The University of Missouri College of Education this week announced three new online programs, including a graduate certificate in positive psychology and master’s degrees in English education and mathematics education.

Daniel Clay, dean of the College of Education, said the college’s goal is “to offer curricula in unique and meaningful ways that improve teaching and leadership.”

The graduate certificate for positive psychology is a 15-credit hour program focusing on the science of well-being. The certificate is geared toward people in “helping” professions, according to a news release, as well as business and government leaders and “transitioning adults.”

Applicants should submit materials as soon as possible as classes begin Aug. 25. The GRE is not required.

People interested in the master’s degree programs can apply by Oct. 1. Classes in these programs begin in January, and the GRE is required for admission.
Gov. Nixon calls for inquiry into UMKC business school rankings

BY MARÂ ROSE WILLIAMS
THE KANSAS CITY STAR
07/31/2014 2:14 PM

NO MU MENTION

Gov. Jay Nixon has asked the University of Missouri Board of Curators to review rankings attained by the business school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

During a meeting of the Kansas City Star Editorial Board on Thursday, the governor announced that he had written a letter requesting that an independent review of the rankings “be undertaken promptly and that the results of this study be made public along with any recommendations for policies.”

The letter to Don Downing, chairman of the board of curators, followed an investigation by The Kansas City Star showing a trail of exaggerations and misstatements by the Henry W. Bloch School of Management that raised questions among university faculty and students about the validity of the rankings.

UMKC responded Thursday with a statement that it welcomed a review, and that it was confident of the validity of the rankings.

The board of curators has scheduled a closed session for Friday, and a source with knowledge of the meeting said it would address the UMKC rankings issue.

Nixon’s letter was referring to two rankings: One from a 2011 Journal of Product Innovation Management (JPIM) study that placed UMKC’s business school first in the
world in innovation management research, and the top-25 rankings that year and others in Princeton Review for the business school’s Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The Star’s findings were published Sunday.

“When I picked up the paper Sunday morning it was the first time I knew that anybody was even looking at that stuff,” Nixon said Thursday morning. “So that's the first time I had any knowledge of it. So we kind of looked at it ourselves.”

In his letter, also sent to University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and UMKC Chancellor Leo Morton, Nixon said that newspaper article raised “serious questions about the integrity of the scholarship and strategies that have been employed to raise the profile of the institution.”

The letter went on:

“The issues raised by the Star's investigations are troubling because they go to the fundamental matter of the university's integrity...

“It is essential that UMKC, and the entire University of Missouri System, establish that the claims and reputation of its academic programs are founded on trustworthy, accurate information in which we all can have confidence.”

In Sunday’s story UMKC denied that it had engaged in a pattern of exaggerations or took any short cuts in order to win national and global rankings.

A spokesman for the University of Missouri system said Wolfe would have no comment Thursday.

A statement from Downing said, “Whenever there are claims made against any of our university campuses or our people, it is our responsibility to evaluate all the facts and look at the entire situation before determining our course of action. That is what we are in the process of doing.”
In UMKC’s statement Thursday, a spokesman said that the public deserves to know that claims about academic programs are founded on accurate information, and that the situation now calls for a thorough review.

The statement took issue with The Star’s report.

“We have not violated the public trust; we say this with confidence, based on multiple reviews of these issues conducted in academic circles long before the Kansas City Star became involved — reviews that found these criticisms to be without merit,” according to the statement.

“The newspaper chose to ignore the extensive evidence we have provided to them of both the previous investigations into these charges, and of the many highly regarded world-class programs at the Bloch School.”

The Star's article, however, did summarize an investigation by the publisher of the JPIM material. The Star noted that the journal had conducted a peer review of the study after questions arose about its methodology and a potential conflict of interest between its authors and the university.

The three unnamed members of that review board said they were untroubled by the relationships between the study's authors and officials at UMKC. Members of that panel agreed they would have published the paper themselves, although they said it could have been improved and that all rankings papers include some subjectivity.

It was that subjectivity, however, and the undisclosed relationship between the authors and UMKC that raised red flags for three independent experts who analyzed the study at The Star's request. The Star’s investigation also found exaggerations and distorted data in the university’s application for Princeton Review rankings.

The Star’s story followed months of reporting that included interviews with dozens of people inside and outside UMKC and reviews of thousands of pages of internal UMKC documents obtained through an open-records request.
It addresses the Bloch School’s struggle to be included among the top-ranked business schools in the nation and how that changed in 2011 after it received top rankings and a long-sought after $32 million gift from Henry Bloch to build a state-of-the-art facility for the school.

The Star found that Professor Michael Song, who was hired to lead UMKC’s Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, or IEI, and then-dean Teng-Kee Tan, as key in the university’s efforts to gain national recognition.

At the time the JPIM paper was written, the two authors were working on the UMKC campus as visiting scholars at the Bloch School and shared an office number with Song, who they named No. 1 researcher in the world in their paper. The scholars’ yearlong visit from China was at the invitation of Song and Tan.

The Star’s experts who analyzed the JPIM study said it appeared the study’s methodology may have been structured in such a way to ensure that the Bloch School and Song received the top rankings.

UMKC and JPIM officials said, however, that the relationships with the authors do not negate the study’s findings.

Song dismissed as “nonsense” any allegations that the JPIM paper was rigged to deliver the number-one rankings. The study’s authors did not respond for comment.

In the Princeton Review rankings, The Star found several questions about the university’s use of data it submitted. For example, UMKC claimed 100 percent of graduate entrepreneurship students had launched businesses, but that the school only counted students in a one-year certificate program and starting a business was a requirement for them to complete the program.

UMKC denied that it exaggerated or took shortcuts to win the Princeton Review rankings.

*Staff writers Mike Hendricks and Dave Helling contributed to this report.*
Editorial: Senate crafts a serious effort to address campus sex assaults

It’s probably too much to hope that the nation’s college and university campuses can ever be completely free of sexual assault. But it’s not too much to think there will be added protection for women and more accountability, stiffer penalties and new standards for the institutions.


Good for the senators, college administrators and law enforcement officials who have rallied around an issue that for too long, too many people have pretended doesn’t exist.

Just because a college woman wears a short skirt or a low-cut blouse and is drunk, drugged or flirtatious doesn’t mean she is fair game. Men must be educated to understand that. Not all education on campus must take place in a classroom or laboratory.

The legislation makes it clear there will be no excuses for preying on women. It aims to change the “boys will be boys” mentality that has long existed in closed cultures such as colleges and the military—which Ms. McCaskill went after earlier this year.

In preparing the legislation, Ms. McCaskill held a series of roundtable discussions and surveyed 236 schools about how they handle rapes and sexual assaults. She and her co-sponsors got resistance from some colleges, from the American Council on Education, which represents more than 1,700 college and university presidents and from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni.

Resistance centered around complaints that some schools have limited resources to focus on topics other than education, that some colleges and universities already are working hard to address the serious and complex societal issue and that the rights of the accused were being ignored.

Those complaints are bogus. No one is calling for a presumption of guilt, only that victims’ rights are equal to those of the accused. And any college or university administrator who doesn’t think that keeping students safe is part of his job should find another line of work.

A more valid criticism was offered by Terry Hartle, a senior vice president for the American Council on Education. Mr. Hartle told the Post-Dispatch’s Chuck Raasch that the bill shouldn’t
give the U.S. Department of Education responsibility for clarifying discrepancies in crime-related definitions and reporting. That should be the Justice Department’s job, he said.

That change can be made, if necessary, as the bill makes it way through Congress. Which should happen quickly.

**Ms. McCaskill praised Tim Wolfe, president of the University of Missouri system, for being a strong supporter of the legislation and “somebody who has demonstrated — almost by constant contact with my office — that he’s really focused on this issue.”**

Specifically, the legislation imposes hefty fines — up to 1 percent of an institution’s operating budget — for schools that don’t comply. Complete withdrawal of federal aid is the only financial penalty available under current law, Ms. McCaskill said, adding that it’s an ineffective deterrent because “everyone knows that is not going to happen.”

Along with establishing realistic fines, the measure takes enforcement of cases involving student athletes away from athletic departments. No more special treatment because someone brings in a lot of money for the university.

**The bill also** would require schools to make public the results of anonymous surveys about campus assaults, designate new resources and support services for assault survivors, establish minimum training standards for on-campus personnel and increase campus accountability and coordination with law enforcement.

Ms. McCaskill said she would have liked stronger language in the bill to codify the standard of proof for sexual assault, but that in the interest of compromise she backed off that provision. She also said about 80 percent of the schools surveyed already are meeting that standard of proof.

This is good legislation designed to counter a huge problem, best illustrated by a finding from a White House task force that one in five women is sexually assaulted while in college.

The bill has no chance of becoming law before the next school year begins, with Congress going into recess next month. But once lawmakers are back, this issue should be pushed to the top of the legislative calendar.
It's the Faculty's Job, Too

August 1, 2014

By Patricia Okker

Between a presidential proposal rating colleges based in part on what graduates earn, studies linking specific majors to earning potential, and seemingly endless reports analyzing the return on investment of higher education, never have the economic implications of a college education been more important.

Faculty members in the liberal arts are, not surprisingly, resistant to the notion that an education can be reduced to a starting salary. Education, we insist, should prepare one for life — for work, for play, for relationships, for responsible citizenry. And when our students do ask questions about their job prospects, we are encouraging, if not precise. We remind students vaguely that critical thinking skills are highly sought-after by employers and then we refer students to our campus’s career centers to work with trained career professionals, whom we largely do not know.

Is this enough?

For years I thought it was enough, but with tuition and student debt loads continuing to rise and a public that seems increasingly impatient with the liberal arts, I’m no longer so inclined.

For the last ten years or so, I’ve been piecing together, often clumsily, a different answer with and for my students that has developed into a three-credit course on career exploration. Based on the premise that students can apply the writing and research skills they’ve developed in the liberal arts to launch their job searches, this course defends the choice of a liberal arts major, while at the same time confronting the challenging job market these students face.

It is an approach that has required me to become much more involved in my students’ job searches. It is not enough, I now realize, to refer students to career centers or to write glowing reference letters. It is not enough offer platitudes about problem-solving skills.

The course almost always begins by having students identify as precisely as possible the skills they have developed in their majors. When talking with English majors, for example, students almost always start with obvious skills such as research, writing, and critical thinking. But
quickly they start unpacking these general categories, and we talk about using databases efficiently, the difficulties of synthesis, and the unappreciated skill of paraphrase.

We talk about interpretation, understanding historical context, writing for particular audiences, and explaining complex theoretical perspectives. Someone inevitably acknowledges that he has learned to discuss difficult subjects like racism and sexism. Someone else confesses that she used to be “bad” at peer review, but now knows how to give -- and receive -- constructive criticism. Someone else talks about developing an aesthetic sense, of appreciating a line of poetry for its sheer beauty.

The different directions this conversation can take have been instructive. The English majors almost always say something about how they have learned to disagree with others, without insisting that one person’s interpretation is right, another wrong, and they appreciate their ability to do so without resorting to the shouting matches they see on cable television.

But students in other disciplines, I’ve learned, are not so quick to claim the English major’s love of ambiguity. During one discussion, two political science majors bristled at the notion that there are no right answers. We, the political scientists proudly declared, learn to win debates. We learn to find the weaknesses in other people’s arguments, and we learn to defend our own positions. Not a bad skill, we all realized, for future policy makers, many of whom will work in a political context in which there are, unquestionably, winners and losers.

I always end this class activity the same way: by asking students to erase those skills we’ve written on the board that are not transferable to a professional setting. There is almost always a long pause, but someone inevitably offers up something: “Peer review. No one here is ever going to get a job peer reviewing poems.”

Before I even have a chance to use the eraser in my hand, however, someone else chimes in with some version of this story: “I’m probably not going to peer review a poem again, but I will have to give constructive criticism. I had a boss once who didn’t know how to give feedback, and it was awful. I know I can give criticism better than he did.”

In all the times I’ve done this exercise, we’ve never erased a single thing.

This activity is no magic bullet. Students still need to identify skills specific to their individual experiences and affinities, and they need lots of practice articulating these strengths to potential employers. But it can be start, a way of helping students link their majors with career options. Because it challenges students’ own perceptions of themselves as having chosen a “useless” major, it also serves as a particularly helpful launch to an entire course devoted to preparing for a job search.

But it is a path that works only if we, the faculty in the disciplines, willingly assume a role in career counseling. As fabulous as the career professionals I’ve worked with over the years are — and they are incredibly knowledgeable and talented — they cannot nor should be solely responsible for helping students recognize the discipline-specific skills they have developed.
Rather than refer students to career professionals, we need to partner with these counselors, in our classrooms and in their career centers. Only if we work collaboratively can we give our students in the liberal arts the career guidance they need and deserve.

Bio

*Patricia Okker is professor of English and interim deputy provost at the University of Missouri at Columbia.*

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**In VA reform bill, Congress provides student vets with in-state tuition**

Submitted by Michael Stratford on August 1, 2014 - 3:00am

**NO MU MENTION**

WASHINGTON -- In passing a compromise piece of legislation [1] aimed at reforming the Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Senate on Thursday also approved a new benefit for student veterans and their families.

The proposal, passed on a 91-3 vote, would require public universities that want to continue receiving GI Bill benefits to offer recent veterans in-state tuition. Veterans' spouses and dependents would also be eligible for the benefit.

The legislation, which was a compromise between House and Senate bills, cleared the House on Wednesday on a 420-5 vote [2]. The in-state tuition provision is only one part of broader legislation that is aimed at reforming veterans' access to health care in the wake of the Veterans Affairs scandal that erupted earlier this year, when it was reported that veterans died while waiting for medical appointments at VA facilities.

Veterans' groups had pushed for the inclusion of the in-state tuition provision, which they said was needed to protect veterans who are "stateless" for the
purposes of in-state tuition. Veterans returning from military service often have difficulty meeting the residency requirements that would qualify them to pay in-state tuition.

Some 30 states or university systems have already changed their laws or policies to recognize returning veterans as in-state students for tuition purposes. The new legislation will likely require additional states to change their laws or policies.

Public universities, however, had cautioned that the provision approved Thursday would effectively reduce federal funding to their institutions, which have already faced steep budget cuts in recent years. That’s because institutions would essentially have to pick up more of the tab for veterans’ education without any matching federal money, which they currently receive under the Post-9/11 GI Bill Yellow Ribbon Program when charging out-of-state tuition to veterans.

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities told Congressional leaders last month that if they were to move ahead with an in-state tuition provision, they should, at a minimum, limit the benefit to veterans and not their spouses and dependents. That policy would mirror a separate bill the House passed last year.

The new measure approved by Congress would require public universities to provide in-state tuition to veterans and their spouse and children within three years of the veteran’s discharge from active-duty. Universities that don't offer the benefit would not be allowed to continue to accept Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

The in-state tuition provision was included in the original Senate-passed bill but not the House legislation. A committee of negotiators from both chambers ultimately included the measure in the final compromise bill.

The measure now heads to President Obama’s desk for his signature.
The college presidents, provosts, and other senior administrators who gathered here on Thursday to talk about work-life balance on their campuses agreed: Higher education has made remarkable progress in making it easier for employees to work and manage their family responsibilities. But it also has a long way to go.

"Other sectors took on this issue ahead of higher education," said William E. (Brit) Kirwan, chancellor of the University System of Maryland, who was one of about 70 leaders who attended a daylong meeting on the subject, held by the American Council on Education and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

What’s standing in the way of more progress? Often the culture at institutions doesn’t match up with the family-friendly policies on paper.

Sometimes the climate is marred by a department chair who isn’t up on all the details of how to help a professor stop the tenure clock or take a leave to have or adopt a child. Or maybe the chair—who hasn’t always been trained on how various workplace-flexibility policies operate—has a hard time recognizing his or her options for modifying the duties of professors who need to adjust their workload to care for children or elderly parents.

Sometimes senior faculty members hint to their junior colleagues that it’s a bad idea to take a break while seeking tenure. Some longtime professors make sure that junior
faculty members know that they managed back when the help new professors have at their disposal didn’t even exist. So the women—and men—who really need policies to help them balance their work and personal responsibilities tend to decide it’s better to just grin and bear it. Those who don’t sometimes suffer the consequences. "It’s not just the department chairs—the whole faculty climate has to change," Steven Marcus, director of faculty leadership at the University of Maryland at College Park, said during one of the discussions on Thursday.

‘A Competitive Issue’

Because of the stigma often still attached to those who use work-life policies, an increasing number of faculty members on the job market make it a point to ferret out which institutions are family-friendly in name only, panelists agreed. New professors often rule out places that don’t appear to embrace workplace flexibility in practice.

"There is an expectation that there will be flexibility," Mr. Kirwan said. "It’s become not just a value we should espouse but a competitive issue."

For institutions looking to hire top-notch faculty members, the stakes are high. Colleges that don’t meet the mark will find that attracting and, most important, retaining the next generation of faculty members will be tough, especially when recruiting globally, said Steven G. Poskanzer, president of Carleton College.

"They come to us with different norms" about workplace flexibility, he said.

The face of work-life balance in higher education has, for the most part, been that of a woman grappling with how to mesh her life as a mother with her life as a professor. But meeting attendees expect the changing demographics of the professoriate will soon give administrators a related issue on which to focus. The same faculty members who needed flexibility to have and raise their children now are taking care of elderly parents.
"This is the next issue we need to take on," said Linda P.B. Katehi, chancellor of the University of California at Davis.

**Getting On With the Task**

Thursday’s meeting, dubbed the National Challenge for Higher Education Conference, also featured roundtable discussions on issues that included recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty, meeting the professional needs of midcareer faculty members, and phased retirement. And there were sessions on the legal issues that can crop up from the use of work-life policies and how liberal-arts colleges can provide their faculty members with more career flexibility, among other things.

Some of the attendees came from colleges that have been awarded Sloan Foundation grants for their efforts to foster work-life balance and faculty retirement transitions. The hope is that some of their ideas will catch on.

"People are not ill willed … but there’s a poverty of imagination of what can be done," said Kathleen E. Christensen, a program director at the Sloan Foundation.

Ms. Christensen led a discussion during the meeting with Joan Ferrini-Mundy, assistant director of education and human resources at the National Science Foundation, about trends in work-life balance, particularly among academic scientists. After much spirited discussion, Deneese Jones, provost of Drake University, called for attendees to "create an urgency" about promoting flexibility in the workplace so that the change they had talked about could take place.

"We can’t continue to admire the challenge—we have to move on it," she said. "Let’s get busy."