The University of Missouri is in the beginning stages of planning a new center to help faculty improve their teaching practices and use of technology.

The discussion is so new that the proposed center doesn’t have a name but it is a top priority of Jim Spain, vice provost of undergraduate studies, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported (http://bit.ly/1l3Azoi).

The 2020 Strategic Plan for the campus includes a proposal for the teaching and learning excellence center.

Spain said he wants to have a list of proposed functions for the center ready by the end of the year. He expects the center would cost the university between $400,000 and $500,000 annually.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin asked him for a plan for the center, which would incorporate lessons from a similar effort, called the Program for Excellence in Teaching, which ended because of lack of consistency and money, Spain said.

Spain said he will ask faculty, department leaders and deans to provide input on faculty’s most important needs before presenting a final list of key functions for the center to university administrators.

Nicole Monnier, associate teaching professor of Russian and Faculty Council academic affairs committee chair, said the new center is also a faculty priority. Besides training for teaching practices, she said she hopes it will be a center for other teaching programs at the university, such as Educational Technologies at MU and monthly brown bag lunch events.

"I think this could be a great resource for new faculty coming in,” Monnier said. "It would also be helpful for senior teachers. We tend to teach how we were taught, and the classroom is so different today from when most of us went to school.”
Round up: curator coverage and administrative changes

By Ashley Jost

Monday, June 23, 2014 at 4:45 pm

Three cheers for Monday, or something like that.

This blog post will be followed by another one tomorrow that goes into a few leftover items from last week’s Board of Curators meeting that I haven’t covered in stories.

Until then, a belated round up:

Inside the system:

- **Your weekly records request dosage:** This week’s records request is for all expense reports filed by the University of Missouri Board of Curators from 2013. The curators file these reports when they need to be reimbursement from a conference or trip, so the documents can be turned in anytime, according to Paula Barrett, assistant custodian of records for the UM System. The document is attached if you’re interested.

- Curator coverage from the annual June meeting in Columbia (in case you missed it):
  - UM System employees in Columbia will have a new medical plan option starting next year, and the system announced a benefits rate cap effective the next three years.
  - MU chief operating officer Gary Ward gave a presentation about the MU Master Plan, including how a few residential life projects would impact MU’s goal to be able to house all of the freshman class plus 1,000 upperclassmen.
  - The curators gave approval to $5 million worth of new funding for the Swallow Hall renovation project.
  - Board Chairman Don Downing took a stance on the tax cut legislation that’s a priority for Missouri’s Republican majority.
• The curators approved the fiscal year 2015 budget, which starts next Tuesday. Also part of the budget story is updates on changes made to the Collective Rules and Regulations addressing Title IX reporting and the student conduct process.
• To top off a busy June meeting, the board also approved changes to the UM System’s nondiscrimination policy that expanded it to include gender identity and gender expression, making the UM System the first public higher education institution in the state to make the move.

- Right after they adjourned the public meeting, the curators hired a new chief financial officer. Brian Burnett hails from Colorado Springs, and he told me Friday afternoon that he looks forward to getting creative with funding sources because of decreasing state appropriations - an issue he’s familiar with in Colorado.

- UM System President Tim Wolfe announced a new, one-time publication from the system called “Spectrum” (pictured on the left). The magazine highlights a little something from the different campuses, the system and MU Extension. John Fougere, chief communications officer for the system, said that they could run additional Spectrum publications down the road, but this edition is it for now. They printed 60,000 copies, so if you’re interested you can pick one up at University Hall.

- The University of Missouri-St. Louis posted a really neat blog two weeks ago with an infographic that gives a breakdown of where UMSL alumni live. Spoiler: Most are in Missouri, especially the Lou, St. Charles and neighboring counties.

- Bob Schwartz, the chief of staff for UM System President Tim Wolfe, was named the interim dean of the College of Engineering last week. Schwartz has a long history in the engineering world before heading to the administrative side of higher education. The Schwartz appointment comes about a week after longtime dean Jim Thompson announced he’s leaving MU, without reason.

**Outside the system:**

- U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-MO, hosted her third and final round table discussion on campus sexual assaults. This week's talk was about the justice system side of the issue. It wrapped up not too terribly long ago, so there isn't anything I can link to now, but I'll include it in this week's round up on Friday.

- I received a call and an email or two about faculty concerned about not receiving their contracts yet. There is a change in Stephens' operations this year. Typically, the college’s fiscal year starts in June, but FY15 will be the first time it starts July 1. Stephens College Spokeswoman Janese Silvey tells me that faculty were alerted about the change in fiscal year during March, and told that they would receive their contracts by July 1. I just wanted to be sure and put this out in the open for any other questions.

- A few ‘in case you missed it’ stories:
• Stephens hired Gail Humphries Mardirosian as the college’s new dean for performing arts.
• The City of Columbia uncovered some Stephens College history two weeks ago when demolishing a building that was part of the former airport. They found a beam with the words “Stephens College Aviation Department” on it - cool, huh? The aviation program was around for a few decades starting in the 40s.

### Former MU student fights to return to school while jailed for rape charges

By Ashley Jost

**Monday, June 23, 2014 at 9:20 am Comments (11)**

**A former University of Missouri student accused of raping another student is fighting to return to school while he’s in jail accused of a similar crime in a different part of the country.**

Ahmed O. Salau, 30, is in a West Virginia jail for allegedly raping his wife in their Athens, W.Va., home in November. He faces a first-degree sexual assault charge and is in jail on a $50,000 bond, according to the West Virginia jail’s inmate search.

Salau’s detainment kept him from his late-May court date in Missouri when he was scheduled to appear at a hearing for an appeal in a civil action against MU.

Salau filed a preliminary injunction in late 2012 against MU administrators, including former Chancellor Brady Deaton, after he was found guilty of a rape accusation and expelled from campus through the student conduct process. Salau argued MU violated his rights in not having a university lawyer there to advise the conduct board, among other issues. Salau allegedly provided alcohol to an underage MU student and, when she was intoxicated, had nonconsensual sex with her, according to court documents.

The same accusations were investigated by the MU Police Department. MUPD Capt. Scott Richardson said the department filed a warrant request with the Boone County Prosecuting
Attorney’s Office and has yet to hear back. Salau’s case is still an open and ongoing investigation.

The preliminary injunction to allow Salau to return to MU was denied. Salau then filed an appeal, which was dismissed earlier this month for procedural reasons. Acting as his own attorney after firing his lawyer in the middle of a hearing, Salau’s attempt to file an appeal was dismissed because appeals only take place after the final judgment of a case — a preliminary injunction isn’t considered the final judgment.

The case now automatically goes to the circuit court, where Salau can choose to move forward. Salau could not be reached for comment because he’s in jail.

John McGinnis, assistant prosecuting attorney in Mercer County, W.Va., said Salau recently asked the court for bond so he could attend his court date in Missouri. At the time, McGinnis said he was unaware of the other accusations.

“This definitely gives us cause for alarm,” McGinnis said about Salau’s Missouri history. McGinnis said Salau also fired his lawyer in West Virginia, but he has kept the lawyer on as an adviser. His next court hearing is set for July.

Salau was in the Boone County Jail for six months in 2011 from a September 2010 charge that he raped a college student. The charge was dismissed. According to previous Tribune reports, the victim was impregnated.

At the time, Salau was held in the county jail on $150,000 bond and an immigration detainer that was later settled.

Forbes

University Hopes To Lend Drones To Students, May Face FAA Challenge

The University of South Florida hopes to lend drones to students when the school’s renovated library opens in the Fall of 2014. The drones will be part of the school’s Digital Media Commons where students work on high end technology projects.

Students looking to use drones will be provided training in advance and will be able to check out the small remote-controlled device containing a video camera, which can be used to capture footage from an aerial view. This is exactly what a university should be doing — providing access to new technology for student learning opportunities.

Unfortunately, it is likely the FAA will shut down this forward thinking initiative. Earlier this year, the FAA shut down the drone journalism programs at the University of Missouri
and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, claiming that the toy drones used by the programs were aircraft subject to FAA regulations. The universities planned to use the small systems according to amateur/hobbyist rules which allow for flights under 400 feet within the line of site of the operator.

A recent legal analysis published by the law firm Kramer Levin also notes how the FAA is going after universities that are using drones. According to the Kramer Levin analysis, the FAA claims that the only acceptable uses for public university drones are “aeronautical research” quoting the FAA:

The public aircraft statute’s description of governmental function [for public universities] includes the term “aeronautical research.” We do not interpret this term to encompass any research conducted using an aircraft (manned or unmanned).

... The term “aeronautical research” would have at its core the development of aircraft and systems. For UAS, we interpret the term as research and testing of the aircraft themselves, the control systems, equipment that is part of the aircraft (such as sensors), flight profiles, or development of specific functions and capabilities for them.

According to CNN, Dean of USF Libraries Bill Garrison said, “We have a global sustainability program, and they are mapping out the campus to see energy usage, so they can use the drones to help map out the campus, there are a lot of opportunities for research and learning by using drones. And the faculty can use it, too.”

That type of research would likely be prohibited by the FAA without specific approval. In fact the FAA in earlier legal guidance has written:

using an off the shelf [drone] as opposed to some other available means – to monitor moisture levels in a soybean field as part of an agricultural research project would not qualify as aeronautical research. Non-aviation research that incidentally uses an aircraft does not qualify as aeronautical research, and would need another governmental function before it would qualify as a public aircraft operation.

In short, if the FAA thinks the research doesn’t count as aeronautical research, then the university must request a special certificate of authorization from the FAA (outside of the public agency process). That time intensive authorization process will limit the places where the drones can be flown and the manner in which they will be used, thus undercutting USF’s entire scheme to allow students to check out their aircraft for creative projects.

When every student is flying their drone at the same field, very few creative digital projects will be undertaken. Of course, the students can work on their projects using their own drone, claiming it is their hobby. But that will require the students to shell out a few hundred dollars for their own drone, which is exactly what USF was hoping to avoid. None of this makes sense, but it’s how the FAA functions when regulating drones that it believes are not fitting squarely in the hobbyist box.
According to USF, “Students will need to enroll in a training course before they can check out the equipment. They’ll also be required to provide an explanation on how the drone will be utilized in a school project, and they must be supervised by a faculty member while operating it around the campus. As of now, the program aims to keep the drones on USF’s campus unless a professor makes the case for an exception, and students will be liable for any damages to the equipment.”

This sounds like a very responsible approach to loaning out equipment that is sold in toy stores, hobby shops, and on Amazon. Despite this safe and responsible approach, the FAA may likely decide that USF needs special approval for their drones.

Underrepresented medical students face lonely, sometimes challenging road

BY TRACEY GOLDNER

COLUMBIA — When Dawit Demissie walked across the stage in May to receive his degree from the MU School of Medicine, he was the only African-American in his class of 97.

Next year, three African-American women and one man are expected to graduate.

The numbers illustrate a common dilemma among MU and other medical schools trying — with mixed success — to recruit underrepresented minorities into their programs. That group includes blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics and Latinos but not students from Asia, India and the Middle East.

The prevailing challenge for the nation’s 141 medical schools is competition for the same small group of minority candidates who are both interested and adequately prepared.

A backlash against affirmative action quotas has contributed to the troubles schools are having in diversifying their student bodies. Schools also must worry about securing consistent financial support for these students.
Then, once they are recruited and enrolled, the students might encounter hostility, even racism, that prompt some to drop out. That can make it even more difficult to sell the program.

"The history of Missouri and its racism has still left a sour taste in people's mouth when they think of coming here," said Robin Clay, the diversity and inclusion recruitment coordinator for the MU School of Medicine.

In Demissie's case, MU was able to offer significant financial incentives to help pay for his education. He was among the top candidates the year he applied — a graduate of the University of Maryland with degrees in biology and economics and above-average MCAT scores.

“"I felt very grateful to do what I had wanted to do all my life," said Demissie, 25, now a pediatrics resident at Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University School of Medicine.

"In my experience, I had never felt directly attacked or racism directed at me, thankfully," he said.

"I had heard several serious accounts, which were always in the back of my mind. I was, in a way, waiting for it to happen to me, but I'm fortunate it did not."

**The face of medical schools**

As the rest of the country diversifies at a rapid rate — [nearly 50 percent of the babies born in 2009 belong to a minority group] — medical schools, including the one at MU, continue to enroll predominantly white students. Since [enrolling its first black medical student, Robert J. Smith in 1951], the MU School of Medicine has struggled to admit more than just a handful of minority students each year.

In 2007, the situation was especially troubling: The school didn’t have a single black student in its freshman class. The following year, the national accreditation committee for the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association told MU officials that it must find a way to diversify its Medical School.

“Despite medical school efforts, including pipeline programs and new scholarships, and university efforts ...[the number of medical students and faculty from underrepresented]
groups remains well below desired levels,” the accreditation committee concluded in its 2008 accreditation letter to then-Chancellor Brady Deaton. The association told the Medical School to develop a strategy to assure that diversifying the student population was a priority, coming up with a plan for recruitment, financial aid, faculty development and community partnerships.

Since then, the school has set up programs aimed at attracting minorities throughout Missouri — local science clubs, simulated Medical School experiences for high school students from St. Louis and Kansas City and Mizzou MedPrep, an academic advising program for nontraditional students. In the past five years, the School of Medicine has more than doubled its acceptance rate of historically underrepresented minorities, from eight in 2009 to 18 in 2013.

The figures look promising, but various challenges remain. Just seven of the 18 students accepted in 2013 chose to come to MU, according to demographic data from the Association of American Medical Colleges. “Reflecting a national trend, the numbers of students from historically underrepresented groups who ultimately enrolled in the MU School of Medicine remain lower than we would like,” said Mary Jenkins, spokeswoman for the MU Health System.

The issue, it turns out, is more complex and longstanding than simply demanding that medical schools diversify their student bodies. It is a matter of getting minority students interested in science at an earlier age, supporting them financially through medical school and making them feel at home.

"The most important thing we can do to broaden the participation of minorities in medicine is to double the number of minorities passing algebra by eighth grade,” Marc Nivet, chief diversity officer for the Association of American Medical Colleges, said in an email to the Missourian.

**Healthier communities**
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics and Latinos made up 30 percent of the population in 2010, but nationally accounted for about 18 percent of students entering medical school in 2011. Last fall, MU’s first-year Medical School class of 96 included four African-Americans, two Hispanics and one Native American, according to data from the Association of American Medical Colleges.
In 2012, about 5.5 percent, or 22 students, of the school’s 410 came from historically underrepresented populations, according to Jenkins.

Diversity is crucial to improving health care across all demographics in the country, particularly in concentrated urban and rural areas where there is a shortage of medical providers.

Studies show that patients are more apt to follow treatment plans and feel comfortable when they share the same racial or ethnic background as their provider.

Minorities are also more likely than their white counterparts to want to practice medicine in underserved areas. About 55 percent of blacks or African-Americans entering medical school said they planned to practice in an underserved area, compared with about 21 percent of white students, according to 2011 data from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

UCLA found that students who attended a racially diverse medical school felt both better prepared to care for patients from a different racial or ethnic group and more likely to view health care as a societal right rather than a privilege.

Clay cited an enhanced academic experience and healthier patients as the main benefits of diversity.

"The biggest thing that (diversity) improves is patient care," Clay said.

“Creating and supporting opportunities for medical students to combine their differing backgrounds, perspectives and skills ... will enhance their ability to work with diverse peers and patients as they enter the workforce,” the Association of American Medical Colleges wrote in its 2012 facts and figures report.

But respecting differences and creating a collegial environment do not always accompany the push to be inclusive.

“Not all physicians are culturally competent, and that includes some of our faculty and staff,” Clay said.

So, the Medical School has staff in place to address the conflicts that might arise. He said it’s about "really committing to training our faculty members and making sure that they are culturally aware and, if not, that they are able to openly, respectfully ask those questions and address those issues if they are not comfortable."
Growing pains
Uncomfortable realities such as institutionalized racism, economic disparities and wariness of reverse racism are holding back many schools, including MU, said Traci Wilson-Kleekamp, the former director for diversity at MU’s Medical School.

Additionally, the school finds it difficult to talk about race, privilege and oppression, she said.

"They are not prepared to come outside their bubble, so to speak, and risk, if you will, having that kind of conversation," Wilson-Kleekamp said. "It's unfortunate because those are the conversations you really need to have."

During her time at MU, she said minority students described incidents of racial insensitivity. They came to study medicine, not teach their classmates how to be respectful, she said.

Wilson-Kleekamp said "micro-aggressive" comments — patronizing statements intended to be compliments — as well as more overt aggression hurt both students and staff. A micro-aggressive comment would be an indication of surprise, for example, that someone could speak or dress well.

"I think the climate of inclusion was pretty poor overall," said Kristal Matlock, an African-American graduate of the School of Medicine in 2012. "It seemed people weren’t interested in making people of color feel welcome – mostly administrators, but students as well."

While a student at the MU School of Medicine in 2010, she was taking a break with other students when one of them used the "n-word" while describing a comedy routine.

The incident rattled Matlock, who is now a resident at a hospital in Ohio. Instead of focusing on her exams, she couldn't stop thinking about the slur.

It was neither the first nor last time Matlock said she witnessed racial insensitivity at the Medical School. Between 2008 and 2012, she said she observed insensitivity among some students and faculty toward blacks, Asians and Indians.

"It made me feel like I was less important than other students, especially when an administrator is sitting right there and makes no effort to correct that person," Matlock said. "It makes me angry, but also nervous, because I don’t want to show that anger."
**Early intervention**

Nivet said in an email that "the biggest challenge to diversification is the nation's poor performing K-12 school systems across the country, particularly in urban and rural environments."

The Association of American Medical Colleges is pushing, even requiring, schools to target underrepresented minorities — defined as African-Americans, Hispanics, Latinos and Native Americans. The end goal of diversity is creating a physician workforce that is reflective of the society it serves, Nivet said.

"Finding and harnessing all talent from different socio-economic or racial and ethnic and gender backgrounds is critical to ensuring we have a workforce that is willing to work in specialties and in geographic areas of high need," he said.

Experts such as Nivet agree that diversifying medical schools starts early — even in elementary school. A few of MU’s pipeline programs are aimed at underrepresented minority high school students from St. Louis and Kansas City.

Ellis Ingram, a pathologist, the senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion at MU and an associate professor, also runs science clubs with minority students in Columbia in collaboration with the medical school.

Nationally, black students on average score 7 points lower on the MCAT than their white and Asian counterparts. Latinos fare better with scores 4 points lower than whites and Asians. The MCAT, a national screening exam for prospective medical students, is often viewed as the key indicator of success in medical school. The data suggests the preparation and training of students from minority backgrounds is not as strong as it needs to be.

"We have too many students, especially minority males, either dropping out of high school or are in under-performing school districts that don't prepare them for the rigors of upper level science and math," Nivet said.

"In other words, we need to go much further down the pipeline to develop talent so that we can increase the likelihood we will have a robust and growing number of minority students prepared for all STEM careers, including the health professions," Nivet said.

**Route to physician**
Demissie knew he wanted to be a pediatrician when he was 6. Once he moved past the astronaut/firefighter phase at age 4 or 5, he started telling his own pediatrician in Salisbury, Md., that he wanted to be just like him when he grew up.

He chose MU because the school offered financial assistance but also because Columbia is where his parents met. Ejigou Demissie, 62, and Nohora Rivero, 56, met while he was teaching economics at Lincoln University in Jefferson City and Rivero was visiting her sister Martha in Columbia.

They kept in touch after his mother returned home to her native country, Colombia, and the two married in 1986 — just seven months after they met — and moved to Maryland to start a family.

Because his mother is from Colombia and his father is Ethiopian, Dawit Demissie calls himself "Colopian."

He and his two younger brothers, Yoseph and Paulo, grew up with predominantly white peers and attended a small private Catholic school from kindergarten through the eighth grade.

His parents taught their three sons to embrace their dual, even triple, identities as people with roots in the U.S., Colombia and Ethiopia.

“Being different wasn’t a bad thing growing up,” Demissie said. “You get to share your differences with other people.”

When he arrived at MU four years ago, he wasn’t terribly surprised to find he was the only black student in his class.

“I was so incredibly happy to be in medical school, I didn’t care about anything else at that time,” he said.

As he progressed through school, he took advantage of opportunities to talk about race, diversity and the importance of being culturally competent.

Demissie served on the MU Health System Diversity Advisory Council for about 2 1/2 years. “I was by far the youngest person there,” he said. “But you keep making comments, you’re helping the conversation. That was really empowering.”
He found mentors in Ingram; Aneesh Tosh, a physician in adolescent medicine; and Michael Cooperstock, a pediatric infectious disease physician and professor emeritus and division director at the Medical School.

Ingram said he always appreciated Demissie’s passion for medicine: “He has incredible skills and is going to be an outstanding doctor.”

Second career
Ontario "Terry" Lacey, who is also African-American and a medical student at MU, has a back story and an experience at the School of Medicine that has been quite different from Demissie's.

Lacey is a 39-year-old nontraditional student, one of four African-Americans in his class but the only black man. He is about to enter his fourth year of medical school.

His mother and father met and married in high school, and Lacey was born in 1974 when his mother was 18. For the first few years of his life, he moved around Birmingham, Ala., with his mom and younger siblings. He said his family had little money, and his early years were unstable.

When he was 6, he went to stay with his maternal grandmother at a housing project in Birmingham. He describes it as a tough area where gang violence, drug dealing and neighborhood fighting were prevalent.

“I know what it’s like to come from farther down,” Lacey said of his childhood.

His grandmother worked as a “domestic” for Gail Cassell, one of the nation’s leading infectious disease specialists and a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham for many years.

His grandmother encouraged him to pursue academics, and during high school, he worked on and off in Cassell’s research lab. Cassell solidified his desire to attend medical school, he said, rather than pursue a doctorate.

Lacey enrolled at the University of Rochester in New York, but he said he wasn't ready to focus on school and dropped out after one year. He met his wife, Lakeitha, when he was 19. The couple married in 1996 and have a daughter, Simone, who is 9.
Before starting Medical School in 2011, Lacey spent 15 years with the Navy. He was stationed in New Orleans for four years and then at the Point Magu Naval Base near Malibu, Calif., for another 11. He will become a lieutenant once he graduates and plans to work in a Navy hospital.

Lacey said he was accepted into other prestigious programs that offered him a year-long preparation course before medical school. He opted for MU because it was the first school to accept him and because he didn’t want to extend his time in school for another year at his age.

After three years in the School of Medicine, Lacey said he doesn’t believe white America is quite ready to have black men as physicians.

He said he has heard hostile comments about his appearance, clothing and the way he carries himself. He’s been called arrogant, confident, easy-going and unprofessional.

“They perceive me one way, and that’s totally different than what I do,” he said.

The problem is that people find him intimidating, he said. In his view, it’s his body language and the way he communicates.

"They will argue that we should all communicate the same, but that’s not true,” he said.

Part of the answer could be better preparation for minority students, who may not have had access to strong primary and secondary education or preparation programs. But it’s also important to build a culture of inclusivity, both Demissie and Clay said.

MU does not offer an extensive pre-enrollment preparation program for underrepresented minorities. But the school has undertaken a number of initiatives, such as the formation of the diversity council, inclusiveness training, diversity goals and a campaign to raise scholarship money for minority students.

The school uses the same definition of underrepresented minority as the Association of American Medical Colleges, with one addition: MU targets students from rural areas because these communities are experiencing physician shortages nationwide.

In addition to rural pipeline programs, the school also offers nontraditional students assistance with the application process and supports them once they are accepted.

Tomorrow’s work force
Demissie and Lacey are both optimistic about the future and hope to see changes in the makeup of the medical student population.

It's not just about diversifying the Medical School's student body, Demissie said. It's also about bringing all types of diversity from the top down.

“Mizzou has an opportunity, I think here in the next few months and years, to bring in a lot of diverse thought as well as culture,” Demissie said.

"Doing a little more to recruit people from other parts of the country and other parts of the world, is going to be really important not only for the students, but more importantly, for the patients they are being trained to serve."

NYC trying to lower speed limit as others raise it

New York City could lower its speed limit as a result of legislation the state Senate passed Thursday.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Jeffrey Klein, a Democrat from the Bronx, N.Y., lets the city lower its default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Gov. Andrew Cuomo is expected to sign the bill, which City Council then could put into effect after 90 days.

Traffic experts say the legislation — which is in line with Mayor Bill de Blasio's Vision Zero plan to eliminate traffic deaths — is rare since the trend in recent years has been for states to increase, rather than decrease, speed limits.

"There's definitely been a movement to bump up speed limits," said Kara Macek, communications director at the Governors Highway Safety Association. "New York's legislation is a welcome change. It's common sense: The faster you go, the deadlier the crash will be."

In a memorandum in support of the bill, Sherif Soliman, the city's director of state legislative affairs, said a pedestrian that a vehicle strikes at 25 mph has a 10% chance of being killed. At 30 mph, the fatality rate increases to 20%. 
"Speeding causes more fatalities than drunk drivers and drivers on cell phones combined," said Executive Director Paul White of Transportation Alternatives, a group pushing for the speed reduction.

Among the cities that already have lowered residential speed limits:

- **Baton Rouge, La.** An ordinance passed in May reduced speed limits from 30 mph to 25 mph on about 1,500 miles of residential streets.

- **Columbia, Mo.** *Speed limits were reduced from 30 mph to 25 mph in 2009 when a University of Missouri study showed that lowering posted speeds would slow drivers' actual speeds by 1 to 6 mph.*

- **Onida, S.D.** The City Council agreed earlier this month to decrease the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph in this town of less than 800 to protect children and older residents.

- **Portland, Ore.** Portland's City Council approved a reduction of the speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph for a 70-mile network of neighborhood streets in 2012.

But not everyone thinks that reducing posted speed limits directly correlates to decreasing fatalities. States including New Hampshire, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and, most recently, Maine have increased speed limits on interstates in recent years.

Spokesman John Bowman of the National Motorists Association said New Yorkers likely won't slow down even if legal limits are reduced.

"People pay less attention to the posted limits than the road conditions and what is going on around them," Bowman said.

Maine's Department of Transportation announced May 27 that it had raised speed limits on sections of Interstates 295 and 95 to 75 mph.

"The decision was about safety," Maine DOT spokesman Ted Talbot said. "Traffic moves most safely when the operating speeds and posted speeds are close together. The goal is to have the speed limit posted be the speed at which 85% of drivers are going."

Talbot said many have a misconception that when speed limits increase, drivers start going recklessly fast

"They will drive at the speed that feels safe," he said.
Sexual Assault Bill Ahead
June 24, 2014
By Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

WASHINGTON -- Two Senate Democrats who are working on legislation to combat campus sexual assault said Monday that they expect to introduce a bipartisan bill when Congress returns from its August recess.

Wrapping up a series of roundtable discussions to solicit input on legislation, Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri said that while she’s open to incorporating the proposal into the coming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, she’s also prepared to advance it separately and more quickly.

“This is difficult for senators to block because of the compelling nature of it,” she told reporters Monday. “So I want it to have the capability of moving forward on its own.”

McCaskill said that she is working with a bipartisan group of lawmakers in crafting the legislation, including Republican Senators Dean Heller of Nevada, Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire and Marco Rubio of Florida. Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat of Connecticut, who is also helping draft the legislation, said Monday that he expects consensus from both sides of the aisle.

“This issue has legs of its own. It’s a cause whose time has come” he said. “It’s on everyone’s mind these days: parents, administrators, legislators, law
McCaskill said that the legislation would include a range of topics, including “some kind of mandatory training for people who are actually investigating” campus sexual assault cases.

She also floated the idea of requiring that colleges impose consistent penalties on students found responsible for sexual assault on campuses. “Maybe the loss of student funding or perhaps being on the transcript permanently,” she suggested.

McCaskill has previously said she’s eyeing stiffer penalties for colleges that violate federal rules on reporting and handling sexual assault cases. She’s also had some tough words for how a higher education lobbying group responded to her effort to survey colleges on campus sexual assault.

But, likely to the delight of many institutions, McCaskill indicated Monday that she plans to explore whether some existing campus safety regulations are overly burdensome to colleges.

She said she had discussed her legislation with Senator Lamar Alexander, the top Republican on the Senate education committee, who has long pushed for deregulation of higher education. Alexander, she said, urged her to look for ways to streamline and simplify campus safety rules.

McCaskill said that she would be looking at whether campus safety has become too “compliance-heavy” for institutions.

“Are they so caught up in everything we’re demanding they tell us that they don’t really have time to do their jobs?” she asked.
Is Reporting Campus Sex Assaults to the Police Discouraged? a Senator Asks

By Monica Vendituoli

Washington

NO MENTION

Whether victims of sexual assault on college campuses are being discouraged from going to the police was a central topic of debate on Monday among participants in a roundtable discussion held here by U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill.

The gathering was the last of three such roundtables on campus sexual assault held by the senator, a Missouri Democrat who plans to introduce legislation to improve colleges’ responses to sexual assault.

The discussions have come at a time when colleges, under pressure from activists and the White House, are grappling with how to carry out their legal responsibility to investigate and respond to students’ reports of sexual violence. The Education Department is now investigating more than 60 colleges for possible violations of gender-equity law involving alleged sexual misconduct.

Previous roundtables in the series have focused on Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which protects students from discrimination based on sex, and other federal laws that apply to how colleges deal with and report sexual assault and other crimes. On Monday the conversation included discussions of whether campuses should issue timely warnings about sexual assaults, and what types of training on sexual assault both local and campus law-enforcement officers should have.
Senator McCaskill questioned whether there was a "bias" among college officials, victims’ advocates, and even other students against reporting campus sexual assaults to the police. She asked, "Is it fair to say sexual-assault victims are being discouraged from reporting to law enforcement?"

One of the participants, Alexandra Brodsky, a Yale law student and co-founder of Know Your IX, said that when she reported her sexual assault to university officials five or six years ago, she was explicitly told not to go to the police. However, Ms. Brodsky added that what each survivor wants is different.

"Some people want public vindication through the courts," she said. "Some people just want an extension on their English paper, or to not have to see their rapist in their dorm the following day."

**Getting the Evidence**

Law-enforcement officials at the discussion emphasized the importance of victims' coming to the police sooner rather than later.

Jennifer Gaffney, of the New York County district attorney’s office, said students who report sexual assaults often are told of the negatives associated with pursuing criminal charges, such as the possibility of a lack of closure and the fact that cases can go on for years, but they are not told of the positives.

The positives, according to Ms. Gaffney, who is deputy chief of the special victim’s bureau in the prosecutor’s office, include that evidence can be gathered more quickly and that the result of a successful prosecution of the attacker is more permanent than actions a campus might take.

Ms. Gaffney said a delay in going to the police makes it difficult for investigators to collect evidence that could make a case succeed in court.
"Just help me get some evidence from the get-go," she said. "Students come after they are upset with a weak administrative process," she said, and by then much of the evidence is no longer available.

Victims’ advocates, however, argued that they need to be truthful with victims about how effective going to law enforcement will be.

**Options for Victims**

Nancy Chi Cantalupo, a research fellow at the Victim Rights Law Center and an adjunct professor of law at Georgetown University, said that not all criminal-justice systems near colleges can properly handle sexual-assault cases.

"Not everyone has a criminal-justice system that is structured to give multiple options" to victims, she said, "and to hold onto evidence for years." Options that some systems offer, she said, include having someone who can tape a victim’s statement, subpoena people for evidence, get a rape kit processed in a timely matter, and speak with law-enforcement officials who have been trained to work with sexual-assault victims.

"All of those things are relatively uncommon," Ms. Cantalupo said.

Senator McCaskill hopes to take the information she received during the three roundtables and use it to craft legislation on college sexual assault.

For the legislation, Ms. McCaskill is considering including mandatory training of people who investigate campus sexual assaults; allowing more options for penalizing colleges found not to be in compliance, other than total loss of federal funds; and potentially requiring students’ transcripts to list any findings of responsibility for sexual assault.

Ms. McCaskill said she had been meeting weekly with a bipartisan group of senators and may not file her legislation until after the August recess. The timing depends on how quickly she receives survey results on campus sexual assault back from colleges.
Meanwhile, other lawmakers are also putting scrutiny on the problem of sexual assault on campuses. The Senate education committee has announced that it will hold a hearing on the issue on Thursday.

McCaskill says George Will 'dead wrong,' but column helped focus on campus sexual assault

By Chuck Raasch craasch@post-dispatch.com 202-298-6880

WASHINGTON • Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., says that while she believes he is “dead wrong,” columnist George Will helped raise interest in the issue of campus sexual assault with a controversial column that got Will dropped from the Post-Dispatch.

“George Will is a columnist, and columnists get to express their opinions,” McCaskill told reporters Monday after a round-table discussion on sexual assault on campus involving law enforcement officials, campus administrators and activists.

“I think he is a smart man who is dead wrong about this subject, so I disagree with his opinion,” she said. “But in some ways his opinion column generated a lot of conversation about this topic at a lot of workplaces, around a lot of kitchen tables, and that is always a good thing. Because I think the more people learn about this problem the more they realize this is a compelling public policy challenge that we’ve got to confront.”

McCaskill is in the midst of writing legislation to confront what she and advocates say is a problem that has persisted too long, is underreported, and is often caught up in a gray area between university and local law enforcement. Her office is surveying 450 colleges and universities to determine their policies on sexual assault.

McCaskill said she and other senators will introduce bipartisan legislation on the issue later this summer. She said it may include requiring training for anyone who investigates sexual assaults on campus, bring more consistency in the punishment of perpetrators and provide more flexibility in the punishment of colleges and universities that might not be too lax on the problem. Currently, she said, the federal government can withhold education funds, but do little else.

Campus administrators, local and campus police officials, and others involved in her Monday round table stressed that every case is different, and some said that victims have been conditioned to not pursue criminal complaints against alleged rapists because of horror stories they have heard about victims’ treatment in court.
McCaskill said that point was the biggest surprise that arose from her three round tables.

“There obviously is a bias, that may be well-deserved on behalf of victims, that ... it is not a friendly place to go, and perhaps they are better off avoiding the criminal justice system,” said McCaskill, a former sex crimes prosecutor. “I didn’t anticipate that being so calcified within this problem. So we have got a lot of work to do about how we bring law enforcement into this in a way that continues to give victims the power ... to come forward.”

The columnist Will earlier this month wrote that “a supposed campus epidemic of rape” had made “victimhood a coveted status that confers privileges,” and that “victims proliferate” as a result.

It set social networks abuzz, often with fierce criticism. Four senators — including Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who joined McCaskill at Monday’s round table — wrote Will protesting that he had “trivialize(d) the scourge of sexual assault.” But McCaskill was not among them.

She said “I know better” than to comment on the Post-Dispatch’s decision to drop Will.

“I am not going to get in the business of criticizing my hometown newspaper,” she said, “but I think George Will has a right to his opinion.”

McCaskill earlier this year pushed legislation through Congress that reformed the way the military handles sexual assault cases.

US professors troubled by Confucius Institutes

By CAROLYN THOMPSON

NO MU MENTION

University professors in the United States have joined their Canadian counterparts in urging universities to cut ties with Confucius Institutes unless the agreements that bring them to campus are re-worked to guarantee academic freedom.
A report by the American Association of University Professors said universities "have sacrificed the integrity of the university and its academic staff" by allowing the Chinese government to supervise curriculum and staff at the institutes it has established on more than 100 North American campuses to promote Chinese culture and language.

"Allowing any third-party control of academic matters is inconsistent with principles of academic freedom, shared governance, and the institutional autonomy of colleges and universities," the report by the association's Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure said.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers raised the same issues in December following an instructor's human rights complaint alleging discrimination based on her belief in Falun Gong, a spiritual group that has been banned in China.

The complaint led McMaster University in Ontario to close its Confucius Institute last year after the complaint was settled through mediation.

The Beijing headquarters for the Confucius Institutes, the Office of Chinese Language Council International, known as Hanban, did not respond to requests from The Associated Press for comment. However, the Communist Party's flagship newspaper, People's Daily, ran an article Friday seeking to refute the AAUP report's claims, quoting representatives from foreign institutions from Germany to Thailand who called them unfounded.

When reached by the AP, directors at several Confucius Institutes in the United States also defended the institutes, saying the AAUP doesn't understand how they work.

"The university comes first, and then the Confucius Institute, which must operate within the rules of the university," said Xu Zaocheng, director of the institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

"It is true that it is a program under the Chinese Ministry of Education, but the accusations reflect the Cold War mentality," Xu said.

The Chinese "fund these activities, but they are not controlling them," said Stephen Dunnett, chairman of the bi-national committee that oversees the University at Buffalo's five-year-old institute.

"If they came here and said we will give you this money but we're going to control it: We're going to pick the curriculum, we're going to pick the teachers by ourselves, and we're going to teach or not teach what we want ... What U.S. university would ever do that?" he said.

With more than 400 already now spread across more than 100 regions and countries, China expects to have 500 Confucius Institutes by next year, program officials have said, along with 1,000 Confucius classrooms in primary and secondary schools.
Universities partner with a Chinese school to establish the programs, with the host school providing space and an administrator in exchange for $100,000 or more yearly from Hanban, as well as text books. Teachers receive a monthly salary from the Chinese government of $1,500 to $2,100.

"We have free speech on campus, and to say these teachers are trying to indoctrinate the 19-year-old, 20-year-old students at the University of Chicago — I personally have found it to be ridiculous," said Dali Yang, Confucius Institute director at the University of Chicago, where more than 100 professors have been lobbying for eviction.

The AAUP recommended universities cut ties unless agreements with Hanban are rewritten to give the universities unilateral control over teachers, curriculum and texts, and Confucius Institute teachers the same academic freedoms as other university faculty.

Associated Press writers Didi Tang and Christopher Bodeen contributed from Beijing.
Nixon has also said he would freeze spending to guard against the potential for the Republican-led legislature to override his vetoes of 10 tax-law measures. The Democratic governor has said those measures could reduce state revenues by hundreds of millions of dollars annually.