University of Kansas sees signs that more students are stepping up to report sexual assaults

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

09/27/2014 6:24 PM

Nineteen sex-related complaints reported at the University of Kansas’ Title IX office this month raise a question:

Are more sex offenses being committed at KU, or are students just becoming more willing to speak up now that the subject of rape on college campuses has moved into the national spotlight?

Answer: Students are stepping up, said Jane McQueeny, the executive director of KU’s Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access.

The office is responsible, under Title IX in federal law, for investigating complaints of gender discrimination and any sex-related offenses on the campus.

“This is exactly what happens once an issue is brought to the forefront and is being talked about,” McQueeny said. “There is a different sense of being able to speak up. A cultural shift is happening.”

The more students report campus sex crime, “it gives us a more accurate snapshot of how often this is being experienced,” said Jessica Haymaker, a coordinator at the Center for Advocacy Response and Education at Kansas State University. “It more accurately depicts the scope of the issue and it is important to hold perpetrators accountable.”
K-State and the University of Missouri haven’t seen spikes in reporting like the one at KU, but their school officials said they expect to see more students and staff reporting sex crimes.

Campus policies on sexual assault are getting makeovers, adding clearer language about rape and consensual sex, sex and alcohol, and personal safety. Schools also are better defining sanctions for offenders identified on their campuses.

“People are talking about this on every campus across the country,” McQueeny said.

The complaints began rolling into her office after a Sept. 4 Huffington Post article about a rape on the Lawrence campus set off a series of student protests and forums calling for changes in the way the university handles sexual assault.

Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little announced Sept. 11 that KU would create a task force of students, faculty and staff to review sexual misconduct policies. And students, with faculty and administrators, have continued to hold a series of forums.

Meanwhile, McQueeny’s office is investigating each of the recent complaints: two reports of stalking, seven of sexual harassment, one of sexual assault, one of date violence, one of domestic violence and seven so recent the office had not yet categorized them.

That students are speaking out encourages Jamie Gadd-Nelson, a member of September Siblings, the student group that earlier this month posted an anti-recruitment video calling KU an unsafe campus.

“But I’m still also concerned about whether (the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access) will handle those cases correctly,” Gadd-Nelson said. “There is still a huge process involved in fixing the entire system.”

So far in 2014, KU’s Office of Public Safety has received reports of two rapes, three sexual batteries and one sodomy.

“They all occurred during the spring semester,” said Maj. Chris Keary.
In 2013, the office handled three reports of rape and six of sexual battery.

K-State campus police received five reports of sexual offenses in 2013 and one so far this school year. The school’s Title IX office hasn’t seen any increase in sex offense reports this year.

But Donald Stubbings, assistant chief of campus police, expects to see an uptick in cases being reported.

“The more services and support for survivors of sexual assault are made available, the higher the chances of reporting,” Stubbings said by email.

K-State is one of hundreds of colleges signing on to the “It’s On Us” campaign, a bystander intervention effort launched this month by the Obama administration. K-State will be asking all students, faculty and staff to make an online promise to stand up against sexual assault. Pittsburg State and Wichita State universities also are taking the pledge.

Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph and Northwest Missouri State in Maryville are also among schools that have signed up.

**The University of Missouri System has taken several steps to curb sexual assaults on its four campuses after an ESPN story in January about the alleged rape and subsequent suicide of former MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey. An independent investigation found in April that the university fell short of its obligations to report, investigate and offer support services to a student victim of sexual assault.**

Last week, UM System President Tim Wolfe announced additions to the system’s policies to include mandated training of all university employees about their responsibilities for reporting sexual misconduct, discrimination and assault.
And on the Columbia campus, MU this semester hired a full-time Title IX coordinator and an investigator to handle sex offense complaints. The MU Title IX office did not provide data for the number of complaints filed to its office since the start of fall classes.

MU police are handling reports of three rape cases that happened within less than two weeks this month. Campus police reported 11 “forcible sex” offenses on or near campus in 2013.

“We have been doing a lot as we work to make sure people on campus are aware of the resources available to them for sexual assault and mental health,” said MU spokesman Christian Basi. “We hope people feel more comfortable to report. ... We believe the more information we have as people report, the more it helps us to provide a safer campus.”

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article2277320.html#storylink=cpy

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Prices for new UM System health care plan raise questions
Monday, September 29, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT; updated 7:09 a.m. CDT, Monday, September 29, 2014
BY SETH K LAMANN

COLUMBIA — Marcia Flesner sat in the back of a town hall meeting on a Friday, listening to a University of Missouri System human resource employee talk about the changes to systemwide benefits.

Flesner has worked at MU for 15 years and is covered by the preferred provider organization health plan. She's in her 60s and has medical problems, so the plan's low deductible and high premiums felt like her best choice.

The problem is the plan's monthly premium is rising nearly 10 percent, from $138.50 to $152. So she's taking a long look at a new, cheaper plan the university is offering that would require her to use mostly MU Health Care physicians. The problem is her current doctors won't be "in network" anymore, she said.
Flesner is faced with a choice: pay more to keep her old doctors, or venture into the unknown and try the new custom network plan. But she's not angry at her employer.

"I think the university is making a good faith effort to keep things affordable," she said. "But health insurance costs go up every year, and how can you keep it down?"

This is the decision facing many UM System faculty and staff members. The new plan has no deductible but is only available to those who live or work in a nine-county area around Columbia. Other changes to the employee health care plans include some new names, a revamped wellness incentive program and some increases in premium prices.

Employees must choose a plan before Oct. 31, or they'll be automatically dropped into the healthy savings plan, which has low premiums and a high deductible.

The overhaul is the result of steadily increasing costs. Last year, the UM System's spending on health care rose 6 percent. That's on par with the increased national average, which is projected to grow 5.8 percent a year until 2022, according to a report from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"If you look at our competitors, that's about where everybody's at," Total Rewards Task Force Associate Vice President Kelley Stuck said. "But if you look ahead to what we spend, we can't continue to do that."

The Total Rewards Task Force, which was formed in 2013 to improve the university's benefit options, echoed Stuck's concern in its April report. It called the steadily climbing benefit costs "unsustainable." The task force wants to slash the increase to a fraction of that — 2 percent in the next several years, Stuck said.

"There's no instruction manual for bringing down health care costs," Stuck said. "Some of (the strategies to lower costs) will work, and some of them won't work, and we'll learn from it."

**Signing up**

Employees must enroll in one of three plans on the university's human resources website during the active enrollment period from Oct. 20 to Oct. 31. Even if an employee wants to opt out altogether or stick with a plan he or she previously had, a selection
must be made. If not, the employee will be automatically placed into the health savings plan.

Formerly called "myChoice", the **Healthy Savings Plan** includes a health savings account funded with $400 from the university. It has a deductible of $1,500 and has remained steady with the lowest premium at $85 a month or $1,020 a year for a single person.

**Recommendation:** It might be a good fit for people who need health insurance for the rare doctor's visit or emergency.

Another possibility, and it's not new, is the **PPO Plan** — once known as "myOptions." The premium for the PPO Plan has risen the most, up to $152 a month from its 2014 premium price of $138.50 for an individual, **according to the Total Rewards' website.** The deductible is fairly low, at $350 for in-network coverage.

**Recommendation:** This is the plan for employees who need frequent-patient rewards at doctors' offices, people who are used to spending time in waiting rooms and are willing to pay for better coverage.

Those two "are available everywhere, across all benefit-eligible employees," Stuck said. Both have access to Coventry Health Care, the UM System insurer and provider, and its nationwide network.

The new plan, the **Custom Network Plan**, meanwhile, is right in the middle at $115 a month in premium for an individual. It has no deductible for in-network and a $500 deductible outside network. Neither it nor the PPO Plan comes with the same health savings account offered through the Health Savings Plan.

Its in-network physicians and health care providers are almost exclusively affiliated with the university, and it's available only to employees who live or work in Boone, Cole, Cooper, Callaway, Osage, Randolph, Audrain, Howard or Moniteau counties.

**Recommendation:** This is the plan for employees who regularly visit doctors, live or work in the Columbia area and are comfortable with MU Health Care. It has lower premiums than the PPO Plan.
The plans are complicated and each have distinct differences. To ensure that faculty and staff are aware of their options and educated on the subject, Total Rewards, the part of the system's human resource department that handles benefits, compensation and retirement, will have held 23 open meetings by the time the active enrollment period is underway. Employees were also offered one-on-one sessions with benefits counselors, who are also available by phone and email.

**County concerns**
The new plan has geographical limitations because of its close affiliation with MU Health Care. Of the more than 1,200 people and practices listed as in-network for the Custom Network Plan, almost 900 are listed on the Total Rewards' website as university affiliates.

Using these providers gives the university a discount, which cuts costs while helping the hospital at the same time, Stuck said.

"One of the models of care that's being explored is that if you can have high-quality physicians, you get a lower cost," she said. "Our hospital wants to be in that, they want to try that. So (MU Health Care) gave us a better discount. They priced their services lower for this plan ... which allowed us to lower the premium."

Although the cost-trimming plan helps the university and may be beneficial for MU Health Care, the university and patients, it is likely to leave some non-Columbia area residents without local or familiar options. In some cases, it might force employees to either give up a favorite family doctor, or pay higher premiums.

Carolyn Jackson, who works as an administrative assistant at MU and commutes from Cooper County, voiced concern about the new plan and the physicians it covers. For her and her daughters, it would mean giving up the nurse practitioner in Pilot Grove they've seen for years.

"She sees my whole family," Jackson said.

Jackson is faced with a tough decision. When asked about what she'll do, she paused for several seconds.
"I don't want to have to find new doctors," Jackson said finally. "And until they force me to do that, I guess I'll pay higher premiums."

Joy Millard, who works at MU Extension, also faces a tough decision because of her family. If Millard chooses the Custom Network Plan and something happens to her son, who lives out of state, she would pay out-of-network prices for him to see a doctor. She's chosen the PPO Plan in the past, and she may have to enroll in it again.

"I think there are good options," she said. "But my son lives in California. His work is ... there's a potential health risk."

Stuck had some advice for people like Jackson and Millard, who are worried about their choice:

"(I)n this situation, I would advise the individual to choose one of the other two plans if they would like to continue to use a provider that is not in the Custom Network Plan," she said via email. "In addition, the employee can request to have a provider added to the network. Coventry would then contact the provider and see if they are willing to meet the criteria to be included in the network."

Representatives from Coventry did not respond to requests for interviews about the criteria for becoming an affiliate. Stuck said the physician would have to meet the discount requested by Coventry, but she was unable to expand on the criteria as the discussions are solely between the insurer and the health care provider.

Jackson and Millard aren't alone in their fears. At a recent meeting attended by 15 UM System employees, several expressed the same anxiety about losing their doctor or paying more in premiums.

But not everyone's worried about the changes. Daniel Domingues, who teaches history at MU, was happy with the options and said he understood why the university was making changes. He said he felt well-informed about the plans' details, and he planned to enroll in the Custom Network Plan.

"I think they're doing a good job," he said.

Laura Lindsey also said she was happy with the options. She works in marketing for MU Extension and said she expected to choose the Healthy Savings Plan because of the health savings account.
"I don't go to the doctor all that often, and the health savings account is good," she said.

**Expanding mental health and wellness resources**

Although the majority of the doctors and health care providers for the new plan are affiliated with MU Health Care, the Custom Network Plan still offers non-university physicians. At a town hall meeting last week, Kelli Holland, manager for communications and training at Total Rewards, said the system is expanding its network to fill holes left in coverage. One of them is in mental health services.

"There is a national shortage of mental health professionals," she said. "To ensure our (Custom Network Plan) members have adequate coverage, we are using the expanded Coventry mental health network through **MHNet**."

MHNet is Coventry's behavioral health program. It pays for treatment for conditions such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

There's also a shortage of family practice physicians, but Holland said some communities who do not have an MU clinic or affiliated primary care doctor could soon have one as the network is expanded.

Although the university is aware of gaps in coverage and has taken steps to fill them, employees are still expressing concerns about the cost of seeing physicians not covered by the new plan. Should Jackson choose the Custom Network Plan and still want to see her nurse practitioner, her deductible would be $500. She would be billed for appointments until she meets that deductible. After that, she would pay 30 percent of the cost until she meets her out-of-pocket maximum of $7,500.

That can hit the wallet hard.

"When you're on a fixed income it doesn't leave you a lot of options," she said.

In comparison to the PPO Plan and the Healthy Savings Plan, the Custom Network Plan's prices are square in the middle. The out-of-network deductible is slightly above the $350 standard deductible available for PPO, but still much cheaper than the $1,500 figure from the Healthy Savings Plan.
Although she's leaning toward the PPO, Flesner said she's still anxious about picking a plan because of her chronic health problems and because she fears divulging too much information about her health problems to an insurer.

"I'm a little nervous," she said with a smile.

Steelman picked for University of Missouri Board of Curators
Friday, September 26, 2014 | 5:37 p.m. CDT
BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA — Gov. Jay Nixon has appointed former political rival David Steelman to the Board of Curators of the University of Missouri.

Steelman's appointment Friday fills the lone vacancy on the nine-member board that oversees the university's campuses in Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis.

Steelman is a Republican attorney from Rolla who served for six years in the Missouri House of Representatives starting in 1979, including as the minority party leader. He ran unsuccessfully for attorney general against Nixon in 1992.

David Steelman is the husband of Sarah Steelman, a former state treasurer and senator who ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2008.

Steelman's appointment to the Board of Curators would run until January 2019, if he is confirmed by the Senate. He will represent the 8th Congressional District on the university board.
Gov. Jay Nixon appointed David Steelman, a lawyer from Rolla and former state representative, as the 8th Congressional District representative to the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

Steelman, a Republican, served in the Missouri House of Representatives during the late 1970s. His wife, Sarah, was a gubernatorial candidate in 2008 and a senatorial candidate in 2012. Both of her campaigns ended after unsuccessful primaries.

Steelman is a managing and senior partner at Steelman, Gaunt and Horsefield in Rolla.

In a news release, Nixon called Steelman “an accomplished professional, a respected public servant and proud University of Missouri alum.” Steelman graduated from MU in 1978.

Curator Wayne Goode said Steelman will make “a great curator.” Goode, a Democrat, served in the Missouri House and Senate for more than 40 years. Steelman and Goode served in the House together for several years.

“He is definitely a Republican but was the kind of Republican that was very easy to work with over the years,” Goode said. “He takes the reasonable approach to things. In the time I’ve been on the board, particularly the last four or five years, we’ve had zero partisan disagreements. We might disagree over an issue for a logical reason, but we work together and get those issues worked out. Just haven’t had those kinds of battles. He will fit in well with that.”

Curator David Bradley echoed the sentiment at the Missouri Press Association conference.

“David is very knowledgeable about the status of Missouri and what’s going on at the university,” he said. “He’s well-liked as far as I can tell, and he’s got his ear to the ground. He’d be a great curator.” Steelman's appointment to the Board of Curators would run until January 2019 if he is confirmed by the Senate.
New UM Curator appointed

By JONATHAN FENTON - SEP 26, 2014

Governor Jay Nixon appointed David Steelman of Rolla, to serve on the University Of Missouri Board Of Curators. The board oversees the operation of the four-Campus University of Missouri system.

"I am confident his depth of experience and commitment to higher education will serve the students, faculty and staff of the University of Missouri well," Said Gov. Jay Nixon in a press release.

Steelman, a University of Missouri Alum is managing and senior partner at Steelman, Gaunt and Horsefield in Rolla.

"David Steelman has a long record of public service in the State of Missouri," said Press Secretary Scott Holste. "He is well respected in that regard. He is well respected as an attorney too," he added.

Republican floor leader. Republican David Steelman and his wife Sarah Steelman have a history of running against Governor Nixon.

David Steelman ran unsuccessfully for attorney general against Nixon in 1992. While Sarah Steelman, a former state treasurer and state senator ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2008. She lost in the Republican primary to Kenny Hulshof, who eventually lost to Nixon in the General Election.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia, Boone County, MU celebrate 175 years of community partnership
Friday, September 26, 2014 | 8:21 p.m. CDT

BY ALEX LEININGER

COLUMBIA – The city of Columbia, Boone County and MU will mark 175 years of community partnership with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and proclamations from city and county representatives on Monday at City Hall Plaza.

The ceremony will kick off an exhibit in City Hall featuring MU artifacts from the past 175 years. They include a vintage Tiger mascot costume, a grade book belonging to Walter Williams, founding dean of the Missouri School of Journalism, and the ceremonial mace made for Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin's inauguration.

The mace, made of wood from MU's Switzler Hall, includes a 3-D replica of Jesse Hall and medallions engraved with university symbols, according to previous Missourian reporting.

The city and the university have always been mutually beneficial to each another, according to Amy Schneider, director of general operations at the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"A recent economic impact study showed that MU ticketing events to city residents raised $142 million from just athletics alone," Schneider said.

"But there's also indirect economic impact, because students that go here will often stay to live here after graduation, or at the very least will come back to visit."

The ceremony will take place at 5:15 p.m. at Eighth Street and Broadway. The event is free and open to the public.
MU, city and county to celebrate 175 years

Saturday, September 27, 2014 at 12:00 am

The University of Missouri, city of Columbia and Boone County will celebrate 175 years of community partnerships at a ceremony Monday afternoon. This year marks MU’s 175th anniversary.

The event will include proclamations from Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid and Boone County Presiding Commissioner Dan Atwill, organizers said in a news release. MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin will attend as well as “representatives from Mizzou’s founding families.” A ribbon-cutting will follow the proclamations, along with an announcement from MU student leaders about the homecoming celebrations slated for Oct. 25.

The event is at 5:15 p.m. at the City Hall plaza at Broadway and Eighth Street. The event is free and open to the public.

After the event, an exhibit in City Hall display cases will feature artifacts from MU’s 175-year history, including the mace made for the chancellor’s inauguration.

University of Missouri team finds way to fight cancer with communication

September 29, 2014 By Mike Lear

Researchers at the University of Missouri might have found a way to fight cancer by interrupting its communication.

Those researchers were studying a molecule used by bacteria to communicate. That molecule would allow bacteria to tell one another to do things like multiply, to flee from a body’s immune system, or to stop spreading.

Assistant Research Professor Senthil Kumar says the team then made a discovery “by accident.”
“We’ve found that this molecule can be effectively used against cancer cells,” says Kumar, by introducing the same molecule to cancer cells. It can be used to tell cancer cells to stop spreading, or even to die. “The cancer cells migrate to form metastasis in the distant organs … we are able to stop that migration when we use this compound. We also found that the genes responsible for this migration can be influenced by this compound.”

Much more research must be done before the technique will be tried on humans, but so far it’s shown promising results against one of the most treatment resistant cancers there is: pancreatic.

In the study published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE, Kumar and co-author Jeffrey Bryan, an associate professor in the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, treated pancreatic cancer cells and were successful in ceasing their multiplication. The cells failed to migrate and began to die. “Because this treatment shows promise in such an aggressive cancer like pancreatic cancer, we believe it could be used in other types of cancer cells and our lab is in the process of testing this treatment in other types of cancer,” says Kumar.

The next step, he says, is to find a more efficient way to introduce the molecules to the cancer cells. “At this time, we are only able to treat cancer cells with this molecule in a laboratory setting.”

MU gets grants for supercomputer equipment, engineering position

By ASHLEY JOST
Saturday, September 27, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (3)

The National Science Foundation has awarded the University of Missouri $1 million in two grants to install a supercomputer for data-intensive research and fund a cyberinfrastructure engineer.

Officials hope the added manpower and equipment will lead to a network of data analysis for all of the UM System campuses to access.

This would be very similar to a virtual cloud system where information — in this case, research data — can be called down to a computer that is connected to the secured cloud.
“Research advancements sometimes are hampered by the ability to process the huge amounts of data scientists are collecting,” Chi-Ren Shyu, chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in the College of Engineering and director of the Informatics Institute at MU, said in a news release.

He added that researchers with tasks that hinge on computer data have to rely on outside ways to “crunch” the data, which adds weeks and months to the timeline.

“With the advancement of cloud computing and Big Data technologies, researchers can cut that time and produce results more efficiently,” he said in the statement. “The advanced equipment provided by this grant will enable scientists and engineers to team with computational researchers to understand the bottleneck of data analytics and identify efficient hybrid computer cloud environments for faster and more accurate scientific discoveries.”

Prasad Calyam, assistant professor of computer science and leader of the cyberinfrastructure engineer project at MU, said the three-year, $600,408 grant is matched with about $26,000 from MU to help fund the new supercomputer.

MU has a version of a supercomputer now, and much — though it has yet to be determined how much — of that machine will be retired and removed from the campus’ information technology hub and replaced with what the university buys with the grant and added commitment.

Details about the machine the school will purchase are yet to be determined, Calyam said, but he said the school probably will get a mixture of brands for different parts of the operation, rather than buying everything from one place. This allows the school to buy what will work with the existing infrastructure at the university. The exact speed and size of the network space is undetermined as well.

When the old parts are transitioned out and newly purchased parts are brought in, that process will happen in phases to help make the transition of existing data easier.

Supercomputers are not new technology for universities.

A website, top500.org, which ranks supercomputers internationally by speed, includes many of the universities that have received grant money for the major purchase such as MU.

According to the website’s June rankings, the University of Texas’ Advanced Computing Center in Austin ranks in the top 10 as No. 7. The Austin-based supercomputer is capable of more than 5,000 teraflops. Flops, which stands for floating-point operations per second, is a measure of computer performance. By comparison, the fastest supercomputer on the list, the National Supercomputer Center in China, is capable of almost 34,000 teraflops.
The only other U.S. higher education institutions with supercomputers ranking in the top 50 is Purdue University in Indiana. Several more across the country made the top 100 list.

The second NSF grant is about $400,000 to hire a cyberinfrastructure engineer who will collaborate with researchers to create tools to adapt to the new network. Calyam said it’s an expansive role that will include working to understand how researchers can better work with cloud computing.

September 29, 2014

California Shifts to ‘Yes Means Yes’ Standard for College Sex

By Jared Misner

Gov. Jerry Brown of California signed legislation on Sunday that explicitly requires colleges and universities that receive state funds to define consent in students’ sexual encounters in terms of "yes means yes" rather than the traditional "no means no."

Mr. Brown’s signing of the "affirmative consent" bill ushers in a new era in the debate about how to curb sexual assaults on college campuses.

A 2007 study by the National Institute of Justice found that one in five women will be sexually assaulted in college. Congress, state lawmakers, and activists have recently been applying intense pressure on colleges to compel them to strengthen their policies against sexual assault.

At California colleges, students must now ensure they have the affirmative consent of their partners at the beginning of a sexual encounter and maintain that consent throughout the activity. The law states that consent "can be revoked at any time." The absence of "no," the law says, is insufficient to indicate consent.
The bill’s supporters, who include activists who this month delivered a petition to Mr. Brown’s office urging him to sign the bill, have hailed the measure as an important step in clarifying the standard colleges should use in investigating sexual-assault cases. Some critics have warned, however, that the law tramples on the due-process rights of accused students.

The debate shows that defining consent can be tricky. The Chronicle compiled a sampling of colleges’ sexual-assault policies, highlighting the differences and similarities in how they define consent.

'Case-by-Case Basis'

Some institutions, like Oberlin College, recognize the nuances and difficulties in defining consent and don’t try to define the term broadly. Instead, Oberlin says that consent must be judged on a "case-by-case basis." Like many other colleges, Oberlin notes that consent cannot be given when someone is asleep, unconscious, or intoxicated.

The United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., like other military-service academies, has drawn scrutiny over its response to reported sexual assaults. West Point’s policy states that sexual violence is "incompatible with Army values" and punishable under state and federal law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The academy’s policy states that sexual assault occurs when a victim cannot or does not give consent, but the policy does not offer a precise definition of the term.

When asked about West Point’s definition of consent, Francis J. DeMaro Jr., a spokesman for the service academy, provided The Chronicle with a slide from a rape-prevention program that cadets and staff members are required to attend annually. "Consent will not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance," the slide states. Some colleges, similar to California’s affirmative-consent law, acknowledge that the absence of a verbal "no" does not mean the same as "yes." The policies at private institutions like Amherst College and Yale University echo the rules at public colleges like the University of North Carolina at Asheville and the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

"Consent is an understandable exchange of affirmative actions or words which indicate an active, knowing, and voluntary agreement to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity," reads Asheville’s policy.
Later, it says, "a person is not required to physically resist sexual conduct in order to show lack of consent."

Amherst’s sexual-misconduct policy includes a lengthy statement that says consent must be "knowing and voluntary," consisting of an "outward demonstration" that an individual has chosen to have sex.

‘Effective Consent’
The College of William & Mary is among colleges that have "effective consent" policies. William & Mary’s policy defines consent using the following guidelines, among others:

- Is mutually understandable when a reasonable person would consider the words or actions of the parties to have manifested an understandable agreement between them to do the same thing, in the same way, at the same time, and with one another
- Is not merely the absence of a verbally stated "no."
- Is never final or irrevocable.

Some colleges, like Sarah Lawrence College and Clark University, acknowledge the different ways that students can obtain consent, through verbal and nonverbal means.

"Ideally, consent is given verbally," Sarah Lawrence’s policy states. "However, consent (or lack of consent) may also be expressed through gestures, body language, and/or attitude. For example, active reciprocation could express consent, and pushing someone away, or simply moving away, could express lack of consent."

Clark University uses similar language on a web page called "Consent 101 or: Doing It With the Lights On." Clark states that it "strongly encourages" students to communicate their intentions verbally, but acknowledges that people can express consent nonverbally by "nodding, removing clothes, proceeding with the proposed activity," and other means.
MU seems conflicted on climate change

By JOHANN N. BRUHN

Sunday, September 28, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (5)

I’ve spent 20 years of my career on the faculty at the University of Missouri. I’m told I’m a member of the MU family, and I take that seriously. I want MU to live up to my affection for it, so I find myself needing to offer the university a dose of tough love.

Throughout my college education, I have thought of the nation’s university system as a bastion of objective investigation, society’s firewall against corporate and government propaganda and shortsightedness. But as public support for universities has waned over the years, I have watched universities turn increasingly to corporations for financial support. This support can become problematic when the aegis of the university is used to inappropriately support an industry’s point of view. While the situation is far from out of control at MU, there was a troubling example early last month.

In my view — as a forest health specialist with more than four decades of experience — and in the views of about 97 percent of climate scientists worldwide, climate change poses the most serious threat ever to humanity. Exhibits A and B are the latest sets of reports issued this year by two independent organizations: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the U.S. National Climate Assessment. These documents make it clear that global climate change is accelerating largely because of human release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Globally, August was the warmest on record, and this summer is tied for the fourth-warmest.

Exhibit C is the REMI (Regional Economic Modeling Inc.) report contracted by Citizens’ Climate Lobby. This study shows we can reduce emissions, create jobs and grow the economy by enacting a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend. The economic benefits of transitioning to cleaner energy sources are further supported by the recent report from the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate.

Yet fossil fuel companies buy influence, not only in Congress but also in universities, to perpetuate their destructive exploitation of Earth’s fossil-fuel reserves. In the process, these corporate entities destroy entire landscapes while despoiling the air, water and soil in ways that affect every aspect of our lives, from public health to global stability.
The kicker is they don’t pay anywhere near the costs to society of their actions. They expect us to be grateful for the “cheap” energy they provide. Thanks, but no thanks!

I found it infuriating to read “Utility-Sponsored Teacher Training At Mizzou Brings Climate Skepticism and Anti-EPA Message” in the Huffington Post and “Mizzou Class Educates Educators About Energy” on the CoMo Electric Cooperative website. A group of Missouri’s Rural Electric Cooperatives, Ameren and MU teamed up to misinform a group of 23 Missouri high school teachers that there is serious scientific debate about the need to reduce fossil fuel emissions. No one presented the scientific consensus. This is simply reprehensible. MU is quick to advertise its “greenness,” but covert programs such as this only leave one wondering where the university’s heart is. MU needs to do a much better job of vetting the programs that take place under its umbrella.

There are excellent solutions to the developing climate crisis, in the form of solar, wind, geothermal and other rapidly developing, much cleaner sources of energy. Ironically, even as these clean energy sources become less expensive, the burden of the long-lived greenhouse gases we continue to liberate from fossil fuels increases the duration and severity of the developing climate crisis. There is no time to waste.

Why don’t electric cooperatives see the sun (smell the roses) and embrace clean energy sources as fast as they can? Let’s put a price on fossil fuels at their source, with all revenue returned to U.S. households. This market-based solution avoids growing the government, captures the external costs of burning fossil fuels (pollution as well as myriad public health impacts) and creates a level playing field for cleaner alternative fuels. It will stimulate innovation and will also help rural electric cooperatives make the transition to clean energy without creating financial hardship for their members.

Meanwhile, we must pursue every option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible. Personally: I have installed solar panels on my roof; I’ve divested fossil fuel companies from my retirement investments; and I am constantly finding new ways to conserve my use of electricity.

Please do whatever you can, and that goes for MU as well.

Johann N. Bruhn, Ph.D., is a Columbia resident and an emeritus research associate professor at MU. He has studied forest health professionally for more than 40 years. He can be contacted at bruhnj@missouri.edu.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Hammock users, swing at your own risk at MU, city parks

Friday, September 26, 2014 | 4:59 p.m. CDT; updated 7:11 p.m. CDT, Friday, September 26, 2014

BY ELLISE VERHEYN

COLUMBIA — Brent Doering was swinging in his hammock south of Jesse Hall one late July afternoon when a man walked out of Jesse and told him to leave the area.

Surprised, Doering, an MU sophomore, asked whether using his hammock was against university rules — he'd done it before and had not been stopped. Without answering, the man told Doering it would make his job easier if he'd leave and go to Peace Park.

Doering went but was confused; he assumed that if he wasn't allowed near Jesse he wouldn't be allowed anywhere else on campus. After a half-hour in Peace Park, two police officers appeared and told Doering to take down his hammock again.

If you're a hammock lover, little can compare to a gentle sway on a fall afternoon, reading, napping or just watching the world go by. But if you're seen at MU, you may be asked to take your hammock down.

Capt. Brian Weimer of the MU Police Department said officers have been instructed by MU Campus Facilities to ask anyone hanging hammocks from campus trees to take them down due to the potential damage they could cause.

There are no hammock-specific regulations for MU, though Weimer did reference Section 1:070 of the Business Policy and Procedures Online Manual, which states: "No posters, signs or other articles shall be pasted, nailed, taped, stapled, or otherwise attached to any part of the interior or exterior (including windows and doors) or university buildings or light posts, telephone poles, trees, trash receptacles, or automobile windshields except as approved by Administrative Services."
Using trees as the anchors for a hammock can damage bark and even kill trees. In order to safely hang hammocks in parks and other wooded areas, use the following tips to preserve the health of anchoring trees. (GRAPHIC: Abigail Keel/Missourian)

Hammocks can technically fall under the "other" portion of the clause, Weimer said. So far, no tickets have been issued to hammock users on campus, but people have been asked to take them down, he said.

"Our priority is the safety of our students, faculty and staff," said Karlan Seville, communications manager of MU Campus Facilities. No one is allowed to set up hammocks on campus to avoid injury as well as to protect MU property, she said in an email.
"We have invested a lot of time and money into beautifying the campus and want to ensure that our trees are not damaged by hammock use or climbing," Seville wrote.

There is no solution for hammock use at this time, she wrote, but it may be an issue for a student group to address with administration.

The Columbia Parks and Recreation Department has a similar regulation, which states: "It shall be unlawful for any person in a park to damage, cut, carve, transplant or remove any tree ... Nor shall any person attach any rope, wire, or other contrivance to any tree or plant."

These regulations include popular parks such as Stephens Lake, Cosmopolitan and Capen.

Tammy Miller, public information specialist for Parks and Recreation, said, "Our ranger told me she has never written a citation for a hammock but has issued the warnings."

One of the main concerns for trees is that the suspension systems used to hang the hammocks will damage the bark and cambium, or inner, layers of the trees. However, there is such a thing as "tree saver" straps — wide straps made out of nylon or polyester webbing that go around the tree to minimize damage. Tree saver straps can take the place of non-tree-friendly material, such as plastic zip cords. They also eliminate the need to hammer or screw anything into the trees.

For his part, Doering said he would like to see the use of hammocks specifically addressed so that it would be clear to all.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
John Mack Carter, 86, Is Dead; Led Women’s Magazines

By LESLIE KAUFMAN

SEPT. 26, 2014

John Mack Carter, a Kentucky-born journalist who had the singular distinction of editing all of the so-called Big Three women’s magazines and, in doing so, helped transform the genre during the feminist era, died on Friday at his home in Bronxville, N.Y. He was 86.

The cause was Parkinson’s disease, his wife, Sharlyn Carter, said.

Mr. Carter edited McCall’s from 1961 to 1965, Ladies’ Home Journal from 1965 to 1974 and Good Housekeeping from 1975 to 1994. He is believed to be the only person to edit all three.

Mr. Carter was already a veteran editor of women’s magazines when, in March 1970, more than 100 feminists led by Susan Brownmiller stormed Ladies’ Home Journal and held an 11-hour sit-in at his office. Some of the women perched on his desk and smoked cigars.

The protesters wanted Mr. Carter to resign and be replaced by a woman. They demanded that the magazine run a “liberated” issue. And they called for the magazine to offer services friendly to women, like day care.

Mr. Carter said he planned to keep his job but was willing to negotiate on the rest of their concerns. In the August issue, the magazine included an eight-page insert written by 30 of the protesters tackling topics like childbirth, divorce and feminist consciousness-raising. In a note to readers about the contributors, however, Mr. Carter cautioned that the editors “do not agree with many of the assumptions their arguments rest on.”

Mr. Carter was no stranger to adding pithier, topical content to women’s magazines. In 1961, at the age of 33, he became editor in chief of McCall’s and immediately began updating it, replacing what he characterized as stories about virtuous women with reported
articles about housing costs, medical insurance and other subjects affecting women.

“Women’s magazines were badly behind the times,” he told The New York Times in an interview in 1963. “They were using baby talk to communicate with their readers. They were failing to keep up with the rising educational levels in this country.”

Still, on reflection in his later years, after he had become outspoken on issues like sexual harassment and job discrimination, he acknowledged that the turning point in his thinking did not come until the sit-in at Ladies’ Home Journal.

“There was more discrimination than I thought,” Hearst quoted him as saying in a biographical sketch. “I didn’t push our women readers far enough in their awareness.”

John Mack Carter was born on Feb. 28, 1928, in Murray, Ky. His journalism career began in high school, when he worked part time for a tiny local paper. But after receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees in journalism from the University of Missouri, the latter in 1949, he joined Better Homes & Gardens because, he said, the pay was so much better than what newspapers offered.

Except for a short stint as a commissioned naval officer during the Korean War, he remained with women’s magazines for the rest of his career, never officially retiring, his family said.

Under his leadership as editor in chief, Good Housekeeping, a Hearst publication, won two National Magazine Awards in the Personal Service category, in 1989 and 1993.

He is also credited with starting the now-common practice among women’s magazines of putting celebrities on the cover.

“The idea was revolutionary at the time, and massive, immediate circulation growth followed,” Frank A. Bennack Jr., a former chief executive of Hearst, said in the company’s biography of Mr. Carter.

Mr. Carter was so well regarded as a moneymaker that he was eventually put in charge of Hearst Magazine Enterprises, an entrepreneurial branch of the company. Over the years, he had a hand in creating many Hearst titles, including SmartMoney (a joint venture with Dow Jones), Marie Claire and Country Living.

Mr. Carter was inducted into the American Society of Magazine Editors Hall of Fame in 2000. He received a plethora of awards and
tributes from women’s groups, among them the Advertising Women of New York, New York Women in Communications and the National Women’s Political Caucus, which named him one of its “Good Guys” in 1985 for his commitment to the goal of full equality for women.

He was also one of the first male members of the Association for Women in Communications.

In addition to his wife of 66 years, the former Sharlyn Reaves, Mr. Carter is survived by a daughter, Jonna Carter; a son, John Mack Carter II; his twin sister, Carolyn Carter Reagan; and four grandchildren.

Is Journalism Education Changing Fast Enough?

By Eric Newton

Last week at the Online News Association convention in Chicago, we did a “lighting round” on our update of Searchlights and Sunglasses, the free digital learning resource Knight Foundation offered up last year to journalism education.

Did we just say the first edition launched last year? That seems like a lifetime ago — maybe because, in iPhone years, it is. If anything, the accelerating pace of change reinforces the Searchlights and Sunglasses message: We in journalism and journalism education still aren’t changing fast enough.

Searchlights and Sunglasses: Field Notes From the Digital Age of Journalism, by Eric Newton

That said, we see hopeful signs of change — “green shoots,” we are calling them. They take the form of new classes, projects, tracks and degrees. Indicators of hope include the number of members in Online News Association’s educators group on Facebook, which has almost doubled to more than 700. Even better, some 125 journalism schools — roughly a quarter of all schools and programs in the U.S. — applied for the Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education.

In the update we’ve added many new links and lessons, everything from Weird Al’s Word Crimes video to a better explanation of the “teaching hospital” form of journalism education. I
won’t list them here because, frankly, I’d rather you to join the 20,000 people who have already taken a look at the resource.

We’re also looking forward to an event at the end of October with our project partner, the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri, to celebrate Searchlights and Sunglasses 2.0 and hear from folks bringing new ideas to journalism education.

One of the best changes we made to 2.0 was to emphasize the #EdShift Twitter hashtag, which includes your comments and tracks the activities here at EducationShift. So if we didn’t see you at the Online News Association conference, we hope we’ll see your comments here and on the #EdShift feed.

This post first appeared on the Knight Blog, a product of the Knight Foundation.

Eric Newton joined Knight Foundation in 2001. He is senior adviser to the president. In the journalism program at Knight he helped develop more than $300 million in grants. Previously, Newton was founding managing editor of the Newseum, leading the content team at the world’s first museum of news. He started at California newspapers. As city editor, assistant managing editor and managing editor of the Oakland Tribune under Bob and Nancy Maynard, he helped the paper win more than 150 awards, including a Pulitzer Prize. Follow him on Twitter @EricNewton1.

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September 29, 2014

Cosmopolitan Creatures

A surprising variety of winged species are answering the call of the not-so-wild.

By Libby Sander

Last year a wildlife biologist spent four days bird-watching in Yellowstone National Park, one of America’s most pristine wild lands. By the time he left, he had tallied 26 species. Soon after, he traveled to New York’s Central Park. In two days he counted 31.

There was nothing scientific about either trip: just a man and his binoculars, looking for birds. But the findings contradicted what he had learned as a conservation biologist: that cities—destructive, disruptive, and, for some species, lethal—were bad for wildlife. So how could it be
that Central Park, as well as neighborhoods in other cities he and his fellow scientists had studied in recent years, boasted such an impressive array of birds?

John Marzluff, the scientist, is well known for his research on, among other topics, the intelligence of crows and ravens. In his new book, Welcome to Subirdia: Sharing Our Neighborhoods With Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife (Yale University Press), Marzluff examines the effects of urbanization on a variety of birds.

In more than a decade of research in and around Seattle, where he is a professor of wildlife science at the University of Washington, Marzluff and a small army of graduate students discovered a consistent pattern: Bird diversity grew from the city center, peaked in the suburbs, and dropped again in the forested areas between Seattle and the Cascades.

"We had discovered subirdia," Marzluff writes. "Now I was really perplexed."

Sprawl, after all, has contributed to the demise of many creatures. And climate change threatens, too: Scientists with the National Audubon Society warned this month that warmer temperatures will force nearly half of North American bird species to live in smaller ranges within decades; those that can’t adapt may go extinct. Yet subirdia—"the confluence between city and country that promotes a mutual exchange of plants and animals," as Marzluff defines it—is clearly an avian hub.

Researchers studying other species of wildlife have been similarly intrigued by these not-so-wild places. Until recently, many scientists and scholars regarded humans and urban areas as the antithesis of nature. But as urban ecology has matured, an interdisciplinary web of researchers including biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and others are training an ever-inquisitive gaze on the soil, water, plants, insects, and animals of cities and suburbs. At the Ecological Society of America’s annual meeting last month, for instance, dozens of presentations explored urban questions: tree communities in Portland, Ore.; spiders in Central California city gardens; migratory birds who rest on a third of an acre of parkland in Newark, N.J.

For some species, urban and suburban development is traumatic and costly, as disruptive as any eviction notice. But others thrive.
For many birds, the suburbs, as Marzluff explains, afford a wide variety of habitats. The trees, flowers, shrubs, ponds, and bird feeders that dot our neighborhoods make them attractive to many species. Add the golf courses, office parks, and retention ponds that are hallmarks of many suburban landscapes, and subirdia becomes downright appealing.

To explain why some species flourish and others decline in the face of rapid environmental changes, Marzluff invokes a trio of terms coined by Robert Blair, a conservation biologist at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities: avoiders, adapters, and exploiters.

Avoiders, like the red-eyed vireo and the wood thrush, are sensitive species that flee the pavement, abundant lights, pollution, and noise of urban and suburban areas. Adapters, meanwhile, adjust to the changing landscapes of cities and towns that approximate their native habitats. "If they were plants, we’d call them weeds," Marzluff writes, noting that these birds—finches, other thrushes, sparrows, and crows among them—live fast, reproduce often, and die young.

Exploiters do just fine around humans and the structures we build; in fact, they rarely exist in places without people. Among them are the familiar "fab five," as Marzluff calls them, present in nearly every city scientists have studied: the Canada goose, European starling, house sparrow, mallard, and rock pigeon.

But how or when do certain avoiders decline? When, and in what order, do adapters or exploiters appear? Are the gains and losses sudden or gradual? These are among the questions Marzluff and his students set out to answer.

Seattle, they noticed, was changing and developing at a rapid pace, so in addition to established neighborhoods, they examined forests slated for residential development. The researchers employed two methods. The first is a common tool in wildlife monitoring known as a point count, used to document changes in bird populations.

Every summer for 12 years, researchers visited 26 designated points across suburban Seattle;
over the course of the study, they visited more than 100 sites at least once. At each point, researchers stood quietly, watching and listening for as many birds as they could detect.

Spot mapping, the second technique, provides additional context through close observation of individual birds over the course of their lives: Do the birds live nearby, or are they flitting in to partake of birdseed at backyard feeders? Are their populations sustainable? How long do they live?

Disguised in some cases as construction workers or prospective home-buyers, researchers poked around backyard bushes and street corners at odd hours to catch and color-band birds, and to find their nests. (Neighbors, police officers, and contractors were, at best, curious.) By 2010, the team had tallied more than 55,000 individual birds, representing 111 species. They concluded that the fab five, along with the American crow and the house finch, did fine. Adapters like **song sparrows** and **spotted towhees** fared well, too, as residential development turned forests into clearings.

But for a handful of the species Marzluff and his students tracked, like the tiny **Pacific wren** and the **Swainson’s thrush**, life in subirdia appeared to trigger a nomadic, and ultimately unsuccessful, search for a suitable home. By the end of the study, Marzluff had deemed the Pacific wren—"the icon of unsettled northwestern forests"—one of subirdia’s clear casualties.

As a graduate student in the 1980s, Marzluff did a study of pinyon jays in Flagstaff, Ariz. When he and his fellow researchers sent out the paper for review, he recalls in a recent interview, they received the same caveat each time: "This is a town," the reviewers reminded them. "Everything you’re seeing is different."

In those days, "real" nature meant wilderness, unsullied by human hands. Biologists sought pristine locations for their research. But during the 1990s, that thinking began to shift. Cities and suburbs offered unique ecosystems of their own.

Many of the ecological patterns and processes of urban landscapes were similar to those that occur in a natural scenario—competition, predation, decomposition. But there were unique aspects to urban environments, too, that piqued scientists’ curiosity, says Nancy E. McIntyre, professor of biological sciences and curator of birds at Texas Tech University's Natural Science
Research Laboratory. Some stressors and selective forces at work in cities were different than those in forested or "natural" areas, she explains.

In the late 1990s, the National Science Foundation began funding ecosystem studies in Baltimore and Phoenix as part of its Long-Term Ecological Research Network. (Most of the network’s other two dozen or so sites, some of which have been under way since the early 1980s, are not located in urban areas.) Drawing on the expertise of researchers in the biological, physical, and social sciences, the studies aim to track the two cities’ ecosystems as their metropolitan areas grow and change.

The Baltimore research, led by Steward T.A. Pickett of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, includes a bird-monitoring project that has continued for more than a decade. In gritty and tony neighborhoods, vacant lots, and city parks, field technicians spend every summer tracking bird populations at 132 sites. Researchers visit each site and take up the point-count method also favored by Marzluff, using a stopwatch as they look and listen for birds.

Ela-Sita Carpenter, an aspiring wildlife biologist and native Baltimorean, was the bird-monitoring project’s field crew leader this summer. On a recent morning, she’s standing on a gravel road in a forested swath of parkland in West Baltimore. It’s one of the most verdant points in the study’s constellation of sites.

A typical outing to this spot might yield sightings of American robins, American goldfinches, house finches, chimney swifts, and gray catbirds. On this day, an eastern wood pewee—by Marzluff’s definition, an avoider that thrives only in wooded areas—trills its eponymous song, and a Carolina chickadee scolds from a nearby branch. Carpenter has heard a great horned owl here, hooting at dusk. Once she spotted a common nighthawk.

By design, the study oversamples the city’s neighborhoods, to better understand how changes in residential areas affect birds, says Charles Nilon, a professor of fisheries and wildlife at the University of Missouri at Columbia, who oversees the Baltimore study’s bird monitoring. Researchers have found that Baltimore is indeed home to an astonishing array of birds. In the city alone, they’ve detected one-third to one-half of the 130 species the Baltimore Bird Club has tallied in a region that also includes suburban Baltimore County.
But the study includes a handful of points in industrial areas, too. One lies southwest of downtown, not far from the Fort McHenry Channel, just outside the locked gates of a storage facility for refined petroleum. It seems like a place that even the most intrepid adapters or exploiters would find hard going: Aside from a couple of trees and shrubs, the area is all pavement and barbed wire, rutted roads ferrying trucks to and from nearby waste-water-treatment plants, rail yards, and asphalt manufacturers. But birds do live here: Since 2005, researchers have documented 23 species, including the killdeer, purple finch, and eastern kingbird.

On this day, no birds were visible. But as we headed back downtown, looping along a vertiginous cloverleaf over the middle branch of the Patapsco River, a dark speck appeared in the hazy sky. An osprey, wings beating, soared above the interstate and the hum of Baltimore’s urban habitat far below.

Madhusudan V. Katti has a metaphor for cities: coral reefs. Mollusks build them, presumably for their own purposes. Yet they are vast, complex structures, home to flora and fauna of astonishing diversity. The human metropolis is no different, says Katti, an associate professor of biology at California State University at Fresno. "Why do we think of cities as artificial just because humans built them?"

For an evolutionary ecologist, he adds, urban areas also offer a rare opportunity. Hurricanes or volcanoes are powerful disturbances that can bring about major changes in an ecosystem. So is development. But there’s a difference: "I can’t interview the hurricane," Katti says, "but I can talk to people."

STORY CONTINUES...
Before the superintendent of Fox schools agreed to retire, district residents were outraged to hear how much her pay had shot up in the less than 10 years she held that post.

Dianne Critchlow’s salary had nearly doubled since 2005, making it one of the highest for superintendents statewide last year. Had she stayed with the district for 2014-15, she was set to pull in about $267,500. Even when adjusted for inflation, the Fox School District increased spending on the position nearly $98,000, or about 60 percent, during her tenure.

While her salary was steep, other districts in the St. Louis area and across the state also have significantly upped their spending on superintendents in the last decade, according to an analysis of Missouri data by the Post-Dispatch. According to the findings:

• Superintendent salaries at area districts have increased nearly 30 percent in the last 10 years, faster than the rate of inflation. Among 52 districts in the region, the median salary is now $170,000. Ten years ago, it was $131,000, or $165,000 in today’s dollars.

• In the 10 largest school districts in the area, the median pay is now $225,000, up from $157,600 10 years ago, or $198,000 adjusted for inflation.

• Nine superintendents regionally made at least $200,000 last year, four of whom lead districts with fewer than 7,000 students, well above the median salary nationally of $150,000 for similarly sized districts. Tops is $264,025 in Kirkwood, where Tom Williams is the highest-paid superintendent in the region this year and second in the state. Gov. Jay Nixon makes about $134,000.

• Fox had the biggest increase in district spending dollar-wise for that position among six area counties, as well as the city of St. Louis. Lindbergh schools had the second-highest inflation-adjusted increase for the position’s salary at $55,800, or 31 percent, from 2004 to 2014. Warren County was third, with a change of $52,900, or 45 percent.

The spike in some superintendent salaries is partly caused by an evolution in the job itself, market experts say. More accountability and pressure — bringing up scores in a struggling
district or maintaining a high-performer status — has increased stress and made the job less attractive.

Amid the rising superintendent salaries, Missouri education officials are nudging school board members to spend more time evaluating superintendents and studying how much students are learning under his or her leadership.

Several districts say they have long done that, though what those evaluations look like and how much weight they have on pay increases varies widely. The Kirkwood School Board, for example, sets goals each year with the superintendent, revisiting them for the evaluation.

But perhaps just as often, superintendents’ pay increases are based at least partly on factors that have little or nothing to do with their job performance.

Some school board members, such as Lindbergh, adjust the superintendent’s salary and write that check partly based on what his or her colleagues in nearby “benchmark” districts make. Others are trying to hold on to an experienced superintendent close to retirement and a lucrative pension. The Post-Dispatch has previously reported on cases where raises of nearly $30,000 or more are needed so that take-home pay exceeds what superintendents would make under the Missouri pension system.

And in some cases, board members make decisions about raises without proof their superintendent’s performance is worth it.

“If you think he or she is worth the money and you’ve got evidence of it, then, absolutely, pay them. We should have a competitive market for school administrators,” said Michael Podgursky, an economics professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia and board member at the Show-Me Institute. “But a competitive market needs two sides — one that is well-informed about performance.”

GREATER SCRUTINY

This year, the state education department has directed districts to revamp their evaluations for teachers. Along with that has come a new model for superintendent evaluations, one that rates the administrators on their ability to lead teachers and boost academic achievement.

“The big focus has been on teacher and principal,” said Paul Katnik, an assistant commissioner in the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. “But an entire district ought to look at how we are increasing learning for kids.”

Other parts of the country also are revisiting superintendent evaluations and salaries.

STORY CONTINUES...