Memo shows that spate of arrests at Missouri galvanized A.D. Mike Alden

Alarm bells were ringing throughout the Missouri athletic department in early April after a string of incidents tarnished an otherwise momentous year.

The Tigers’ on-field successes — including an undefeated SEC volleyball championship, an appearance in the SEC football championship and the deft handling of Michael Sam’s situation — were overshadowed by the arrests of seven athletes over a three-month span.

According to documents obtained by The Star, Missouri athletic director Mike Alden had seen enough after basketball player Zach Price, a transfer from Louisville who sat out last season, was arrested twice in the same day and Columbia Police opened an investigation into an alleged burglary and assault by wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham. The incidents took place less than a week apart.

In a memo to MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, Alden said “the actions of a few individuals over the past three months are unacceptable” and outlined measures to stem run-ins with the law.

“I’ve been at Mizzou 16 years and, from a concentrated standpoint to see that number of incident over the course of three months and the issues, it’s unlike anything I’d seen before,” Alden said Thursday in a phone interview.

Alden outlined the athletic department’s existing resources and efforts “to promote positive staff and student-athlete conduct” in the memo, citing alcohol awareness, gambling, sexual assault, domestic violence, professional etiquette, interviewing skills and general social conduct among the central areas of focus.

MU’s troubles started in mid-January when Green-Beckham, then a member of the football team, was arrested on suspicion of marijuana possession in Springfield. He was eventually dismissed from the team in April amid the burglary and assault investigation.

Between Green-Beckham’s off-field incidents, fellow wide receiver Levi Copelin was arrested for a peace disturbance on campus and four athletes — defensive backs Aarion Penton and Shaun Rupert and basketball players Wes Clark and Shane Rector, who has since transferred — were arrested for suspicion of marijuana possession.
Then Price, who was subsequently dismissed from the Tigers’ basketball team, was arrested twice April 3 for alleged domestic assaults only three days before Green-Beckham’s own alleged assault, prompting Alden’s action.

“One incident is always one too many. But given the number of incidents we’d had, I thought, personally, it was important from a leadership standpoint to step in and say, ‘Look, we’re going to remind ourselves of who we are and what we expect of everybody,’ ” Alden said.

No university ever avoids all off-field incidents, but “it’s how you respond to those issues that is the critical deal,” Alden said. “So you’re always analyzing: Are there things we could have done differently? Could we have done more? Sure, there are.”

According to the memo, Alden met with the entire athletic department — coaches, support and student-athletes — in a series of meetings with a clear message: His patience had worn thin and tolerance for such embarrassing legal entanglements would be lower moving forward.

“The logo never, ever comes off — for any of us,” Alden said. “What we keep emphasizing with our kids and our staff is that if you’re going to be associated with the athletic program at the University of Missouri, or frankly any school in the country at our level, you have to know that everything you do — inside the classroom, outside the classroom, on the field, off the field — is going to be scrutinized.”

Alden also stressed the importance of “You See, You Hear It, You Own It,” a program that stresses accountability at all levels of the athletic program, but said he doesn’t believe the spate of arrests was indicative of a cultural problem at MU.

Alden said he understood how such a conclusion might have been drawn after that three-month period, but he insisted that would be a short-sighted view.

“If you take a more general look at who we are and what we’ve done over the course of so many years — how well our kids have done in the athletic arena, in the classroom and in the community — that would be a little unfair to judge everything from that three-month course of time,” he said.

Alden meets with each team at least twice a year and the athletics staff meets with the chancellor each August, according to the memo.

Missouri also has a Student Athlete Advisory Committee, which meets on a bimonthly basis and regularly brings in speakers from the MU and Columbia Police departments along with various student or social groups.

Additionally, as part of MU’s drug education program, athletes are subject to two mandatory drug tests each year and can be called in randomly for more drug screenings.

Alden also said in the memo that the athletic department would commission an outside consultant to review issues of student-athlete conduct.
“We think we’re doing a good job here at Mizzou, but we don’t want to look at it only through our lens,” Alden said. “We want to be able to take a look at how does this compare to other schools around the country, maybe what are some other best practices that we could be able to add. Our hope is that maybe we can make whatever modifications we need to by August when all of our kids get back.”

UM System almost ready to rent Providence Point for university events

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, June 26, 2014 at 11:30 am

University of Missouri System administrators are wrapping up a detailed proposal packet for university groups that want to rent Providence Point, formerly the UM System president’s residence, for activities.

Administrators decided to use the space for programming after UM System President Tim Wolfe moved out of the home last fall.

The nearly 13,000-square-foot home was built in 1971, with a residential addition completed 14 years later. Each of Wolfe’s eight predecessors has lived at the presidential home.

Wolfe initially said he planned to move out in April 2012 but ended up staying for another year while the university assessed what work needed to be done on the house.

Before Wolfe’s arrival in early 2012, then-interim President Steve Owens said the home was not a comfortable living space for families. He also expressed concerns about the home’s fitness for hosting large numbers of guests.

A bill summary of upgrades made at Providence Point during 2012 and 2013 shows the university spent just more than $200,000 on the property.
A total of $74,781 went toward interior upgrades and repairs, including upgrades to the electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. That total also includes remodels of the master bathroom and living room and the installation of a shower on the second floor.

The most expensive change was $67,955 to replace worn flooring. The remaining $62,646 was used for purchasing furniture.

“These expenditures are part of standard maintenance and repair based on what it will be used for going forward and what it’s been used for in the past,” said UM System spokesman John Fougere.

The UM System’s proposal packet will include information for contract use of Providence Point, criteria for groups that want to rent the facility and food vendor information, among other things, Fougere said. Those documents are “close to being finalized,” he said.

13th annual Cambio de Colores Conference promotes immigrant integration

By Tiffany Melecio
June 26, 2014 | 10:03 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Eleazar U. Gonzalez stood in front of the small crowd and began to speak, gesturing toward his PowerPoint presentation. Some audience members nodded in agreement and others glanced around the room, confused expressions crossing their faces. Two minutes later, he paused midsentence, looked down at the man in front of him and began to chuckle.

“I’m speaking in Spanish?” Gonzalez asked the man. The man nodded. “Oh, I’m sorry,” he said, looking up at the audience. The room burst into laughter.

Gonzalez, a rural sociology researcher with the Cambio Center, was one of several presenters Thursday at the 13th annual Cambio de Colores (Change of Colors) Conference, which will continue through Friday at the Reynolds Alumni Center.
Formerly known as "A Call to Action," this conference began in 2002 as a response to the increase in Spanish-speaking immigrants in non-metropolitan areas around Missouri and the lack of knowledge about how to address their needs.

"There were a couple of seminars organized here on this campus, and then we decided, 'Listen, let's make a conference,'" said Domingo Martinez Castilla, director of MU's Cambio Center, during a break in the conference. "We organized what we thought would be a conference. We didn't know it was the first of thirteen."

The Cambio Center, one of the organizers of the event, focuses on research and outreach to Latinos and other changing communities within Missouri, according to its website.

This year, the conference's theme is "Growing Together in New Destination Areas." The roughly 70 attendees spent the afternoon in breakout sessions devoted to topics such as health, education and entrepreneurship. The sessions showcased research, and organizers hope they will produce dialogue related to the integration of immigrants around the Midwest.

Among the presenters Thursday was David Nehrt-Flores, an organizer for Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates. The organization's research centers on how to build more welcoming schools for all children and parents in the Ritenour School District in St. Louis. His presentation was titled "Welcoming Schools: The Integration Process at Ritenour Public Schools."

Nehrt-Flores said he participated in the conference because the focus on integration and changing demographics matches his organization's mission.

For Alisa Warren, executive director for Missouri’s Commission on Human Rights, the conference provided another chance for her to learn about issues related to the Latino community.

*Supervising editor is Landon Woodroof.*
Senate Hearing on Campus Sexual Assault Puts Official on the Hot Seat

By Monica Vendituoli

NO MU MENTION

The federal government’s role in combating campus sexual assault sparked a debate at a Senate hearing on Thursday, as lawmakers weighed the Education Department’s enforcement authority.

With opposing views of what that authority should be, the two highest-ranking members of the Senate’s education committee grilled a top Education Department official on what the department was doing to enforce the gender-equity law known as Title IX. Sen. Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat who is the committee’s chairman, suggested that the department needed more power to compel colleges to respond effectively to students’ reports of sexual violence and harassment. But Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the top Republican on the committee, suggested that the department had already overstepped its authority by issuing guidance independently.

The committee’s hearing came on the heels of discussions led by another senator who plans to propose legislation aimed at improving how colleges handle sexual assault. It also came as colleges are struggling, under pressure from activists and the White House, with how to carry out their legal responsibility to investigate and respond to students’ reports and to provide a safe learning environment. The Education Department is now investigating more than 60 colleges for possible violations of Title IX involving alleged sexual misconduct.
‘Who Gave You the Authority?’

The committee heard from five witnesses invited to testify, including two federal officials and two former victims of campus sexual assault.

At the beginning, Catherine E. Lhamon, the department’s assistant secretary for civil rights, was on the hot seat. Mr. Harkin asked her if the department had ever revoked an institution’s federal funding—what he called the "nuclear option"—for not complying with Title IX rules on sexual assault.

When she replied that it hadn’t, Mr. Harkin argued that, given the magnitude of the problem, the department should have more sanctions available, such as requiring colleges to allocate funds to investigate alleged sexual assaults and to put programs in place to prevent them.

The department has enough authority, Ms. Lhamon replied.

But what to her was enough to Mr. Alexander was too much. He pointedly suggested that by issuing guidance to campuses without first seeking public input, the department had overstepped its bounds. "Is this the law?" Mr. Alexander asked. "Who gave you the authority to do that?"

Guidance documents from the department that have sent colleges scrambling to shore up their policies include a "Dear Colleague" letter issued in 2011 and a 52-point series of questions and answers released this past April. By contrast, Mr. Alexander said, proposed new regulations under a law that Congress passed last year (S. 47) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act are now open for public comments, according to the established rule-making process.

‘Gaps’ in the Legislation?

Those proposed new regulations would amend the campus-crime-reporting law known as the Clery Act by requiring colleges to provide prevention programs for a number of types of sexual violence and harassment, including not only sexual assault
but also dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Colleges would also have to track and report incidents of those offenses.
Whether those changes adequately deal with the issue was another question at Thursday’s hearing.


James L. Moore III, compliance manager in the Education Department’s Clery Act compliance division, said that despite the work that had gone into drafting the proposed new regulations, they may not resolve every question. "You can guarantee that there’s a piece here or there that we didn’t consider," he said, "and we will have to go back and address that."

One of the federally appointed negotiators who helped produce the proposed rules, however, advised a cautious approach. In a letter to the Senate committee, S. Daniel Carter, director of the 32 National Campus Safety Initiative of the VTV Family Outreach Foundation, an advocacy group representing survivors and victims of the mass shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007, urged lawmakers to wait until the new regulations go into effect before proposing more legislation.
"We just don’t want to reinvent the wheel," Mr. Carter said in an interview. "We simply need to give the recently instituted law the opportunity to take effect."

**Going to the Police**
The American Council on Education and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni also submitted statements to the Senate committee. Both highlighted the importance of involving law enforcement in investigating allegations of sexual assault on campuses. ACE’s statement said: "Because colleges and universities may lack the expertise and resources needed in these areas, we believe it is essential to work closely with local law-enforcement agencies when sexual-assault cases arise."
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, Democrat of Rhode Island, expressed concern that some colleges do not have good working relationships with local police departments, a situation that can deter students from reporting sexual assaults to law enforcement.

Ms. Lhamon strongly agreed with Mr. Whitehouse’s concern. She also expressed fear that some police departments were not equipped to handle sexual-assault cases in general. "At some colleges, there is not local law enforcement nearby that can take a rape kit," Ms. Lhamon said.

Both of the former victims of campus sexual assault who attended the hearing—John Kelly, a student at Tufts University, and Emily Renda, special intern in the office of the vice president at the University of Virginia—also expressed concerns about going to the police.

Ms. Renda said victims may initially be too traumatized or worried about the perpetrator’s reaction.

Mr. Kelly, who was assaulted by another man, said he was wary of going to the criminal-justice system because, as Senator Whitehouse suggested, cases like his would be hard to prosecute under many state laws.

States’ definitions of sexual assault and rape vary widely, Mr. Kelly said in his prepared testimony, "and only some sufficiently recognize male survivors and victims of same-sex violence." The federal government’s definitions of rape also vary, he said, contributing to a "chronic misrepresentation of rape outside of the male perpetrator, female victim context."

Mr. Kelly advocated that a standard definition of sexual assault be adopted for colleges nationwide.

Two other Democratic senators at the hearing, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Patty Murray of Washington, also expressed concern that LGBT sexual violence could be better handled by colleges, both in investigations and in prevention programs.
Prevention Programs

What colleges can do to prevent sexual assault, and how to pay for prevention programs, were also discussed at the hearing.

Ms. Lhamon said she hoped to see all colleges completing campus-climate surveys to identify how safe students feel, dubbing such efforts "an important first step." Climate surveys can help colleges gauge how safe students feel as well as measure how successful prevention programs are, she said.

She also said a grant program to help campuses deal with sexual-assault prevention "would be enormously helpful" for the division of the Education Department she leads, the Office for Civil Rights. "I can’t tell you how much that tool would mean to us."

The American Council on Education also said in its prepared statement that "Congress should support funding for research into sexual-assault education and prevention training programs."

Ms. Lhamon added that she had a "real jealousy" that the Justice Department’s Office on Violence Against Women has a grant program specifically to reduce sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking on campuses.

The fifth witness at Thursday’s hearing was Jane Stapleton, a co-director of a research unit at the University of New Hampshire known as Prevention Innovations: Research and Practices for Ending Violence Against Women. She revealed during her testimony that she had been asked to complete a study on prevention efforts for the White House Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault. She said the results should be out in January 2015.

Mr. Harkin concluded the hearing by saying that guidance for campuses on how to handle sexual assault would be a part of the Senate’s legislation for reauthorizing the Higher Education Act. He said he would use information from the hearing to help him decide what to add to the legislation.
Mr. Moore, of the Education Department’s Clery Act compliance division, added that when institutions issue their campus-security reports this October, his office will be looking to see the ways that colleges are carrying out the Campus Save Act.

"We are going to issue additional guidance in the coming days to reiterate that institutions have to make their best, good-faith effort in this first year" to comply with the new law’s requirements, Mr. Moore said.

Ed official: Some campuses hostile to victims

By KIMBERLY HEFLING

NO MU MENTION

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some colleges and universities are still failing students by inadequately responding to campus sexual assault, a senior Education Department official testified Thursday.

"For those schools, my office and this administration have made it clear that the time for delay is over," Catherine Lhamon, the department's assistant secretary for civil rights, told the Senate committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Lhamon said that since the beginning of President Barack Obama’s term in 2009, her office has investigated more than 100 such cases. Through them, she said, the office is aware that some schools are doing things such as retaliating against students for filing complaints and allowing perpetrators to remain in school.

However, Lhamon said, many colleges and universities are "stepping up to the challenge of addressing the problem of sexual assault."

At the hearing, Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., said federal officials should be mindful of the federal limits in these cases because federal oversight should be "helpful and not burdensome."
"Whatever we do here, I think we need to make sure that we don't suggest to anybody that we in Washington should be primarily responsible for making the campuses safe," said Alexander, who served as education secretary under President George H.W. Bush.

Alexander also questioned Lhamon about where her office had been given the authority under which it issued guidance to colleges and universities about how to handle such cases. She said she was given such authority by way of her appointment.

The Education Department has sought to use its available regulatory powers to push colleges and universities to better handle sexual assault cases.

It announced a proposed rule last week that would expand campus crime reporting requirements by requiring colleges and universities to compile statistics on stalking, dating violence and domestic violence. It also would spell out that both the victim and the accused perpetrator have the right to an adviser of their choice at campus disciplinary proceedings in these cases.

Earlier this year, a White House task force on sexual assault recommended actions that colleges and universities should take, including ensuring the availability of confidential victims' advocates and conducting surveys to better gauge the frequency of sexual assault on their campuses. The department also took the unprecedented step of releasing the names of 55 schools facing federal investigation under Title IX for the way they handle sexual abuse allegations.

Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education, which represents college presidents, said in a letter to the committee chairmen that colleges and universities are "undertaking significant efforts to enhance their educational programs to prevent sexual assaults and to ensure a prompt, supportive and equitable response when they do occur."

Broad said investigating and adjudicating such cases is a "difficult challenge."

She encouraged the department's Office of Civil Rights to wrap up cases against colleges and universities in a more timely manner, instead of sometimes taking years, and to provide a more fair and transparent process.

And, she said, the recent publicizing by the department of colleges and universities under investigation may have the unintended consequence of publicizing incomplete or inaccurate information.

Follow Kimberly Hefling on Twitter: http://twitter.com/khefling
Proposals by House Republicans Seek to Ease College-Application Process

By Dan Bauman

NO MU MENTION

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce announced on Thursday a series of bills intended to reform the college-application process. Outlined in a news release, the proposals tackle the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the availability of college metrics to families, and students’ financial literacy.

Contrary to the approach of the Senate, which on Wednesday unveiled a comprehensive 785-page bill to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, the House is taking a piecemeal approach to reauthorization.

The committee’s news release promised more bills in the coming days as the House works to overhaul the Higher Education Act. Rep. John P. Kline Jr., the Minnesota Republican who is chairman of the committee, said on Tuesday he expected the House to vote on several proposals before the midterm elections, in November.

Sponsored by three Democrats and three Republicans, the proposed Simplifying the Application for Student Aid Act would allow applicants to submit family-income data from two years prior to the date they submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the Fafsa. The method is identical to the approach championed in the Senate’s Financial Aid Simplification and Transparency Act, or FAST Act, which was proposed last week by Sen. Lamar Alexander, Republican of Tennessee, and Sen. Michael F. Bennet, Democrat of Colorado. Unlike the FAST Act, which would replace the Fafsa with a two-question application for federal student aid, the House’s...
simplification measure, which is known as the SASA Act, would not address the length of application.

Robert Kelchen, an assistant professor of higher education at Seton Hall University who has conducted research on the Fafsa and the use of two-year-old tax data on family income, said a majority of students would not see a change in their Pell Grant awards if older data were used.

"It gives students the ability to know their financial aid several months earlier, and that will give them information about their federal financial-aid eligibility as they are searching for college," Mr. Kelchen said.

Besides the Fafsa-reform proposal, another bill would instruct the Department of Education to design a user-friendly college-data interface for students. Such a resource would include information on the completion rates for Pell Grant recipients and their peers.

The third proposal released on Thursday would require colleges to conduct annual counseling sessions with students on financial literacy, either in person or online. The sponsors of the latter two bills are Republicans.

Muddled messages transmitted from 'Ivory Tower'

By Joe Williams joewilliams@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8344

**NO MU MENTION**

As a chronicle of higher education in America, “Ivory Tower” makes a persuasive case that the gravest epidemic that’s spreading from college campuses isn’t student-loan debt but attention-deficit disorder.

Although debt is the over-arching theme, the syllabus of this CNN-produced documentary bounces from binge drinking to technological literacy to the generosity of the robber barons who founded such schools as Stanford and Cooper Union.
The latter is a small college in downtown New York City whose charter guarantees free tuition for its students. It was founded before the Civil War — and 150 years before the financial crash that left overbuilt campuses flooded with debt. When the president of Cooper Union decrees that the school must charge tuition, drum-pounding pupils stage a sit-in.

Meanwhile, at the Death Valley campus of tiny Deep Springs College, the 26 male students work off their tuition with ranch labor.

Another segment of the film focuses on the “un-college” movement, a Silicon Valley notion that stresses Web-based, self-guided education.

But the prevailing model of college education is a super-sized school that uses flashy facilities to lure students from afar. At private schools such as those in the Ivy League, the lures include A-list professors and the implied promise of professional networking. At public schools such as Arizona State in suburban Phoenix, the attractions include luxury high-rise dorms where the university earns its reputation as a great party school.

The documentary implies but hardly proves that public-school administrators condone hedonism to pad the student-body count. Nor does it follow the serpentine paper trail from student-loan providers to debt collectors, a trail that ends at Wall Street. As with war, trillions of dollars are being redistributed from taxpaying workers to a small number of loophole-loving rich people. So where’s this movie’s outrage?

Chartered to provide both sides of every debate, CNN has positioned itself as the middle ground for discussions of current events. But without a knowledgeable teacher (or filmmaker) to lead such discussions into new territory, they devolve into noisy bull sessions. Maybe an ivory tower built by the best and the brightest is the ideal place to avoid the crossfire.

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What “Ivory Tower” • Two and a half stars out of four • Rating PG-13 • Run time 1:30 • Content Some suggestive images and partying • Where Tivoli