McCaskill to release survey on college sexual assaults

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

WASHINGTON • As soon as this week, Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., intends to release the results of her survey of how 450 colleges and universities treat sexual assault, and she hopes to introduce bipartisan legislation on the topic later this summer.

The legislation will attempt to address a complex, layered problem that has turned into a national discussion on how often such assaults take place compared with how often they are reported, and how the offense is adjudicated by colleges and the police.

Last week, the Washington Post, after surveying college crime statistics, reported that there were 3,900 reports of forcible sex offenses on campuses around the country in 2012, a 50 percent increase from 2009. But the newspaper cautioned that the numbers include allegations of incidents that did not result in prosecutions or convictions.

McCaskill said her legislation could encompass a variety of approaches, including requiring mandatory training for people who conduct the first interviews of an alleged victim of sexual assault. It may also offer more flexibility in punishment of sexual assault perpetrators — and of schools that do a poor job handling assault allegations.

Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., who plans to join McCaskill on a bipartisan bill, would like to see more sexual assault data available to parents and prospective students. He is also calling for streamlining federal directives that overlap and confuse, Heller spokesman Chandler Smith said.

Advocates say one of the biggest barriers for victims of sexual assaults is immediately cooperating with a criminal investigation while still traumatized, partly because of stories about how past victims were sometimes treated.

In a report called “Not Alone,” a White House task force on sexual assault recommended that colleges enter into memorandums of understanding with local rape crisis centers and police. The White House also has ordered colleges to keep better statistics on stalking, domestic assault and other related issues.

But McCaskill said she had talked with many sexual assault survivors who had “little or no confidence in the criminal justice system” or administrative processes on campuses.
“These cases are hard cases (but) they are makeable ... if the victim has the right kind of interview, the right kind of evidence, and the right kind of investigation is done as close in time as possible to the event,” said McCaskill, a former sex crimes prosecutor. “The more time that passes the less likely there will be a successful criminal prosecution, because a lot of this is about corroborating the victim.”

The challenge, McCaskill said, is insuring that a complex system “makes sure that the victim gets as much information as possible as quickly as possible and fully understands” that a successful prosecution “has everything to do with her willingness to not only come forward, but come forward quickly.”

Some senators have raised concerns that any new federal action not be burdensome to campuses already required to adhere to many federal regulations.

“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,” Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn, who served as education secretary under President George H.W. Bush, said at a Senate hearing on Thursday.

Catherine Lhamon, the Education Department’s assistant secretary for civil rights, told that Senate committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions that some universities were still dragging their feet in combating sexual assault.

McCaskill helped shepherd successful legislation earlier this year changing how the military handles sexual assault.

In January, when a story emerged that former University of Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Coury had committed suicide after an alleged sexual assault, McCaskill spoke then of a personal stake, and of the legislative action that has followed.

“As a mother of a daughter in college, my heart breaks for this young woman and her family,” she said then. “We must create a safe space for all women to report sexual assault to law enforcement — and no matter who the alleged perpetrator is, there must be a thorough and professional investigation.”

McCaskill subsequently held three listening sessions with victims and their advocates; local and college law enforcement officials; and experts on how allegations of sexual assault can be handled under Title IX, which bans discrimination based on gender.

Several advocates stressed that the issue did not lend itself to one-size-fits all answers.

And new legal trends are emerging from it, according to a renowned law professor who has begun following the issue. John F. Banzhaf III, professor of public interest law at George Washington University Law School, says he has noticed more cases of young men producing video of sexual encounters to defend against sexual assault or rape, and more students suing their schools after being punished administratively for sexual assault.
“Very clearly what is happening is the colleges are being pressured to do more in this area,” he said. “There are various concerns now. You start with the basic one: whether colleges should be in this business. It is argued that is why we have prosecutors. Colleges are not equipped for this.”

McCaskill said universities and colleges that said they had no problem with the issue — sometimes under pressure from parents or alumni — were either “lying or denying or incompetent.”

Past “horrible stories about how victims have been treated,” McCaskill said, have been used “almost as a cudgel in some ways to keep victims from believing that there are people ... that will listen and investigate and handle the cases in a very professional and supportive manner.”

Her final round table talk, made up of campus and local law enforcement officials and victim advocates, produced several reasons that legislating on the issue may be difficult:

• Law enforcement’s first impulse to is to gather as many facts and do as many interviews as possible, but often the first people who hear about an alleged incident are friends or dorm mates — people who are not trained to conduct good forensic interviews. Many victims do not come forward immediately, and many do so reluctantly.

It may take “several days, several months for somebody to decide to come see an advocate,” said Darcy Folsom, director of Sexual Violence Prevention & Advocacy at Connecticut College. “At that point, even if they turn around and say the next day they want to file a criminal report, then that time has passed.”

• The initial advice given to victims who come forward is vital and should be designed to empower victims, advocates say, but it must be balanced with clear explanation of the challenges ahead. And it might differ from college to college because of variations in everything from university relations with police, to the state-by-state differences in laws on sexual assault.

“You have to balance between giving full and informed consent, giving enough information about the options that she can make, and informed choice about the options,” said Nancy Chi Cantalup, a research fellow at the Victims Rights Law Center and adjunct professor at the Georgetown University Law Center.

“Unfortunately, not everyone has a criminal justice system that is structured to give multiple options and to hold onto evidence for years so there can be a prosecution later if the survivor is ready for it,” she said. “You need to give them an honest idea of what they can expect from the various processes, whether it be internal or external.”

She added: “I am going to be very clear with anyone I talk to that if your goal is to not have to see him in the cafeteria, you are going to be better off going through the university’s Title IX system. If your goal is to have him incarcerated, then we need to talk to the police.”
• The desire for confidentiality — key for many victims, according to advocates — often runs into open-records laws and the way students communicate. Social media have accelerated the proliferation of rumor and disinformation, which law enforcement officials say can hamper investigations and discourage victims from coming forward.

“It is unfortunate, and it is also very impactful on victims, it is very impactful on the investigations,” Cornell University Chief of Police Kathy Zoner said. “People are presuming things have happened, they tell stories, (and) once the comment is out there it is un-retractable. These are battles that we all face.”

“99 percent of which is not admissible in court,” McCaskill said.

Zoner agreed, but added that it “does impact the ability to move forward” after a victim is on social networks.

Keeping records of sexual assault confidential on campus “is going to be a challenge in some states,” said Paul Denton, chief of Ohio State University Police. But he also said that law enforcement could use social media — especially video found there — to help build a case.

Banzhaf, the George Washington law professor, said that video was also likely to be used in defense of sexual assault cases and that he had noticed an uptick in the use of video in sexual assault defense.

Banzhaf predicted that more college students would shoot video of sexual encounters as protection against prosecution. He said shooting such video, sans audio, was legal in most states if done for legal defense.

Banzhaf said the rise in students’ suing their schools after facing sexual assault discipline or criminal proceedings pointed out how universities “are damned if we do, and damned if we don’t” on the push to get tougher on the sexual assault.

Colleges and universities are “pretty good at making academic decisions,” Banzhaf said, but not as equipped for “judging exactly what went on in a darkened dorm room two weeks ago.”
Loftin requests $3.8 million back from MU divisions to make up for funding shortfalls, restrictions

By ASHLEY JOST
Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 11:30 am Comments (1)

University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is requesting department chairs and other divisions and auxiliaries give back a portion of their budgets to offset state revenue shortfalls for fiscal year 2014.

MU is reallocation $3.8 million to make up for the state funding shortfall.

Gov. Jay Nixon announced in May that because of declining lottery and casino revenues earmarked for education, $10.5 million worth of higher education budget restrictions were necessary. Because of additional cuts made in April, the total loss for Missouri colleges was about $17 million, according to Associated Press reports.

Loftin and his administration have specified how much money MU’s colleges and other divisions need to give back to make up for the $3.8 million. MU’s auxiliary units, including Intercollegiate Athletics and Residential Life, will be part of the cuts even though they do not receive state funds.

According to a breakdown provided by MU spokesman Christian Basi, the largest cuts were to the Office of Student Affairs with $936,050, the provost’s office and its subsidiary programs with $289,917 and several other administrative offices. Intercollegiate Athletics is giving back $40,997. About $1.3 million of the $3.8 million total is coming from the colleges and schools; the rest of the money is coming from other divisions.

The amount requested from each school depends on its current balance, the amount of general revenue it received in fiscal year 2014 and whether it has generated money through other means, Basi said. He said each college and division is expected to return that money to the university by July 11.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU divisions to help make up loss of state funding

By Zachary Van Epps
July 3, 2014 | 8:14 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced Thursday that each division of the university will contribute part of its budget to make up for more than $3.8 million in state funding lost after Gov. Jay Nixon withheld funds in the last fiscal year.**

Loftin said in an email to MU faculty and staff that the amount contributed by the divisions will depend on their balances, the amount of general revenue they received and any auxiliary enterprise funding.

**Reallocation amounts**

Here is the breakdown of funds returning to the budget office:

- Schools and colleges
- Arts and Science, $189,717
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, $227,054
- Business, $63,039
- Education, $101,396
- Engineering, $58,743
- Human Environmental Sciences, $50,432
- Health Professions, $21,144
- Journalism, $29,392
- Law, $43,064
- Medicine, $324,707
- Nursing, $58,949
- Public Affairs, $7,431
- Veterinary Medicine, $125,032
- Other divisions
- Alumni and advancement, $34,310
- Intercollegiate Athletics, $40,997
- Vice chancellor finance, $31,178
- Vice chancellor operations, $222,517
- Vice chancellor — health sciences, $283,799
- Chancellor, $239,356
The amount each division and auxiliary unit will contribute has been decided, and each division head will determine how to provide these contributions.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the reallocation is in response to announcements made by Nixon in April and May. Nixon said then that funding would be withheld from multiple state agencies, including the university.

Basi said the reallocation of funds has nothing to do with Nixon's announcement in June to freeze $1.1 billion in state funds for the 2015 fiscal year. Auxiliary units that do not receive state funding, such as the Residential Life and Intercollegiate Athletics departments, also will contribute, Loftin said in the email. Basi said the auxiliary units are contributing to help make the impact on students and faculty as small as possible.

"It was a matter of everyone pitching in," Basi said.

The auxiliary units are expected to contribute up to one-third of the funding shortfall. Basi said the university does not expect the change to have any effect on tuition.

Loftin announces budget reallocations

Nearly 25 percent of the cuts will come from the Division of Student Affairs.

By Covey Eonyak Son
July 3, 2014

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced Thursday that departments across campus will need to give funds back to the central MU budget, in an effort to cover a $3.8 million state funding shortfall.

MU’s loss comes after the state government’s revenues fell short of its fiscal year 2014 prediction that general revenue would grow by 3.1 percent, which prompted Governor Jay Nixon to withhold funds from several state agencies.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the $3.8 million reallocation will be a non-recurring situation, independent of the $8.7 million planned to be reallocated from various campus areas over the next four years to fund the MU Strategic Operating Plan.

Nearly 25 percent of the cuts, a total of about $936,000, will come from the Division of Student Affairs.

Student Affairs oversees nine departments: Residential Life, Campus Dining Services, Student Life, MU Student Recreation Center, Counseling Center, Disability Center, The Mizzou Store, Student and Auxiliary Services, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, which includes the Office of Parent Relations.

Student Affairs Director of Fiscal Operations Alysha O'Neil said a majority of the division’s cuts will come from its reserve funds, which would typically be used for unexpected expenses in projects and building management.

O'Neil said while the cuts may be an inconvenience to the division, it is not completely unexpected and not without precedence, as the state withholds funds whenever revenues do not meet their fiscal year target.

Academic areas will see a total of approximately $1.3 million of their budgets reallocated.

Some of the largest cuts will come from the School of Medicine, which will reallocate over $324,000, the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources ($227,000) and the College of Arts and Science ($189,000).
Auxiliary areas that do not receive state funding, such as Intercollegiate Athletics and Residential Life, will also participate in the reallocations to help minimize the impact to MU’s academic areas.

“We worked to reallocate funds in a way that would have the least impact on our missions of teaching, research, service and economic development,” Basi said. “Recovering funds from auxiliary units helped us with this goal.”

Loftin said in an email to the MU community that the amounts reallocated from each area were calculated based on a division’s current budget balance, amount of general operating funds — money raised from tuition and state funds — received and auxiliary revenue raised by the division, if any.

For a detailed look at how much money will be reallocated from each area, please view this spreadsheet made available to The Maneater by Basi.

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Health & Science

Can plants hear? In a study, vibrations prompt some to boost their defenses

Specimens responded to audio of caterpillar chewing

BY MEERI KIM July 6 at 7:18 PM

Plants can sense and react to temperature changes, harsh winds, and even human touch. But can they hear?
They have no specialized structure to perceive sound like we do, but a new study has found that plants can discern the sound of predators through tiny vibrations of their leaves — and beef up their defenses in response.

It is similar to how our own immune systems work — an initial experience with insects or bacteria can help plants defend themselves better in future attacks by the same predator. So while a mustard plant might not respond the first time it encounters a hungry caterpillar, the next time it will up the concentration of defense chemicals in its system that turn its once-delicious leaves into an unsavory, toxic meal.

**Now, biologists from the University of Missouri have found that this readying process, called “priming,” can be triggered by sound alone.** For one group of plants, they carefully mimicked what a plant would “hear” in a real attack by vibrating a single leaf with the sound of a caterpillar chewing. The other group was left in silence.

When later faced with a real caterpillar, the plants that heard chewing noises produced a greater amount of insecticide-like chemicals than the silence group. They also seemed able to pick out those vibrations signaling danger; playing wind noises or insect mating calls did not trigger the same chemical boost.

Although the mechanism of how plants can discern sounds is not known, a deeper investigation could lead to advances in agriculture and natural crop resistance — as opposed to spraying costly and harmful pesticides.

**“We can imagine applications of this where plants could be treated with sound or genetically engineered to respond to certain sounds that would be useful for agriculture,”** said study author and biologist Heidi Appel.

The [study](#) was published online Tuesday in the journal Oecologia.
Despite not having brains or nervous systems in the traditional sense, plants are surprisingly sophisticated. They can communicate with each other and signal impending danger to their neighbors by releasing chemicals into the air. Plants constantly react to their environment — not only light and temperature changes, but also physical stimuli.

Two famous examples are the Venus’ flytrap, which snaps shut when an unsuspecting bug contacts one of its trigger hairs, and the touch-me-not plant (*Mimosa pudica*), which shrinks and closes its leaves upon even a slight touch.

“Plants certainly have the capacity to feel mechanical loads,” said plant biologist Frank Telewski, who was not involved in the research. “They can respond to gravity, wind, ice or an abundance of fruit.”

But trying to prove that plants can sense sound has been difficult.

“*There is a long history of people interested in whether plants could hear sound, and that usually involved sounds that are very salient to us — music*
or tones of pure sound — just to see if plants would react,” said study author and biologist Reginald Corcroft.

Even though some swear that a soothing voice or classical music works wonders for their greenery, the scientific evidence is spotty. Experts believe that music in particular is too complex and varied to be able to use in a controlled study.

**Research: Chemical alters development of turtles**

July 05, 2014 10:21 am  •  By BLYTHE BERNHARD

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The turtles are in trouble. A chemical found in Missouri's rivers and streams can influence the sex organs of developing turtles, making males more like females, researchers say.

*A pilot study conducted at the University of Missouri showed that the synthetic chemical bisphenol A — or BPA, which is known to mimic estrogen and disrupt hormone levels in animals — can alter a turtle's reproductive system after exposure in the egg. Turtles are perfect creatures for this type of study, because their sex is determined by the temperature of the environment during their development in the egg.*

"Cool dudes or hot babes," explained Sharon Deem, director of the St. Louis Zoo's Institute for Conservation Medicine and a lead investigator on the study.

The researchers dropped a liquid form of the chemical onto hundreds of eggs that were incubated at cooler temperatures required to produce male turtles. A few months after they hatched, the turtles' sex organs were removed and studied. The male turtles had developed gonads that were closer to ovaries than testicles.
The BPA essentially overrides the temperature in determining the sex of the turtle, creating an animal that is probably unable to reproduce, Deem said.

The researchers used the same levels of BPA that were found in samples from Missouri waterways including Peruque Creek in St. Charles County, James River in Nixa and Perche Creek in Columbia. The estrogen-like chemical is found in plastics and is thought to contaminate more than 40 percent of U.S. rivers. Estrogen also enters the waterways through the urine of men and women, especially pregnant women and those taking birth control pills. Waste water treatment plants cannot fully remove hormones, sending them back into the natural water system.

The study on turtles is a good indicator of the overall health of the ecosystem because the reptiles live in oceans, rivers and on land, scavenging food from decaying plants and animals.

"We have some environmental issues that are impacting wildlife," Deem said.

The researchers from the university, the zoo, Westminster College and the U.S. Geological Survey recently received a $250,000 grant from the Mizzou Advantage research project to continue the study and compare results among fish, mice and turtles. They also hope to learn whether the introduction of synthetic and natural hormones alters the animals' DNA, which could create problems in future generations.

The changes already seen in animals' reproductive systems indicate the potential for the same effects in humans, the researchers said. Urinalysis has shown that 93 percent of people have detectable BPA levels in their bodies from exposures to plastics or industrial fumes, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Bisphenol A is found in certain food and drink packages including plastic containers, water bottles, baby bottles and cans. The chemical can leech into food or liquid, especially when the packaging is heated. The chemical is believed to pose higher risks to fetuses, infants and children and can potentially affect brain and reproductive development, according to the National Institutes of Health. Earlier this year, University of Missouri researchers showed that pregnant monkeys exposed to very low levels of BPA produced offspring with birth defects.

"If that's happening in (animals), that would suggest it could be happening in humans and babies as well," said Cheryl Rosenfeld, associate professor of biomedical sciences at the University of Missouri.

The Food and Drug Administration has rejected efforts to ban BPA from food packaging, although several manufacturers of baby bottles and canned foods have voluntarily stopped using the chemical.

The researchers hope to eventually take the lab study into the field, where they would take blood samples from turtles to determine their level of contamination, said Dawn Holliday, assistant professor of biology and environmental science at Westminster College. The concern is that chemicals in the waterways could already be altering the natural sex selection of turtles, leading to extinction.
"Changing reproductive rates is not something you would be able to walk out to a creek and observe," she said.

University of Missouri system starts alert program

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — University of Missouri administrators have decided to expand a new early alert system to all four system campuses after a pilot of the system got positive reviews.

The Columbia Daily Tribune (http://bit.ly/1mXysTu) reports MU Connect will let faculty, advisers and other key staffers keep an eye on each student's progress and identify any problems that could hinder the student's success.

The system uses a tracking program known as Starfish that will give key people in each student's life access to up-to-date information on grading and any notes made by the adviser, faculty members or the student.

The university's College of Engineering implemented a pilot of MU Connect in the spring 2013 semester, and last semester administrators decided to implement it at all four campuses

The University of Missouri is rolling out a new early alert system this fall on all four campuses after a successful pilot program at part of the Columbia campus during the past year.

The system — referred to as MU Connect at the Columbia campus — gives faculty, advisors and other key staff in each student’s college life the chance to give them praise and raise flags when there are concerns with their studies. The goal is to bring awareness as early as possible to potential issues that could hinder the student’s success.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies at MU, said developing some version of an early alert system on campus has been a priority for administrators for years.

During the spring 2013 semester, Spain said MU’s College of Engineering implemented a pilot of MU Connect, which uses an online tracking system known as Starfish.

Last semester, Spain said the UM System picked up the program after analyzing how the pilot went, and now each of the four system campuses is implementing the Starfish program at their own discretion.

The new system gives students the ability to schedule appointments with their academic advisors when needed. Then, advisors have access to all of the student’s up-to-date information on grading and any notes that the advisor, faculty members or the student has made.

Spain said the university sets the criteria that determine when a student is struggling, which sends up a flag in the system.

“What it really helps with is us getting a better handle on if the student is struggling in just one class, because that’s an entirely different conversation than if the student is struggling with all five of their classes,” Spain said. “The goal is to move to an earlier intervention model. If a student completes a
semester and did poorly on all five classes, that’s a different situation than struggling at week four when we can still turn things around."

Before Starfish, there was no effective way of collecting all of that information. The program will cost MU $88,400 for the coming year. Spain said the program is being funded with part of a $12-per-credit-hour instructional technology fee that students pay every year.

Spain said the transfer of information will be valuable for a student enrolled in one college who decides they want to switch to a new major. Their new academic advisor will have access to notes his predecessor has taken.

Academic and advising offices already have access to the program. This fall, the financial aid office, Career Center, the Office of Student Life and the Office of Residential Life will also have access, as those are considered to be integral parts of the student’s MU network, Spain said.

The university has hired Tina Balser, who worked on the pilot for the engineering school, to be the coordinator of the new program.

Balser said that at the end of the spring semester, 70 percent of students at MU were already enrolled in the system. Journalism, nursing and human environmental sciences students will be the last to enroll this fall. She said the focus is on undergraduate students, with a hope to increase the university’s four-year graduation rate. The university has piloted use of the program with some graduate students.

“I think overall, the positive changes I’ve seen are the range of communication we’re able to have as a campus,” Balser said.

Balser and other administrators are working to develop options for social and health flags for the students, too. Another option is a financial flag, which can alert a student and their advisor when a payment is due and a hold has been placed on the student’s account.

Just as the students can receive flags, they can also receive praise, Balser said. This program has been used at community colleges in the past, which have found that students who receive kudos from faculty are likely to work harder to succeed because they understand the professor recognizes their work.

“The biggest challenge with all of this is adoption — it’s a change,” Balser said. “As we’ve implemented and piloted these changes, we’ve found that faculty and advisors have been doing a version of this for a long time. Instead, it’s making files and sending emails. So we just have to get them to do it in a new way so that everyone has that information. It’s a culture change, but so far many of the people who are using it are very excited about it.”
LEARNING CURVE

Round up: S&T federal investigation, sex assault database and documents

By ASHLEY JOST

Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 9:30 am

An extended weekend? Don’t mind if we do. Enjoy it.

I’ve got a couple of interesting stories coming out this weekend on the UM System’s new early-alert system and the system’s new approach to online course sharing. Keep an eye out!

Inside the system:

- Happy FOIA… uhh… Thursday! This week I have one-and-a-half documents for you.

- “Document one” isn’t a document but a heads up. Last week I requested “faculty termination records from May 1, 2013 to today, June 26, 2014.” The idea came from something I saw on the list of other requests made (ICYMI, you can see that document here). I received a response that there were no corresponding documents for my request, and the person who initially made that request earlier this year received the same response. Back to the drawing board to reword what I’m looking for!

- My real records request this week is the log of all of MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s travel expenses so far this year. The chancellor does a lot of traveling, to say the absolute least. He’s made multiple donor visits to Texas in particular, and several visits to Washington D.C. to meet with the Missouri delegation and SEC leaders. There are a few SEC trips sprinkled in there as well.

- The Missouri University of Science and Technology is under investigation by the federal government for alleged mishandling of a sexual assault case. A spokesperson for the department declined to discuss details about the case because it’s an ongoing investigation. The Springfield News-Leader wrote about the investigation in early June and it must have completely slipped my radar. In case it’s the same for you, here are a few details:

S&T is the only Missouri school the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights is looking into. It’s on a list of 64 campuses nationwide that are under investigation. According to OCR, the
investigation began May 21 - I've attached the corresponding document that shows the list of schools and dates. Per the OCR spokesman: “The list includes investigations opened because of complaints received by OCR and those initiated by OCR as compliance reviews. When an investigation concludes, the Department will disclose, upon request, whether OCR has entered into a resolution agreement to address compliance concerns at a particular campus or found insufficient evidence of a Title IX violation there.”

S&T spokesman Andrew Careaga said university administrators were notified about the investigation in early May. While he’s not aware of OCR reaching out to the campus since for the investigation, Careaga said administrators will do whatever they can to work with the feds.

An interesting tidbit: here is a summary of results from a 2012 campus climate survey at S&T.

I’ll keep tabs on this as the OCR moves forward.

- University of Missouri administrators closed the University Village doors Monday. The hope is for demolition of the university-owned apartment complex to be in July or early August. MU spokesman Christian Basi said earlier this week the university still hasn’t picked its choice from multiple bids to demolish the complex. Basi did say that the university is “getting close” to wrapping things up and making a decision.

I’ve attached the spreadsheet with some of the bidders. You’ll notice that there is a “base bid” and an “alternate.” The base bid is solely for demolition. The alternate would be the added cost to recycle at least 50 percent of the materials during and after demolition.

- The University of Missouri-St. Louis appointed a new director for the Missouri Institute of Mental Health, a research arm of the campus.
- Washington Post published a comprehensive, interactive database of campus sexual offenses. According to the database, Washington University in St. Louis (29), University of Central Missouri (23) and MU (22), in that order, were the three schools with the largest number of forcible sex offenses from 2010 to 2012. You can see the full list on the site.

Molly Borgmeyer, coordinator for student conduct at Columbia College, pointed out on Twitter that increased reporting “could mean the culture is one where” people “feel safe enough to report.”

Outside the system:

- Moberly Area Community College’s board of trustees gave its stamp of approval on the preliminary 2014-15 budget Monday night.
- Columbia College rolled out a new website this week.
- Linn State Technical College is no more. The public community college is now called the State Technical College of Missouri. Campus administrators hosted a ceremony Tuesday where several trustees and elected officials celebrated the official title switch.

- Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., [announced a new partnership](#) with an online-only graduate school based in Arizona. The partnership allows Westminster faculty, staff and alumni to get their master’s and doctoral degrees at a discount.

- An ICYMI from last week: Braxton Rethwisch, regional admissions director at Central Methodist University, celebrated his 50th anniversary of working at his alma mater this week. A very, very fun feature to write.

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**University Hospital renovates, moves intensive care units**

**By ASHLEY JOST**  
Friday, July 4, 2014 at 5:45 pm

**University Hospital is renovating and shifting several beds within its multiple intensive care units.**

Part of the process — which started in mid-May and is slated to be finished in early October — is merging the burn victim and surgical ICU and the expansion of the general, medical ICU.

Mary Jenkins, MU Health Care spokeswoman, said the new surgical ICU moved to the seventh floor Wednesday from the third floor, where the operating rooms are located.

The new seventh-floor space is the first renovation completed.

Jenkins said it isn’t out of the ordinary to move the surgical ICU four floors from the operating rooms. Multiple ICUs, including cardiac and neurological units, were and will continue to be floors away from the operating rooms. Rushing patients to the third floor for surgery won’t be a new process for hospital staff, she said.

Jenkins said the move makes sense because many of the existing trauma care services are on the seventh floor.
The third floor ICU space that the surgical unit is vacating will still be used for general intensive care patients.

There were previously 18 surgical ICU beds, 14 burn ICU beds and 18 general, medical ICU beds. When the updates are complete, there will be 14 surgical ICU beds and 32 beds for the medical ICU. There are no changes to the number of beds in other units.

After renovations another medical ICU will move from the second floor to the fifth floor. The cardiac ICU and neuroscience ICU will also receive updates, but will not be moving.

The renovation includes updates to the flooring in all units, along with a paint job, Jenkins said. The price tag is about $800,000. Allen Floors Inc. from Jefferson City is updating the floors. In-house staffers are taking care of the painting.

The renovation also includes installing real-time, interactive monitors that provide information on the patients for hospital staff.

The tentative schedule for the upgrades is:

- Tuesday, cardiac intensive care moves to the third floor of the Critical Care Addition.
- July 16, renovation begins on the fourth floor of the Critical Care Addition. This phase is expected to last four weeks.
- Aug. 6, cardiac intensive care moves back to the fourth floor of the Critical Care Addition.
- Aug. 7, renovation begins on the third floor of the Critical Care Addition. This phase is expected to last four weeks.
- Sept. 8, the medical intensive care unit moves to the third floor of the Critical Care Addition.
- Sept. 9, renovation begins on the fifth floor of the Critical Care Addition. This phase is expected to last four weeks.
- Oct. 9, another section of the medical intensive care unit moves into the fifth floor of the Critical Care Addition.
July 3, 2014

Tim Wolfe, guest columnist: University of Missouri Extension marks 100 years of service
By Tim Wolfe Special to The Globe

It’s an organization that assisted the residents of Joplin in recovering from the devastating 2011 tornado, helped Missourians set up the first rural electric cooperatives, works with farmers to promote the best farming practices and helps residents start up small businesses. It trains thousands of Missouri firefighters, provides guidance on proper nutrition for families, and promotes youth development through a variety of 4-H programs.

University of Missouri Extension does it all for Missourians and their communities, and it has been doing it all for the past century. It is also yet another great example of how the University of Missouri System touches Missourians in every county of our state, every day, in a variety of ways.

This year is the 100th anniversary of Extension. Its origins date back to the establishment of “land-grant” universities in the mid-1800s, which were created to provide practical education to people in the working class. While the practical focus of land-grant universities like the University of Missouri made higher education more relevant to many people, the education was primarily for university students. So to make practical education truly available to all, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, which provided land-grant institutions federal support to offer educational programs to enhance the application of useful and practical information beyond their campuses. University of Missouri Extension was born.

Today, Extension has a local presence in every one of Missouri’s 114 counties. In Joplin, the Jasper and Newton County Extension offices are continuing the tradition of taking the University of Missouri’s research-based knowledge to people in local communities throughout our state.

Programming sponsored by Extension is so comprehensive that many folks in small towns throughout Missouri may not realize that this important information to help better their lives is actually a product of the University of Missouri. But on the 100th anniversary of this pivotal organization, there has never been a better time to take a moment to appreciate what an asset Extension is to our entire state.

Extension is organized into five focus areas, all of which directly benefit Missouri communities: educational attainment; community, economic, business and workplace development; environmental concerns; global food systems; and health systems. But from five areas of focus come thousands of examples of how Extension improves the lives of Missourians on a daily basis.

Those include the 13,000 fire and emergency service first responders that received training in 2013 from the Extension’s Fire and Rescue Training Institute, which is critical when you consider that about 80 percent of firefighters in Missouri,
especially in rural Missouri, are volunteers. And, don’t forget the 4-H activities in many Missouri towns, maintaining the long tradition of educating young people in the best practices of agriculture, but also offering many new opportunities in areas like robotics, aeronautics, e-commerce and filmmaking. Many people might not realize it, but Missouri 4-H is a University of Missouri program.

Folks might also be unaware that there is a wide variety of educational opportunities available to local residents at the Jasper and Newton County Extension centers, including in areas like lawn and garden, home and consumer life, nutrition and health, business and career, and emergency management.

Or that, as a result of training and services provided by the Jasper County Extension’s Small Business and Technology Development Center, entrepreneurs started 16 new businesses and created 96 new jobs in the county in 2013. Or that 160 fire and emergency first responders from Newton County received continuing education and training at the Extension’s Fire and Rescue Training Institute in 2013.

There are countless additional examples of how Extension has been providing knowledge to Missourians to help them make informed decisions about their lives for the past century. I salute this great University of Missouri asset on its 100th anniversary year of 2014, and invite you to visit your local Jasper or Newton County Extension office today.

For more information about University of Missouri Extension, please visit http://extension.missouri.edu.

Tim Wolfe is president of the University of Missouri System.

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Push to keep incoming college students on track

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS • The excitement of acceptance into that dream college has passed. The first day of classes is still weeks away. But the resources provided by high school teachers and computer labs are no longer available for recent graduates.

Education researchers and academic counselors call it “summer melt,” the precarious time when some college-bound students fall through the cracks, at risk of abandoning their higher education plans entirely. Studies show that first-generation college students and those from low-income families are particularly vulnerable.

In St. Louis, a drop-in counseling center helps such students negotiate financial aid agreements, housing contracts and the other many details of college enrollment. School districts in Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Minnesota and West Virginia are among those using text messages to keep aspiring college students on track.
“You get the acceptance letter and start the celebration,” said Shauna Cunningham, a high school guidance counselor who’s spent the past two summers at the St. Louis Graduates High School to College Center. “They don’t realize all the other steps.”

Recent studies by Harvard University’s Center for Education Policy Research found that an estimated 20 percent of graduating seniors from urban school districts in places such as greater Boston, suburban Atlanta, Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, abandon over the summer their plans to attend college.

Among prospective community college students, the summer melt rate increases to about 40 percent, said former Harvard researcher Ben Castleman, now an assistant professor of education and public policy at the University of Virginia.

A lack of financial aid is to blame in about half of those cases, Castleman said. But students also wind up getting derailed by much less significant hurdles, from failing to meet course enrollment deadlines to registering for summer orientation programs.

“The idea was that if you could get a kid to graduate from high school, they’d been accepted and chosen where to go, that student was going to show up,” he said. “What our work shows is that in fact, students encounter a pretty complicated array of financial and procedural tasks to complete over the summer.”

Daisha Tankins, 19, had planned to attend Spelman College in Atlanta after graduating from a St. Louis high school last summer. But unable to afford the private college and unwilling to go into more than $100,000 in debt over four years, she enrolled at Harris-Stowe State University in her hometown. Like Spelman, it is a historically-black school, but with far more modest costs.

Tankins now works as a peer mentor at the St. Louis counseling center, offering guidance to students who find themselves at a similar crossroads.

“A lot of students are bewildered and can’t understand the magnitude of what’s going on,” she said.

School districts and colleges are beginning to find that reducing summer melt doesn’t require dramatic intervention.

For just $7 per student, school districts in Lawrence and Springfield, Massachusetts, were able to boost their number of college-bound graduates, according to research by Castleman and Harvard colleague Lindsay Page, a research assistant professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh.

Students received introductory text messages such as “We want to help you w/ college! Stay tuned for key summer to dos. Save this #, you can txt us for help!” Their parents received similarly tailored messages with reminders about financial aid, orientation enrollment, tuition bill deadlines, campus health insurance and college placement exams.
A subsequent text message campaign was aimed at low-income college students who received federal Pell Grants as freshmen but were in danger of dropping out due to not reapplying for financial aid.

On a recent weekday afternoon, St. Louis high school graduate Kelcee Burton stopped by the drop-in counseling center just blocks from Washington University, which donated the storefront to the nonprofit group St. Louis Graduates.

**The Sumner High School valedictorian has been accepted at the University of Missouri and expects to receive roughly $18,000 in grants for the coming year. But gaining admission was only the start for Burton, who was 4 when her mother died and has spent the past year living with a friend after her father remarried.**

There are immunization records to track down and a housing waiting list to maneuver at the flagship state campus. She stopped by the counseling center at a friend’s suggestion and left with confidence about starting college come August.

“I really didn’t even think about all these details. I had no idea,” she said. “I thought I was good to go.”

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**College presidents say no to unions for athletes**

July 03, 2014 6:15 pm  •  By TOM RAUM

**NO MU MENTION**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Northwestern University on Thursday urged the National Labor Relations Board to overturn a regional ruling that would allow its scholarship football players to unionize, holding up the football program as exemplifying the university’s integration of athletics and education.

In a 60-page brief filed with the labor board in Washington just hours ahead of a midnight deadline, the university laid out its opposition to student athletes forming a union and asked to argue its case before the board.
The regional director's decision "transforms what has always been a cooperative educational relationship between university and student into an adversarial employer-employee relationship," the university said in the brief.

Northwestern's brief was one of several filed Thursday by organizations on both sides of a March 26 ruling by a regional director of the labor board that could revolutionize college sports. The director ruled that football players who receive full scholarships to the Big Ten school qualify as employees under federal law and therefore can unionize.

An employee is regarded by law as someone who, among other things, receives compensation for a service and is under the strict, direct control of managers. In the case of the Northwestern players, coaches are the managers and scholarships are a form of compensation.

An organization of college presidents filed a friend-of-the-court brief taking strong issue with the regional director's ruling.

"Student-athletes participate for their own benefit; they do not render services for compensation," said the 1,800 member American Council on Education. They "are not employees and therefore not subject to the National Labor Relations Act."

The full labor board is weighing the case but has no deadline for a ruling.

In asking the board to overturn the ruling, Northwestern University said that its Chicago-region director "overlooked or ignored key evidence that Northwestern presented showing that its student-athletes are primarily students, not employees."

Instead the regional director's decision "relied incorrectly on a common-law definition of employee that considered the amount of control an employer has over an employee," said Northwestern, which is located in Evanston, Illinois.

In its own brief, the fledgling College Athletes Players Association argued that Northwestern football is a commercial enterprise from which the university derives substantial financial benefits. "They are entitled to representation ... the regional director's decision should be affirmed," the union said.

At its core, the players' union said, "this case involves the same questions that arise in every representation case: Do the players perform services for the university? Do they work under the university's supervision and direction? Do they receive compensation for their work?"

Answering in the affirmative, the players' union said that under federal law, the players are entitled to vote on whether to unionize "and to pursue a collective voice to address their working conditions."
The Northwestern college athletes on scholarship did hold an election in the spring. However, the ballot box was sealed pending a final NLRB decision.

In other voices in the case:

— The AFL-CIO labor union asserted in its brief that the Northwestern football program "functions as a largely autonomous commercial enterprise that is affiliated with and generates revenue for the university. There is no question that the players... 'work for' the Northwestern football program in much the same way as professional athletes."

— Republican members on the House Education and Workforce Committee, led by its chairman, Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., urged the labor board to rule against the college athletes' union. "The profound and inherent differences between the student-university and employee-employer relationship makes employee status unworkable both as a matter of laws and in practice."

— Republican members of the Senate Labor Committee also sided with Northwestern, saying in its court filing, "Congress never intended for college athletes to be considered employees under the National Labor Relations Act, and doing so is incompatible with the student-university relationship."

— A coalition of unions representing major league professional baseball, football, basketball and hockey players filed its own brief supporting the players, noting that Northwestern should be able "to negotiate clearly delineated contract terms" with the university "that respect each other's vital concerns and include a fair and effective dispute resolution mechanism."
Colleges are slowly taking away your First Amendment rights

July 04, 2014 6:15 am  •  by Robert Shibley

Special To The Washington Post

NO MENTION

PHILADELPHIA — Sept. 17 last year was a pretty bad day for the Constitution on our campuses. Robert Van Tuinen of Modesto Junior College in California was prevented from passing out copies of the Constitution outside of his college’s tiny “free speech zone.” Near Los Angeles, Citrus College student Vinny Sinapi-Riddle was threatened with removal from campus for the “offense” of collecting signatures for a petition against NSA domestic surveillance outside his college’s tiny free speech area. I mention Sept. 17 because that was Constitution Day.

These attempts to silence students are all in a day’s work for today’s college administrators. Thanks to the continuing menace of campus speech codes — rules restricting what students may say and where they may say it — these sorts of offenses happen every day on our nation’s college and university campuses. The only difference between the above cases and hundreds or thousands of others is that these students decided to stand up for their rights in court. That’s about to become a lot more common.

Modesto quickly settled, paying $50,000 and signing a binding agreement to dismantle its unconstitutional rules. And Tuesday, Sinapi-Riddle and plaintiffs at three other schools filed federal lawsuits asserting their rights as part of a major new litigation campaign from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE, where I work) to finally end speech codes on public campuses. More cases are planned in the coming weeks and months.

The nature of the lawsuits shows the authoritarian bent of campuses today, where every sector of a student’s life is festooned with regulations. Two of Tuesday’s suits, at Ohio University and at Iowa State University, have to do with unconstitutional regulation of the content of student group t-shirts — one because of a suggestive joke, the other because it advocated marijuana legalization. If you are a student or parent worried
about the fact that college costs are up 80 percent in the last 10 years and continue to rise, the fact that campuses are paying people to act as T-shirt police for their adult students offers little reassurance.

The remaining suit shows how free speech and academic freedom for faculty are threatened, as well. Administrators at Chicago State University evidently are unable to accept the idea that people might criticize their alleged mismanagement online. So Chicago State has engaged in increasingly ridiculous stunts to try to silence the professors who author the CSU Faculty Voice blog, the most recent of which involved rushing to pass a “cyberbullying” policy it immediately used to target them. This threatens not just free speech but also academic freedom, which to be meaningful must include the right of professors to speak out on matters of public concern — like the university’s well-publicized problems with finances and graduation rates.

Why is this happening? The main problem is incentives. Colleges fear those who demand censorship more than they fear those who demand they follow the Constitution and their own written policies. (Importantly, they also believe that the former group is more likely to sue than the latter.) And they’re under more pressure than ever to censor; with the explosion of social media, demanding that institutions punish or silence people when they say something “outrageous” has practically become our national pastime. The movement to include expression-chilling “trigger warnings” in curricula and this year’s disgraceful spate of commencement address controversies involving figures like Condoleezza Rice and IMF head Christine Lagarde only to push colleges further toward enforcing a stifling uniformity of opinion.

Six years ago, 79 percent of America’s largest and most prestigious public universities chilled student speech with laughably unconstitutional codes. Today, thanks to increased awareness of the problem, that number is down to 58 percent. That’s a real improvement, but it’s still far too high when the law requires that number to be 0 percent. Higher education cannot live up to its fantastic (and now, fantastically expensive) promise if this pervasive culture of censorship doesn’t change. The ugly truth is that far too many of our campuses are now places where making T-shirts, collecting petition signatures, blogging or distributing pamphlets can get you in trouble.

That must end, and the sooner the better. America must not see another generation of students robbed of their basic rights to protest and to dissent on campus.

Shibley, a civil liberties attorney, is senior vice president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. Charles Krauthammer’s column did not make today’s print edition because of the early holiday deadlines. It will return next week.