Six MU fraternity members arrested for hazing in hide-and-seek game

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, December 20, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (6)

Police arrested six University of Missouri students for alleged hazing last week during a hide-and-seek-style game, but it’s unclear if any charges will be filed.

Six Phi Kappa Theta fraternity members were arrested Dec. 7 for an event involving active members of the fraternity chasing down the group’s pledge members after they “walked out” of classes, a fraternity tradition, MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer said.

The incident took place around 10:20 a.m. Dec. 5.

The six men who were arrested are Jack R. Berry, 20; Steven R. Savio, 21; Kevin D. Meyers, 19; Joseph A. Wiss, 19; Remy J. Hoffmann, 19; and William T. Ismert, 20.

Weimer said MUPD officers were called to Lathrop Hall on campus after several students saw what they thought was a person being assaulted. Weimer said several members of Phi Kappa Theta had chased down and grabbed two pledge members who were then put in a van. One of the pledges had his hands tied behind his back, but neither person was injured, Weimer said. He described the game as a version of hide-and-seek.

By using photos and making contact with Phi Kappa Theta members, Weimer said officers identified the six members involved in the event and they were arrested and released on summonses.

The pledges who were grabbed and put in the van aren’t pressing any charges, Weimer said.

Student members had already left the fraternity house, 601 Rollins St., Friday evening for winter break, but an alumni board officer said fraternity members don’t comment on arrests. A staff member from the Office of Greek Life at MU said the office doesn’t speak about incidents involving the police.

Boone County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Brouck Jacobs said charges have not been filed. The six men have pending court dates for 9 a.m. Jan. 23, Weimer said.
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - Police have arrested six University of Missouri-Columbia students on suspicion of hazing during a hide-and-seek style game.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that officers were called to a residence hall after several students saw what they thought was a person being assaulted.
MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer says several fraternity members had chased down and grabbed two pledge members who were then put in a van. Weimer says one of the pledges had his hands tied behind his back, but neither person was injured.

He described the game as a version of hide-and-seek.

The men who were arrested ranged in age from 19 to 21. They were arrested and released on summonses.

Weimer says the pledges who were grabbed and put in the van aren't pressing any charges.

To view the KRCG story, visit: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=28758872-2f1f-4ac0-9f53-2c413d037b5e

110 to take Mizzou's buyout offer

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri's flagship campus says a buyout offer will free up about $17 million in budgeted salaries and benefits.

More than 42 percent of eligible faculty members, or 110 people, were approved for the buyout, the Columbia Missourian reports. The majority won't retire until August.
To qualify, faculty had to be retirement-eligible and turn 62 by Aug. 31, 2015. They were eligible for a one-time payment of 1 1/2 times their base salary, not to exceed $200,000.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said some rehires would take place, but the number has not been finalized.

Faculty Council chairman Craig Roberts said the program may have exceeded expectations of administrators, who he said had guessed 60 or 70 professors would take the buyout. More retirements give the university extra funds for new hires and budget redistribution.

"It's slightly better news, I might say," Roberts said.

Forty-three Arts and Science faculty members accepted the buyout, along with 15 from the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, 14 from the College of Education and 11 from the School of Medicine.

The Trulaske College of Business, School of Journalism, Sinclair School of Nursing, College of Human Environmental Sciences, School of Law, College of Veterinary Medicine and the Office of Graduate Studies each had fewer than 10 faculty members accept the buyout.

College of Arts and Science Dean Michael O'Brien will meet with department chairs in early 2015 to discuss vacancies, noting some retiring faculty could be hired back part-time.

Roberts said he expects the university to make new hires that will allow retiring professors' largest and most popular classes to continue.

"I'm pretty confident that the administration will shore up clear deficiencies in the curriculum," Roberts said.

Less than half of eligible faculty accept MU voluntary buyout

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, December 21, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (13)

The final deadline for retirement-eligible University of Missouri faculty members to accept a voluntary buyout came last week, with 110 professors choosing to retire early.

Those who accepted the buyout are set to receive 1½ times their base salary, not exceeding $200,000. MU is set to pay out about $17.7 million between Dec. 31 and Aug. 31, 2015, MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. Two-hundred-sixty-one faculty members were eligible.
The Voluntary Separation Program was described by MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin as an “opportunity to manage a challenging financial environment by providing flexibility for funding new positions and granting appropriate salary increases,” when he announced the buyout this fall.

The money used for the payout comes from different places, Banken said. The UM System contributed $5 million from its reserve funds per an agreement with MU to match up to $5 million worth of buyouts.

An additional $8.8 million came from the reserve funds of MU colleges, and the final $3.8 million came from campus reserves, Banken said.

Through the buyout program, the university is saving $17 million in budgeted salary and benefits. Banken said because the payout was a one-time cost paid for by reserves, those salaries and benefits for fiscal year 2016 are now freed up. Benefits cost MU about 35 percent of each employee’s salary.

That money will go toward hiring new faculty, Banken said. Because there’s advance notice about the retirement, the university can start advertising for the replacements immediately.

For Eddie Adelstein, MU associate professor and medical examiner, the decision to accept the voluntary buyout was easy.

“I walked in and asked what I needed to do to accept” the buyout “and they said they needed a letter of resignation, so I asked them if I could borrow a piece of paper,” Adelstein, 77, said. “It’s hard to pass up $186,000.”

Adelstein isn’t really retiring, though. He came to the university from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with which he still has a dual appointment. Adelstein said he now will be almost entirely focused on pathology work as the chief of laboratory at Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital. He likely will still teach a course at MU and continue being a medical examiner, he said.

“They’re basically buying out your tenure, but that won’t change what I do in life,” he said. “They’re doing it to bring in younger people, to bring in new research scientists, which isn’t unreasonable.”

Another buyout will be offered at an undetermined date to 28 administrators who also are tenured faculty, including deans, the provost and any other administrator with tenure.
Dear Reader,

This much we know: There will be fewer senior faculty on the MU campus next year. The effects of those buyouts remain to be seen.

Among the possibilities are freeing up money for salary increases for remaining faculty and improving the university’s standing among peer institutions for research grants, in number and in dollars. Those goals are public. As the theory goes, senior faculty members tend to take on more administrative or mentoring roles while doing less research.

But the offer, for tenured professors 62 years old and up, was voluntary. It couldn’t discriminate between dead weight and bright stars. (Here's the full article.) Missourian reporter Claire Boston heard fears about the loss of great teachers and big-dollar researchers from many faculty members. None of them, however, would say a word on the record.

The Missourian frowns on anonymity for ethical and practical reasons. A newspaper puts its credibility at higher risk every time an unnamed source is used. The policy isn't absolute. But there are high barriers, and they come in the form of questions.

Boston's first response to a professor's refusal to be named was to find another source. When that failed, she tried another. And another. And finally, when it became clear that she couldn't get anywhere by that route, she and education editor Liz Brixey considered the road rarely traveled.

Brixey pointed to the Missourian policy. Boston would need to write out her rationale. They ultimately decided (with my approval) to use unnamed sources. The questions
drove the answer. The exercise, one way or another, is played out in every locally written article in the Missourian and Vox magazine. Here's how:

1. Is the information absolutely essential? Put another way: Could we still run the story without the anonymous source? Could we convince the source to go on the record? Or could we get that information from an on-the-record source?

Boston struggled with the first question. In a post on her advanced reporting class website, she wrote: "What I’m missing are those personal voices — the professor who felt compelled to stay out of duty to students, or the research-oriented professor who took the buyout but found the administration’s concern that older professors were less productive insulting.

"Is that absolutely essential? I really believe this information should be included, but I’m not sure if these views are 'absolutely essential' if I have some less-controversial takes on the issue on the record."

Too often, articles reside only in the world of official sources and don't capture those most affected by decisions from on high. On the other hand, an article could have been published without including unnamed sources. I'd call this one 65-to-35 in favor of anonymity.

2. Does the source believe he or she will be harmed? That could be either physical harm or the loss of livelihood, but it doesn’t mean simple embarrassment.

Boston wrote: "Tenure means they couldn’t necessarily be fired for their comments, but administrators could certainly make their work lives more difficult."

True, but how? Would vindictive administrators really cut off grant money to researchers or give professors bad committee assignments? I’m not sure. Did professors Boston talked to believe there could be serious retribution? More likely. I'd give this one 60 percent against using anonymity.

3. Is the source hiding behind anonymity to take a cheap shot at an enemy?

In other words, anonymity shouldn’t be used for personal attacks.

Boston wrote: "I think this one is a firm no. Faculty who told me about their concerns had clear, well-reasoned opinions and few would probably consider upper-level officials 'an enemy.'" Her sources also weren't pointing fingers at particular people.
I agreed. No cheap shots here.

4. **Is the story important enough to the health of our community to override the risk to the newspaper’s credibility? (A story about bad housing might be; a story about a quaint old house probably isn’t.)**

Boston wrote: "This buyout issue is certainly a hot topic for MU faculty. Does that make it a 'health of our community' story? Maybe. Probably. This is the question I wrestle with the most."

What affects community health? Lots of little things. This is a significant action on the part of the largest employer in Columbia. Is it big enough to pass the threshold?

I believe so.

Those are the four questions (with sub-questions). They have covered almost every situation I can recall. They require all Missourian journalists to wrestle with the answers before making judgments.

Overall, I thought this was a borderline call. Could have gone either way. It's a good case study in that way.

*Tom Warhover is the executive editor of the Columbia Missourian.*

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**Longtime University of Missouri enrollment official to retire**

By Ashley Jost

*Saturday, December 20, 2014 at 12:00 am*

It was more of a calling than anything else that brought Ann Korschgen back to her alma mater to work, she says.
After 14 years as the vice provost for enrollment management and 42 years in higher education, Korschgen announced her retirement last week. She is set to depart from campus June 1.

“Everything is going beautifully. We have record enrollment, a wonderfully-competent management team, I enjoy my colleagues — why not leave on a high note?” she said about her decision to retire.

Korschgen’s vice provost role is to oversee departments including admissions, financial aid and the registrar.

Korschgen returned to MU in 2001 after 30 years away, when she and her husband — who she met as an undergraduate student at MU — were furthering their education and working around the country. After her bachelor’s degree, Korschgen went on to get her master’s at the University of Maine while working in admissions at Husson College, a private, not-for-profit college in Maine.

After Maine, the couple left so Korschgen could get her doctoral degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She then went on to work in admissions at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse before venturing back to Columbia.

“Working at Mizzou was more of a calling rather than a job,” she said. “It was just so fulfilling to enable students to have the transformational experience like I had years ago.”

Chuck May, MU interim director of admissions, has worked with Korschgen since she started 14 years ago and called her a supportive, enthusiastic leader.

“She has been enthusiastic about anything involving staff development, engaging students and trying to improve the student processes,” May said. He recalled Korschgen’s work to improve campus visits, speeding up application processes and finding new ways to support the transition for admitted students.

During Korschgen’s time in the vice provost’s office, enrollment has increased by almost 12,000 students, about 50 percent, interim Provost Ken Dean said in announcing her retirement.

“I’m very, very proud of having increased total enrollment so significantly,” Korschgen said. “That came at a time of great need given that we were cut by state allocations for several years. So that increase helped keep the university in good shape.”

In retirement, Korschgen hopes to pursue biographical writing, nature writing or possibly writing that reflects on her time in higher education. She and her husband love to travel, have a garden, chickens, honey bees and tree farms, so having time to focus on those things is on her retirement agenda.

A national search will be conducted for Korschgen’s replacement.
Final candidate for MU Title IX office leader touts experience

By Ashley Jost

Friday, December 19, 2014 at 2:00 pm

A University of Missouri audience heard from the fourth and final candidate for the campus’s first Title IX administrator.

Rick Olshak, associate dean of students at Illinois State University, spoke about his years in roles where he focused on Title IX, student conduct processes and conflict remediation, pointing to that experience as qualification for the MU position.

Olshak has been at Illinois State since 1996 in multiple capacities handling student conduct and discrimination issues that the Title IX administrator at MU would have a hand in. His current position also makes him the Title IX hearing officer for student conduct matters, which includes hearing cases involving sex discrimination violations with the campus’ Title IX administrator.

Before he worked at Illinois State, Olshak served in similar roles at Georgetown University and State University of New York College at Cortland.

In addition to his job experience, Olshak stressed several other professional experiences, including boards he served on. He currently serves with the Association for Title IX Administrators and is an “affiliated consultant” with the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, which is the consulting company the UM System hired to help create its Title IX policies. That consultant relationship is new this year and has predominantly included training, Olshak said. He has had no involvement in the NCHERM’s work with the university.

Olshak is the second candidate of the four who is not an attorney. During the forum with students, faculty and staff Thursday afternoon, he said that is a positive aspect of his candidacy.

“I don’t see this as a true legal issue. I see this as an educational issue, and it has legal implications in administrative law, which is what we practice in higher education,” he said. “This is not criminal law. It’s not civil law. It’s administrative law. Those of us who have worked in student conduct have had to become experts at administrative law. I see the importance of having an educator tackle an educational problem.”
To succeed in the administrator role, Olshak said, he would have three main goals for the first year: building relationships with students, faculty and staff; understanding the culture and processes in place at MU around Title IX and student conduct; and creating a mission, vision and strategic plan for programs that would allow the Title IX office to build partnerships with campus groups.

When he asked what the audience wants to see from a person in this new position, Liz Zufall, a staff member in the College of Education dean’s office, told Olshak she wants to see a prevention and education program that addresses alcohol, masculinity, the culture around catcalling and verbal harassment, among other things.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is ultimately responsible for hiring the new Title IX administrator. The chancellor has met with each of the four candidates — Joe Gilgour, Andrea Hayes, Ellen Eardley and Olshak — as they have come for their final interviews in recent weeks. The university has revealed no timeline for filling the position.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU continues to have renovations backlog

COLUMBIA — MU has recently announced plans to renovate Lafferre Hall, but many buildings are still in need of repairs.

According to the UM System's Appropriations Request for Capital Items for the 2014 fiscal year, Lafferre Hall was ranked a Tier 1 facility, meaning its renovation takes top priority at MU. Tier 2 and 3 facilities include the School of Music Facility and the Arvarh E. Strickland Building Renovation and Addition, respectively.

The document includes a list of all MU facilities in need of renovation in the 2014-2019 fiscal years and includes 33 projects, some of which are underway, such as the construction in Jesse Hall.

Others include Ellis Library, Mumford Hall and Middlebush Hall.
"We don't really put them in any type of order," Karlan Seville, communications manager for Campus Facilities, said. "It depends on how much money the university receives."

However, buildings are judged by the university using the Facility Condition Needs Index.

The index scores buildings by dividing the total cost of repairs by the cost of rebuilding the facility entirely. A score of 1 is given if it would cost the same amount of money to rebuild the facility as it would to repair the original. Jesse Hall, for example, scored a .49 on the index, and Arvarh E. Strickland Hall scored a .60.

"It helps us prioritize what buildings we should be looking at," Seville said.

However, STEM buildings are of the highest priority, she said.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin also emphasized the importance of research and STEM buildings in a recent interview about the university's strategic operating plan. "We don't have much more to give there," he said. "The biggest major here is biology."

MU plans to begin renovations on Lafferre Hall early in 2015 with a goal of completing the project in December 2016, Loftin said at the Fall General Faculty Meeting. The renovated building will be open for classes for the spring 2017 semester.

Loftin said the growing student body is "a strain felt on faculty and facilities."

This strain will only increase. Loftin said the university plans to reach 38,000 students in the future, an achievable goal given the enrollment record this fall. An increase in students leads to an increase in demand for modern facilities.

"Your students are learning in spaces that aren't good," Loftin said to faculty.

After the renovation of Lafferre, Loftin said in the meeting, there will be another $30 million available for other projects.

Loftin announced the formation of the Budget Allocation Advisory Council, which is being trained to advise the chancellor on the campus' budget, which includes renovations. The council will begin work after the start of the new year.
Round up: Curators, Title IX candidates and rankings

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, December 20, 2014 at 7:15 pm

Happy weekend. Stay warm and enjoy your holiday, whatever it may be.

Also, happy graduation to Columbia's departing students.

Inside the system:

- Among the biggest news in the last few weeks: The University of Missouri hired a new provost. Garnett Stokes, outgoing provost at Florida State University, starts at MU Feb. 1. Her salary is set at $375,000. Still working on getting any incentive information associated with her contract.

- The Missouri University of Science and Technology made Yahoo Finance’s list of Top 104 Smartest Public Colleges, featured at No. 22. Truman State University wasn’t far behind at No. 30. MU came in at No. 68.

- Speaking of Truman State, the university landed on Kiplinger’s Personal Finance magazine’s list of 100 Best College Values for 2015 as No. 19, down seven spots from its 2014 ranking. MU was ranked No. 57, and S&T was ranked No. 79 — the only three Missouri schools to land on the list.

- This has been really fun to watch out of the University of Missouri-Kansas City: UMKC started a blog this month that is chronicling what soon-to-be graduates are doing after they walk across the stage.

- The final curators meeting of the year was last week in St. Louis. Here’s a round up within the round up of stories from that meeting:

  - Tuition increases proposed at University of Missouri campuses (link)
  - UM System employees in mid-Missouri choose new health plan (link)
  - UM System touts millions in savings (link)
  - Three seats open on UM Board of Curators (link)
- And on the Title IX beat … All four candidates have officially been interviewed. Read about their open forums where they discussed ideas and fielded questions:

  - Joe Gilgour, dean of students and academic support services at State Fair Community College in Sedalia
  - Andrea Hayes, Boone County assistant prosecuting attorney
  - Ellen Eardley, partner at Mehri & Skalet, a Washington, D.C.-based law firm
  - Rick Olshak, associate dean of students at Illinois State University

Outside the system:

- Moberly Area Community College is offering one free class to four individuals who will be selected at random in a text-to-win competition. The college has four different advertisements: one on its website, floor decals around the Columbia mall, radio advertisements and more ad spots on Pandora radio for listeners around the regional sites. Anyone interested can enter to win by finding the code at any or all advertisements and texting it to the number on the advertisement they find.

  Winners of the one free class will be chosen at random on Monday. Those selected can take a class worth up to three credit hours at any of MACC’s regional sites or online.

- In case you missed it, Stephens College awarded a full-ride scholarship to a homeless teenager in New York City on the "Today Show" this week. Very powerful story. Check out our brief and then watch Dominique’s reaction yourself on the videos posted to the Stephens’ blog.

- Missouri State University’s President Cliff Smart appeared in a fun Facebook video to lighten the mood during the most stressful time of the semester.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Thousands of MU students prepare to receive degrees during winter commencement

Friday, December 19, 2014 | 5:23 p.m. CST; updated 5:40 p.m. CST, Friday, December 19, 2014

BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA – **MU's December graduations began Friday afternoon.**

In all, 2,367 students are set to be presented with 2,570 degrees, including 1,916 bachelor’s degrees, 474 master’s degrees, 152 doctorates, seven law degrees and 21 education specialist degrees. The university also recognized 276 honors graduates.
"The University of Missouri is confident that our graduates have much to contribute to the state, nation and world," said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment at MU, according to a news release from the MU News Bureau.

Eleven ceremonies were scheduled at either the Hearnes Center or the Missouri Theatre, and the ROTC commissioning of officers will be held at Crowder Hall.

Speakers included MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who was scheduled to speak Saturday at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources ceremony; John Haskins, managing editor of magazines at The New York Times and an MU alumnus, who spoke Friday at the School of Journalism ceremony; and Bill Bryan, director of Missouri State Parks, who was scheduled to speak Saturday at the School of Natural Resources ceremony.

A live stream of the Missouri Theatre ceremonies was open to the public in Keller Auditorium in the Geological Sciences building. (That stream can also be watched online.)

Darwin Hindman, a former mayor of Columbia, was to be presented with an honorary degree from MU Saturday at the Missouri Theatre during the Honors Ceremony. Hindman served five terms as the mayor of Columbia from 1995 to 2010. As mayor, he managed to secure a $22 million federal grant that helped promote cycling and walking in the city. Hindman also established numerous community physical activity programs, curated the reconstruction of Stephens Lake Park and was instrumental in the creation of the Katy Trail State Park.

An MU alumnus who received his degrees in political science and law in 1955 and 1961, respectively, Hindman has already been recognized with other honors from MU. He has already received a Mizzou Alumni Association Faculty-Alumni Award and an MU College of Arts and Science Distinguished Alumni Award.

The full schedule of the commencement ceremonies and events can be found at the University Registrar’s website.

Additional reporting by Aleksander Gorbachev.
Former Columbia mayor receives honorary degree from MU

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, December 21, 2014 at 12:00 am

In front of more than 250 University of Missouri honors graduates, alumnus Darwin Hindman was given an honorary degree for his tenure as Columbia’s mayor and a career’s worth of service.

Hindman was the speaker Saturday morning at the Missouri Theatre for MU’s fall semester honors convocation, a ceremony that recognizes those students who are graduating with academic prestige.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin took a few minutes to recognize Hindman, recounting the highlights of his professional career before bestowing Hindman with a Doctor of Laws diploma.

“You’ve made this university proud to call you one of its own,” Loftin said. Hindman received two degrees — political science and law — from MU in 1955 and 1961.

Promoting health and physical activities was one of the staples of Hindman’s career in public office. During his five elected terms from 1995 to 2010, Hindman established the Mayor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Health and the Mayor’s Bike, Walk or Wheel to Work Week.

Hindman was, and continues to be, a major advocate for alternative transportation.

“You can’t imagine what a pleasure it is to stand here and have those nice things said about me, but it’s wonderful,” he said after accepting the honorary degree.

To the room full of those regarded as MU’s best of the outgoing class, Hindman provided insight about the importance of collaborating to meet goals, among other advice.

“As successful as you are in your education, there is a lot — and as a matter of fact, a whole lot — that you don’t know,” he said. “Human progress depends on working together.”

Each degree doesn’t just benefit the person who received it, Hindman said, but rather society as a whole can reap the rewards of a more educated populace.
MU gives out honorary degrees each semester. In May, the recipient was Jim Held, owner and founder of Stone Hill Winery.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Former Mayor Darwin Hindman receives MU's annual honorary degree at Honors Convocation
Saturday, December 20, 2014 | 3:54 p.m. CST; updated 5:00 p.m. CST, Saturday, December 20, 2014
BY LILI SAMS, TAYLOR LOWER

COLUMBIA – Mizzou Alumni Association president Dudley McCarter said he didn't recall anything about his MU Law graduation 40 years ago. He said he wanted to make Saturday's Honors College Convocation more memorable.

McCarter gave the 276 Honors College graduates three guidelines for life: make the most of yourself, develop confidence and show compassion.

"There are few earthly things more splendid than this university," McCarter said. "The University of Missouri, the place we call home."

MU awarded its annual honorary degree during the ceremony. Former Mayor Darwin Hindman received a Doctor of Laws diploma in recognition of his years of service in Missouri.

Hindman received MU degrees in political science and law in 1955 and 1961 respectively. As a young attorney starting his own firm, Hindman asked questions to competing lawyers and later shared what he learned with anyone who asked.

"You must learn to seek, evaluate and appreciate, as well as give, good advice," Hindman said.

Past honorary degree recipients have included singer Sheryl Crow, psychologist B.F. Skinner, former presidents Harry S Truman and Herbert Hoover and broadcaster Walter Cronkite.
Hindman has been recognized with other MU honors including a Mizzou Alumni Association Faculty-Alumni Award, a College of Arts and Science Distinguished Alumni Award and induction into the Order of the Coif, law honor society, at the annual Law Day Awards Ceremony at the School of Law.

**He served five terms as mayor of Columbia from 1995 to 2010.** During this time, he secured a $22 million federal grant to promote cycling and walking in the city. Hindman also established a number of community physical activity programs, oversaw the reconstruction of Stephens Lake Park and was instrumental in creating the Katy Trail State Park.

Hindman is a chairman for a foundation dedicated to extending the Katy Trail to Kansas City. He also serves as a liaison for the Missouri Municipal League to the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health, and is a member of the Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Authority and president of the Missouri Rail Trails Foundation.

"You must strive to continually learn and improve," Hindman said.

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**MU journalism graduates prepare to enter the workforce**

Friday, December 19, 2014 | 7:38 p.m. CST; updated 8:05 p.m. CST, Friday, December 19, 2014

BY ELLISE VERHEYEN, TAYLOR LOWER

COLUMBIA – At Friday's Missouri School of Journalism graduation ceremony, commencement speaker John Haskins couldn't help but commend students for their hard work during a time of change in the journalism industry.

"I'm a little jealous," Haskins said. "You all are way ahead of where I was at your age."

One hundred and thirty-four journalism graduates were awarded degrees Friday at the Missouri Theatre. Haskins, a 1985 MU School of Journalism graduate and current managing editor of magazines for The New York Times, decided to share some advice from his career.
"First of all, do not begin an email with 'hi,'" Haskins said.

The list went on to include always being prepared, solving others’ problems to also solve your own and always being professional.

Jamie Crockett, a strategic communication major, talked about her hopes for the graduates’ futures.

"You are bearers of light," Crockett said. "Rise and shine, greatness. It is time to change the world."

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin made it his mission this December to attend every commencement ceremony. Speaking to the crowd of young journalists, he affectionately used the hashtag #itsallaboutstudents.

"Go and change the world," Loftin said. "Use your power wisely because you have great power."

Riley Simpson, a magazine journalism graduate, spoke with relief and excitement after the ceremony. Simpson said he has a busy week of moving out ahead, and that sometime within the next two hours he would start furiously sending out job applications.

"I’m glad the stress is gone," Simpson said. "This graduation is kind of a high point, then home for the holidays."

Supervising editor is Hunter Woodall.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Human and Environmental Sciences graduates eager to get out in the world

Saturday, December 20, 2014 | 4:21 p.m. CST; updated 11:01 p.m. CST, Saturday, December 20, 2014

BY LILI SAMS, TAYLOR LOWER

COLUMBIA – At Saturday's MU College of Human and Environmental Sciences commencement ceremony, some students wore traditional high
heels and loafers, while others added their own personal touch to the usual graduation garb.

"It's very me and my personality," Paige Echimovich said as she sported brown cowboy boots waiting in line for the graduation ceremony to begin. "Why not walk across the whole stage for everyone to see?"

Echimovich's cap was also adorned with country singer Garth Brooks lyrics, "blame it all on my roots, I showed up in boots."

**Echimovich was one of 88 graduates from the College of Human and Environmental Sciences, which includes departments such as architectural studies, human development and family studies, nutrition and exercise physiology, personal financial planning, the School of Social Work, and textile and apparel management.**

The dean of the College of Human and Environmental Sciences, Stephen Jorgensen, said the December 2014 graduates exemplified the college's mission "to make a genuine, positive difference in the lives of others."

Jorgensen congratulated the graduates on completing their undergraduate studies and moving on to jobs or continuing education.

"Commencement doesn't mean end, it means beginning," Jorgensen said.

Bethany Strodtman, an architectural studies graduate, will stay in Columbia to work as an interior designer for Inside the Lines, a furniture company. Strodtman said she is excited to apply what she has learned in her field.

"I'm feeling relieved," Strodtman said. "I'm happy to be done."

Other graduates echoed Strodtman's excitement.

"I am very excited to start a new chapter," said Lauren Bikshorn, a textile and apparel management graduate who will be moving to New York City for a broader fashion experience.

Human development and family studies graduate Taylor Rosehill said graduation was bittersweet. She said she had grown close to her nine other classmates in the families
and lifespan development program. Rosehill will continue her education at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, studying educational counseling.

"It's such a small program," Rosehill said. "I'm sad to see everyone go their separate ways."

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**MU nursing graduates ready to serve Missouri**

Friday, December 19, 2014 | 5:27 p.m. CST; updated 7:41 p.m. CST, Friday, December 19, 2014

**BY ELLISE VERHEYEN, TAYLOR LOWER**

COLUMBIA — Ross Licklider decided he did not want to sit idly by while others were sick and hurting.

After serving five years in the U.S. Army and two deployments in Iraq, Licklider decided to attend MU's Sinclair School of Nursing. On Friday, he spoke to his fellow graduates as a class-nominated speaker at the school's Fall 2014 commencement.

Licklider, now a graduate of Sinclair School of Nursing and member of Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society, will be spending his days treating patients at Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital.

**Eighty students received their degree for bachelor of science in nursing during Friday afternoon's commencement. Two students, Alyssa Day and Claire Schimweg, graduated summa cum laude, with a GPA 3.9 or higher. Five students graduated magna cum laude, with a GPA of 3.8 to 3.89. Four students graduated cum laude; with a GPA of 3.7 to 3.79.**

A majority of the graduates will soon begin working in the state of Missouri. Seventeen will join the MU Health Care System, while others will also stay in the Columbia community to work for Boone Hospital Center.

"I think the nursing class and faculty as a whole is a family," said Tess Dillon, a graduate who will be working in the Intensive Care Unit for Boone Hospital Center.

After graduation, Dillon will be working with friend and fellow graduate Kristine Gibson.
"It's been a long two years," Gibson said of her time in the program. Gibson will be working in Boone Hospital Center as an RN in the Stepdown Unit.

During her remarks, Sinclair School of Nursing Dean Judith Miller reminded the graduating students what a degree from the school meant to each of them. Earlier this year, the school was ranked as one of the best nursing school in the country. "Remember, not just a nurse," Miller said. "A Mizzou nurse."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

New assistant physician law presents licensing, regulation challenges
Friday, December 19, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CST

BY PAIGE BLANKENBUEHLER

COLUMBIA — Earlier this year, Missouri passed a law that will allow medical school graduates who didn't get a residency to become health care providers as "assistant physicians."

But already, the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts and the law's original crusaders are running into ambiguities in the bill, prompting one of the law's authors to suggest that more legislation might be needed.

“It appears that some follow-up legislation might be of a benefit to clarify areas and perhaps even improvements," said Rep. Keith Frederick, R-Rolla, during a licensing board conference call in October. "I'm certainly willing to and would like to work on a follow-up piece of legislature to settle anything that needs settling."

The new, mid-level care designation allows medical school graduates to enter into supervised positions in rural or urban underserved areas without completing a residency requirement, as described in Gov. Jay Nixon’s signing statement. With a license, assistant physicians can function relatively autonomously and prescribe schedule III, IV and V drugs, which include drugs like Xanax, codeine and Valium, but not Adderall or oxycodone, according to the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency.
The new type of provider is unique to the state, and the national medical community is watching closely to see if the new position might help alleviate the scarcity of primary care doctors without compromising quality of care by introducing inexperienced doctors into the workplace.

Of Missouri’s 101 rural counties, 98 are designated "primary medical health professional shortage areas," according to a 2013 report from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Now, the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts is working on creating rules and establishing a licensing procedure for this new kind of doctor.

But questions raised during debate over the bills persist: There's no legal limit on how long an assistant physician is allowed to practice under that designation, and new assistant physicians skip an important step: residency.

While medical school offers a broad education in the basics of multiple medical specialties, residency training has a somewhat narrower focus so that doctors can have more in-depth experience in a particular area or discipline, said Turi McNamee, program director and vice chair of training and education in the department of medicine at MU.

McNamee said there will be multiple losses to both doctors and patients if medical graduates choose to forgo residency training.

“A patient being seen by a doctor who has successfully completed residency training can have some measure of security that the physician caring for them has more than a basic understanding of their current issue,” McNamee said. "Absent such oversight it would be hard to say with much confidence what physicians are being taught."

The bill, sponsored by Frederick and Sen. Dan Brown, R-Rolla, went into effect Aug. 28, but representatives of the board say applications for the new license likely won’t be accepted until the summer or fall of 2015.

Who fits the bill?
According to the bill, any medical school graduate who has passed medical examinations but has not entered into residency training is eligible to apply for a license. Frederick sees that as a good match of supply and demand.
“Those skills are often wasted while we have communities that need those skills and can’t access them,” Frederick said. “The intent is to allow a physician to collaborate with an assistant physician and go to a rural area and bring services to those areas.”

The nuances in the definition of an assistant physician make it hard to distinguish it from other mid-level positions, and that has slowed and complicated the implementation process, said Jeff Howell, lobbyist for the bill and spokesman for the Missouri State Medical Association, which helped draft the law and is one of its major supporters.

Missouri is the first and only state with the assistant physician — or AP — designation, though a similar “physician assistant” — PA — designation has existed in all 50 states, stemming from WWII medics that served as primary care doctors to address shortages, according to the American Academy of Physician Assistants. The law was originally thought unlikely to pass, with much of the opposition centered on confusion between the similar titles.

Alexis Neal, a graduate student in the physician assistant studies program at Missouri State University said the assistant physician bill has “stirred up a lot of feelings in the medical community.”

She thinks confusion could create stress for patients and families still trying to grapple with the differences between a physician assistant and a medical doctor.

“I think PAs are concerned about the fact that it’s already so hard for us to have people understand who we are and what we do as mid-level providers — and then you’re just going to throw in this new type of provider,” Neal said. "I’m afraid it’s going to be confusing for people.”

But Neal said she and her colleagues don’t see the new position as a threat.

“There is a shortage of healthcare services, so I don’t necessarily think that the assistant physician position is a bad idea by any means,” Neal said. “Once people understand the roles of these mid-level providers, I think that both we, PAs and new APs will be able to fill in the shortage even better — the better our patients understand what’s going on, the better we can help them.

“I don’t really see any problem with us having that goal together,” Neal said.
**Turning a law into a profession**

The challenges the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts faces in creating a licensing process, rules and regulations for governing the new class of doctors was obvious during a board conference call in October. What was meant to be a discussion of the legal analysis of the law and a first stab at making rules and policies soon got stalled on questions and comments from the board’s staff about ambiguous language and contradictions within the bill.

The conference call was meant to be a first step toward setting up roles — an “information-gathering venture” — for the board, according to Dr. David Tannehill, a board member of the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts.

The board’s biggest challenges in implementation:

1. **How will "collaborative practice arrangements" between APs and physicians work?**

   The law requires APs to arrange “collaborative practice arrangements” with supervising physicians within six months of their licensure, but the responsibilities of the physician remain somewhat unclear.

   There is precedent though, said Sarah Schappe, the board’s general counsel. The board licenses Physician Assistants (PAs) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), who are also required to enter similar collaborative arrangements. The board asked for clarification during the October conference call about how the collaborative practice arrangements would work.

   The bill’s language reads that a physician can collaborate with three APs, PAs and APRNs.

   On the surface that seems like as many as nine mid-level care providers, but representative Frederick clarified that the maximum number would be three collaborations, regardless of the combination.

   “Let me look at that issue again then, and give that some thought,” Schappe said. The board is also faced with the challenge of defining how the board would monitor the duration of collaborations, and how it would enforce the arrangements.
We may want to consider a mechanism and rules about reporting collaborative practice arrangements and when and how that should happen when people enter them and leave them,” Schappe said. “What happens if somebody does go longer than six months without a collaborative practice agreement? I think there’s an argument that the license is void.”

2. **How will the DEA deal with assistant physicians?**
   The AP will be able to provide care somewhat autonomously, including the ability to prescribe Schedule III, IV and V drugs — Schedule III are limited to a five-day, no automatic refill supply.

   However, since Missouri is the first state in the United States to establish the AP mid-level provider, it’s unclear how the federal Drug Enforcement Agency will treat the new category, Schappe said.

   The DEA is required to give registration numbers to all healthcare providers who are enabled to prescribe drugs, Schappe said.

   “I haven’t talked to anyone from the DEA, so I don’t know whether they’re willing to provide numbers to assistant physicians and allow them to prescribe,” Schappe said during the conference call. “That may be a challenge, and again, that may be an area that the committee may want to direct staff to do additional research.”

3. **How will the board assert regulatory power for discipline of the new designation?**
   Schappe also brought up a potential management problem.

   She said it was unclear, under the way the legislation is written, whether the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts has authority to discipline, suspend or revoke a license. It is also left out of the bill what acts might require disciplinary action from the board, or any other entity.

   “Probation, discipline are important tools of the board to monitor, particularly for substance abuse problems, and sometimes for significant mental health problems that
have affected someone’s practice directly, or for other causes as well,” Schappe said. “Right now, there’s really no basis in the legislation that enables the board to act.”

Frederick said the board should be empowered to discipline and the extent the bill did not enable it “was a shortfall of drafting, not intent.”

"During the process of developing this language, we did want to give the board the same leeway — the same tools and domain — over these individuals as they have over physician assistants,” Frederick said.

4. Will a physician be liable for mistakes of an assistant physician collaborator?
According to Schappe’s legal analysis of the legislative language, two sections outlining the responsibilities of the collaborating physician contradict. One section says the physician is solely responsible for an assistant physician while the other says the “board may not deny, revoke, or take disciplinary action against a collaborating physician for the healthcare services delegated to an assistant physician,” according to the bill.

“If there is going to be modification of the statue, that may be one areas to consider because of the apparent contradiction,” Schappe said.

“That discrepancy is duly noted and I would be looking for feedback from the board about actions to take legislatively in the follow-up bill,” Fredericks said.

5. What do “scope of practice,” “geographic proximity” and “emergency situations” mean?
The bill allows the new mid-level provider to act somewhat autonomously — the legislation allows an assistant physician to be the only physician on site, especially in underserved areas during “emergency situations,” and with the sponsoring physician within “geographic proximity” to the practicing assistant physician.

The board expressed some concerns during the conference call about how independently these physicians will be able to practice in underserved urban and rural communities, and the gray area of defining these terms.

“If we simply define these terms, we could avoid a lot of questions or possible litigation,” Schappe said.
The Board of Registration for the Healing Arts already allows licensed PAs to practice within the “primary care scope of practice,” which usually includes taking patient histories, performing physical examinations, diagnosing illness and developing treatments, counseling patients on preventative health, and in most states, writing prescriptions, according to the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

The scope of practice ultimately falls under the collaborating physician’s discretion and the PA’s ability and skill, according to the Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts.

“This has come up sometimes, particularly with nurses and how you determine what the scope of practice is for various individuals,” Schappe said during the conference call. “That may be an area to consider defining more for the assistant physicians as we go forward in rule-making.”

6. Could this stepping-stone position turn into a permanent career for someone?

Although the original intent of the bill is to use the skills of medical school graduates that weren’t able to fill residency positions, Frederick said, there is no language in the bill indicating a limit on license renewal.

“As far as the legislature reads, there’s no language that says a license can’t be renewed indefinitely as long as the individual meets the requirements,” Schappe said. “There may be some folks that decide for any number of personal reasons that this is the profession they would like to settle in and function in for the long term,” Frederick said. “But I wouldn’t see someone going through med school and paying that kind of money wanting to stay as a AP for a long length of time — I don’t know if it’s a big issue.”

Neal, in the PA studies program at Missouri State University, is passionate about the physician assistant position and opted for the mid-level career position because it’s a "happy medium between a nurse and a fully autonomous physician," she said.

During the conference call, there was some debate about an earlier version of the bill that may have included language that capped renewals at three to five years, but representative Frederick denied any recollection of including that in any version of the bill.
'Wait and see'
The board and other stakeholders haven't had a lot to say about the rule promulgation process.

Following the Oct. 27 conference call, several phone calls and emails to reach Schappe; Connie Clarkson, the executive director of the board; other members of the board; and politicians who supported and helped write the bill, went unanswered.

Two weeks after repeated attempts to follow-up, Chris Cline, the director of communications of the board, sent a response that was nearly identical to the limited information about the implementation process on the board’s website.

In response to the possibility of a second bill to clear up ambiguities, Cline wrote in an email, “The board does not typically comment on possible or pending legislation.”

The board will meet again Jan. 23-24 in Jefferson City to discuss molding the specifics of the licensure.

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Slow down and simplify to reduce stress during the holidays

By LINDA GEIST University of Missouri Cooperative Media

Sunday, December 21, 2014 at 12:00 am

It’s the most wonderful time of the year. That’s what the perfectly coiffed shoppers and cookie bakers on television say about the holiday season.

But what if you’re stressed, tired and overwhelmed? That means you’re probably normal, said Jeremiah Terrell, University of Missouri Extension human development and family studies specialist.
In a word, simplify. Everything doesn’t have to be perfect.

As the days wind down to holiday gatherings, be kind to yourself. Your presence is the present. The gift of shared time is what lingers long after the trash collector has hauled away the crumpled wrapping paper and boxes.

Set realistic expectations, Terrell said. Your house doesn’t have to be the perfect winter wonderland. No one will notice if you serve three desserts instead of four this year. They will remember that you spent all of your time in the kitchen and didn’t get to visit with family and friends.

Don’t be afraid to delegate. Ask someone else to pick up the ice and paper supplies. ‘Tis the season for carry-ins. Let family and friends share their culinary skills and favorite recipes to add fun and variety to your meal.

Don’t pressure yourself looking for the perfect gift. Ask people on your list what they want. Have family members, especially ones you don’t see often, register their wish lists on an online shopping service.

Set aside differences for one day. Holidays are tense because of time, finances and family dynamics. Keep any family disagreements out of earshot of younger family members. “Children are in tune to adults,” Terrell said. “They are able to pick up on the tension in the room.”

Lessen anxiety by reducing uncertainty. Some people like the element of surprise; others do not.

Establish boundaries for in-laws well in advance of the holidays, Terrell said. Newlyweds set the stage for future holidays on their first holiday as a couple.

Terrell also recommended that you allow enough time for travel and rest. Consider that you might be sleeping in a hotel or guest bed that doesn’t allow you to rest as well as you might at home.

Before you leave on a long car trip with children, talk about rules of the road and how long it will take to get there. Pack toys and books or audio books as age indicates. “They can get lost in a story as they are going down the road,” Terrell said. Plan trips around naptime if possible.

Grab time for yourself. Schedule downtime between events. Don’t skip hobbies such as exercise or reading the morning newspaper during the holidays.

Create a new tradition this year by enjoying the gift of time with friends and family, Terrell said. In years to come, you’ll remember the fun you had rather than how perfect Aunt Gert’s fruitcake was.
What About Learning?

December 19, 2014

By
Carol Geary Schneider and Daniel F. Sullivan

NO MU MENTION

"As a nation, we have to make college more accessible and affordable and ensure that all students graduate with a quality education of real value."

--Secretary Arne Duncan, December 19, 2014

With the release of the Obama administration’s much-anticipated framework for rating the nation’s colleges and universities, commentators already are weighing in on the yawning gulf between the stated intention of ensuring “a quality education of real value” and the severe limitations of the metrics being considered. While the proposed college ratings system can and should expose some truly bad institutions that don’t deserve to receive federal support, the ratings framework by design presents a severely limited picture of how individual colleges and universities serve students and the nation.

Regardless of whether one judges the proposed ratings data to be clarifying or misleading, the fact remains that the most important outcome of higher education — the impact a college or university has on student learning outcomes — is completely missing from the federal ratings framework.

American higher education urgently needs a college learning assessment system, but not one that equates student learning with disciplinary knowledge alone. Rather, it needs a way to account for the higher-order capacities and skills that are the hallmarks of a liberal education. The ordinary citizen will very reasonably assume that the college ratings system the federal government is now poised to promote does provide the needed evidence on college learning and quality. (Secretary Duncan himself seems to assume this, as the quote above makes clear.)

But the ordinary citizen will be wrong in this assumption. The proposed college ratings system does not, in fact, provide any evidence at all about the quality of student learning. By design, the federal ratings system is focused carefully and exclusively on
What then should we do about the quality of learning challenge? What America absolutely does not need the federal government to do — and what the administration has so far very prudently and thoughtfully refrained from doing — is to create a national, federally devised and controlled system that would specify what the learning goals of college should be and then assess whether students are achieving them. Nonetheless, the public does need to know how well colleges, universities, and community colleges are doing in providing the kinds of learning that contribute directly to students’ success beyond graduation.

Under established law, private college and university boards of trustees and public college and university state system governing arrangements rightly determine the missions of individual higher education institutions, and through longstanding shared governance arrangements faculty and institutional leaders set the goals for student learning on individual campuses with the needs and goals of students and of the nation very much in mind. Yet there is wide recognition — especially among America’s employers, but also within higher education itself — that far too few students graduate from college well-enough prepared for success in work, civic participation and democratic citizenship, and life in the 21st century.

American higher education must do much better in both assessing and improving learning.

And, on this front, there is genuinely good news to report. This year, far away from the ratings furor, educators themselves are taking the lead in developing the kind of learning assessments the public deserves from higher education. The VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) represents an important step forward — one that has at its core not only the assessment of student learning, but also the creation of a platform for providing institutions with direct feedback to support continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning. Developed in 2007 through a national collaboration of faculty, institutional, and state-system leaders along with content knowledge and student learning experts, the VALUE approach to assessment has since gained acceptance with remarkable speed.

This year, building on this foundation, AAC&U, the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), nine state systems, and 85 public and private institutions are engaged in a major proof of concept study designed to demonstrate the different direction the VALUE approach represents both for assessing learning outcomes and for providing useful feedback to educators about strengths and needed improvements in student performance. The states working in concert with AAC&U and SHEEO are Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Utah. Private liberal arts institutions in additional states also are contributing to the study.

Under the VALUE approach, rubrics — common across participating institutions — are used rather than standardized tests, and scores are based on faculty judgments about actual student work. Specifically, graded student work products that show what a student knows and can do — an essay, a piece of creative writing, a lab report, an oral
presentation — are evaluated and scored by faculty members (not those who originally assigned and graded the work product) against a rubric that describes multiple dimensions of what it means to do critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, integrative reasoning, or any of the other forms of higher-order learning for which the VALUE rubrics describe achievement at different levels. The exciting promise of this work is that higher education itself is advancing an approach to assessment that is meaningful and accessible to faculty, students, and higher education stakeholders alike.

The VALUE rubrics were initially created by faculty members, and they reflect educators’ shared judgments about both the substance and the quality of student learning outcomes. Teams of faculty and academic professionals from more than 100 campuses across the country contributed to the development of these VALUE assessment rubrics for each of 16 liberal learning outcomes: inquiry and analysis, critical thinking, writing, integrative learning, oral communication, information literacy, problem solving, teamwork, intercultural knowledge, civic engagement, creative thinking, quantitative literacy, lifelong learning, ethical reasoning, global learning, and reading. These outcomes are important to the education of all college students, whether in two-year or four-year institutions, liberal arts or pre-professional programs, online or in-person courses, and regardless of institutional mission.

But the VALUE approach offers more than just a way to assess student learning. It is itself potentially a “high-impact practice” that will lead to greater student persistence and completion and to a reduction in the achievement gap between white students and disadvantaged students of color. The VALUE rubrics show students what excellence with regard to a particular learning goal looks like, and they let students see where they are on the path toward excellent performance. When faculty talk with students about their work and how it was scored, they are providing students with precisely the kind of “frequent, timely and constructive feedback,” “interactions with faculty ... about substantive matters,” and “structured opportunities to reflect on and integrate learning” that is characteristic of high-impact practices as George Kuh has defined them in his influential reports. In addition, AAC&U has learned already from campuses piloting the use of VALUE rubrics that, after initial experiences with the rubrics, faculty come together to develop assignments that directly address higher-order liberal learning skills — especially evidence-based reasoning — rather than lower-order skills such as description, summary, and paraphrase. None of this happens when a student is sent his or her score on a standardized test. This feature of VALUE, above and beyond its great utility as an assessment system, is responsible for its already very wide and growing support in colleges, universities, and state systems nationally.

What the federal government could and should do, even as it develops and tests its new ratings system, is to remind the nation, over and over, that student acquisition of the knowledge and skills college graduates need is the primary and most critical public purpose for which colleges and universities are chartered. Hence, the federal government should say that assessing what college students know and can do must be a very high institutional — and, for public institutions, institutional and state-system — priority.

While the federal government should not seek to take responsibility for this assessment, it can and should remind those properly responsible that the quality and assessment of student learning — not just access, completion, and non-learning
outcomes — must become a top priority.

At the very least, the US Department of Education should publicly be calling attention to and rooting for the success of state- and institution-driven efforts like VALUE that have national potential. But it also could, through existing federal grant programs such as the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) or through Department of Education contracts, create incentives for institutions and state systems to adopt new assessment approaches by offsetting temporary institutional “ramping-up” costs or providing financial support for the necessary infrastructure to allow initiatives like VALUE to become functional nationwide.

This is how public-private partnerships should work: investing in promising ideas and facilitating their testing as they develop. Both at the federal and state levels, public policy can be an enabler for the radically better approach to assessment that VALUE represents.

So even as we debate what’s right or wrong with the ratings, let’s remember that advancing accountability in higher education ultimately needs to include what students are learning.

**BIO**

*Carol Geary Schneider is president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Daniel F. Sullivan is president emeritus of St. Lawrence University and chair of the AAC&U LEAP Presidents’ Trust.*