violated federal law.

University and federal officials said Friday that Tufts had formally recommitted to the signed agreement that it backed out of earlier this month, which prompted a warning from the Education Department that the university’s federal funding may be in jeopardy.

Catherine Lhamon, the assistant secretary for civil rights, confirmed in a statement Friday that the university was no longer in breach of the agreement.

“I congratulate Tufts University for taking swift action to cure its breach of its April 17 agreement with” the department’s Office for Civil Rights, she said. “I look forward to working with [Tufts] President [Anthony] Monaco and the university community to ensure the safety of all students on campus.”

Monaco “officially” recommitted to the signed agreement during a meeting on Thursday with Lhamon, the university said. Following student protests on campus, a university spokeswoman first said last Friday that the university was recommitting to the agreement.

The standoff began last month when Tufts withdrew from an agreement it had signed nine days earlier to resolve a Title IX complaint against the university. The Education Department
responded by saying that Tufts had breached the agreement and warned that officials might seek to cut off the university’s federal funding if the matter was not resolved in 60 days.

At the time, university officials said they were backing out of the agreement because they had signed it under the understanding that federal officials were concerned only with a previous violation of Title IX on the campus, not a current issue. The university said it strongly disagreed with the conclusion by the Office for Civil Rights that its current sexual assault policies violated Title IX.

The department’s announcement about the Tufts case came as the Obama administration was promoting its efforts to push colleges to clamp down on sexual assaults. The administration also publicly named, for the first time, all of the 55 colleges that the Education Department is probing for their handling of sexual assault cases.

College graduation events start tonight

Stephens will kick off weekend ceremonies.

Friday, May 9, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Several Mid-Missouri colleges and universities are having commencement events this weekend and next.

The first ceremony is at 6 tonight for graduate students at Stephens College in the Kimball Ballroom.

Stephens College President Dianne Lynch will confer three post-baccalaureate certificates tonight, as well as 41 master's degrees.

The undergraduate ceremony for Stephens College students is set for 11 a.m. tomorrow in the Missouri Theatre, 203 S. Ninth St. Lynch will present a video tribute to the class and will confer 119 degrees during the ceremony.
Columbia College is holding two commencement ceremonies tomorrow, one at noon and the other at 3:30 p.m., in Southwell Gymnasium at Rogers and Range Line streets.

About 2,200 students graduate this semester from Columbia College, and 539 will participate in the commencement ceremony. That number includes 85 associate degrees, 398 bachelor's degrees and 85 master’s degrees. The college has a large online presence in addition to those who attend the local brick-and-mortar institution.

Other Mid-Missouri commencement events this weekend:

- William Woods University: Associate and bachelor's degrees: 10 a.m. tomorrow in Cutlip Auditorium in the McNutt Campus Center, 1 University Ave. in Fulton.

Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, education specialists and Doctor of Education degrees: 2 p.m. Sunday in Cutlip Auditorium

- Westminster College: 2 p.m. tomorrow in Champ Auditorium, West Seventh Street in Fulton.
- Central Methodist University: 2 p.m. tomorrow in the Puckett Field House, North Mulberry Street in Fayette.

The University of Missouri has about 20 commencement ceremonies scheduled for next weekend, starting with the College of Veterinary Medicine at 1 p.m. next Friday in Jesse Auditorium and ending with the master's and educational specialist candidates at 7 p.m. May 18 in the Hearnes Center. For times, dates and locations of the other ceremonies, visit www.registrar.missouri.edu/commencement/ceremonies-events/spring-ceremony.

Thousands participate in Senior Sendoff, symbolic end of MU career

Friday, May 9, 2014 | 8:39 p.m. CDT; updated 8:57 p.m. CDT, Friday, May 9, 2014
BY SARAH ROTHBERG

COLUMBIA — Thousands of MU students crowded Francis Quadrangle on Friday for the annual Senior Sendoff.
The Senior Sendoff begins with the Tiger Prowl, when students run through the MU Columns away from Jesse Hall to symbolize their exit into the world.

The event wraps up with free drinks, food and games. Students also were asked to place a pin in a map to mark where they were headed after graduation.

Free beer is distributed during the event. MU planned for 3,000 participants and purchased 16 kegs of beer. Budweiser donated six kegs.

WHAT OTHERS SAY: MU wastes thousands on coaching search

Saturday, May 10, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY THE ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mike Alden, MU athletics director, didn’t need a compass, let alone a coaching search consultant, to find Kim Anderson.

Anderson, who was hired as the new Tigers basketball coach on April 28, was working about 95 miles west on Interstate 70 at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg.

The Tigers’ rabid fan base has multiple opinions about Anderson already. He’s the Second Coming. He’s too old. He’s a Norm Stewart retread.

Whatever.

We wish Anderson the best of luck. What bothers us about his hiring is the $42,500 the Kansas City Star reported the state’s largest public university wasted on Collegiate Sports Associates Executive Search and Consulting.
The reason Alden (and others like him) hire such firms (which are generally run by former coaches and athletics directors), is so they can do their work in secret. It creates a game of sanctioned lying that goes like this:

Alden has the consultant reach out to coach X, say, Gregg Marshall of Wichita State. Marshall denies he’s been contacted by MU, which is kinda, sorta true.

Then when the search is over, because it benefits the coach’s future earnings power, his agent later confirms, yes, he was contacted by the university, through the third party which pocketed a little easy cash.

It’s a silly game for a public university to be playing, particularly one overseeing one of the top journalism schools in the country.

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Former MU vice chancellor honored with Lang service award

Friday, May 9, 2014 | 5:38 p.m. CDT

BY ADRIENNE DONICA

COLUMBIA — **Kee Groshong, a former MU vice chancellor for administrative services, was awarded the 2014 Howard B. Lang Jr. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service to Columbia on Thursday.**

Groshong is the sixth recipient of the award, which honors former Columbia Mayor Howard Lang Jr., who served from 1953 to 1957.

Recipients can be elected officials or those who serve on a city board, commission or event or leads an effort that benefits the city. Nominees are evaluated on their community involvement, personal initiative and impact.
Groshong has served the community in several capacities including chair of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce and treasurer of the Daniel Boone Regional Library Foundation, according a city news release.

He was also a delegate to Columbia's sister city, Kutaisi, Georgia. Currently, he is a member of the City of Columbia Railroad Advisory Board and the Community Foundation of Central Missouri.

Mayor Bob McDavid presented Groshong with the award and was a member of the five-person selection committee. Other committee members were former Mayor Bob Pugh; Margrace Buckler, the city's director of human resources; Lori Neidel, a New Century Fund board member; and Cindy Sheltmire, a real estate agent.

Groshong was commended by the committee for his contributions to Columbia's economy and culture and his effort to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the city and MU. He was one of five nominees who all had laudable recommendations, Trust Specialist John Baker said.

Ed Kaiser, Darwin Hindman, Dave Griggs, Robert Smith and Eva Jo Sapp are past recipients of the award. Sapp was recognized posthumously.

Big data means big profits, risks for farmers

Christopher Doering

WASHINGTON -- When Dave Nelson climbed into his John Deere planter this spring to sow corn seeds across nearly 3,000 acres of land, the 39-year-old Iowa farmer was armed with a secret weapon: a precise, data-driven view of his operations that gave him an advantage over most farmers in the Corn Belt.

The past four years, Nelson has been testing a technology from Monsanto known as FieldScripts, a program that uses soil information, yield data and computer algorithms to identify which
patches of land, some only a few meters in size, could support corn seeds planted closer together. Last year, the technology, which has recently been rolled out to farmers in Iowa and three other Corn Belt states, helped him squeeze an additional eight to 12 bushels per acre above his recent 10-year average of 195 bushels per acre. The result was up to an extra $50 for each corn acre, or about $150,000 throughout his operation -- revenue that would have otherwise gone unclaimed.

"I'm maximizing every kernel I put in the ground," said Nelson, who farms with his dad near Fort Dodge, Iowa. "Every farmer is going to say 'Oh, I've got data, but ... how many farmers can say I'm putting the data to work in every aspect of my farm?"

Agribusiness giants, such as Monsanto and DuPont Pioneer, are spending millions of dollars to help farmers mine ever-increasing amounts of data from their fields through "precision agriculture" technology to help them boost yields, lower their costs and reduce their risk, all the while increasing the amount of revenue they squeeze out of every acre.

These new products and services are developed by taking samples from a field to show the topography and characteristics of the soil, such as its nutrient content. Additional information such as weather patterns or yield trends from previous growing seasons are included to help a farmer select the seed that is best for a particular plot in a field, determine how much of it to use and establish how much fertilizer and chemicals they need and when to apply them.

To be sure, farmers have been collecting data and making decisions based on their own information and observations in the field for years. But smart phones, iPads, apps and faster wireless networks have provided a catalyst for the information gathering and increased its usefulness for the farm community.

While farmers have started to embrace the promise of the technology, they have grown increasingly concerned the data about their operations could be sold to traders or commodity brokers even though no cases of abuse have been found. Other growers worry their data could wind up in the hands of other farmers or be used by companies to peddle more seed and fertilizer and set prices because they'll know more about how much farmers will be using.

Agribusiness companies have promised the farm community they would protect the data and not misuse it.

"We're real concerned about who gets access to that information, what they would be allowed to do with it once they have it," said Scott VanderWal, South Dakota Farm Bureau president. "We're too early in the process to see any unintended consequences yet but we have to think ahead to figure out where this is going and make sure we don't have any."

The American Farm Bureau Federation has said data collected from individual farms is valuable and should remain the property of the farmer. The country's largest farm group hosted a meeting in April in Kansas City with Monsanto, DuPont Pioneer, Deere & Co. and other agricultural companies to agree upon a set of standards to protect agricultural data gleaned from growers' fields.
While participants during the day-long meeting agreed the data belongs to the farmer, they still need to reach a consensus on how the information can be shared. Further meetings are planned for later this spring.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in an interview last month that even though he was optimistic the burgeoning amount of farm data could help farmers grow more while helping the environment by reducing the amount of fertilizer and water being used, he said companies need to be do more to quell industry concerns.

"Agribusiness needs to be deeply concerned about the skepticism that most folks have about the privacy that is associated with the decisions that they make or information that is gathered on their farm," Vilsack said.

After decades of growth generated predominately from sales of seeds and chemicals, DuPont and Monsanto have made acquisitions and engaged in partnerships to grow their data-technology business, hoping to gain an early advantage over their competitors in the promising field. Monsanto has estimated the market for providing farm data analysis could be worth about $20 billion annually.

"This is just another component of where each organization can differentiate and try to get ahead," said Paul Schickler, president of DuPont Pioneer based in Johnston, Iowa. "Whatever we can do to bring more information and predictability and knowledge ... the better we can do in prediction of seed performance. That has been the holy grail for decades."

DuPont Pioneer is rolling out a new data platform called Encirca to help growers use their data to improve crop production and assist them in better using seed, nitrogen and water. DuPont has estimated Encirca services could generate more than $500 million annually for the company. It also launched a free service in March that allows growers to use a mobile-enabled information platform tied to their iPad or other device that organizes crop observations and gives them access to Pioneer expert advisers if needed. Farmers can upgrade to a subscription service that adds field-specific weather forecasts, market analysis and grain trading capabilities.

**DuPont Pioneer also has struck an agreement with the University of Missouri and the USDA to pool soil mapping resources and technologies to help growers more sustainably improve crop yields through better nitrogen application management and other field input planning.** And in November, DuPont Pioneer reached a deal with agribusiness giant Deere & Co. that will let farmers see data that's been collected on their farms in a few minutes, rather than weeks or months.

At the same time, Monsanto, the world's largest seed company best known for its Roundup herbicide and genetically modified corn and soybean technology, introduced its FieldScripts service this year in four major corn producing states -- Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and Indiana -- after testing it with farmers such as Nelson since 2010. And in October, Monsanto spent nearly $1 billion to purchase The Climate Corp., a provider of hyper-local weather monitoring and data models to farmers, that the seed and chemical company has combined with its FieldScripts technology.
FieldScripts users on average saw their corn yields rise by five to 10 bushels an acre, which translates to between $25 and $50 per acre based on current prices. The St. Louis seed company, which expects to grow FieldScripts for corn across the four states next year before expanding it to other states, has planned similar services for soybeans in a few years.

Here's how the technology works: The farmer provides the necessary data (yield history, soil conditions, etc.) to a local certified dealer. Monsanto crunches the data and suggests to the farmer which three corn hybrids are the best match for the grower's particular field conditions. The data is then sent back to the farmer and uploaded into the planter. The process to create a "prescription" for the farmer takes less than a month. During the growing season, Monsanto offers farmers another application that analyzes soil moisture content based on rainfall and the growth stage of the crop to help them determine how much fertilizer they need to apply, among other recommendations.

While revenue from data-driven technologies such as FieldScripts is not contributing much yet to growth and earnings, Anthony Osborne, The Climate Corp.'s vice president of marketing, said the parent company, Monsanto, is optimistic the new technologies can have "a significant impact on the company or we wouldn't be resourcing it at the level that we have." Monsanto generated close to $15 billion in net sales during its 2013 fiscal year, with 70% coming from its seed and genomics business.

"We view this as a platform that is as important to Monsanto as the biotech (one)," Osborne said.

Monsanto is operating its precision agriculture business separately from its commercial seed business. Osborne said the agribusiness giant's seed selection technology will suggest a competitor's product if it is found to be better for the farmer's operation. Not doing that would undermine the technology and Monsanto's credibility in precision agriculture, he said.

"If you think about this as a platform to provide expertise to growers, it has to work that way. And so as you build models and you have the data you make the best recommendation for a grower regardless of what that brand of seed or that herbicide or that fungicide would be," Osborne said. "You want to make the most sound recommendation that puts the grower in the best position possible."
St. Louis Rams pick Missouri’s Michael Sam in NFL Draft

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Michael Sam waited and waited. Hours passed, rounds came and went, and eventually, there were only eight more picks left on the third and final day of the NFL draft.

For just a moment, it looked like his chance of being picked by a pro team and becoming the league's first openly gay player might take a detour. Or at least be delayed.

The call finally came Saturday from the St. Louis Rams, the team right down the road from where Sam played his college ball at the University of Missouri.

"Thank you to the St. Louis Rams and the whole city of St. Louis. I'm using every once of this to achieve greatness!!" Sam tweeted with a frenzied typo moments after he was picked in the seventh round, with a picture of himself wearing a Rams cap and a pink polo shirt.

Sam came out as gay in media interviews earlier this year. His team and coaches knew his secret and kept it for his final college season. He went on to have the best year of his career: He was the Southeastern Conference defensive player of the year.

The pick came after several rounds of suspense. The first round of the day, No. 4 overall, came and went, no Sam. Then the fifth and sixth, and finally, the day was down to just a handful of picks.

When Mike Kensil, the NFL's vice president of game operations, walked to the podium at Radio City Music Hall in the draft's final minutes to announce the Rams' second-to-last pick, the crowd got a sense something was up. Very few of the last day picks were announced at the podium. Twitter lit up with suggestions the Rams were about to make news.

When Kensil said: "The St. Louis Rams select ... Michael Sam..." the fans gave a hearty cheer, chanting "Yes! Yes! Yes!" and "Michael Sam!"

Sam was in San Diego watching with friends and family at the home of his agent, Joe Barkett of Empire Athletes. ESPN and the NFL Network had cameras there and showed Sam's reaction.
Sam was on the phone bending over, with his boyfriend hugging him and rubbing his left bicep. When Sam got off the phone, the tears started. He gave his boyfriend a big kiss and a long hug as he cried and his eyes reddened. After, they shared cake — and another kiss.

Sam will start his professional career not far from the place where he played his college ball, with three former Missouri teammates.

The 6-foot-2, 255-pound Sam was considered a mid-to-late round pick, far from a sure thing to be drafted. He played defensive end in college, but he's short for that position in the NFL and slower than most outside linebackers, the position he'll need to transition to at the professional level.

"I knew I was going to get picked somewhere. Every team that passed me, I was thinking how I'm going to sack their quarterback," Sam said.

He was taken with the 249th overall pick out of 256. Players from Marist, Maine and McGill University in Canada were selected before Sam.

"In the world of diversity we live in now, I'm honored to be a part of this," Rams coach Jeff Fisher said during an interview on ESPN.

The NFL had no comment on Sam being drafted.

The impact of Sam's selection goes far beyond football. At a time when gay marriage is gaining acceptance among Americans, Sam's entry into the NFL is a huge step toward the integration of gay men into professional team sports. Pro sports have in many ways lagged behind the rest of society in acceptance.

"Michael Sam wouldn't have been drafted five years ago," said former Viking punter Chris Kluwe, who has accused Minnesota of cutting him in part because of his vocal support for gay rights.

In the last year, NBA veteran Jason Collins has come out publicly as gay, and is now playing for the Brooklyn Nets. Collins said before the Nets' playoff game against the Heat that he was watching the draft and texted Sam after he was picked.

"It's a great day for Michael and his family and for the NFL," Collins said.

Publicly, most people in and related to the NFL have been supportive of Sam. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has said Sam would be welcome in the league and judged solely on his ability to play. A few wondered whether teams would be reluctant to draft Sam because of all the media attention that would come with it.
Fair or not, the NFL — coming off a season in which a bullying scandal involving players on the Miami Dolphins was one of the biggest stories in sports — was looking at a possible public relations hit if Sam was not drafted. He would likely have been signed as a free agent and given a chance to make a team in training camp, but to many it would have looked as if he was being rejected.

Now that he’s there, it could be seen as an opportunity for the NFL to show that crass locker room culture is not as prevalent as it might have looked to those who followed the embarrassing Dolphins scandal.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
Teammates feel relief for Michael Sam after he is drafted by Rams
May 11
BY TOD PALMER
The Kansas City Star

Former Missouri defensive end Michael Sam doubled over and began sobbing when Rams coach Jeff Fisher called shortly before 4 p.m. Saturday to say Sam had been drafted into the NFL.

The relief and exuberance, as captured by ESPN cameras in the living room where he watched the third and final day of the NFL Draft, was evident for Sam, who became the NFL’s first openly gay player.

“It took a guy with raw courage to stand up,” Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said as he left the NASCAR Sprint Cup race Saturday night at Kansas Speedway.

Far from the camera’s prying lens, Sam’s former Tigers teammates felt a similar sense of relief.

“That guy is like family to me,” former MU tight end Eric Waters said. “I’ve lived with him for a year now, and he’s a great guy. I wish him the best, and I’m so proud of him. ... I wanted it (to get drafted) more for him than I did for myself, so I really want to say
congratulations to him. He deserves it. He’s a hard worker, and he really deserves the opportunity.”

Sam was the SEC defensive player of the year and racked up a school-record 11 1/2 sacks and 19 tackles for a loss last season as a senior at Missouri.

He was projected as high as a third-round pick by some in early NFL Draft analysis, but those same analysts started sliding Sam farther down the draft board after he came out publicly in February.

Sam’s name still hadn’t been called as the draft entered the supplemental picks, which are tacked on to the end of the seventh round.

That’s when Fisher and the Rams — with pick No. 249 overall — made history.

“We were very fortunate to have the supplemental choices, and you use those for players that you want to give an opportunity to that you think you want to draft,” Fisher said during a news conference. “I haven’t said a whole lot to anybody over the last week or so, but after doing the study, he’s a good football player.”

Fisher described Sam as a “tweener, maybe a rush end or a standup” linebacker.

“He screams off the edge,” Rams general manager Les Snead said.

There wasn’t a raucous celebration in St. Louis’ draft room — “They reacted no different than any other selection — they clapped, they were excited,” Fisher said. — but Sam’s selection was wildly cheered outside those walls.

“That’s awesome,” said former Missouri wide receiver Marcus Lucas, a Liberty graduate. “I’m glad that all the backlash that came along with him announcing that he was openly gay didn’t discourage the Rams from taking him. I know it may have hurt his draft potential, but knowing that he’s a great player and the defensive player of the year in the SEC — that’s a prestigious award — so he deserves to be rewarded for that.”

Sam joins a Rams roster that already includes three other former Tigers — center Tim Barnes, wide receiver T.J. Moe and cornerback E.J. Gaines, whom St. Louis drafted in the sixth round on Saturday.

“That’s perfect, having that kind of Missouri connection will be great and will help him be more comfortable in that situation,” Lucas said.

Now, though, those close to Sam hope the focus shifts to football.
“That’s cool,” Pinkel said when asked about Sam staying in Missouri to begin his professional career,” but the bigger issue is he’ll be judged as a football player, and let’s move on.”

Chiefs general manager John Dorsey also limited his comments on Sam to his on-field value.

“He’s a good football player,” Dorsey said. “The guy was SEC defensive player of the year for a reason, and you know what, that’s why you’re happy for him. The guy got drafted. He’s made his dream. His dream is to play in the National Football League, (and) he’s playing in the National Football League.”

Still, for many, it was clear that Sam’s arrival in the NFL was a transcendent moment.

“I’m glad he got drafted,” said Chiefs quarterback and former Missouri star Chase Daniel, who also was at Kansas Speedway for the NASCAR race. “He deserves a chance. Quite frankly, he’s a darn good defensive lineman. I’m excited about it, I’m sure he’s completely pumped about it.”

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/10/5015856/teammates-feel-relief-for-michael.html#storylink=cpy

Bernie: Rams did the right thing in drafting Sam

Bernie Miklasz bjmiklasz@post-dispatch.com

Say what you want about Rams coach Jeff Fisher, but no one has ever described him as weak, indecisive, timid or afraid. This coach is hardcore in his football beliefs.

Even when his teams have been short on victories, they’ve never lacked an identity. They’re tough. They’re aggressive. They’re edgy. Penalty flags fly whenever they’re around. And the stubborn, independent-minded Fisher has never worried about seeking anyone’s approval. He is comfortable in his own skin.

It should be no surprise, then, to see Fisher and his Rams step forward when none of the other 31 NFL teams had the guts to choose Mizzou pass rusher Michael Sam in the 2014 draft. We’ll talk about the football part of this landmark event later on. But to me, more than anything, this was about Fisher, GM Les Snead, owner Stan Kroenke and chief operating officer Kevin Demoff having the courage to do what’s right.
In Saturday’s seventh round the Rams gave Michael Sam a chance to prove he’s worthy of a job as an NFL player. The other 31 teams can say what they want about Sam’s relatively short height, and his sluggish 40-yard times, or his mediocre performance in workouts.

Here’s the only fact – the only test – that matters: after 248 selections, no franchise had bothered to open the door to an All-American defensive end, the co-SEC defensive Player of the Year and a pass-rush force that helped make No. 5 Missouri one of the best defenses in the nation last year.

On the final day of the ’14 draft, in rounds four through seven, 10 defensive ends came off the board as Sam waited for a phone call that all college football players dream of receiving. Some of the defensive ends were pulled from small, even obscure, college programs such as Illinois State, Marist and Concordia-St. Paul.

Sam — despite his award-winning season in the best college football conference in the land — was still on the board, ignored. And we were supposed to believe this had nothing to do with Sam being the first openly gay player eligible for an NFL draft? That’s absurdly naïve.

So with the 249th pick of a 256-player draft, the Rams saved the NFL from profound embarrassment by proudly choosing Michael Sam.

As Fisher told ESPN immediately after the draft: “In the world of diversity we live in now, I’m honored to be a part of this.”

As he should be. The Rams didn’t have to do this. They didn’t need to pull a publicity stunt to cover a poor draft; their list of selections had already received top grades nationally. Fisher makes $7 million a year in salary and is secure in his job; he didn’t need to score public-relations points.

The Rams drafted Sam for several reasons. First, they covet players who can pressure the quarterback. Second, Sam obviously represented superb value for a seventh-round pick. Third, the Rams have a strong locker-room culture that will welcome Sam as a teammate.

And finally _ though Fisher tries to downplay this — the Rams clearly recognized that Sam shouldn’t be excluded just because his presence on the Rams’ roster would make OTHERS uncomfortable. The people who aren’t members of the Rams’ family.

Fisher likes to reinforce his defense when he gets the chance, but the Rams didn’t really need a defensive end at that point in the draft. But the message was clear: the Rams drafted Michael Sam because it would have been wrong for all 32 teams to shun him. This move was a bold reaffirmation of the wonderful principle of fairness. For all people.

Fisher is an enlightened individual with no hang-ups. It’s never a problem for Fisher to go against the grain. His locker rooms have been filled with players that come from every type of background and circumstance. That goes for players that have run afoul of the law, players that have made messes in their personal lives, players that would make other coaches nervous.

The Rams employ a few players that have police records attached in their files. Fisher fired defensive coordinator Gregg Williams of the "Bountygate" scandal _ only to bring him back a year later because he
needed Williams to improve the defense. All of this, after firing Williams' son from the coaching staff after the 2012 season.

And yet Fisher would somehow draw the line at spending a late-round draft choice on an openly gay player? The very thought is laughable.

That's among the reasons why Fisher's decision was so interesting.

Yes, Fisher understands the historical significance of this moment and wanted to be on the right side of history. But it was also a slick move. How many times do you have a chance to grab the SEC Defensive Player of the Year with a supplemental seventh-round pick?

Fisher, the enlightened one, also loves winning football games. He's brazen about that. If you can ball, he'll give you a chance. To that end, if Fisher didn't think Sam had the potential to win a spot and add more fury to the pass rush, he wouldn't have made this call. All Sam wanted was an opportunity. He got it from an opportunist.

And also understand this about Fisher: the coach has the strength of character to cut Sam. As he enters the NFL, Sam is a one-skill player — a situational pass rusher. And if Sam can't demonstrate a consistent ability to storm around blockers and get to the quarterback, he won't make Fisher's squad. Not a chance.

I have to believe this was a factor. How many NFL coaches were nervous about the prospect of having to cut Sam and possibly face a backlash for it?

It took a strong leader to draft Sam; it may take an even stronger leader to waive him.

But Michael Sam will get a fair chance from this coaching staff.

Sam was a smart pick for the Rams. And he's a good fit. Rams players already have reached out to let Sam know they're happy he's part of the team. Sam won't have any problems at Rams Park. Not with Robert Quinn, Chris Long, William Hayes, James Laurinaitis and so many others having his back.

"I think he's going to want to prove himself and we're excited about that," Laurinaitis said. "I think from the reaction you've seen from people on our team on Twitter and all that, I think it just shows we've got a group of guys that all we care about is, hey, if you can come in and help this football team and win football games and get to where we want to go, I think that answer is definitely yes."

And this concocted issue of "distractions" is just that: nonsense. There will be an initial media stampede, yes. But I'd expect the Rams to have a firm but reasonable plan for media access to Sam. And after the first round of stories, the national media will move on, and everyone at Rams Park will continue working.

Unless a Rams player (or Sam) says something stupid to cause a full-blown controversy, the hubbub will be minimal. But given the way Fisher runs the operation, everyone in that building will know what's expected from them. And it's nothing radical.
This is a player-friendly coaching staff and organization. Players are treated with respect. All players; that was true long before Fisher decided to draft Sam. On top of that, I don't believe Sam's teammates require a classroom lecture to realize that their boss just made a powerfully symbolic statement about inclusion.

This doesn't mean that any Ram (or any person) is required to approve of Sam's personal life. The drafting of Sam will lead to some pushback from outside the gates of Rams Park. But it will be a different vibe inside the building. Fisher's workplace environment is as good as it gets. And among the players, the team leaders are proactive. And that's why this is the right team for such a potentially sensitive situation.

“We're in an age of diversity," Fisher said. "The players understand that. They know that. I think the University of Missouri should be commended on how they handled that. It's not a distraction. People will try to make it a distraction, but it's not a distraction.

"I'm personally proud of him for coming out. I'm sure it was a very, very difficult thing for him to do, and I would also submit that it was probably a tremendous load off of his shoulders and he enjoyed a sense of relief because the truth was out there and he was accepted by his teammates and he was able to flourish and be part of an outstanding defense."

As a seventh-round selection on a team with a deep defensive line, Sam faces long odds to win a job on the 53-man roster.

But at least one NFL team had the fortitude to draft him. At least one NFL team was willing to give a shot to this long shot. At least one NFL team deserves to feel proud today for reasons that have nothing to do with draft report-card grades from ESPN.

Only one NFL franchise had the heart to tear down a barrier, and welcome Michael Sam into their family.

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Education Rundown: Sleep Helps Students; Racial Achievement Gap Persists

BY SUSAN HEGGER

NO MU MENTION

Once a week, our team of education reporters would like to share stories that look at trends in education here and across the country. In particular, we want to focus on people, research and even gizmos that may help make kids learn better.
Snooze button

Here's some research that won't be news to all of those transfer students who have had to get up before the sun to catch buses this school year: Teens need more sleep and early start times for class are harmful to their physical and academic health. The Education Commission of the States says in a new study that "there is virtually unanimous agreement in the research community that later start times in adolescent education would produce a positive change in adolescent learning, health and safety."

On school days, researchers found, students can lose as much as an average of 2.7 hours of sleep. At the Air Force Academy, data showed that the earlier students began classes, the worse they did in those classes, and their achievement suffered in all of the classes they took later in that same day. And more sleep helped things at home as well. Research among students and families in Minneapolis showed that when classes started later, families had more conversation time and their high schoolers were easier to live with. (Dale Singer)

Happy graduation

Looking for that perfect gift for your graduate as commencement season approaches? Why not consider what a project at MIT will be giving every undergraduate student this fall -- $100 in Bitcoin.

Sure, you may be like everyone else and not be able to explain exactly what Bitcoin is, or how it can be used. But that didn’t stop a pair of MIT students who managed to raise $500,000 for their Bitcoin Project. The website Fast Company explains that most of the money came from MIT graduates. After the new currency is distributed, the project plans to study how students use it and how their spending affects the university. Founder Dan Elitzer said that “we expect the broader ecosystem and focus on Bitcoin at MIT that it helps create will continue for many years to come.” (Dale Singer)

In loco parentis

A new report from the American Association of University Women says that more women than ever before are choosing community colleges to get an education and training for the workforce. But, it adds, within six years after they first sign up for classes, nearly half of those students leave school without a degree. One big reason: a lack of child care. The report says that even though a greater number of student-mothers are enrolling at community colleges, only 49 percent of them provide on-site child care, compared with 57 percent of four-year public schools and only 9 percent of four-year private schools. The report calls for Congress to put more money into a federal program known as CCAMPIS -- Campus Child Care Means Parents in School. (Dale Singer)

Taken to the cleaners?

Pity the poor students at Davidson College in North Carolina. Since 1920, they have been able to take advantage of a free, full-service laundry on campus, where they could drop off their dirty
clothes and pick them up all clean, folded and wrapped -- or in the case of dress shirts, on hangers. The laundry was named after Lula Bell Houston, who worked there for 57 years. But the college says it is now "aligning its resources to meet educational priorities within the changing landscape of higher education." Translation: No more free full-service laundry, starting May 15, 2015. But don't expect students to have to start going grubby. They still have free self-service laundry facilities on campus to keep themselves looking sharp. (Dale Singer)

**Feds remind schools of obligation to enroll students regardless of immigration status**

Even though the path toward immigration reform remains murky on Capitol Hill, the U.S. Department of Justice [updated rules](#) that school districts must follow when it comes to educating children regardless of immigration status. Civil rights groups say the revised rules, which provide specific examples that administrators must follow, will prevent discrimination against school age children. The U.S. Department of Education says it’s received [17 complaints](#) since 2011 that districts were raising barriers to student enrollment because of immigration status. That's illegal under the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision Plyler v. Doe.

A [letter](#) to administrators acknowledges that schools can ask for proof of residency in a district, but that documents can’t unlawfully bar students from going to school.

While a district may restrict attendance to district residents, inquiring into students’ citizenship or immigration status, or that of their parents or guardians would not be relevant to establishing residency within the district.

The updated rules also include a [question and answer](#) document for administrators. The [fact sheet](#) that accompanies the new rules notes that all children are entitled to equal access to basic public education, regardless of immigration status.

*(Tim Lloyd)*

**The racial gap in education achievement isn’t getting any smaller**

Despite the upward trajectory of overall student achievement in America, the gap between minority and white high school students is wide and steady. That finding is part of the nation’s report card from the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

In a statement, Education Secretary Arne Duncan called the results troubling.

We project that our nation’s public schools will become majority-minority this fall – making it even more urgent to put renewed attention into the academic rigor and equity of course offerings and into efforts to redesign high schools. We must reject educational stagnation in our high schools, and as nation, we must do better for all students, especially for African-American and Latino students.

The report found that African American and Hispanic students had gains in the percentage scoring at or above proficient level on standardized tests, but those gains didn’t make the
achievement gap slimmer as overall student success improved. The report card from the federal
government is issued for high school students every four years and every two years for fourth
through eighth grade students.

Editorial: Follow the Oregon trail to student loan relief
By the Editorial Board

Two-thirds of students in the United States leave college with a crushing load of debt. This national debt
total is now $1.2 trillion.

It’s not only debilitating to the kids who owe it, it’s also crippling their parents. It’s a drag on the entire
economy.

The Institute for College Access and Success Project on Student Debt says the average borrower is in the
hole for $26,600 by the time he ends his college career.

One in 10 of them is more than $40,000 in the red. Although the number of students with debt of
$100,000 or more is tiny — about 1 percent — they’re out there, too.

Student loans are the equivalent of payday loans for the middle class, second only to home mortgages as
the highest form of consumer debt in the nation. They account for 6 percent of the nation’s $16.7 trillion
debt.

These are staggering statistics. Not only have we hocked our kids’ and grandkids’ futures to the already-
here-and-growing climate change crisis, but we’ve put a debt monkey on their backs that many of them
won’t be able to shake.

The latest proposed solution to the problem, and the one currently getting the most media attention, has

Ms. Warren introduced the “Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act” in the Senate on
Tuesday. The act would allow borrowers with outstanding student loans to refinance them at the same low
rates offered to new borrowers in the student loan program.

But Ms. Warren’s excellent bill has what is probably a fatal flaw: She’s counting on passage of the “Buffett
Rule” to fund it.
The rule, named after billionaire investor Warren Buffett, would increase the income tax rate on people who earn more than $1 million a year. Mr. Buffett doesn’t believe that rich people should pay less in federal taxes as a portion of their income than middle- and lower-income people.

Senate Republicans disagree and killed the bill in 2012.

If that’s not enough to doom Ms. Warren’s legislation, another portion of the bill might be. That part would allow borrowers to refinance their private loans from lenders like Sallie Mae, once a federally chartered student loan operation, now a private company. Ms. Warren wants student-debtors to have access to low-interest loans from the U.S. Department of Education to pay off their private debt.

The private lenders deserve to eat the loss. Many of them used what the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau called “subprime-style” lending tactics in making loans to borrowers who had a slim chance of paying them back. But will they take a bath? Not with this Congress.

The main reason students and their parents have incurred high debt is the precipitous decline in state funding for higher education over the past 30 years. Forty-seven states spend less on college students now than they did in 2008, with the average state spending 23 percent less.

Missouri is spending about 26.1 percent less now per student than it did in 2008.

Coupled with that decline was the laudable goal of making sure most young people could attend college, and the decline of the sorts of manufacturing and unionized industry jobs that had formerly employed many kids without college degrees.

To compete for students and their federal loan money, colleges and universities built ever-grander campuses with more bells-and-whistles and hired more administrators at higher salaries. University presidents are paid on par with the CEOs of successful businesses.

Schools used their posh surroundings and administrative skills to justify consistent tuition increases.

“Since 1980, inflation-adjusted tuition at public universities has tripled; at private universities it has more than doubled,” Benjamin Ginsberg, a political science professor at Johns Hopkins University, wrote in Washington Monthly in 2011. “Between 1975 and 2005, total spending by American higher educational institutions, stated in constant dollars, tripled, to more than $325 billion per year.”

All along, lenders have continued to hand out money to students, safe in the knowledge that all loans are guaranteed by the government. Federal aid (inflation adjusted) increased more than 500 percent between 1973 and 2012.

It’s unconscionable, and yet it’s been continuing for decades.

Borrowers have little chance to adjust their loans. Even bankruptcy is not an option because student loans can’t be discharged. The Department of Education offers an Income-Based Repayment plan for borrowers who are having “partial financial hardship.” Designed to reduce monthly payments to make loan debt more manageable, the enrollment process is so complicated that borrowers often throw up their hands in despair.
So let’s credit Ms. Warren with dragging the issue back to the front burner. Take the good things her legislation includes (like allowing borrowers to refinance at lower interest rates) and match it up with a plan like what is being offered in the state of Oregon.

Nearly a year ago, the legislature there adopted a flat-tax loan plan for graduates of in-state public universities. Kids go to school for free and repay 3 percent of their annual earnings for 25 years after they graduate. Payback for community college grads is 1.5 percent, and students who attend school for less time pay a pro-rated fee.

Part of the beauty of the Oregon plan is that students are not required to pay tuition upfront so there are no traditional loans. No one is making money off a kid’s desperate effort to get an education.

How radical — educating students and not forcing them to make deals with the debt devil.

Oregon shouldn’t occupy this territory alone. Missouri can do it, and should. Illinois, too. It won’t solve the student loan crisis, unless the feds see fit to try something along the same lines, but it would be a great help to local students, their parents and the economy.

Chinese visiting scholars confront culture shock in middle-class America
Saturday, May 10, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT; updated 8:42 p.m. CDT, Saturday, May 10, 2014

BY MIRANDA ZHANG

COLUMBIA — If Kai Qiao were back in China, he would take the routines of his middle-class life for granted.

He would wake up in a four-bedroom condo in a nice neighborhood. He would drive his wife to a shopping plaza in their Ford sedan. He would share their pictures on his iPhone.

Back in Chongqing, Qiao would likely be planning a lunar New Year dinner at his grandparents’ home. As a physical education teacher in a four-year college in China, he could be umpiring an international tennis tournament. He could be drinking with friends in open-air restaurants.

But this spring, landing in the United States as a visiting scholar at MU, Qiao’s life became a tangle of culture shock, homesickness and strained finances.
For the first 10 days, he and his wife, Yang Wang, lived with another Chinese couple, shared kitchen utensils and frantically hunted for an affordable apartment. With no car, they weren't sure whether to live close to the MU campus or to a supermarket.

Qiao used buses as much as he could for errands — opening a checking account, registering for classes and managing the red tape of forms and applications. At night, he relied on acquaintances to drive him home. The little luxuries he now takes for granted at home are more elusive in Columbia.

**Lifestyle contrasts**

In the new China, Qiao and Wang belong to an emerging middle class that is tied to the machine of economic and social change. Like many Chinese, they came to the United States not to escape poverty, but to capitalize on opportunities.

They can afford to spend a year in the United States to study or simply explore, knowing they can return to comfortable, affordable lives in China.

As a middle-class Chinese couple, Qiao and Wang have a kind of passport to success, according to Ted Fishman, bestselling author of “China, Inc.: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World.”

They belong to a fast-growing segment — the middle class — that represented 68 percent of China's urban households in 2012. That figure has skyrocketed from just 4 percent in 2000, management consulting firm McKinsey & Company reported last year.

Chinese middle-class households like Qiao and Wang’s earn $9,000 to $34,000 annually in disposable income. They can afford air conditioning, washing machines, cars, apartments, college education and travel.

Overall, a lifestyle that costs the equivalent of $30,000 in China would cost about $51,000 in the U.S., according to the Big Mac currency-comparison index created by The Economist magazine. Beyond the material well-being of the rising Chinese middle class, Fishman said, they also have the ability to spend their money and time on experiences and learning.
“Coming to a university town in a way is one of the dreams of a lot of Chinese middle-class consumers,” Fishman said in a phone interview.

“When Chinese come to the United States, you know, they go to the usual places. They go to New York City. And they go to Las Vegas, probably more than other people,” he continued.

“But they very often want to see the campuses of MIT, of Harvard, of Princeton. They want to see it. They want to soak it up.”

**Wave of Chinese scholars**

*Chinese now make up almost half of all international students and scholars at MU. In 2012, more than 1,000 Chinese students and 300 Chinese scholars were enrolled at the Columbia campus, according to the MU International Center.*

A decade ago, the campus had only 270 students and 97 scholars coming from China.

America was one of Qiao’s dream destinations.

He decided on MU through established connections between the college where he works in Chongqing and the MU Asian Affairs Center, which offers training programs, professional visits and cultural events to visiting scholars, government officials and business people from Asia.

It took a year to complete the paperwork and get their visas. His wife quit her job as a magazine editor in order to join him.

Qiao came on an exchange program to study sports management while Wang accompanied him on a spouse visa. They arrived in Missouri too late to register for spring classes.

This semester, they are attending workshops arranged by the center, and they visited the MU athletics department, learning how college football players train and how they are treated for injuries.

Qiao does not know whether his American experience will benefit his career when he goes back to China, but he feels every day is precious in a country he once saw only in movies and news.
From heartland to heartland
In mid-February, the day before the Lantern Festival, the last day of the Chinese lunar New Year celebration, Qiao and Wang boarded a plane for America.

Qiao says he doesn’t believe in fortune telling. But he picked Feb. 13 to start their yearlong journey because Baidu, the biggest Chinese search engine, says it's a lucky day for traveling.

Wearing his grandmother's red carnelian bead bracelet, he and Wang bid goodbye to Chongqing — formerly known as Chungking — a booming mega-city upstream on the Yangtze River in southwest China.

They stopped in Shanghai, San Francisco, Los Angeles and then Dallas, where they were stuck overnight during a Valentine's Day snowstorm.

“The hotel sent a rose,” Qiao said in Chinese. “And I gave it to her.”

He turns to his wife with an apologetic look, sorry he couldn’t give her a nicer gift, as he usually would.

The next day, the couple reboarded and flew north from the bare winter landscape of Texas to the snow-covered fields of the Midwest.

"Missouri looked like a white sea from the air," Qiao says. “It made me feel pure inside.”

Qiao had done his homework about Columbia before choosing MU for a year of professional development.

"We checked out the city from Google Earth views," Qiao says. “It looked better than I imagined before coming. The snow scene was poetic, just like what we watched on movies such as 'Lord of the Rings.'"

Before leaving China, he joined an email group for Chinese living in Columbia. That’s where he and Wang found a temporary way-station; another Chinese couple agreed to share their two-bedroom apartment for the first few days.
When the couple landed and pulled three heavy suitcases into the cozy waiting area of Columbia Regional Airport, they were warmed by the sight of locals hugging each other upon arrival.

They were met by Gary Dou, senior coordinator of the Chinese programs at the Asian Affairs Center. It was a Saturday when Mizzou Arena hosted a college basketball game, and the streets of Columbia were filled with groups of Missouri Tigers fans.

It seemed like a smooth entry, with little hint of the bumpy road ahead.

Settling into life in Columbia proved a startling shift for Qiao and Wang, both 32, born and raised in an intensely urban megalopolis. Chongqing was dubbed “Chicago on the Yangtze” by the American magazine Foreign Policy in 2010, and described as the “fastest-growing urban center on the planet” by Britain’s Channel 4 in 2006.

They were prepared, at least in theory, to land in a small American town. What they weren’t prepared for were the challenges of going days without Internet access, hunting for apartments, running errands without a car and the shock of learning utilities were charged on top of the rent.

New faces in town
It was Qiao and Wang’s first Friday night in Columbia, and they had been invited by their temporary roommates to experience a bit of the local Christian culture.

On Fridays, the Columbia Chinese Christian Church offers dinner and Bible study groups. The church on Rock Quarry Road has become an important social center for the growing local population of students, visiting scholars and permanent residents.

In the front row of the English Bible study group, Qiao and Wang were singing along with the others while a volunteer leader, Randy Dolan, kept rhythm with his guitar.

Dolan told the congregation about visiting some friends in China in 1994. He took a boat trip on the Yangtze River and chugged past Chongqing.

Qiao, distracted by stress and sleepy from jet lag, suddenly brightened when he heard the name of his hometown. He raised his hand when Dolan asked if anyone is from the city.
“I was so happy to hear him talking about Chongqing. I thought it must have been destiny,” Qiao said, recalling that night.

He forgot for a few moments about the difficulty of finding housing and transportation and trying to reach his family back home.

A week later, Dolan visited the couple at their temporary apartment on West Broadway. He brought his wife’s home-baked pumpkin bread to welcome them.

His slow, clear English is a relief to Qiao and Wang, who struggle to understand rapid-fire American slang.

Qiao asked Dolan the best way to answer the constant American greeting, “How are you doing?” Back home, people greet each other with a simple “Hello.”

Dolan told them that the phrase was just a courtesy, like saying “hi,” and there was no need to respond.

A regular traveler to China and an intermediate Mandarin speaker, Dolan can pick up what the couple says from time to time. But he is bewildered when they switch to the Chongqing dialect they speak with each other.

Their provincial dialect is one more isolating factor for Qiao and Wang. Although Mandarin is the national language, most Chinese have difficulty understanding someone from a different province.

**Dou, MU Asian Affairs Center senior coordinator, tries to speak the couple’s dialect to make them feel more like home. He has picked up the various dialects after a decade of working with Chinese scholars.**

One of Dou’s jobs is to introduce the center’s Chinese scholars to the area, taking them on trips to the Hong Kong Market, Osage Beach Premium Outlets and the Amish Community near Columbia. He shows them around and often sparks laughter among the small group of scholars.

**A challenging move**
Most visiting scholars rely on the center to find housing, buy a car and sometimes enroll their kids in school. Although Dou introduced Qiao and Wang to a local friend who
eventually does help them find a new apartment, the couple managed to deal with many matters on their own.

Among the Chinese scholars who have come to MU through the center, Dou said Qiao was the first to sign a private apartment lease on his own. Not that it was easy.

He ended up finding a one-bedroom apartment close to their temporary lodging, as well as to a grocery store. With Dou’s help, he opened an account at a local bank the same day he and his wife moved into their new place.

They had purchased a queen-size bed, a desk, a dining table and smaller pieces of furniture through the Chinese email group or from acquaintances. The furniture had to be moved from their temporary quarters up a set of stairs into the apartment.

Qiao thought about lugging everything on foot, but he didn't have enough help and the night was cold. A friend of this reporter finally loaned him a van and offered to drive it, since the Qiao didn’t yet have a driver’s license.

The two men carried all the furniture and heavy bags into the apartment as Wang told them where to put it. After everything was unloaded, she pulled out her Chinese iPhone and took pictures of her husband trying to assemble the wooden headboard for their bed.

“This is funny,” she laughed. Her husband rarely did this kind of work back home.

**Spicy dishes, sweet wine**

On a breezy March day, the afternoon sunlight crept into Qiao and Wang’s apartment. A bunch of pink tulips sat in a pot on the nightstand-sized table, brightening up the pale living room. The couple had covered a mattress with a floral-patterned quilt from a garage sale to use as a couch.

The kitchen was the center of sounds and smells. Next to the stove, a dozen bottles and jars sat on the counter — cooking wine, vinegar, spicy bean sauce, pickled peppers, sesame oil and white pepper.

In the cabinet were dry peppers, garlic and ginger that Qiao and Wang had brought from home, where spices are worshipped as health cures to those who live in the mountainous area around Chongqing.
The taste of four different kinds of hot peppers in one dish speaks to the essence of Chongqing cuisine. It’s a branch of the Szechuan style that American spicy-food lovers might recognize.

As Chongqingers who are most proud of their own food, Qiao and Wang have found cooking Chinese in America is the way to bridge the distance from home.

“Americans eat simple stuff like hamburgers, sandwiches and drink Coke,” Qiao said. “I’m trying hard to get used to them to explore their culinary culture.”

Qiao is a creative cook and often volunteers to take over the kitchen, especially in his better moods. That day, Qiao had successfully persuaded the technicians from CenturyLink to repair their Internet service.

The couple cheered when they were finally able to Skype with their parents, and Qiao was proud of the victory over another confusing problem.

Devising a plan for dinner, he walked to the nearby Hy-Vee grocery store to buy vegetables. Once back home, he busied himself in the kitchen. Wang, dressed in a long gray skirt with suspenders and a matching beret, was allowed only to peel and chop the potatoes.

Qiao mixed slices of beef with spicy bean sauce and added three kinds of chili peppers. The oil popped, and the peppers sizzled like lit firecrackers in the wok.

A dinner of soup and four main dishes was soon ready. Wang set the table, and Qiao poured himself a glass from the jug of Paisano red wine. It helps him sleep better these days, he said.

As Qiao began to eat, Wang stood up to take pictures of their colorful dinner table. She might show the photos via Skype to their parents, who would soon be awake on the other side of the planet.

Steam from Qiao’s celery beef stir-fry and the hot-and-sour shredded potato sent a spicy fragrance around the small apartment.

It smelled like home.

**POSTSCRIPT: May 2014**
The days of struggle to settle down in Columbia are over for Kai Qiao and Yang Wang. Commuting is not a hassle anymore. Qiao drives around in a Jeep SUV that he bought from a Chinese owner. He also acquired a Blackberry cellphone to make contacts in the U.S.

The couple goes to the Hong Kong Market and can get most ingredients they need to cook authentic Chinese meals. They were happy to find a stove and pot set for making hotpot, one of the most typical local cuisines in Chongqing.

They are learning about the government, economy and culture of Missouri in the workshops arranged by the Asian Affairs Center. Their English has improved a little, but has a long way to go to understand everything. In his spare time, Qiao plays tennis with friends in the open-air public court.

Columbia is the couple's home, for now.
Enrollment at the bucolic campus has hovered between 10,000 and 13,000 since 1974. But the last 10 years have boasted a slow, steady rise. The head count peaked a couple of years ago at 14,235.

And now come the graduates. This year is another new milestone: 3,155 have earned bachelor’s or master’s, a smidge higher than the total two years ago.

Doug McIlhagga, the university’s executive director of marketing and communications, credits robust professional programs such as dental medicine, pharmacology and nursing. Engineering and business degrees are doing “exceedingly well” too, he said.

Practical matters help. The vast majority of SIUE students come from Illinois high schools and community colleges.

“Part of it is we’re the most affordable state school in Illinois,” he said. Annual tuition for full-time students who qualify for the in-state rate this fall is $7,296. The University of Missouri-Columbia estimates tuition next year at about $10,300. The University of Illinois will crest at $12,000.

But some of it, McIlhagga acknowledged, is just old-school familiarity. Fathers sending sons. Sisters encouraging brothers. And so on. “I start to run into it somewhat routinely,” McIlhagga said. “You talk to parents, their parents went here.”

On Saturday, B.J. Downer, 30, of Godfrey, was walking his 3-year-old daughter, Zayda, to see his sister graduate that morning. Then, at 1 p.m., Downer would walk the aisle himself, to pick up his diploma in geography.

Richard Hill, from the Chicago suburbs, pumped his fist when his son, Ryan, 24, funneled up the stairs with the other morning graduates in cap and gown. Standing next to Richard was his wife, Angela, and also his daughter, Courtney, 25, who got her master’s from SIUE last year.

“We didn’t graduate from college,” Angela said. “We own a business. And both our kids graduated from college. We are so proud.”

In the case of the Waddells, Chesley, 24, first followed in the footsteps of her father, Rex, 49. Then he, in turn, chased her.

SIUE was an easy choice as an undergrad, Chesley said. It was inexpensive and close to home in Fairview Heights — a built-in safety net.

But it was also familiar. Her dad, a pastor, had been mentoring African-American students here for years.

Then, when she decided to go to grad school, roles reversed.

On Saturday, they put the competition aside, at least momentarily.
And cheered for each other.