NO MU MENTION

With the college football season set to officially begin on August 23, many collegiate teams find their rosters in question, with a number of football players accused of sexual assaults against other students.

Two University of Miami linebackers were arrested early last month after reportedly buying alcohol for a 17-year-old girl and sexually assaulting her after she was heavily intoxicated and "physically helpless to resist."

At the University of Texas, two wide receivers have been suspended from the team indefinitely after the two were charged with sexually assaulting a female.

At the University of Oklahoma, linebacker Frank Shannon is still listed as a member of the Sooners football team, despite some protests that he should be suspended based on an allegation that he sexually assaulted a woman after a party early this year. Shannon’s teammate, freshman running back Joe Mixon, however, is not reporting for team activities, following allegations that he punched a female student in the face during an altercation.

In Shannon's case, however, the District Attorney declined to prosecute, citing both a lack of evidence and the refusal of the young woman involved to press charges. Without a conviction or even a criminal charge or arrest, is it really the responsibility of the university to mete punishment for a crime that may not have occurred? Should the university's investigation override a legal presumption of innocence?

Maybe.

Recently, the University of Connecticut agreed to a $1.3 million settlement with four women who filed lawsuits alleging that their rape and sexual harassment complaints were not investigated by the university. More than 50 schools are currently facing similar Title IX lawsuits from victims of sexual violence on campus. However, even in the face of pending litigation across the nation, many universities have still failed to adequately address
allegations of sexual assault.

Take for example the recently scrutinized Air Force Academy investigation of sexual assaults. An investigation regarding the Academy's athletes revealed that female students were given drinks laced with Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol), commonly known as a date rape drug, prior to being sexually assaulted at an off-campus party. In this case, there were no police reports -- the victims did not know what had happened to them. If not for witness reports to the university, the allegations may never have been investigated.

Regardless, the Academy failed to report the sexual assaults for more than two years, when officials were eventually confronted by the press.

Consequently, pending federal legislation attempts to enforce university accountability in reporting campus sexual assaults and in protecting the student body. Often, athletic departments are accused of covering up allegations of sexual assault in order to protect their prized athletes and their money-making teams, according to Senator Claire McCaskill, co-sponsor of a bipartisan bill to combat campus sexual assault. The hope is that this bill would put an end to that perception (or reality).

According to CDC statistics, nearly 20 percent of undergraduate women experienced sexual assault in college. Despite sexual violence against 1 in 5 college women, a survey of colleges and universities found that 40 percent of responding institutions had not conducted a single sexual assault investigation in the last five years. McCaskill called that figure "unbelievable," and said that many universities' policy of allowing athletic departments to internally investigate sexual assault allegations only fosters the protection of student athletes, rather than the protection of the entire student population.

With this in mind, forcing universities across the nation to become even more involved in the realm of sexual assault allegations might not be the best idea.

The Campus Safety and Accountability Act includes provisions to add resources for victims of sexual assault, minimum training standards for campus employees, transparency requirements including the publication of the results of an anonymous student survey about sexual violence, uniform policies for dealing with sexual assault allegations, and coordination with local law enforcement. The Act would also increase fines and penalties for unreported incidents.

Clearly, colleges and universities have a responsibility to report sexual assault. We have seen what happens when officials turn a blind eye to reports of sexual abuse (Penn State, we're looking in your direction). But Anne Neal, the President of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, has a point when she says, "Colleges are simply unable to play judge, jury and
Although university officials should be required to report allegations of sexual assault to law enforcement, there has to be some room to allow the criminal justice system to do its job, unfettered by the pressure from universities which implement the proposals with a heavy-handed approach.

After all, isn't the incompetence of the universities one of the biggest gripes which led to the proposed legislation? Why in the world would we want colleges even more involved in the investigation and aftermath of the allegations if they are already doing such a horrible job? The underlying issue seems to stem from the idea that universities are too biased towards their athletic programs to assess sexual violence allegations in a detached and neutral manner; as such, I think students would be better served if the universities were simply removed from the equation.

Now, don't get me wrong. There needs to be required disclosure if the allegations are made directly to the university, and there should be penalties for failure to disclose the complaints directly to law enforcement. After the initial disclosure however, universities should remove themselves from the situation and allow law enforcement to do its job. With the history of negligence (or perhaps recklessness) on the part of educational institutions, it would be counter-intuitive to push them to be more involved in the arena of sexual assault allegations.

I have no doubt that the provisions of the Campus Safety and Accountability Act that support these aims are on target. Still, expecting educational institutions to serve as pseudo law enforcement jeopardizes both the institution and the rights of its students. If the Act becomes law, where should universities draw the line if and when law enforcement or the prosecution decides that criminal charges are unnecessary?

MU names chairwoman of health psychology department

Administrators from the University of Missouri School of Health Professions announced yesterday that Christina McCrae, director of the Insomnia and Behavioral Sleep Medicine Clinic at the University of Florida, will join MU as professor and chairwoman of the Department of Health Psychology.
McCrae starts Jan. 1, according to a news release.

“Christina will not only lead the department but will bring a translational research program that makes very real contributions to improving the health and quality of life of patients,” Kristofer Hagglund, dean of the School of Health Professions, said in a statement. “Her work will further the University of Missouri’s strategic objective of advancing interdisciplinary research, a key measure of success as an” Association of American Universities “institution.”

McCrae said in a statement that the mixture of clinical and research missions at the school is a great fit for her.

Her accolades include three active National Institutes of Health-funded research projects, and she has authored or co-authored about 70 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, with 20 more currently in submission or preparation.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Traditions Plaza will open by Homecoming

Tuesday, August 12, 2014 | 6:06 p.m. CDT
BY MICHELLE TODD

COLUMBIA — The Mizzou Alumni Association is taking votes for which 19 MU traditions will be etched in granite tiles and installed on the main stage of the new Traditions Plaza. The nominated traditions are common shared experiences or campus icons important from one generation of students to the next.

Construction on the Mel Carnahan Quadrangle, behind Tiger Plaza, is scheduled to be completed by Oct. 24, just in time for Homecoming weekend.

The Traditions Plaza will take up most of the northern portion of the quad, according to previous Missourian reporting. It will be an outdoor amphitheater open for events and outdoor classes and to the general public.

"(The plaza) will be a place to honor the traditions and show our pride," said David Roloff, MU director of marketing and strategic communication said.
Roloff said the voting will continue until noon on Aug. 20 to decide which traditions will be featured. Anyone can vote by going to the alumni association's website, mizzou.com. Nominees include:

- Tiger Walk
- Rubbing Gov. David R. Francis' nose
- Painting the Rock M
- Summer Sendoff
- Stepping on the Engineering shamrock
- Truman the Tiger

More traditions, famous quotes and historical moments will be added to other areas of the plaza, and a time capsule with mementos from MU's 175th anniversary will be buried in the center stage, according to the Mizzou Alumni Association's website. Paving stones can be engraved with names or an inscription. Students and recent graduates can buy 4- by 8-inch bricks, which can fit three lines of text, for $175. Alumni association members can buy the same size for $375, non-members for $425.

An option of 8- by 8-inch bricks, allowing five lines of text, costs $500 for Alumni Association members and $550 for nonmembers, according to the website.

Orders for the first installment of stones are due by midnight Thursday and will be included by the opening. After the first installment of paving stones, additional installments will be made twice a year until no blank tiles remain, Roloff said.

More than 1,000 paving stones have been ordered so far. Roloff said he anticipates that about 1,250 will be ordered for the first installment.

"We're very pleased with the donor response to the pavers," he said.
City proposes commercial trash increase, nixing free black bags

By ANDREW DENNEY

Tuesday, August 12, 2014 at 12:16 pm Comments (25)

To help the city’s Solid Waste utility get on firmer financial footing, City Manager Mike Matthes is proposing a 10 percent increase in collection rates for commercial customers in the upcoming 2015 fiscal year and doing away with the practice of giving free black trash bags to residential customers.

But the commercial rate increase and making residential customers buy their own trash bags — which is estimated to provide the utility more than $710,000 in additional revenue, according to a report to the Columbia City Council — might just be the first of many changes on the horizon for Solid Waste over the next several years as it considers strategies to recover a larger share of its costs.

The 10 percent increase for commercial customers applies to rates for bulk storage collection, front-loading construction dumpsters, roll-off containers and collection rates within the borders of the downtown Community Improvement District. Legislation to increase the rate and do away with the black bags also contains increases for various landfill fees and for curbside pickup of major appliances.

An outside consultant is finishing up the final draft of a cost-of-service study to determine where rates should be increased in future years to help the utility recover more of its costs. Cynthia Mitchell, manager of the Solid Waste utility, said the finished product will likely contain a revamped structure for commercial rates.

For years, Mitchell said, Solid Waste has tried to stay competitive with by forgoing fee increases, but she said rates would need to change to keep the utility solvent.

“As opposed to the greater good for all, people need to pay their way,” Mitchell said.

According to Matthes’ budget, Solid Waste is projected to spend into the red in the current fiscal year — its projected revenue is $17.2 million but expenditures are expected to exceed that amount by
more than $600,000. In the upcoming fiscal year, which starts Oct. 1, Matthes’ proposed budget anticipates $18 million in revenue for the utility but $23 million in expenditures, of which $4.7 million are capital projects.

Of the capital projects, Solid Waste is planning to spend $4 million to relocate its operations housed at the Grissum Building on Business Loop 70 to a new complex at the municipal landfill.

Assuming the city council approves the proposal to do away with the black bags and increases commercial and roll-off collection rates next year, with additional 10 percent bumps each year through fiscal year 2019, the city projects Solid Waste’s savings account will continue to dwindle, falling from an estimated $1.2 million in fiscal year 2015 to about $177,000 by fiscal year 2019.

While Matthes has proposed doing away with the black bags, Solid Waste would continue to mail out vouchers for the blue recycling bags.

Shane Corl, who lives on Concordia Drive in west Columbia and had both black and blue bags out front yesterday afternoon ready for today’s pickup, said he likes the convenience of receiving the free black bags but would not be too sad to see them go.

“They’re a convenience but not like a necessity,” Corl said.

But John Garrison, who lives near Corl on Bourn Avenue, said eliminating the black bags just adds another cost for him and his wife, who are 94 and 89 years old, respectively, and live on a fixed income. “It doesn’t hurt to get a little service,” Garrison said.

Mitchell said the suggested changes to the utility’s rate structure might also include eliminating discounts for premium services it offers large customers such as the University of Missouri. MU is in a five-year refuse collection contract with the city that expires at the end of the current calendar year, and the city and MU are scheduled to meet next month to talk about the terms of the contract.

*Karlan Seville, a spokeswoman for MU Campus Facilities, declined to comment on the city’s proposed increase on commercial rates, saying that the university would not take a position on the issue until after the contract talks. “We have already been told our rates will go up,” Seville said.*

The council took a first reading of the bill to eliminate the black bag vouchers and raise various rates — along with other bills that will make up the city’s fiscal 2015 budget — at its Aug. 4 meeting, but the measure won’t be up for a final vote until the Sept. 15 meeting. The proposed rate increase was on the agenda for today’s 4 p.m. meeting of the CID board of directors.
MU Extension offers online grain marketing game

By ASHLEY JOST
Tuesday, August 12, 2014 at 11:21 am

Learning how to successfully sell their products is crucial for farmers, but experimenting while selling their crops is too risky to try in the real world.

To help Missouri farmers, University of Missouri Extension created an online game called the Show-Me Market Showdown, which allows players to sell virtual crops using real-time market numbers. The goal is to give farmers and other players an even better understanding of when to sell.

“It comes from a need among farmers to utilize grain marketing tools and develop a plan strategy for marketing their grain,” said Whitney Wiegel, agriculture business specialist with MU Extension. “The default strategy for many farmers is to store harvests and try to pick a time throughout the year when prices are the highest. That doesn’t work really well as a risk management strategy.”

This program gives players the chance to experiment in a “controlled environment with zero risk,” Wiegel said.

There are just more than 50 participants in the first round of the game, which ends in mid-September. Players receive virtual crops — 7,000 bushels of soft-red winter wheat, 40,000 bushels of corn and 25,000 bushels of soybeans — to sell in the game, which shows real-time prices.

Players are competing to see who can make the most money, but Wiegel said it’s also about the experience.

“We potentially want to make this annual as long as we can continue to maintain the website, which is a great learning tool,” she said. Another round of the game starts in January and runs through mid-March.
Jesse Schwanke, a corn, soybean and cattle farmer from Shelby County who is taking part in the game, said he decided to participate because it seemed like a good way to learn better practices with “no real skin in the game.”

“As a farmer, marketing is really important,” he said. “You can go to seminars and have a presenter stand up and talk about all of the tools of marketing and how they work, but it’s really hard to take that in until you can put some of that into play. When you make some mistakes in the real world, that can really be expensive. No better way to learn than a simulation like this.”