The Ways to Avoid Feeling Off During Workouts

How to Explain a Slow Day of Exercising? It’s in How You Eat, Drink, Sleep and Think

By RACHEL BACHMAN

One of the mysteries of being physically active is when the same workout feels great one week and lousy the next. Why does a routine 4-mile run or hourlong yoga class suddenly morph into the last leg of an Ironman triathlon?

Bad workouts happen to everyone, from professional athletes to office workers trying to carve out 30 minutes at the gym.

Coaches and academics can identify many factors to explain this mystery. In short, much of what you eat, drink and even think about can affect how you exercise.

Peter Thompson, a longtime track and field coach who has worked with athletic novices and Olympians, says one factor that can slow regular exercisers is inadequate recovery time.

"Training does not make you fitter. It's the recovery and adaptation for training that makes you fitter," says Mr. Thompson, a native Brit who lives in Eugene, Ore. "So you should train to recover, not recover to train."

Mr. Thompson recommends that people rank their energy level each day on a scale from 1 to 10. If they never rank themselves an 8 or 9, they're working out too hard, too often or both, he says.

For most of us, excessive channel-surfing is a bigger problem than overtraining. But we don't always prepare for workouts as predictably as we set our DVRs.

Failing to eat enough, especially before a taxing workout, can leave people feeling heavy-legged, says Stella Lucia Volpe, chair of the department of nutrition sciences at Drexel University in Philadelphia.
The idea is to provide your body with fuel that it can use quickly. The closer you get to exercising, the simpler and more carbohydrate-centric the food should be. Dr. Volpe recommends eating an apple or a small piece of toast with peanut butter, for example.

"Even some coffee before is absolutely fine," she says. For part-time coffee drinkers she cautions to start with a small cup, because it can stimulate the gastrointestinal tract.

Some people can't eat before exercising without getting nauseous. For them, Dr. Volpe advises eating a light snack of yogurt or cereal the night before. If you're trying to lose weight, weigh yourself once a week to make sure your caloric intake isn't overtaking your activity level, Dr. Volpe says.

Alcohol, though it can have health benefits in moderation, can be a stealthy workout disrupter. The American College of Sports Medicine, an organization of 50,000 exercise-science professionals, recommends avoiding alcohol for 48 hours before an athletic competition.

Teetotaling isn't necessary if you're just cycling your usual loop. But the quantity or type of alcohol you drink could help explain why that loop sometimes feels tougher.

"If you normally drink wine but then the night before you have some brandy, your body might react to that," Dr. Volpe says. "Maybe you won't sleep as well."

Alcohol is one of several things that can pull water from the body. Dehydration can make your body less efficient at cooling itself, making exercise feel more labored.

Sleep also can be dehydrating, particularly if sleep with your mouth open, says Chris Winter, a neurologist in Charlottesville, Va., who consults pro athletes on how to manage their slumber. That could explain why a morning workout leaves you feeling especially parched if you usually work out later in the day.

The effects of poor sleep also can linger for as long as 48 hours. A deficit of as little as one or two hours can throw people off, Dr. Winter says.

A bad night's sleep can have ripple effects, such as altering what and when you eat, he says. Sleepy people tend to crave fatty, carb-laden snacks, which can disrupt energy levels and lead to overeating. Even if you're not hungry, Dr. Winter says, "you may find yourself walking by Gladys's desk and helping yourself to her Hershey's Miniatures seven or eight times a day."
Lost sleep and snacking could prompt you to skip a workout. But the best thing to do after poor sleep is return to your regular routine as soon as possible, the doctor advises.

While everyone is a bit different, "I tell people, the best thing you can do for your sleep is to exercise the same time every morning," Dr. Winter says.

One important thing to remember as you labor to hoist the kettlebell you were lifting with ease last weekend is that bad workout days are normal. Emily Rand, a semiprofessional middle-distance runner who works out under Mr. Thompson's guidance, says she has a few workouts every month that feel worse than expected. In most cases, she says, she never figures out why.

"I always say if you're working out five days a week, you're going to have one good day, one bad day and three kind of normal days," says Stephen Ball, an associate professor at the University of Missouri department of nutrition and exercise physiology.

What about those days when you're perfectly hydrated and fed, you've had a good few days of sleep and limited your alcohol intake to a few sips? Why are you still dragging?

Simple monotony can cause a bad training day, Dr. Ball says. Serious weightlifters in particular can spend several hours each week in the same confined area and often do the same routine, he says. That's a recipe for boredom and lackluster performance.

Often there are multiple exercises or machines that can work the same muscle group, Dr. Ball says. Instead of plopping down and doing the same old bench press, try using dumbbells, a chest-press machine—or try changing the angle of the bench, Dr. Ball says.

To stave off sameness, you can also try varying the length of rest periods between sets, he says.

If you're still stumped as to why a workout went badly, think about your life away from exercise. Are you preoccupied with a looming project at work? Are you feuding with a rebellious teenager? Mr. Thompson, the running coach, says he coached one athlete whose workout performance dipped for six months after a broken engagement.
From 2000 to 2010, Mr. Thompson coached the cross-country running club at England's academically intense University of Oxford. Those athletes, like many people, "had this kind of mistaken belief that they could compartmentalize the stress in their lives."

Instead, their personal worries sometimes would encroach on their performance.

"I would encourage them to go to a comedy club once a week," he says.

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**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

**Mará Rose Williams: Feds cut a new tuition break for some veterans**

**BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS**

**THE KANSAS CITY STAR**

**University officials are starting to weigh the effects of a new federal effort to broaden educational opportunities for the 1.5 million veterans who will be discharged in the next few years.**

The provision, which will take effect in July and is part of the $16 billion Veterans Affairs reform package, requires colleges and universities getting federal money through the G.I. Bill to offer in-state tuition to all qualified veterans, including those who have not established residency in the state. The feds will continue to foot the bill.

Currently for out-of-state veterans, the VA pays only a portion of the costs above the in-state rate.

With the new provision, a qualified veteran discharged in California could attend the aviation program at the University of Central Missouri at the in-state rate and save more than $7,000 in tuition and fees. Those benefits are still transferable to a vet’s spouse or dependent.
Out-of-state tuition and fees are often double the in-state cost, or more.

“The whole meaning behind this new law is that veterans fought for the entire United States of America, not just the state they came from,” said Carol Fleisher, director of the MU Veterans Center at the University of Missouri in Columbia. “They should get in-state tuition in every state.”

Most states, with varying conditions, already give veterans in-state tuition. Missouri passed such a law last year. But Kansas lawmakers rejected an in-state tuition measure a year ago, said Andy Tompkins, president and CEO of the Board of Regents.

At the University of Missouri, out-of-state tuition and required fees for a full-time undergraduate are $24,460 this year. For an in-state undergraduate, it’s $9,433. That means a difference of more than $15,000 a year in revenue from one student.

According to the MU Veterans Center, about 680 veterans and dependents are enrolled at MU. Not all use their education benefits, though.

The new law could cost the University of Missouri-Kansas City $245,000 to $325,000 a year in revenue, said Eric Grospitch, dean of students.

On the other hand, it could make UMKC more attractive to out-of-state students. UMKC intends to recruit more veterans to its campus, Grospitch said.

Because tuition for students on the G.I. Bill is paid by Uncle Sam, it’s money schools can count on, Fleisher said. “There’s no chance some family financial crisis might interrupt those payments.”

On top of that, she said, “Veterans are good for the student population. They add a lot of diversity.”

Officers handle a variety of issues on football game days

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, August 31, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (9)

By the time fans packed into Memorial Stadium for the University of Missouri’s first home football game yesterday, they likely encountered at least a few of the more than 100 law enforcement officers and security guards on duty in the parking lots and around the stadium.

Security efforts at football games are led primarily by the MU Police Department, the Boone County Sheriff’s Department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

About 15 people were stationed inside the stadium’s command center, which is on the west side next to the press box. Those people included representatives from the three main agencies, MUPD’s communications staff, the Columbia Fire Department, Public Safety Joint Communications and the MU athletics department. Although there was one representative each from the Columbia Police Department and the FBI, those agencies typically aren’t involved in game-day security efforts. The Columbia Police Department’s game day focus is the off-campus celebrations.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer, who serves as spokesman for the department, said officers on duty monitor video feeds from cameras around the stadium and parking lots and keep track of contacts made by the officers stationed around the area.

During a home game, officers are headed out before 8 a.m. when fans start to arrive to tailgate. Part-time officers monitor many of the surrounding parking lots while others drive or bike around — there are eight bicycle units — to check on patrons while they enjoy their game-day parties. Briefings between agencies start a few hours before game time.

Weimer said “by far” the most common issue encountered by officers is medical emergencies.

“We had over 100, maybe closer to 120, 130, at a game last year,” Weimer said, noting that most are related to dehydration.
Attendees drink alcohol at pre-game parties, and when they feel thirsty they drink more alcohol instead of water, which only makes dehydration worse, Weimer said. Then when they come inside the stadium, the heat often can make them sick, he said, and arguments can erupt when people vomit on their fellow fans.

Minors possessing alcohol is another common issue, Weimer said. The number of such incidents varies, from four or five per game to more than 20.

Finding missing children or adults also is requested on a regular basis, and the cameras are helpful in those instances, Weimer said. Occasionally, officers have to deal with thefts and fights.

“We just hope people understand that we really are here for their safety,” Weimer said. “We aren’t trying to ruin everyone’s parties. We know there are traditions and we encourage those, we just want everyone to be safe.”

Weimer said preliminary estimates are there were 80 medical emergencies and seven arrests yesterday.

Julie Tudor, an attendee at yesterday’s game, said she wouldn’t know about the strong police presence at the game because she’s never needed it, and she considers that a good thing. “I’d feel safe here with or without them,” she said.

The rock wall that was built when the University of Missouri renovated its Student Recreation Complex during the early 2000s is coming down.

Diane Dahlmann, director of recreation services and facilities, held a team meeting for her staff at the recreation complex Sunday to discuss upcoming projects, including one that involves taking down the rock climbing wall and expanding the weightlifting room into that space.
Current and past students who say they formed a sense of community during their time at “the wall” are frustrated about the decision.

A Facebook group called “Save the Mizzou Rec Rock Wall” started Friday morning and by the evening had more than 400 members, many of whom posted their concerns.

Jamie Blankinship, MU senior and a climbing technician at the recreation complex, said she has been climbing all four years of college and it has since become part of her lifestyle, even leading to a summer job out West teaching climbing techniques.

“I was struggling to feel connected to the university when I first got here,” Blankinship said. “I was considering transferring before I found the friends that I made at the wall. That connection was so effortless after that. I’ve worked at the rec since freshman year, and I can see those relationships and that community still growing. I see everyone who comes in and is new be automatically accepted. That’s why I’m fighting for it.”

Dahlmann said from an administrative standpoint, interest in the rock wall has been on a steady decline. When it first opened during 2005, there were between 200 to 250 members. Now, there are about 150, she said. Members pay an annual $39 user fee for access to the wall because it is a supervised space.

The rock climbing space is open about 20 hours per week, she said, and there are about 50 “regular” members. Dahlmann said she can’t recall whether there has been a cut to the open hours of the space throughout the years.

Meanwhile, the “pump room,” or the adjacent space that houses free weights, is “significantly overcrowded,” Dahlmann said.

“We are still in the design phase and talking estimates,” she said, adding that the renovation costs have not been determined. “For this project, if we continue working this fall, if it’s approved, I would imagine we could move forward over the holiday, winter break.”

Dahlmann reports to the vice chancellor for student affairs, Cathy Scroggs. Money for capital projects are approved by Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s office.

Dahlmann said last year, rock wall staff organized an effort to bring in more climbers and create programming but were unable to attract more people.

“The coordinator was frustrated because people who are regulars aren’t interested in programming,” she said. “We wanted to make all efforts before we take it offline. It’s disappointing, but sometimes activities are not going to draw a crowd.”

Dan Hooley, recently retired professor at MU who served as the faculty advisor for the MU Climbing Club for almost a decade, called it “disingenuous” to say there has been a decline in participation in the rock wall.
“Management never had a functional system to calculate the actual number of uses,” Hooley said. “The check-in policies were never consistent. I have seen years when you couldn’t find a rope because it was so busy. There were other times when it’s been less so. It comes and it goes.”

Hooley said the wall is a resource for students who want to be active but don’t fit into large group activities like basketball or who don’t enjoy the weight rooms.

“I said on the Facebook page that I can’t think of a facility at the rec that so changes lives as much as the climbing wall does,” he said. “It really does engender a life-long pursuit of an activity that creates friendships that last years and years. That’s unique.”

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Artists moved by Michael Brown death gather in Peace Park

Monday, September 1, 2014 | 9:46 p.m. CDT; updated 6:31 a.m. CDT, Tuesday, September 2, 2014

COLUMBIA — **Artists for Justice showcased musicians, writers and visual artists responding to police violence in its inaugural event Monday in Peace Park.**

Monica Hand, a local poet, brought local artists together with MU English graduate students in the wake of Michael Brown’s fatal shooting by police in Ferguson. Musicians and poets performed on a stage while people painted, wrote and danced with hula hoops in the crowd. Organizers also set up tents for attendees to create group murals.

Opening act Jemerson Creek, a down-tempo electric rock outfit, compared today’s political unrest to that of the early 1960s, noting the impact of positive music in that climate.

"We were going to do only sad songs or only angry songs," frontman Grant Withers said, "But we decided that what the world needs is happy songs."

Other artists also tried to draw on the historical context of Brown’s death. Blues performer T.J. Wheeler began his performance by saying, "History has a funny way of sliding and repeating itself, and we are in the era of the new Jim Crow."

Artists for Justice spokesman Kenneth Bryant, sitting in the shade of a voter registration booth, emphasized that the group sees art as a tool of social change.
"Politics have a place, and rallies have a place, but art has a place, as well," Bryant said. "That's why we're here."

Bryant said Artists for Justice is focused on treating the underlying causes of violence and civil conflict, which he said are based in fear.

Columbia hip-hop artist NicDanger performed a song about feeling alienated as a black man in the Midwest. He said the song was written before Brown's shooting, but the events in Ferguson have justified his viewpoint.

"It's just adding to it," he said. "It's crazy to see that happen and to know I wasn't wrong in how I was feeling."

Treasure Redmond, one of Artists for Justice's first performers, recently spent time in Ferguson. The St. Louis-based poet said the work she read Monday was inspired by Fannie Lou Hamer, a '50s and '60s civil rights activist, and Trayvon Martin, who was killed in a 2012 shooting in Florida.

Bryant said Peace Park was the obvious choice of venue because of its symbolism.

"We don't want to be against; we want to be for," he said. "We want to be for peace, for justice, and for civil rights."

College Presidents Must Lead on Sexual Assault

Posted: 09/01/2014 11:16 am EDT Updated: 09/01/2014 1:59 pm EDT

By Patricia McGuire
President, Trinity Washington University

NO MU MENTION

College presidents, usually a verbose bunch, have been remarkably silent in the media on the topic of campus sexual assault and remedies for this plague. Why the silence? Nobody
wants to be on the wrong side of this issue; every single president I know agrees that sexual assault is appalling and we must do all in our power to stop it. But with the intense media glare on horrific cases and thunderous righteous pounding on universities by legislators and regulators, we are also concerned that any appearance of disagreement on tactics will be construed as coddling criminals.

Into this breach now comes Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, President Emeritus of George Washington University and University Professor of Public Service at that esteemed institution. For better or worse, Trachtenberg shattered the silence recently by saying on NPR's *The Diane Rehm Show* in response to the host’s question about sexual misconduct and fraternities:

"Without making the victims responsible for what happens, one of the groups that have to be trained not to drink in excess are women. They need to be in a position to punch the guys in the nose if they misbehave. And so part of the problem is you have men who take advantage of women who drink too much and there are women who drink too much. And we need to educate our daughters and our children in that regard."

Well, thank you, President Emeritus Trachtenberg, for breaking the silence! In the social media frenzy that has ensued, the controversy generally aligns according to those who take the "appalling trogodyte" view of what he said, and the "yo, bro, you rock!" school of thought --- extremes that illustrate the polarization of the issues without adding any useful ideas to solving the problem.

Trachtenberg’s comments are simply wrong in three ways: blaming women for the sexual assault problem; failing to hold perpetrators accountable for crimes; and reinforcing the perception that college presidents are obtuse, irresponsible and out of touch. Singling out women as those who have to solve the problem of their own sexual abuse utterly ignores the central role of the perpetrator, who is usually male, and blames women who drink to excess for their own degradation. This point of view lets the rapists off the hook, excuses away their criminal behavior as some kind of understandable response to a woman's inebriation.

Sure, alcohol is a serious problem on many campuses and is a contributing factor in too many sexual assaults. Trachtenberg could have saved himself a world of hurt by saying that both women and men in college should be responsible about drinking. But by singling out women for his paternalistic advice, he perpetuates the pernicious belief --- held fast in some quarters, still after all these years --- that women deserve what they get. Surely, Trachtenberg did not mean that at all --- and he clarified his comments in subsequent statements just to be clear --- but anyone who has been in a position of collegiate responsibility today must know that sexual assault is a tinderbox requiring great care in the
choice of language.

Trachtenberg’s paternalistic view summons quaint images of women as delicate maidens reading poetry in their rooms while the men wave tankards as they raucously bellow “Gaudeamus Igitur” in their manly fortresses. His comments take us back to the 19th century screeds against the whole idea of women going to college lest these delicate creatures suffer mental and physical collapse under the weight of the collegiate curriculum and culture.

Haven't we fought for several centuries to overcome such disempowering stereotypes about the inherent fragility of women in college?

Of course college women should not drink to excess, any more than college men should and both men and women in college should do their homework every night, never cheat, show up on time for class, and turn off their cellphones without rolling their eyes when asked to do so. But failing to observe these rules is not license for a criminal to commit the worst possible act short of murder against another human being.

College students do get drunk, and the only appropriate response is to get them help --- friends, bystanders and college staff must be ready to intervene and help the student in distress. In the same way, friends, bystanders and staff must be ready to intervene to prevent sexual assault from occurring, standing up to the potential perpetrators, separating them from the situation, calling the police immediately if warranted.

Trachtenberg’s additional piece of advice to college women --- that they should stay sober so they can "punch the guys in the nose" sounds like a Popeye cartoon. That comment is woefully ignorant of the sheer physical terror of women crushed in the embrace of larger, stronger men. No woman should have to pack brass knuckles along with her laptop when she sets off for college.

This leads to the larger problem with Trachtenberg’s comments: what about the men? Why aren’t we focusing more intensively on the perpetrators of these crimes, most of whom are men? Who is identifying the pathologies that cause young men to assault and rape college women in startling numbers? Where is the paternalistic advice for them? Why aren’t their names in lights? Why don’t we demand to know the names of the parents of these criminals, their pastors, their coaches, their high school teachers and principals? The men who commit these crimes in college did not just suddenly become heinous actors when they moved into the dorm. Somewhere along the line, the moral education of some young men has failed, failed utterly. No regulatory scheme imposed on colleges and universities can undo the damage of failed parenting.
In an ironic parallel to Trachtenberg’s sentiments, the federal regulatory scheme also tends to fix blame in the wrong place, impose paternalistic solutions, and assume that college leaders are amoral buffoons. Most of the massive and complex legislative and regulatory scheme designed to address campus sexual assault fails to hold the perpetrators of these crimes accountable while imposing extraordinary liabilities on colleges and universities to create procedures and services that largely deal with the aftermath of crimes.

Surveys, training and education, sophisticated counseling and adjudication programs are all useful, but the actual relationship between these measures and truly stopping the crime of campus rape is unclear at best. We now have Title IX, the Clery Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and soon, Senator Claire McCaskill's Campus Accountability and Safety Act. All are well-intended. All create a labyrinth of rules and procedures that seek to help victims, to improve investigations and adjudications, to educate and train faculty and staff to the signs of sexual assault among students. But the rules are complicated, fraught with legal conflicts, and expensive to implement --- and with little evidence that they will actually stop rapists.

These governmentally-imposed tactics purposefully restore "in loco parentis," a concept we railed against with gusto in the '60's and '70's as being unworthy of college students who are all legal adults. College boards agreed and removed most of the restrictive rules; now to our sorrow as the government imposes harsh obligations on institutions, perhaps made necessary in part because we have so few rules left to govern student behavior. But the majority of all undergraduates today are non-traditional students, working and raising families while going to school, often attending part-time, most not residing on campus, most not participating in the bacchanalian rites of football and frats. Most of the legislative and regulatory mandates about sexual assault assume the most traditional ideas about college students and campus life, in large part because the most notorious cases all have arisen on very traditional campuses. All institutions must comply with all aspects of the regulatory plan even if the rules are inappropriate for the student body.

As president of one of the nation's historic Catholic women's colleges, I certainly applaud protections for women and take great pains to be sure that my students --- most of whom are non-traditional --- have a safe, healthy and empowering environment. I fully subscribe to all reasonable efforts to combat campus sexual assault; the current national discussion is necessary and fruitful to help universities get a grip on these issues.

However, I reject the idea that a reasonable critique of the web of laws and regulations governing campus sexual assault is a repudiation of accountability. In fact, questioning whether government mandates can actually solve the problem, or whether other and more effective solutions might be found in private action, is part of my responsibility as a college president.
I am wary of laws and regulations that have the potential to strip women of their own power by treating them like children who need the awesome intervention of the federal and state governments to help them to negotiate life’s relationships. Consent is certainly a very difficult issue, but women cannot be truly empowered if institutions and the government do all of their thinking for them. While ensuring rapid and effective responses that uphold the rights of victims, we also must be sure that our solutions do not further disempower women.

I have a hard time understanding how a federally mandated annual campus climate survey with very onerous penalties for failing to administer it properly, an idea in Senator McCaskill’s proposal, will stop men intent on committing rape. Sure, we may be interested in the data, and the data may help to create some educational programs, but data is not the same as addressing the causes of rape in the uncontrolled, entitled behavior of the perpetrators.

I am equally wary of legislative and regulatory proposals that impose new unfunded mandates on colleges and universities for conducting forensic investigations and trial-like proceedings that we have no core competence to conduct when, in fact, we already have a law enforcement system that is supposed to arrest and prosecute criminals. Rather than trying to force colleges to build an investigatory and adjudication system for sexual offenses that runs parallel to the existing law enforcement system, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education should insist that colleges call the police and turn the case over to authorities whenever a sexual offense occurs on campus.

We would do that if we found a body in a room; why does the body have to be dead before we call the police? We do not expect campus disciplinary processes to manage other criminal cases; all are turned over to law enforcement. We should handle sexual assault cases exactly the same way.

We try to control our costs and keep our tuition price under control, but each new piece of legislation and regulation adds expectations for staffing, training, educational programs and even software --- to say nothing of potential fines, like the 1% of the college budget fine proposed in Senator McCaskill’s bill. Someone has to pay for all of this, and it’s quite likely that colleges will simply have to pass the costs along to students in tuition prices, surely an unintended consequence of good faith efforts to protect students. At Trinity in Washington, our campus security budget is four times the size of our library budget; each new regulatory requirement adds to that imbalance.

We presidents must hold each other accountable for the current mess. All of this has come about because some colleges and universities have failed in their obligations to protect students from harm, and these cases have become a national scandal blighting all of higher education. Colleges and universities should have zero tolerance for sexual misconduct. Shame on those who have waffled. Our policies and procedures should be swift and certain
for these cases. Due process does not have to mean undue delays in getting perpetrators off campus and into jail.

College presidents need to exert far more leadership on these issues. More presidents of major universities should take on the problem directly and in public in the ways that Dartmouth President Phil Hanlon did in April. In calling for radical change in the culture of Greek Life, sports teams and other campus activities, he said:
"We can no longer allow this College to be held back by the few who wrongly hide harmful behaviors behind the illusion of youthful exuberance. Routinized excessive drinking, sexual misconduct, and blatant disregard of social norms have no place at Dartmouth. Enough is enough."

More college and university presidents need to read this kind of riot act to their campuses -- and then put teeth into the speech by taking swift and certain action to stop campus sexual assault before more crimes occur. Perps need to be on notice that they will be separated immediately from the campus, arrested and prosecuted, not protected. Due process should not be a shelter preventing action where the facts demand action.

Ultimately, ending campus sexual assault and creating a healthy, life-giving climate on campus for learning and intellectual growth is our responsibility as presidents. We should have zero tolerance for sexual crimes on campus. And we should have zero tolerance for presidential colleagues who fail to exhibit strong and effective leadership to put an end, once and for all, to the shame and suffering of campus sexual assault.

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Sam Brownback is paying a political price for bold leadership

BY BRAD COOPER

THE KANSAS CITY STAR

08/31/2014 7:19 PM

Sam Brownback always knew his time as Kansas governor would be short.

So he promised to govern to the fullest.
“We have been placed here for a reason and a short season,” Brownback said at his 2011 inauguration. “Let us make the most of it.”

And that he has — at a political price that could cost him a second term.

For four years, Brownback has governed fearlessly while steamrolling his political opposition along the way.

But with each policy victory he scored, the number of vanquished opponents piled up. Eventually, the governor risked building a critical mass of opposition that could lead to his undoing.

“You step on enough toes, and more and more people are going to drop out of your coalition,” said Ohio State political science professor John Mueller.

Brownback has slashed income taxes, cut thousands off welfare, curbed abortion rights, tried gaining control of judicial appointments and made a failed attempt to cut arts funding.

When the moderate wing of his party stood in the way, Brownback successfully campaigned for conservatives more in step with his political philosophy so he could exert a tighter grip on the statehouse.

While Brownback held sway during his first term, he has angered various factions across the state and even prompted protests at the Capitol.

Teachers angry over losing some job protections. Lawyers upset over attempts to change the way judges are selected. Worried families who opposed efforts to move the developmentally disabled into managed care.

Much done

Brownback’s agenda was bound to offend some voters, especially since his signature income tax cuts have been blamed for bleeding the state treasury.
“He’s been able to pretty much get what he wants,” said University of Missouri political scientist Peverill Squire. “At some point you own those policies, and if they don’t work out as you advertised, then there’s bound to be some voter backlash.”

Now, Brownback finds himself in an unexpected slugfest with lawmaker Paul Davis, the House minority leader from Lawrence and the Democratic nominee for governor.

Most of the electorate doesn’t know much about Davis yet. But voters appear to be leaning against Brownback, especially after the state’s credit rating was downgraded partly because of income tax cuts he signed into law.

The state missed its revenue estimates by more than $300 million for the fiscal year ending on June 30, fueling criticism that the tax cuts will eventually put vital state services on the chopping block.

“Being a bold leader will come back to bite you if the bold things you do are things that voters don’t like,” said Tom Jensen, director at Public Policy Polling, which has been surveying Kansas voters.

Polls have shown Brownback losing the tax debate. An August survey by Rasmussen Reports showed that likely voters trusted Davis more with taxes than Brownback. Almost half the people polled in a separate survey in February didn’t believe the governor’s tax plan was working.

Overall, Brownback has been trailing in most polls, sometimes by as much as 10 percentage points. The governor’s private polling, in contrast, shows a dead heat.

Brownback is mounting a vigorous campaign defending his tax cuts, emphasizing job creation over falling state revenues.

The governor acknowledged that he’s running into headwinds because he has pushed for so many changes.

“It makes re-elections more difficult because you are trying to get things done to move in a new direction,” Brownback said.
The governor said he needed to make big moves to get the state growing in the aftermath of the recession.

“If you’re not growing,” he said, “we have a large problem.”

He says voters ultimately will line up behind him when they’ve compared him with Davis, someone the governor says represents higher taxes and bigger government.

**Money worries**

But some voters who supported the governor in 2010 think his tax policy is going to end up hurting the state in the long term.

Republican Clarence Roeder of Leawood is among those wavering in his support for Brownback, partly because of the tax changes.

“He is well-intentioned and I think he is a good man, but I think he has the wrong formula for Kansas,” Roeder said. “I’m afraid we are headed to some really difficult times with money.”

The governor’s political problems are not limited to tax policy.

He created a furor in 2011 when he cut $700,000 for the arts, a decision that later cost the state more than $1 million in funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Mid-America Arts Alliance.

Brownback eventually restored the state money, and matching grants later followed. But as little a sum as it was in the context of the state budget, the issue was emotionally charged. Critics accused the governor of not understanding how the arts play a role in the economic development of the state. The governor’s decision still stings today.

Julie Britton of Atwood, Kan., is a Republican who voted for Brownback in 2010 but won’t this year. She is a former board member of an arts group that lost about $9,000 when Brownback cut arts funding.
Britton supported Brownback because she thought he would help stabilize the state economy amid the Great Recession. The governor went too far, she said.

“I was looking for someone who had some creative ways for restructuring things instead of just completely killing entities and completely turning things upside down,” she said.

Republican Effie Bradley should be the kind of slam-dunk vote that Brownback could count on this year. The Lake Quivira resident attends church every Sunday and is a fan of conservative radio personality Rush Limbaugh.

Yet she is angry about the Brownback administration’s decision to move Medicaid services for the developmentally disabled into a managed-care program run by private insurers.

With a sister who has Down syndrome, Bradley was among the hundreds who rallied at the Capitol last year to protest the administration’s decision to move the developmentally disabled into managed care, known as KanCare.

She and many others argued that private insurers wouldn’t understand the special living needs of the developmentally disabled. She thought the Brownback administration ignored her pleas.

“Why fix something that’s not totally and completely broken,” she said, “when you’ve got lots of other things in the state that are totally and completely broken?”

Bradley won’t go rogue and vote Democrat. But she may not cast a ballot for a governor whom she agrees with on many issues, including tax cuts.

“He certainly succeeded in alienating me, and I’m his natural constituent,” Bradley said. “I feel like the Democrats who are disillusioned in Obama.”

A record to judge

Much of the pushback against Brownback is a natural evolution of trying to change government, said state Rep. Scott Schwab, an Olathe Republican.
Brownback, he said, has shaken up the Kansas power structure and that has met blowback from established political leaders with a different approach to governing. In the end, he said, Brownback wins.

“When you make changes and shake up an organization, people are going to be offended because they have to do things differently,” Schwab said.

“He’s not going to lose this election because of what he’s done. He’s going to win the election because of what he’s done.”

Experts say political leaders can govern ambitiously and still get re-elected, pointing to Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal policies to resurrect the country from the depth of the Great Depression. Roosevelt was re-elected three times.

“He did a lot of stuff,” Mueller said, “and that probably helped him considerably because he seemed to be doing something.”

In that sense, Brownback may still have room for building back the coalition he needs to win a second term, experts said.

But Squire, the political scientist, cautions that Brownback may face what he called a “coalition of the minorities” where enough angry voters from separate constituencies form a mass that could threaten his re-election prospects.

“Each of these grievances builds, and at some point you’ve irritated enough people where you’ve put your political future at risk,” he said.

“Brownback has accomplished a lot of conservative Republican goals, and because of that there are a lot of people — even in Kansas — who disagree with some of those things,” Squire said. “It can come back to haunt you.”

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/news/government-politics/article1337459.html#storylink=cpy
Historic farms to be recognized at Missouri event

August 30, 2014 10:54 am

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) — Missouri farms that have been in the same family for at least 100 years will be recognized at an event in southwest Missouri.

The "Salute to Century Farms" is being held Tuesday night at the Round Barn Event Center east of Ash Grove. The site features a barn built in 1880 that is thought to be the earliest round barn in Missouri.

Besides recognizing century farms, an assistant dean of agriculture extension at the University of Missouri will discuss the 100 year history of Cooperative Extension and the challenges facing family farms in the coming 15 to 20 years.

The event also will include music, food and a silent auction that will raise money for the Greene County Extension.

Editorial: Adjuncts unite for better education

September 01, 2014 6:00 am • By the Editorial Board

NO MU MENTION

A Labor Day riddle: What working group that doesn’t work in retail or fast-food earns so little money that people in it often qualify for food stamps, have no health insurance and no job security?
It’s college professors, specifically adjunct college professors. That adjective — adjunct — generally means someone with an advanced academic degree who is hired on a short-term contract with no possibility of tenure at an institution of higher learning. “Adjunct” has come to mean second-class.

It isn’t just a professor here or there, or a couple of teachers at community colleges, either.

Adjunct professors now make up 76.4 percent of the faculty in U.S. higher education institutions of all types — from liberal arts colleges to research universities to community colleges — according to a study by the American Association of University Professors.

The U.S. House of Representatives released its own study in January revealing that the majority of the adjuncts live below the poverty line.

This is how low the value of education has sunk in the view of the vested and powerful in the United States. This is analogous to the way the moneyed class treats all workers, educated or not. It’s all about corporatization and the bottom line.

It’s not like parents pay lower tuition when classes are taught by adjunct professors. It’s not like colleges say OK, we’re going to give our students and families a break because it’s going to cost less to educate them. Not at all. The money saved is plowed back into bigger and fancier sports facilities and higher salaries for administrators. In recent decades universities have focused on enhancing the students’ experience outside the classroom — to offering more ostentatious amenities such as fancy food and high-end dorm settings — not inside of it.

Despite lip service to the importance of attaining a college education, the critical need to compete with highly educated students from other countries, the value added to a life when educational goals are attained, the corporatization of higher ed demands the second-class citizenship of adjunct professors.

Many of these second-tier teachers are first-class educators being forced to teach without tools. They don’t have offices so can’t meet with students, unless they want to gather behind the trunks of their cars, which generally serve as their filing cabinets.

They usually don’t have basic resources needed to properly teach their courses, such as sample syllabuses and the opportunity to help set learning objectives. They frequently are hired at the last minute so are not adequately prepared to enter the classroom and have been given no say in ordering textbooks or establishing a curriculum.

They also often juggle a number of teaching assignments at different colleges, or have additional jobs in other industries so they can get health care benefits. The result is that adjuncts spend a lot of time commuting.

Adrianna Kezar, professor of higher education at the University of Southern California, is co-founder of the Delphi Project, which is examining how the changing faculty affects student success. She said in Atlantic
magazine in April that her data consistently show that students who take more classes with adjuncts are more likely to drop out than those who take classes with tenured or tenure-track professors.

The problem is not the quality of instruction but the compromised working conditions that adjuncts face. That limits the time they can devote to individual students.

The adjunct problem is also restricting the research output of American universities, education scholars say. Because of the problems outlined above, they are unable to produce the scholarship that their rigorous academic backgrounds have trained them for. These are voices that could help expand national discussions, but they’re not being heard.

Adjuncts are fighting back. On this Labor Day, their efforts should be heralded as they take a page from the annals of the working poor of earlier generations and other industries. The adjuncts are organizing.

Their problem was spotlighted last year when a United Steelworkers lawyer described the death of Margaret Mary Vojtko, 83, an adjunct at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, where the steelworkers were organizing.

Ms. Vojtko taught French at Duquesne for 25 years and never earned more than $25,000, even though she sometimes taught as many as eight courses a year. She developed cancer, had no health insurance and was dismissed from her job without a pension or severance. She died in squalor a few months later.

The Service Employees International Union, with members in health care, maintenance and public service, is organizing adjuncts at private colleges in several urban areas, including Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Boston.

The Post-Dispatch’s Koran Addo reported Aug. 24 that about 4,000 adjunct faculty are working in the St. Louis area. The SEIU is leading the push to organize here. The union is reluctant to say what schools they have targeted, but teachers at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, St. Louis Community College at Meramec and St. Louis University say they have been approached.

Uniting this lower class of educator will help students reach their full potential and reinvigorate higher education. Maybe the future, like the past, can be about teaching inside the classroom and not the amenities on the outside.
My son and I were recently watching an episode of one of our favorite shows, “The Big Bang Theory.” Andrew is getting ready to start graduate school in engineering this fall, and I’m an engineer myself. Sometimes it feels like the comedy was written just for us. On this particular episode, the highly intelligent and painfully awkward physicist Sheldon was pondering the problem of why more women don’t go into the hard sciences. He decides to launch an outreach program and speak with middle school girls about pathways to a career in the fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

He reminds them that they, too, can become like Marie Curie, the famous physicist and chemist who developed the theory of radioactivity. She’s also the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Sheldon reminds the girls that Curie died a horrible death due to radiation exposure. “With a little hard work, I see no reason why that can’t happen to any of you!”

While I probably wouldn’t emphasize any mortal danger posed by the STEM fields, Sheldon and the show writers are spot-on when it comes to the reasons why more women don’t go into these fields. It is a lack of role models, and it’s a problem that starts long before a woman steps foot on a college campus.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that just 18 percent of those who receive a computer science degree are women. Only one-fifth of physics Ph.D.s in this country are awarded to women. And while the majority of U.S. college students today are female, fewer than a quarter of all STEM workers are women.

That’s a serious problem for our nation’s economic well-being. No sector of our economy is poised for more growth than the STEM fields. The Missouri Department of Economic Development reports that Missouri’s 2020 projected job growth for STEM occupations is higher than the average expected combined growth of all other occupations in the state, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that Missouri will have an additional 143,000 STEM jobs to fill by 2018. We simply can’t meet that demand — or provide the diverse workforce the Boeings of our state demand — by continuing to do things as we always have.

At Missouri University of Science and Technology, we’re trying to do our part to change these statistics. This fall, we’re introducing a new credential in elementary education that will prepare graduates to teach math and science to young students. This dovetails with the similar high school credential we offer, as well as the
hundreds of Missouri teachers we train on our campus every year through the national STEM-focused education program, Project Lead the Way. These programs are not focused on singling girls out but rather on ensuring that all students are supported and encouraged to learn. Highlighting diverse role models is an essential part of our curriculum.

Last week, my family and I drove to Atlanta to help our son get situated at his new school, Georgia Tech. Our hope for Andrew has always been that he would try his best and follow his passion. He will be working on innovative ways to capture energy from the sun, and we couldn’t be prouder or happier.

Of course, we wish the same for our daughter, Ella — that she, too, will follow her passion and know that with hard work, she can accomplish whatever she sets out to do. Ella is getting ready for the second grade and is already showing some of the same problem-solving aptitude we see in her brother.

However, if statistics are any indication, it will be a steeper climb for Ella than Andrew. But that doesn’t mean we should give up — for any of our nation’s daughters. It means we should work that much harder so that all children have the opportunity to follow their passion. As Curie once said, “We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves.” That, in my opinion, is no laughing matter.