MU Title IX office investigates report of sexual assault

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 8:21 pm

The University of Missouri’s Title IX office reported a sexual assault to the MU Police Department on Tuesday, but the victim has chosen not to talk to the police, according to a news release.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said Title IX officials investigated the sexual assault report, identified the victim and worked with her to gather information about the incident.

The victim reported to the Title IX investigator that sometime between 12 and 1 a.m. Friday she was sexually assaulted by an unknown man near the benches between Jesse Hall and Hill Hall on the MU campus, according to a news release from Weimer.

The victim reported that the suspect penetrated her vagina with his finger, Weimer said. The suspect was described as a man taller than 5 feet 8 inches tall wearing all black clothing.

“No additional information or details are available, and the victim has chosen not to discuss the incident with the MUPD at this time,” Weimer said.

Weimer issued the information as a so-called Clery release. Campus police nationwide are required to disclose information about crimes on or near school property as a result of the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Police and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998.

Anyone with information is asked to contact CrimeStoppers at 573-875-8477.

Title IX officials investigate report of sexual assault on MU campus

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 | 9:39 p.m. CDT
BY NICOLA DALLASEN
COLUMBIA — A woman reported a sexual assault by an unknown male that occurred on the MU campus early Friday morning, according to a Clery release from the MU Police Department.
According to the report, between midnight and 1 a.m. the male penetrated the woman’s vagina with his finger near the benches between Jesse Hall and Hill Hall.

MU’s Title IX office reported the sexual assault to campus police Tuesday. The investigation is ongoing, MU Police Capt. Brian Weimer said.

The woman decided not to discuss the incident with campus police at this time, according to the release.

This is the first sexual assault reported during the 2014-2015 academic year, Weimer said. Eight incidents of sexual assault, sexual misconduct and rape were reported during the 2013-2014 year, according to the MU Police Department’s website.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM System paying Title IX consultation firm almost $500,000
Tuesday, September 9, 2014 | 6:50 p.m. CDT
BY KEVIN MODELSKI

COLUMBIA — As part of its plan to create policies and training for Title IX practices at its four campuses, the University of Missouri System is paying almost $500,000 to a risk management firm for its services.

The National Center for Higher Education Risk Management asked for a flat fee of $495,000 as part of its yearlong contract created in July.

The firm was hired to advise the UM System's three-phase sexual assault and mental health task force, which was created by UM System President Tim Wolfe in the spring to evaluate current sexual assault and mental health resources, investigate campus policies on those topics and find room for improvement.
Of the Pennsylvania-based firm's $495,000 fee, $150,000 will go toward consulting the UM System, and the remaining $345,000 will cover Title IX training and sexual assault prevention efforts.

UM System spokesman John Fougere said those involved with investigating Title IX-related incidents, such as the school's Title IX coordinator and deputy Title IX coordinators, will be the first to complete training.

As part of Wolfe's Executive Order 40, which was released in April, all UM System employees not bound by confidentiality — such as health care providers, counselors and lawyers — will be required to undergo training on handling Title IX incidents including sexual harassment or assault after the Title IX coordinators.

Fougere said the training is still in development for UM System employees, but it will probably be online-based.

Fougere said the firm is looking to assess the best practices and identify areas for improvement of sexual assault and mental health services in the UM System. It will also be assisting the system's task force recommendations and giving feedback on it.

The $495,000 will be paid in installments. A $165,000 installment has already been paid by the UM System. A second installment of that same amount is due next month. The final two installments — both $82,500 — are due Dec. 31 and July 1.

Fougere said an additional $10,000 was set aside for mental health consultation.

The fee will be paid for from the UM System's budget. The university paid the firm a $40,000 retainer fee in April when it was hired to evaluate the system's task force and address its sexual assault policies.

The UM System's sexual assault task force was created in February after the Dowd Bennett law firm was hired to conduct an independent investigation into whether MU acted consistently with the law and university policy in reporting the sexual assault of Sasha Menu Courey.
Menu Courey, a former MU swimmer, took her own life in 2011 after leaving the university and a year after she was allegedly sexually assaulted by at least one football player.

**Local institutions make U.S. News and World Report lists**

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 10:30 am Comments (2)

U.S. News and World Report included several local institutions in its 2015 college rankings release Monday.

*The University of Missouri has slipped to No. 99 from No. 97 on the list of national universities. The university ranks No. 45 on the list of public schools and No. 20 for best colleges for veterans.*

Stephens College moved to No. 23 from No. 30 on the list of best regional colleges in the Midwest.

Columbia College is ranked for programs but not on a broad list like Stephens or MU.

All three local schools were ranked for best online bachelor’s program — MU is 48, Columbia College is 69 and Stephens College is 186. For best online graduate education program, Columbia College ranks 90 and MU ranks 131.

U.S. News’ ranking system takes into consideration retention and graduation rates, student-to-faculty ratio and peer assessments.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Ferguson forum at MU addresses racism, privilege

Wednesday, September 10, 2014 | 12:33 a.m. CDT; updated 6:20 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, September 10, 2014
BY ROSE MCMANUS

COLUMBIA — Although Michael Brown died more than 100 miles from where she spoke, Storm Ervin's voice cracked as she read her prepared statement one month after his death.

“They tried to demonize him after he died,” said Ervin, president of MU's NAACP chapter. “They tried to demonize us for speaking up about it. Our First Amendment rights were met with SWAT trucks, canines, assault rifles, wooden pellets, rubber bullets, tear gas and multiple arrests.”

About 200 people gathered at MU on Tuesday evening to discuss race, police profiling and privilege in light of Brown’s death on Aug. 9. A panel sponsored by MizzouDiversity included law professors, clergy and other community members. The panelists began the forum with prepared statements before inviting attendees to participate.

“I wanted to offer the opportunity for Columbia as well as the larger University of Missouri campus to have a dialogue around not just the shooting of Michael Brown but also a dialogue surrounding race, gender, class, community,” Zakiya Adair, MU assistant professor and organizer of the forum, said during the event. “Hopefully this will be the beginning or the catalyst for further conversations around these issues.”

The police shooting of 18-year-old Brown sparked days of peaceful protests, looting of stores and sometimes violent clashes between protestors and police.

MU law professor Frank Bowman emphasized the legal ambiguity surrounding Brown’s death when other panelists and community members referred to his death as a homicide.
“Perhaps the one thing that we are least certain about, if we’re being honest, is the
details of the central incident that started all of this, which was the death of Michael
Brown,” Bowman said during the forum.

Regardless of the circumstances, many in the crowd and on the panel agreed the issue
goes beyond Brown’s death.

David Mitchell, also an MU law professor, began his statement with a
moment of silence for Brown before addressing the audience.

“We may not know whether it was legally justified, but there is a context
here that exists that we cannot ignore,” Mitchell said. “There is a narrative
between law enforcement and interaction with African-American males
that we cannot ignore.”

The forum, which was later open to comments from audience members, brought about
closestions ranging from the mistreatment of African-Americans by police to the
misrepresentation of minorities in politics.

Audience member Angela Speck said nonminorities need to recognize their
role in the community.

“There are so many people on this campus, in this city, who deny that they
have privilege, who don’t understand,” she said. "They have no concept of
it. That’s a difficult conversation to have."

Ultimately, most participants seemed to agree that the first step after the events in
Ferguson is to have open conversations about the events and their implications.

“To come up with a solution, this is it. It’s going to take all of us,” said Lorenzo Lawson,
panelist and senior pastor at Chosen Generation Ministries.
MU hosts open dialogue on Ferguson and social issues

A ‘Forum on Ferguson’ took place in Hulston Hall from 6-7:30 p.m., and was led by Dr. Zakiya Adair, assistant professor of women’s and gender studies.

Students, faculty and concerned community members came together Tuesday evening for an open forum on Ferguson to discuss the current situation in Ferguson since the shooting of Michael Brown.

“Forum on Ferguson” took place in Hulston Hall from 6 to 7:30 p.m., and was led by Dr. Zakiya Adair, assistant professor of women’s and gender studies

Adair guided the conversation by fielding questions and comments from audience members who voiced their concerns on the Mike Brown case and its reflection on issues the U.S. currently faces with race.

Adair said the goal for the evening was to get as many voices and opinions involved to help further the role of activism at MU and within the Columbia community.

“I wanted to offer an opportunity for the community of Columbia as well as the larger University of Missouri campus to have a dialogue around not just the shooting of Michael Brown, but a dialogue about race, gender, class, community,” she said. “Hopefully, this can be the catalyst of further conversations surrounding the many issues we face today.”

Emotional students and citizens took turns sharing how they’ve felt in the past when confronted with discrimination, while attempting at coming up with plans to improve how society treats race issues today.

Questions of handling racial issues in both Columbia and nationwide arose and anecdotes of personal experiences from attendees led the discussion.

“To prevent things like Ferguson from happening in the future, people at Mizzou need to help others toward becoming just better people,” junior Byron Norman said. “With the portrayal of Mike Brown in media, people need to really learn more about what’s actually happening.”

The forum included a number of speakers who volunteered to start the dialogue for the evening, including law professors Frank Bowman and David Mitchell, Brian Houston, assistant professor of communication, Bishop Lorenzo Lawson and MU NAACP President Storm Ervin.
The conversation was held this particular Tuesday as it marked the 30-day point since the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

While Brown’s death was the focal point of the forum, the discussion eventually worked its way toward a multitude of racial and social issues, including housing discrimination, militarization of the police force and living through institutionalized discrimination.

“I’m someone who thinks you do effect change by talking about difficult issues and discussing your feelings,” Adair said. “Continuing to discuss and be informed is the beginning of action, and I believe anger and frustration have a place as a motivator to actually make change happen.”

The discussion also touched upon the media portrayal of young black males and the misrepresentation of the general black demographic in positions of authority.

The public forum captivated both older community members and MU students, and some attendees said they found the forum helpful in simply learning more about current events regarding race.

“I think (the forum) is a great opportunity for people to learn more about what’s going on and be able to formulate a strong opinion, especially those unaware of the context and closeness Ferguson has,” freshman Samantha Christensen said.

MU researchers discover link between TIM-1 protein, HIV infectivity

A discovery surrounding the TIM-1 protein’s effect on viruses leads MU researchers to study HIV.

In a recent study, MU researchers found a link between a T-cell membrane protein and HIV infectivity.

Shan-Lu Liu, associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology and an investigator with the Bond Life Sciences Center, and graduate student Minghua Li were studying the role of transmembrane, immunoglobulin and mucin (TIM) family proteins in the immune system and suspected the TIM-1 protein is involved in viruses’ entry into cells.

“While we were working on the possible role of the TIM-1 protein in viral entry, we found, by accident, this protein actually blocked HIV release,” Liu said.
The research team went on to prove the discovery by studying the protein and HIV very carefully. A collaboration with Eric Freed from the National Cancer Institute was a vital part in discovering how and where the TIM-1 protein worked. Freed helped the team discover that the protein was trapping the virus on the membrane of the cells.

“You have to be prepared (for the unexpected),” Liu said. “We look at the data very carefully.”

The TIM-1 protein has the ability to cross-link with the chemical compound phosphatidylserine, making the cell membrane stronger and more rigid. Membrane strength aids the cell in preventing viruses, such as HIV-1 and Ebola, from being released.

“We spent a lot of time to find the mechanism behind the phenomenon — how and why TIM-1 can inhibit HIV and a broad reach of other viruses,” Li said.

However, the researchers said they could not be certain this prevented the virus from spreading. To further explore the biological role of the TIM-1 protein, they are looking into what happens after the protein prevents the virus from being released.

“Regardless of if (the protein has) a positive effect or a negative effect, we will gain the knowledge of the TIM protein in terms of viral infection and other biological functions,” Liu said.

An understanding of the TIM-1 protein could be a factor in future HIV treatment. While it may not provide a cure or treatment, the study provides important information and an exciting opportunity to the researchers.

“We did not plan to work on HIV so quickly,” Liu said. “Now that we found this, half of the people in the lab are working on HIV.”

Jane Goodall to visit MU next week

Jane Goodall, well-known primatologist and conservationist, will visit the University of Missouri next week to talk about her life’s work.

Goodall is set to speak at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 17 at Mizzou Arena, 1 Champions Drive. Tickets are free for MU students and $10 for the public. They’re available at the MSA/GPC Box Office on the first floor of the MU Student Union.
Goodall is known for her research on chimpanzee behavior. In 1977, she founded the Jane Goodall Institute, an organization that supports primate research and conservation in Africa.

The visit from Goodall is sponsored by the Delta Gamma Lectureship in Values and Ethics, among other campus organizations. The lectureship brought kidnapping survivor Elizabeth Smart to campus earlier this year.

‘Legendary’ Dr. Jane Goodall to speak at Mizzou Arena

The world-renowned scientist and advocate will speak as a guest lecturer Sept. 17.

The chimp champ. The ape aristocrat. A speaking savant for scientific society. Alliteration aside, Dr. Jane Goodall is kind of a big deal, and she’s coming to speak at MU.

On Sept. 17, Goodall will give her speech, “Sowing the Seeds of Hope,” at Mizzou Arena.

Senior Cale Sears is the mastermind behind the Speakers Committee, a group within the Department of Student Activities, that brainstorms, coordinates and executes four to eight guest speaking events a semester. The committee collaborated with the Delta Gamma Lectureship Foundation to bring Goodall to campus.

The DG Lectureship, which has been working with the Speakers Committee since 1998, is comprised of a committee of its own, mostly volunteers and alumni of Delta Gamma.

Lucinda Rice-Petrie is the chairwoman of the committee.

The goal of the lectureship is “very simply, to promote ethical behavior and values through exposure to distinguished lecturers,” Rice-Petrie said.

Goodall will talk on contemporary and sometimes controversial issues.

Known primarily as a primatologist, Goodall is much more. She's an advocate for global action, non-human rights and environmental sustainability. At 80, she travels 300 days out of the year and is a UN Messenger of Peace.

“There is only one Jane Goodall,” Sears said. “She is one of a kind. She is legendary in the science world.”
Goodall doesn’t just appeal to science buffs, though.

“Even I had to do my own research to learn about Jane,” Sears said. “It took me a period of time to understand what I think is the gravity of this visit.”

Sears equated Goodall’s appearance to that of Maya Angelou in 2012. After Angelou’s death this past May, students will never again have the chance to hear her inspirational words or experience the depth of her character.

“This is going to be… a once in a lifetime opportunity for students who attend,” Sears said.

He said that it was his (“kind of selfish”) hope that students look back on their time at MU and remember the Goodall lecture.

In recent years, Sears said, it has been the goal of the Speakers Committee to bring in more content-driven lecturers: scholars who can really get students involved.

Deciding on Goodall was no easy task. The committee often has to try and find up-and-comers in the lecture field, a similar job to that of the students who plan the Fall Welcome Concert.

“I look at trends as far as what kind of issues are popping up — what could affect campus life,” Sears said.

In the DG Lectureship’s case, Goodall has been a goal for close to eight years.

“It’s a dream come true to us who have been with the lectureship from day one,” Rice-Petrie said.

In Goodall’s case, she’s a timeless speaker and an expert at relating to young people and discussing very pertinent and popular topics.

In a twist from previous speakers, Goodall will be speaking at Mizzou Arena instead of past lectureship venues such as Jesse Auditorium or Missouri Theatre.

The event was moved after DSA members noticed a trend of large audiences in universities that Goodall has spoken at previously. Sears said the committee’s top priority was to make sure that students who wanted to attend would not end up without a ticket.

The DSA is planning for 4,000 audience members, a huge hike from the 1,200-to-1,700-member audiences of previous lectures.

The Speakers Committee will also be hosting many more speakers this semester, such as actress Laverne Cox and J.R. Martinez.

“If you want to make a difference, come see how it’s done,” Sears said.
Plaintiff drops suit over MU medical billing fraud

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 10:23 am Comments (3)

A plaintiff in a lawsuit involving two former University of Missouri radiologists dropped her federal case this summer.

Kenneth Rall and Michael Richards were both fired from the MU School of Medicine in 2012 after an internal investigation found they had committed billing fraud by allowing resident physicians to perform services Rall and Richards were supposed to do, violating Medicare and hospital rules.

The complaint filed by Ruth Brush, another radiologist physician and faculty member at MU who left the university this spring, outlines the concerns in greater detail.

Brush’s complaint was sealed when it was filed in February 2013 until May 16 of this year. The federal government filed a notice declining to join the case in May. In early June, Brush filed a motion to dismiss the case.

Brush’s complaint against Rall, Richards and the UM Board of Curators alleged that MU “acted in reckless disregard” about the documents that were submitted to the government for payment or that the university failed to investigate any issues by comparing documents that were filed by Rall and Richards against the work they were actually doing.

The complaint alleges the fraud took place from January 2009, when Brush started at MU, until December 2011.

As a result of the fallout, then-medical school Dean Bob Churchill retired in 2012.

According to previous Tribune reports, Churchill was not suspected of wrongdoing but stepped down because he hired Rall in spite of a criminal past.
Ordinance prohibits private campus shuttles from certain routes

MU was not consulted when the new ordinance came into effect.

On the first day of the new school year, drivers of private campus shuttles — and the students who ride them — were caught by surprise when police began enforcing a new city ordinance that alters their routes and pick-up locations on campus.

The change came after City Ordinance 14-180 was put into effect this fall, prohibiting nearly all private vehicles from using sections of Rollins Street, Hitt Street, Ninth Street, Conley Avenue and Missouri Avenue from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. on weekdays.

Private shuttles, which are often operated or contracted by off-campus student housing companies, must now change their routes to drop off and pick up students near Strickland Hall and Memorial Union, said Mike Sokoff, director of MU Parking and Transportation Services. Previously, the shuttles dropped off alongside Columbia Transit, outside of the Student Center.

“The city had a regulation that states only city buses — that includes the Tiger Line buses — can park and drop off and pick up at the Student Center,” Sokoff said.

The public transportation system, COMO Connect, which was revamped in August, drops off and picks up at the Student Center in addition to the other city bus stops. Sokoff said the new shuttle route locations have helped relieve traffic congestion on Rollins Street and keep the Tiger Line buses on schedule.

“The city buses run on a time schedule and in order for them to be able to pull in, load and unload, and leave at the proper time they need that area that has been designated for them,” Sokoff said. “Rollins is a city street, it is not a university street, so they have control over what happens at Rollins.”

Sokoff said MU was not consulted before the city ordinance was passed in July, but the city is working with MU to set up shelters at locations like Strickland Hall.

MU also worked with the city to set up alternate routes for the private shuttles to ensure that students would still have convenient locations around campus to be picked up and dropped off.

“We (MU) were the ones who came up with the alternate areas for students to be dropped off, especially Memorial Union,” Sokoff said. “We thought that perhaps having a location at the
north end of campus would really help people and buses coming in. It was kind of a joint
decision between the city and MU to provide these alternate spots because we didn’t want any
student to suffer unnecessarily.”

Student safety was a top concern for the city and MU when coming up with these alternative
locations and routes, Sokoff said.

“The change was made to facilitate better movement and reduce the congestion, to make it safer
and more available … that was the goal to begin with so students can get to school and get to
class as safely as possible,” Sokoff said.

Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp said the city wants more students to use COMO
Connect over the private shuttles.

COMO Connect is the rebranding of the public bus system that resulted from the city’s growth
and a demand for new routes, Trapp said. The city redrew neighborhood routes and
designed them to pass schools and shopping and medical centers.

“In the first two weeks of operation, there has already been a substantial increase in bus
ridership, but it’s also led to a lot of changes,” Trapp said. “Any time you change something, it
disrupts what people are used to, and that causes consternation.”

Doug Dickherber, owner of Green Way Shuttles, which services 18 off-campus housing
complexes, said he spoke to City Council members in 2012 and again in August 2014 to voice
his own concerns about the ordinance.

“(The city) has kind of turned the campus itself into a community bus stop and that opens up
seats for people that are homeless, people that are potentially dangerous and people that don’t
really need to be at school to sit with students, rather than my shuttles, which are filled entirely
with students,” Dickherber said.

Sokoff said safety was a top concern for the city and MU when coming up with these alternative
locations and routes.

“The change was made to facilitate better movement and reduce (traffic) congestion, to make it
safer and more available, and that was the goal to begin with: to get students to school and get
them to class as safely as possible,” Sokoff said.

However, Dickherber said he disagrees.

“To me, it’s riskier for my students on the buses to have this new ordinance in place because
they’ll have to walk through way more busy streets, and that puts a lot more stress on my
drivers,” he said. “The students that I bring in from the apartment complexes all bring in tax
money that pay for bus spaces to be built, and those bus spaces are being taken away from me.”
With the implementation of this ordinance, some students in off-campus housing complexes have switched from their complex shuttles to the city-operated bus services. Stuart Watkins, spokesperson for Aspen Heights Housing Complex, said he has not received negative feedback from students thus far.

“Initially, Aspen Heights was concerned about the new drop-off location, especially during inclement weather,” Watkins said. “However, since the change we have heard some positive feedback on the new location. Many residents have stated there is less congestion and the private shuttle travels to and from campus at a faster rate.”

However, junior Hailey Lenahan said she has been using the private shuttle buses for two years and has noticed the change.

“It honestly doesn’t affect me that much because a lot of my classes are on this part of campus, but when I have to go to Cornell Hall it kind of sucks,” Lenahan said. “The shuttles have been running kind of late, too. I don’t know if it’s just them or if it has to do with where we are being dropped off.”

Ben Bolin, the Missouri Student Association Senate speaker, said MSA will be taking a formal stance against the new shuttle routes and steps to repeal the city ordinance.

Bolin said Campus and Community Relations Committee chairman Chad Phillips has met with City Councilwoman Ginny Chadwick to discuss repealing Ordinance 14-180 while also drafting an MSA Senate resolution, which will be ready for the committee meeting Sept. 10.

Trapp emphasized that the process is still ongoing, and the city is continuing to seek student and community feedback.

“I understand some amount of the frustration from shuttle owners, but we’re trying to open a transit service for students around the city and so we need an understanding that we need some sort of transit system that works for the most people,” Trapp said. “Sometimes, we have to make small sacrifices for the greater good, and I think efficient transit is worth that community investment.”

MU considers replacing mechanism in Memorial Union clock
By Ashley Jost | Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 10:30 am

The University of Missouri is in preliminary discussions about replacing the historic mechanism inside of the clock tower at Memorial Student Union.
The mechanism — including the bell and pipes inside the tower — is about 90 years old, Michelle Froese, assistant director of strategic communications of Student and Auxiliary Services at MU, said.

“We’re not replacing the tower but trying to figure out what it would take to replace just the mechanism,” she said. “It loses time every few weeks; it’s very susceptible to humidity; the chimes work sporadically; and the interlude that goes off before the hour hasn’t worked for years.”

Froese said no firm decision has been made to replace the mechanism. Staff are only looking to see whether it would save the university money to “go digital,” which wouldn’t change the face of the tower. “This is sort of a fact-finding mission,” Froese said.

Bill Hart, field representative with the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation, hopes the university will consider preservation opportunities over replacement of the mechanism.

“We’re hoping that if the public knows and the university realizes that this is a historic mechanism, they will consider preserving it,” he said.

Hart said the mechanism has a three-legged gravity escapement, a standard for tower clocks that is used in London’s Big Ben. The escapement is a mechanism that uses gravitational forces to help move the clock.

**MizzouRec rock wall’s fate uncertain**

Dahlmann said the overcrowding in Pump Room has prompted talks about possibly removing the wall.

The fate of the rock wall in the MU Student Recreation Complex is uncertain.

Speculations continue that Scroggs Peak, a 35.5-foot climbing tower, and Brewer Butte, a 180-square-foot bouldering wall, may be taken down within the next year, but no final decision has been reached so far.

Mizzou Rec Director Diane Dahlmann held a “rally” with the center’s staff Aug. 31, where projects for the upcoming year were discussed.

Dahlmann said the possibility of taking down the wall to expand the Pump Room, which is becoming increasingly overcrowded, was discussed at the event.
“So many factors go into this conversation, which is why we presented it at the rally,” she said. “We are in the process of studying and looking at the Pump Room problem, and this is just one option for it.”

Usage of the wall has significantly decreased in the last five years.

At the wall’s peak in the 2009-2010 academic year, 236 annual passes were sold for a fee of $39 each. Last year, only 138 annual passes were sold.

Only seven passes have been sold since the beginning of this academic year, but Dahlmann said she expects sales to increase throughout the year.

After the possibility of taking the wall down was discussed, fearful students flocked to social media to air their concerns.

Senior Jamie Blankinship created a Facebook page called “Save the Mizzou Rec Wall” to spread awareness on the issue and collect personal testimonials in an attempt to save the wall.

The Facebook group had more than 830 members as of Tuesday.

“I am not surprised that the group has gained so much momentum,” Blankinship said. “The wall is a really important place to a lot of past and present students. For me, the community that I found there is what kept me from transferring to another school.”

However, because Blankinship is a Mizzou Rec employee, she cannot lead any more plans to save the wall.

“I just wanted to start the discussion,” she said. “I will continue to encourage everyone I meet to come in and try it out, but that's all I can do at this point.”

MU graduate Wesley White said he first heard the news from Blankinship’s Facebook group.

“My college experience was really shaped by climbing, and I don’t want that taken away from future generations,” White said. “If the wall is taken down, a lot of students will never have the same opportunities I had.”

White, along with dozens of other current and former MU students, expressed their concerns on the Facebook page, writing paragraphs of personal testimonials and listing dozens of reasons why MU should not remove the wall.

Another Facebook page, “MizzouRec PumpRoom Expansion,” was created on Sept. 3 to support the expansion of Pump Room. It is currently not clear who founded the page, but the page had garnered nearly 230 members as of Tuesday evening.
“We have received such magnificent testimonials from parents, students, and alums, and those are very valuable in coming to a decision,” Dahlmann said. “Part of our job here is to listen to students and solve problems.”

Dahlmann said she anticipates a decision to be reached sometime this school year.

“The only decision the department made was to try to come up with options to solve the Pump Room problem,” she said. “We know this might be the best option, but we don't necessarily need to exercise it.”

Veteran Democratic legislator leaves mark on GOP-led House

By Virginia Young vyoung@post-dispatch.com 573-556-6181

JEFFERSON CITY • A recent budget hearing gave state Rep. Chris Kelly, the senior member of the Missouri House, one of the “teaching moments” that he loves.

A state health official had been droning on about “317 funds” when Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, asked what the 317 program was. The program, named for a section of federal law, provides money for vaccines.

Kelly, D-Columbia, heaped praise on Flanigan for asking the question. No one on the committee had understood the bureaucrat’s jargon, Kelly declared, but often, basic questions aren’t asked because a legislator worries about looking dumb.

As Republicans were nodding approvingly, Kelly added that the 317 program is important to understand because “we have witch doctors scaring people out of getting these vaccines.”

It was vintage Kelly.

Though he is more liberal than most of his colleagues and is a member of the minority party in a chamber where Republicans control two-thirds of the seats, Kelly has used a mixture of bipartisan collaboration and colorful criticism to make his mark on everything from crack cocaine sentencing and capital improvements to tax credits for renters and care of the disabled.

He has served a total of 18 years in the House, a rare feat these days since term limits cap service in each chamber at eight years. Kelly’s tenure includes 12 years in the 1980s and early 1990s, before term limits were imposed.
Though he could have run for one more term, he decided to retire after his district was carved up in redistricting. So he will be at his desk in the rear of the chamber, sporting his trademark bow tie, for the last time at the veto session that begins Wednesday.

“We are going to miss you,” Rep. Sue Allen, R-Town and Country, told Kelly at the budget hearing. “I’ve heard a lot of people say this — well, not everyone,” she quipped.

Friends say his influence stems from his sharp wit, deep knowledge of state government and lack of personal rancor. While he may criticize a legislator’s position, he doesn’t attack the opponent’s motives.

But his no-holds-barred remarks have sometimes annoyed both political parties.

“People say Chris Kelly is very knowledgeable and easy to work with,” said Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Independence. “They’re half right.”

A lawyer and former judge, Kelly, 67, began his second stint in the House in 2009, when he ousted an incumbent to win one of the most expensive House races that year.

Kelly didn’t stay enemies with the GOP leaders who had funded his opponent. He immediately partnered with then-Speaker Steve Tilley, R-Perryville, to push for a bond issue to finance campus construction projects.

Though that plan fizzled, Kelly finally got part of his wish this year when legislators approved bonds that include $38.5 million to renovate the University of Missouri’s engineering building.

While the GOP usually can get its priorities through the House, a powerful argument from Kelly occasionally can sway enough votes to have an impact.

For example, in 2011, he helped derail a bill that could have forced the closing of habilitation centers for the developmentally disabled. Kelly described the alternative — community placement — as housing vulnerable people in “a refrigerator box behind a dipsy dumpster.”

But Kelly has reserved perhaps his most strident criticism for a fellow Democrat, Gov. Jay Nixon, accusing him of not engaging in the legislative process enough to iron out thorny policy disputes.

Kelly complains that Nixon pushes his causes mainly through speeches outside the Capitol instead of gathering key legislators in a room and seeking compromises, as former Govs. Christopher “Kit” Bond, John Ashcroft and Mel Carnahan did.

“You’ve got to give and take and scrap,” Kelly said.

When Nixon threatened earlier this year to veto a massive criminal code overhaul and noted that changing the code was a serious undertaking, Kelly deadpanned: “Yeah, we know it’s very serious. That’s why we’ve been working on it eight years.”
Kelly says his biggest disappointment has been his failure to forge a working relationship with Nixon.

“He only understands two relationships: slave and enemy,” Kelly said. “I would have been happy to be a partner.”

Some of Kelly’s younger House colleagues say his expertise and knowledge of the legislative process provide a good example of what the state loses with term limits.

“He’s just very smart about the budget,” said Rep. Craig Redmon, R-Canton. “He doesn’t care if you’re Democrat or Republican. Wrong’s wrong and right’s right with Chris, and I really appreciate that.”

Catherine Rampell: Only college graduates need apply

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NO MU MENTION

You’ve heard of grade inflation? Welcome to the world of degree inflation.

A new report finds that employers are increasingly requiring a bachelor’s degree for positions that didn’t used to require baccalaureate education. A college degree, in other words, is becoming the new high school diploma: the minimum credential required to get even the most basic, entry-level job.

The report is from Burning Glass, a labor market analytics company that mines millions of online job postings. The company found that a wide range of jobs — in management, administration, sales and other fields — are undergoing “upcredentialing,” or degree inflation. As examples, just 25 percent of people employed as insurance clerks have a BA, but twice that percentage of insurance-clerk job ads require one. Among executive secretaries and executive assistants, 19 percent of job-holders have degrees, but 65 percent of job postings mandate them.

What’s going on?
The most benevolent explanation is that technology has changed the nature and responsibilities of many jobs. Duties are becoming more complicated, requiring more technical knowledge and stronger critical thinking skills.

Being in charge of logistics a generation ago required strong organization and management skills, whereas today it might also require familiarity with sophisticated optimization and simulation software. And on the bright side, the pay in many of these upcredentialing careers is rising as workers are expected to be higher-skilled and more productive.

And sometimes there are quantifiable differences between the skills needed at jobs requiring B.A.s and those that don’t, even when the title of the job is the same. Postings for loan officers that require B.A.s are more likely to ask for national accreditations and specific commercial and retail lending skills than are postings for loan officers that don’t call for a bachelor’s degree. Note, though, that the skills required of college grads are not always ones they are taught in college.

Which brings me to another, potentially more troubling explanation for degree inflation: signaling.

Regardless of what you actually learn in college, graduating from a four-year institution may broadcast that you have discipline, drive and stick-to-it-iveness. In plenty of jobs — such as I.T. help-desk positions — there is little to no difference in skill requirements between job ads requiring a degree and those that do not, Burning Glass found. But employers still prefer college graduates.

With college attendance more routine today than it was in the past, degrees are becoming a common, if blunt, tool for screening job applicants. In 2013, 33.6 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds had a B.A., vs. 24.7 percent in 1995. Bachelor’s degrees are probably seen less as a gold star for those who have them than as a red flag for those who don’t. If you couldn’t be bothered to get a degree in this day and age, you must be lazy, unreliable or dumb.

Or so employers — especially their human resources departments — seem to suspect. A 2012 survey of employers conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education found that human resources professionals (as opposed to executives and managers, who were also surveyed) were less likely to overlook an applicant’s lack of a degree if the worker otherwise had “the right fit.”

Of course, the majority of workers, including millennials, still don’t have a bachelor’s degree. And with a weak labor market, employers can afford to be picky.

They’re certainly acting picky, too. Employers are taking longer than ever to fill vacant positions, according to a recent Dice Hiring Indicators report. Inflated, unrealistic job requirements may be one explanation. Employers who demand postsecondary education for positions that didn’t traditionally require it seem to be waiting especially long periods before selecting their ideal candidate. Burning Glass found that construction
supervisor positions that require a bachelor’s degree take 61 days to fill on average, while those that don’t take just 28 days.

As the economy recovers, workers become less desperate and businesses feel more urgency to fill vacancies, hiring managers may have to get a little less persnickety about their workers’ pedigrees. But in the meantime, college grads are landing in positions that probably don’t use the skills they’ve piled up thousands of dollars in debt to acquire, and many high school grads and college dropouts are being shut out from the first rung of the career ladder altogether. The resulting damage to all these workers’ career trajectories could last for many years to come.