Just past 8 p.m., on what was surely the worst day of her professional life, a message appeared in Melissa Click’s email inbox.

"Are you OK?" it asked. She wasn’t.

**Earlier that day — November 9, 2015 — Ms. Click had participated in a protest at the University of Missouri at Columbia, where she works as an assistant professor of communication. Students, along with sympathetic members of the Missouri faculty and staff, had formed a protective ring around the protesters’ encampment on the quad and forbidden members of the media to enter.**

Mark Schierbecker, a student who was filming a confrontation between protesters and a young photojournalist named Tim Tai, managed to slip through the perimeter. Ms. Click confronted Mr. Schierbecker after he identified himself as a member of the media. When he refused to leave, she grabbed at his camera, then shouted, "Who wants to help me get this reporter out of here? I need some muscle over here!"

Mr. Schierbecker uploaded the video to YouTube. It soon went viral, and Ms. Click, along with Janna Basler, an assistant director of Greek life who also appeared in Mr. Schierbecker’s video, were thrust to the center of the debate over whether colleges were privileging "safe spaces" for aggrieved students over free speech.

By the evening, Ms. Click’s inbox was spilling over with emails from an assortment of angry First Amendment enthusiasts. The note of concern from Angela Speck, a professor of astrophysics at the university, stood out as an expression of sympathy.
"I have seen some stuff suggesting people are gunning for Melissa," the professor wrote to Ms. Click and Ms. Basler. "So I wanted to check in and see if you're both OK."

Ms. Click wrote back: "Oh yes, I am getting rape and death threats. I am definitely not OK."

She did get a number of menacing notes. Others were vulgar, sanctimonious, histrionic, sympathetic, mean-spirited or simply bizarre. *The Chronicle* obtained hundreds of email messages sent to Ms. Click's university account after filing a public-records request. (We also requested Ms. Basler's emails, which the university has not yet released.) We were curious to know what kinds of messages people send to a professor on a day when public opinion has deemed her an enemy of the state based on 12 seconds of video. What did these people feel Ms. Click needed to hear from them, personally?

The university handed over approximately 1,100 pages of emails received that day and the next day, and some patterns emerged. Broadly speaking, there were 12 kinds of messages that landed in Ms. Click's inbox:

1. You should be ashamed/fired!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Shameful demonstration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 10, 2015 12:12:27 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a Professor of Mass Media to subvert the lawful actions of a professional photographer documenting a public event, and to lead students is their abysmal denial of First Amendment rights, is a travesty.

“Humanity” and “these are people” too, is absolutely no grounds at all for the actions of you or your group. The photographer had every right to be there and to take photographs

The actions taken by you and your group are blatantly threatening are very close to mob rule.

Shame on you, many times over.
This was the most popular choice. The words "shame," "ashamed," or "shameful" appear 238 times in the emails.

Variations on "embarrassment" came in second, at 104, followed by "disgrace" at 98.

About seven dozen people wrote to tell Ms. Click she should be fired, and one person suggested she be set on fire.

2. Primers on the First Amendment

Subject: 1st amendment
Date: Monday, November 09, 2015 10:41:01 PM

You should really know the 1st amendment.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

You should read the rest of it too.


The First Amendment was mentioned 242 times in the emails. Fourteen people sent Ms. Click the text of the amendment. Several referred her to the entire Constitution.

One message contained, in its subject line, the words "Constitutional Rights," followed by an emoji of a smiling person wearing a pointy hat.

"We are under heavy surveillance at all times," it read, "and it's unconstitutional but it's happening so the illusion of privacy just because you can't see a camera in front of you is futile."

3. Unflattering comparisons to 20th-century political regimes
Whatever your motives, your attempts to use physical force to prevent a journalist from covering a news event, in a public place, reveals that you don't have the slightest notion of why a free press is necessary. Your actions would have been at home in Putin's Russia or the Ayatollah's Iran. I shudder to think of what you are teaching your students.

Ms. Click's detractors were eager to associate her with "fascists" and their ilk.

They said her actions were reminiscent of North Korea, the Sturmabteilung (i.e. Nazi enforcers — the writer included a Wikipedia link), the Ayatollah's Iran, Mao's China, Stalin's Russia, Putin's Russia, and George Wallace's Alabama.

"Cuba calls," wrote one person. He advised Ms. Click to "call for muscle to help you pack."

It's not clear if any of these people were history scholars, although the guy who cited 1960s' Alabama was a marketing professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

4. Angry notes from journalists

Today you violated the 1st Amendment rights of a student journalist. As an educator, you are held to a higher standard and should be expected to act accordingly. You have proven that you do not believe in basic Constitutional values, especially the one that is so critical to an amazing network of Mizzou graduates. If you do not understand the rights granted to all, you are unfit to teach students at the University. Please resign immediately and spare more students from being exposed to your twisted ideology.

Journalists took special umbrage at Ms. Click's attempt to keep cameras out of the protest camp on the Missouri quad, though their criticisms tended to be more courteous than others'.
"You have proven that you do not believe in basic Constitutional values, especially the one that is so critical to an amazing network of Mizzou graduates," wrote a news editor at CNN.

"I’ve been defending the protesters on Facebook for days and you just blew a huge hole in the argument I was making in support of their legitimate grievances," wrote a reporter for Bloomberg News. "I don’t get it. I just don't get it."

Graduates of Missouri's highly regarded journalism school, where Ms. Click held a courtesy appointment at the time, seemed to take the incident personally.

"I am embarrassed for my alma mater," wrote one alumnus, a photojournalist for the European Pressphoto Agency, "and do hope your department considers this video when you are up for tenure."

5. Media requests from journalists

Subject: CBS News Request
Date: Tuesday, November 10, 2015 10:57:32 AM

Hi Melissa—Can we talk with you on the phone for a radio story we’re working on?
Steve

When journalists weren't scolding Ms. Click, they were courting her.


"You are all over the news as you probably know by now," said the Post editor.
"I’m sure you're getting bombarded with messages today, but felt it is only fair to reach out," wrote the Daily News reporter.

"It'd be a chance to clear things up — give your side of the story," wrote the VICE contributor.

"The context isn't clear at all," wrote the Reader writer.

"It's a complicated equation and I'd like to talk to you about it," wrote the national NPR reporter.

"*CNN Tonight with Don Lemon* is currently the highest rated show at CNN among young viewers," said the producer, "and we would love to hear from you."

6. Genuine support

Dear Dr. Click,

I'm reaching out to ask you not to lose your spirit in this situation.

Please explain to people why you were angry during Monday events.

Please defend yourself. Do not let them force you out of your job.

We understand you.

Kind regards,

They were few and far between, but Ms. Click did get some sympathetic emails.

"As one communication educator to another this is a short note of my expression of support with your actions today," wrote a visiting assistant professor of rhetoric at
Northern Illinois University. She praised Ms. Click for staying true to "your students, your discipline, and your overall core beliefs."

An English instructor at the University of Arkansas at Monticello thanked Ms. Click for sticking up for her students. "I've been telling everyone, including my students: I would've done the same damn thing," he wrote. "Congratulations, and keep up the good work."

"I understand and appreciate the need for safe space for protestors" [sic], wrote another supporter. "I get that it's not about freedom of the press, but rather, about respecting the protestors, and their safety (and anonymity, if desired)."

One message asked Ms. Click not to lose her spirit, and to speak up about why she had been so angry in the video. "We understand you," it said.

7. Fake support

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Subject: Course Inquiry  
Date: Monday, November 09, 2015 7:19:46 PM

Dear Professor Click,

I'm very interested in Mizzou's doctoral program. I currently have a master's degree in media theory and was curious how many semesters it would take before I was allowed to enroll in *Barricading the Fourth Estate: How to Effectively Suppress the News Media in a Public Sphere*.

Additionally, I was hoping you could speak to the various elements that may or may not be covered in this course such as:

- Requesting muscle to assault journalists that refuse to obey illegitimate commands
- Denial of First Amendment rights
- Unlawful commandeering of public grounds

And etc.

Thank you very much for your time and the amazing example you set for the student body at large as well as your continual support for journalist's rights.
"I appreciate your actions," one person wrote. Why? "I always like telling my girlfriend that my journalism school (Syracuse) is better than her journalism school (Missouri). Today you confirmed that I am correct!"

"I support you, Melissa," read the subject line of another email. "Psych! You’re an asshole," read the body.

8. I’m not mad, I’m disappointed …

Professor Click,

While I sympathize with your desire to protect the safety and comfort of your students, I’m deeply disturbed that you saw fit to grab a photographer’s camera and call out for "muscle." I imagine you were caught up in a moment, and I personally understand.

However, as a public figure I hope you will prepare a statement explaining your actions in the coming weeks. I believe the student body at Mizzou, and on campuses across North America need to hear it, and I hope you’ll find the strength to take up the mantle.

Disappointment wasn't as common as outrage, but it was mentioned more than three dozen times in the emails, often by writers who were sympathetic to Ms. Click's cause but not her methods.

A person professing to be "a minority, born and raised in the Show Me State," said he didn’t want the professor to be fired, but he was disappointed that she had called in the "muscle" on a student.

"Please," he wrote with no trace of irony, "utilize the most important muscle of all: your heart."

9. Threats and horrorcore

There were some of these:

"I hope your mother dies of brain cancer."
"I plan to belly laugh when someone shanks you or sets you on fire in the next week."

"Sport should be made of you, in which you are passed around a cell block for a week straight, then cut loose to be hunted down and killed. If hell exists I want to be there to take part in your eternal agony. You do not deserve a marked grave."

"I hope you're gang-raped by some of the very animals with whom you're so enamored."

Ms. Click reported that last one to the campus police.

10. 'This Week in Cats' and other digital subscriptions
Maybe Ms. Click chose the worst day of her career as an opportunity to sign up for a bunch of digital newsletters. More likely, somebody else signed her up as a prank.

In any case, she received confirmations to receive BuzzFeed's "Dog a Day," "Dude a Day," and "This Week in Cats," plus subscriptions to dozens of techie news sites.

11. Impertinent ax-grinding
"Your football team is trash," noted one writer.

"I live out east with plenty of good universities ... with the exception of UMass Amherst ... another left wing over run with minorities school," wrote another. (Ms. Click got her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.) He recommended that she move to Zimbabwe.

Someone sent her a link, along with a note calling her "pathetic." The link was to an article about how everyone who thought the University of Alabama's football dominance had ended owed Nick Saban, the head football coach there, an apology.
"At 87 years of age I am ashamed to tell anyone I was once a reporter," another person wrote. "Instead I say I am an artist who writes occasionally."

12. Meta-outrage

"I am just a run of the mill 41 year old from Charlotte, NC. I am in no way interested in you, your school, your program or your students. However, here you are ... reading an email from me about how disgusted I am with you.

"Think about that for a second."

OpEd: MU faculty make a bad case worse

Colleagues look foolish trying to defend Click.

By JENNIFER BUKOWSKY

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 2:00 pm

**Hey, Mizzou, when you’re in a hole, stop digging!**

Assistant Professor Melissa Click must be a lovely person — off camera, anyway. Apparently, 116 University of Missouri faculty members signed a letter in her support. This letter was released publicly in response to the letter demanding Click’s termination signed by 118 members of the Missouri General Assembly.

The faculty’s letter claims that Click has been “wronged in the media” and calls upon the university to defend her “first amendment rights of protest.”

But according to the expert opinion of Ken Paulson, one of Click’s communication colleagues, the “Carnahan Quad kerfuffle was not a First Amendment conflict.” Both the faculty letter and Paulson’s opinion piece seem to operate under the assumption that there was no “government involvement” because Click was merely acting as a private citizen during the videotaped incident.
Paulson’s piece notes his view that had the police been present, there would have been government involvement: “Police would be filing charges or providing guidance to keep the peace. It didn’t come to that.”

But while University of Missouri Police Department officers (oddly) weren’t there to maintain the peace on campus — again — at the quad during Click’s kerfuffle, that doesn’t mean the government wasn’t on the quad “providing guidance” at that time. In fact, the night before the kerfuffle unfolded, faculty members had announced that they would be at the quad that day for a “teach-in” to answer students’ questions.

And it was at that same place and time that communications Professor Click instructed students to form a human chain to physically block, intimidate and prevent members of the press from covering what was, in Paulson’s words, a “very public news event in a public space.” A government employee instructing students of a government university on government-controlled property certainly creates the appearance of government involvement to me.

I agree with Paulson that the students had no right to “carve out a space” on that public space. And the fact that the students mistakenly believed otherwise was no secret the day before Click’s kerfuffle. The students had posted a sign on that public space purporting to exclude the press from their encampment. So although I agree with the opinion of MU Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg that Click should not be judged solely on “the worst 10 minutes of her career,” Click had more than 10 minutes to reflect on her actions that day.

One would think that the faculty hosting this “teach-in” would have instructed the students that if they wanted privacy, they needed to go somewhere, well, private. Instead, by following Professor Click’s instructions, the faculty and students of my alma matter looked like a bunch of uneducated idiots on national TV.

I respect the extraordinary effort to come to Click’s defense. But I believe that the 116 faculty members listed on Click’s letter of support are only making a bad situation worse for both Click and Mizzou — in the eyes of both the Missouri legislature and alumni of the University of Missouri. If Click’s colleagues really want to help her out, I suggest they help her find a job somewhere else.

Jennifer Bukowsky is a Columbia attorney and regular political commentator. Her Twitter handle is @esqonfire.
Republicans In Tennessee Want State Investigation Of University Diversity Offices

Republican lawmakers in Tennessee want to launch an investigation into the diversity office at the University of Tennessee and other public colleges in the state.

A group of 10 GOP state senators and representatives, led by state Rep. Eddie Smith, sent a letter Monday to Tennessee House Speaker Beth Harwell and Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, both Republicans, requesting they establish a special joint committee to look into diversity efforts at public colleges and universities in the state.

A spokeswoman for Harwell said the speaker will back the creation of a joint House-Senate committee to investigate how the universities promote diversity. Ramsey has not yet decided if he will support it.

No one is alleging anything illegal was done in an office that controls less than 0.25 percent of the UT system's annual budget -- rather, it's ideological differences driving the calls for an investigation of public college diversity offices in Tennessee.

**GOP Lawmaker Wants Keep The Investigation "Positive"**

Smith said in an interview he intends to address controversies -- such as a guide about gender-neutral pronouns and a memo about holiday parties -- but he also wants to allow the university to "highlight some of the successes they've had." He hopes the legislature's investigation, which would largely take place in public hearings, would not be a "gotcha" situation.

"We need to know the positive things that are happening," Smith told The Huffington Post. "That's why we wanted a very broad hearing to allow everything to come out."

**Colleges and universities nationwide are scrambling to respond to student protesters demanding that higher education do a better job at being inclusive on campus. Flagship universities at the center of racist incidents, like at the University of Missouri and the University of Oklahoma, responded in 2015 by creating diversity offices similar to the one that Tennessee lawmakers want to now investigate.**
The Tennessee legislators said in their letter to Harwell they will try to pinpoint which people are involved in diversity programming, how they spend their money, and the "actual productivity and efficiency of persons engaged in diversity activities."

**Why Are Lawmakers Concerned About College Diversity Offices?**

Local media has characterized recent UT diversity efforts as controversial, coming under "national scrutiny" and attracting "ridicule" -- though in each case, it appears there was little objection on campus, and instead the flames were fanned by outside conservative media.

GOP legislators in Tennessee said last month that people should be fired over the UT-Knoxville diversity office issuing a memo suggesting employees avoid religious symbols for workplace holiday parties. Students largely supported the university administrators against the Republican objections, and a campus ministry sent an open letter to the lawmakers telling them to "calm down, have a cookie." The holiday party memo did not attract much attention until there was a Fox News interview with a Congressman from Tennessee mocking it.

Earlier in 2015, elected Republican officials in Tennessee objected to the UT-Knoxville diversity office attempting to educate faculty about gender-neutral pronouns. False reports from Fox News pundits at the time said the university "banned" the terms "he" and "she," though the school did nothing of the sort.

"We want to know where did these controversies arise from, and are there benefits to them," Smith said. "UT-Knoxville is the state's land-grant university, and when you think of Tennessee you think of UT. And the university needs to reflect the values of Tennesseans."

Aside from the criticism of the diversity office, conservative lawmakers have repeatedly gone against the university over a student-funded annual event called "Sex Week." The weeklong series is organized by students, who bring in speakers to discuss sexual identities, healthy relationships and discuss potential hazards relating to sexual activity.

In a brief statement responding to the call for a special investigation, the university system said it "welcomes this legislative oversight as an opportunity to broaden understanding of diversity and inclusion efforts on all our campuses."
Fewer freshmen apply to MU; officials expect enrollment decrease

By Megan Favignano

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 2:00 pm

**Fewer freshmen have applied to the University of Missouri compared to this time last year, and the university expects a drop in enrollment, according to an internal MU memo dated Jan. 4.**

However, officials cautioned “there is no way to accurately forecast our fall enrollment at this time.”

So far, 18,377 freshmen have applied to attend MU this fall. This time last year, MU had received 19,318 applications. While MU has received 941 fewer applications than January 2015, it has received 123 more compared to January 2014.

MU Director of Admissions Chuck May said in an email that controversy on campus this fall contributed to the decrease.

“While we don’t have any clear data, we know that the events this past fall have had an impact, and we are answering any questions that parents and students have about those events,” May said.

Students protested the racial climate on MU’s campus last fall, with some camping out in tents on Carnahan Quadrangle and one student going on a hunger strike. UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned in November after student protesters criticized him by saying he inadequately addressed race issues.

Graduate students spent the fall collecting signatures needed to hold a vote to form a union. In August, the university told graduate student workers it would no longer subsidize health insurance premiums, a decision officials later rescinded for one school year.

Graduate student applications are down 19 percent compared to 2015. MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said academic units recruit graduate students, making it harder to identify reasons for the drop. Banken said fewer people are going to graduate school nationally as the economy improves.

Increased competition in some of MU’s major markets, especially the Chicago area, also has affected applications, May said. Barbara Rupp, MU’s interim vice provost for enrollment management, said in a September interview the university increased its out-of-state recruitment efforts in response to small high school senior class sizes.

This year’s decrease comes entirely from nonresidents. May said applications from Missouri residents are even with last year.
Of MU’s fall 2016 applications, the number of black students decreased by 78 compared to last year — a decrease of about 3 percent — and increased by 24 compared to two years ago.

May said MU schools and colleges are calling prospective students this semester to see what questions they might have. Officials will bring faculty representatives and more currently enrolled students to recruitment events to share their experiences, he said.

MU’s goal is to increase its enrollment to 38,000 students from its current enrollment of about 35,000. In a November interview, interim UM System President Mike Middleton said he does not think current plans for continued growth on MU’s campus need to be modified.

“There are some parents who are reluctant to send their kids here” after events this fall. “I think the Columbia campus might experience less growth in the immediate future than they had projected,” Middleton said. “But I don’t think it’s going to be a dramatic drop.”

Curators to discuss search for next UM System president

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 9:53 am

The University of Missouri Board of Curators on Wednesday will discuss the timeline for finding a new UM System president.

Former UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned in November after weeks of protests over the racial climate at MU. The curators named Mike Middleton interim president and are starting to set parameters for their search for a permanent president.

The curators will meet at 1 p.m. Wednesday in Room 106A of Ellis Library, 1020 Lowry St. According to the meeting agenda, the board will approve its 2016 executive committee and standing committee assignments before beginning a closed session.

The agenda cites sections of Missouri’s Sunshine Law, the state’s open records and meetings law, which allows the public board to close meetings for “confidential or privileged communications with university counsel, personnel and contract items.”

The board is set to reconvene its public session at about 2:30 p.m., at which time the curators will discuss the presidential search.
Protests on college campuses this school year are a sign of great changes
Black students are becoming the change they wish to see in America

BY LEWIS DIUGUID
ldiuqoid@kcestar.com

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. would smile with pride over students’ nonviolent protests to combat racism at the University of Missouri in Columbia and other college campuses.

On Monday we celebrate the national holiday for the slain civil rights leader’s birthday. King, who championed nonviolent resistance to force social change, would have been 87 if he weren’t assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn.

King would have applauded MU graduate student Jonathan Butler’s hunger strike, refusing to eat until after MU system president Tim Wolfe resigned. King would’ve loved the black MU football players threatening a boycott of future games and the backing of head football coach Gary Pinkel and his staff.

The protests last year show students of color uniting against intolerance and the status quo. It has happened before.

James G. Thompson, a 26-year-old African American from Wichita, in a 1942 letter to the editor of The Pittsburgh Courier, helped launch the “Double V
Campaign” for victory over Adolf Hitler and the Axis powers and victory over racism and Jim Crow at home. That activism led to the civil rights movement and to white college campuses opening to black students.

Black student protests in the 1960s and 1970s led to the hiring of black faculty and administrators and the addition of black studies classes and degree programs. Despite decades of civil rights gains, integration politically and judicially has mostly been abandoned in cities and in lower grades.

Many black kids face segregation and poverty, the razor wire of low expectations in poor performing schools, racial achievement gaps and a school-to-prison pipeline with police eagerly waiting for them.

College for many students of color is an unachievable dream. But for the few who make it, it’s where they encounter many white students who for the first time have to interact and share dorm rooms with blacks. Until college, they only “knew” African Americans through TV sports, music, entertainment or crime-filled news, sparking some intolerance.

Today’s black students who make it to college have a higher expectation of acceptance and equal treatment. They’ve also been affected by the 2014 Ferguson, Mo., police shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown and police killings of other unarmed black males nationwide. They’ve been inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement.

Black baby boom students like me mostly endured the racial bigotry as part of the cost of a higher education at white universities. In an odd way, it helped prepare us for bigotry in professions that were not used to black workers.

Like King’s generation, today’s students won’t tolerate the status quo. Good for them. If black lives are to matter, then the voices of young African-Americans have to be heard and result in a meaningful change.

Being put off and ignored is what resulted in the resignations of the MU system president and the chancellor. King would applaud Mike Middleton’s appointment as interim president of the MU system.

The MU black student movement spread to college campuses nationwide. Black lives have to matter throughout the country to schools, police, government officials, faith and civic leaders, businesses and colleges and universities.
Young people also should rail against low expectations, racial achievement gaps and disparate treatment.

Their activism makes me wonder how these young graduates will transform the workplace in the jobs they take, the way they’ll vote, the elected offices they’ll hold, the pulpits they preach from and the judicial benches they’ll occupy.

American is in for more changes. It can only make these United States more inclusive and better for everyone.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

JANUARY 12, 2016 11:32 AM

VML and MU School of Journalism team up for social media course

Kansas City agency helped design class on advanced social media strategies

VML staff will teach class along with an MU professor

Many journalism students study marketing and will need social media skills

BY GREG HACK
ghack@kcstar.com

Kansas City marketing agency VML has helped design a new class at the Missouri School of Journalism called Advanced Social Media Strategies.

In the class, which will start this semester, graduate and undergraduate students will plan, develop and implement social media for the journalism school’s social media accounts.

Though colleges sometimes consult the industry on what to teach and often have guest speakers from companies, VML’s involvement for this class is much more
extensive. The firm helped develop the course, and two VML staff members will teach it along with the MU professor.

“Collaborating with top professionals provides a tremendous opportunity for Missouri School of Journalism students to develop strategic social media skills using the industry’s leading tools and techniques,” David Kurpius, dean of the Missouri School of Journalism, said in a release announcing the partnership.

Social media has grown in importance in marketing, and nearly half of the school’s students major in strategic communications, which includes marketing and public relations. VML noted a recent study in which more than half the firms surveyed said recruiting candidates with the right mix of digital skills, including social media, was “challenging” or “very challenging.”

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Lawmakers hear bill to increase regulation on abortion clinics, doctors

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Former University Hospital Chief of Staff Gordon Christensen of Columbia accused state lawmakers Tuesday of engaging in “political theater” on a bill adding new restrictions on doctors performing abortions and the disposal of fetal tissue.

Christensen testified to the Senate Seniors, Families and Children Committee against a bill filed by Sen. Bob Onder, R-St. Charles, to require abortion providers to have surgical and admitting privileges at a community hospital near the clinic and to require all tissue from abortions be sent to a pathologist.

The first provision is included because University of Missouri Health Care granted refer and follow privileges to a St. Louis obstetrician and gynecologist, allowing a license for abortions to be issued to Planned Parenthood’s Columbia clinic. The second provision is in the bill because lawmakers doubt assurances from Planned Parenthood and Attorney General Chris Koster that no fetal tissue from abortions performed in Missouri is being donated for research.

Neither provision is necessary and both will make it more difficult for women to obtain a safe abortion, Christensen said. “You are going to increase the problems you are intending to prevent,” he said.
Christensen is a candidate for the Democratic nomination for Congress in the Fourth District. He was assistant chief of staff at Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital, where he became a whistleblower in a case involving the deaths of more than a dozen patients.

The effort to accuse Planned Parenthood of marketing baby parts for profit reminds him of the way the VA sought to cover up the deaths, he said.

“I was witness to political theater,” Christensen said. “This has the appearance, not only in my opinion but what other people have told me, of political theater.”

As he presented the bill, Onder said it is intended to address gaps in law identified during hearings of the Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life.

Doctors performing abortions should be able to treat their patients when complications require hospitalization, Onder said. The requirement to send all tissue to a pathologist is because lawmakers are not certain tissue is not being diverted for research, he said.

“The laws are meant to uphold medical standards, protect women and ensure public safety by enforcing standards that have been violated in clinics around the country,” Onder said.

Along with the provisions about hospital privileges and disposal of tissue, the bill requires annual, unannounced inspections of abortion clinics, bans the donation of fetal tissue for research and bars the Department of Health and Senior Services from waiving any licensing requirements as part of a lawsuit settlement.

The interim committee was formed after national anti-abortion activists released videos they said showed Planned Parenthood personnel negotiating the sale of fetal organs. No investigation initiated since the release of the videos has produced evidence that state or federal laws were broken by Planned Parenthood affiliates.

An investigation by Koster of abortions performed in June — the month before the videos were released — showed no evidence that tissue was being provided for research in Missouri.

The investigation was incomplete, said Susan Klein, legislative director of Missouri Right to Life.

“I think there needs to be a thorough investigation,” Klein said. “Our attorney general has given us a minimal statement that for one month out of one year that there may not have been baby body parts being sold.”

The interim committee’s investigation pressured MU Health Care to stop offering refer and follow privileges. As a result, abortions stopped Nov. 23 in Columbia, leaving a Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Louis as the only licensed abortion provider in the state. David Eisenberg, medical director for Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, told the committee that Onder’s bill would prevent testing of fetal tissue for genetic abnormalities or law enforcement purposes.
The bill is unnecessary, Eisenberg told the committee.

“I don’t feel this bill will improve the safety, health and well-being of women in this state,” he said.

Meeting at MU to discuss permanent UM System President

COLUMBIA- The University of Missouri Board of Curators is planning to meet and discuss the search for a permanent UM System President.

The board is expected to hold a session in Ellis Library Wednesday afternoon to have a conversation regarding logistics and parameters of the presidential search. John Fougere, Chief Communications Officer for the UM System, said there will be no decisions made at the meeting.

“We’re not planning on taking any roads or making any decisions,” Fougere said. “Just [having] a discussion of these issues in a public session.”

Former University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe resigned in November after issues with the racial climate on MU’s campus. Mike Middleton was then appointed as interim president.

The board is scheduled to call a public session to order at 1 P.M. but will move into a closed meeting at 1:10 P.M.

A public session is planned to reconvene at approximately 2:30 P.M. to have a discussion with and gain feedback from the community.

The curator’s next meeting is scheduled for early February.
Colorectal cancer at young age more likely for minority groups

COLUMBIA, Mo., Jan. 12 (UPI) -- Members of ethnic and racial minorities are diagnosed with colorectal cancer at younger ages and more advanced stages, according to a new study.

Researchers at the University of Missouri said there is a range of possibilities for why younger minorities are diagnosed with more advanced forms of the disease, though lower rates of screening and reduced access to education and health care are among those they suggest.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common form of cancer diagnosed in the United States and second leading cause of cancer death, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 134,000 people were diagnosed with the disease in 2012, and 51,000 died from it.

"Regular screening for colorectal cancer is essential for prevention and early diagnosis," said Dr. Jamal Ibdah, a professor of medicine at the University of Missouri, in a press release. "Our findings suggest a need for further studies to examine current guidelines for all minority groups in the U.S. and the development of possible new interventional strategies."

Researchers who conducted the study, published in Cancer Medicine, analyzed data from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results study and North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, reviewing diagnosis and treatment records collected between 1973 and 2009.

The average age of patients diagnosed with colorectal cancer in non-Hispanic whites is 72, with all other average ages being younger. The average age at diagnosis for Hispanics is 66, for Asians and Pacific Islanders it's 68, for American Indians and native Alaskans it's 64, and for blacks it's also 64.

Just 6.7 percent of non-Hispanic whites receive a colorectal cancer diagnosis before age 50, compared to 12 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders, 15.4 percent of Hispanics, 16.5 percent of American Indians and native Alaskans, and 11.9 percent of blacks.

The researchers suggest hereditary and environmental factors, diet, and lifestyle may contribute to the statistics, but lower income levels, lower screening rates, and reduced access to education and health care are also likely culprits, they said.

"While we know the risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with age, little is known about its prevalence within various minority and ethnic groups," Ibdah said. "Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaska Native and African-American populations are the fastest-growing racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. Having the most accurate statistical data is critical to providing cancer prevention and control programs for these groups."
COLUMBIA — MU science departments are opening their doors this week to graduate students and community members interested in evolutionary thought.

On Monday evening, MU history professor Ted Koditschek led the first of four public events in "Evolution Bootcamp" for about 20 people. Koditschek shared the history of evolutionary theory, including the perspectives of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Darwin.

During the day, events are limited to 18 graduate students from several departments. At night, however, the public is invited to attend boot-camp events from 7 to 9 p.m.

"Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial," a NOVA presentation about a Pennsylvania court battle over teaching evolution in public schools, will be shown Tuesday evening in room 18 of Tucker Hall.

Wednesday and Thursday evenings will feature an "EvoBlitz," in which faculty or graduate student researchers describe their research as simply as possible in less than three minutes. The faculty EvoBlitz is Wednesday, and the grad student EvoBlitz is Thursday; both are in room 112 LeFevre Hall.

The boot camp is new to the university this year. Students in the one-credit class get a crash-course in evolution.

"The goal is to bring early grad students up to speed on evolutionary theory and its applications," said Mary Shenk, an associate professor of cultural anthropology.
The students come from biological sciences, geological sciences, anthropology, animal science and science education, Shenk said.

Some might be entering research programs that require them to have a better understanding of evolution than what they learned in their undergraduate years, said Sarah Bush, a teaching associate professor of biological sciences. This gives them the opportunity to get a more in-depth background in evolution, which is typically taught only in biology courses.

The boot camp also gives them the opportunity to make connections with peers in other disciplines.

"The interdisciplinary nature of evolutionary theory means that people can be working on evolution-based projects without knowing about related research that their colleagues are doing on the other side of campus," Bush said.

This issue exists among both student and faculty researchers, she said. Bringing together graduate students from different disciplines also brings faculty together, Bush said. Students get the chance to see the perspectives of other scientific fields, said Liane Linehan, a first-year master's student in geological sciences.

Additionally, professors talk about misconceptions about evolution, Linehan said. Professors from several fields lecture during the day on topics across fields, including the biological factors of evolution, animal behavior, human behavior and how to communicate evolutionary theory.

"It's double-checking that we're all on the same page," Linehan said.

The organizers and faculty involved with the boot camp plan to make this event annual, Bush said.
State NAACP president steps down after 25 years

HANNAH STURTECKY, 13 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — The longtime Missouri NAACP president and Columbia resident, Mary Ratliff, will step down from her state position and will focus on her role in the Columbia chapter.

The NAACP has chosen Rod Chapel to replace her as the 14th president of the Missouri State NAACP chapter, according to a news release.

Chapel is the Jefferson City NAACP branch president and practices employment law at the Barnes and Associates Law Firm in Jefferson City. He is also a member of the Missouri Bar Association Board of Governors. In Chapel’s college years, he was NAACP president of the Oklahoma State University chapter, according to the release.

In 2013, Ratliff decided not to run for another two-year term as the Missouri NAACP president. She will remain president of the Columbia chapter for the time being, but Ratliff said she is training someone to take over her position in Columbia.

During her tenure as the Missouri president, she hosted the Journey for Justice walk from Ferguson to Jefferson City in December 2014. She said she enjoyed bringing people together from throughout the country for the event.

One of her proudest accomplishments, she said, was being able to establish a working relationship with the Missouri governor's office and legislators.

Ratliff was also outspoken about the protests on MU's campus in November. She said that racism at MU is an indicator of the racism in broader Columbia, according to previous Missourian reporting.
As she steps down from her state role, the activist looks forward to being able to give more of her time to Columbia in order to bring the community together.

"Nobody stays forever," Ratliff said. "You leave when things are going well, not when they're going bad."

In a news release, Chapel stated that he intended to increase membership as well as units in the Missouri chapter.

NAACP was founded in 1909 and is America's oldest and largest civil rights organization, the release states. The Missouri NAACP has over 15 units throughout the state.

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Many Black Students Don’t Seek Help for Mental-Health Concerns, Survey Finds**

**No MU Mention**

African-American students feel less emotionally prepared for college than white students do, and they’re also more likely to keep their worries to themselves, according to the results of a national poll released on Wednesday.

The survey marks one of the first efforts born of a partnership between the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the emotional well-being of college students, and the Steve Fund, a group focused on the mental health of minority students that was formed in 2014 to honor Stephen C. Rose, an African-American graduate of Harvard University who committed suicide that year at age 29.
The results of the survey, which was conducted online last year by Harris Poll, reflect a clear racial disparity between students who feel comfortable in a college setting and students who do not. Among the 1,500 second-semester freshmen who responded, less than half of black students rated their college experience as "good" or "excellent," compared with nearly two-thirds of white students.

African-American students were more likely to report feeling overwhelmed and angry, and to say that college wasn’t living up to their expectations. Black students were almost twice as likely to report that they had seriously considered transferring during their first semester.

Black students also didn’t seek help as often as white students for their mental and emotional problems; white students were nearly twice as likely to report receiving a diagnosis of anxiety, depression, or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Three-quarters of black students said they tended to keep their feelings about the difficulties of college to themselves.

The survey’s findings were released in the midst of a wave of student protests about the racial climate on college campuses. One of the activists’ most frequent demands of their administrations: improve counseling and support services for minority students.

Unique Challenges

Alfiee M. Breland-Noble, an associate professor of psychiatry at the Georgetown University Medical Center who works with the Steve Fund, said activists are serving as the "boots-on-the-ground voice" to illustrate why it’s important for colleges to deal with the unique emotional challenges that minority students face.

What are those challenges? For African-American and Hispanic students, especially at predominantly white institutions, dealing with racial stressors and with being
underrepresented on the campus are two common problems, Dr. Breland-Noble said. Though many colleges have over the years increased their number of black and Hispanic students, she said, the minority percentage remains relatively small, so administrators and counselors don’t always have the specific tools they need to help those students.

Most of the survey’s findings were not surprising, particularly for mental-health professionals, Dr. Breland-Noble said. But they provide a foundation from which colleges can begin thinking about how they can better serve minority students, she said.

For instance, the black students surveyed were less likely to report that they had felt more pressure to drink alcohol now that they were in college, or that drinking was a normal part of the college experience.

"African-American students are not resorting to some of these really negative ways of coping," Dr. Breland-Noble said. "In my mind, that’s encouraging." However, if black students aren’t using alcohol or drugs to manage their internal struggles, she asked, "what are they doing?"

The African-American respondents were also more than twice as likely as white students to turn to a religious figure for support during their first semester. So colleges could consider teaming up with religious figures, she said, and ensuring that they know how to point students toward on- and off-campus resources.

Strategies That Work

A sizable amount of research has been done on minority students and mental health, Dr. Breland-Noble said, notably on microaggressions. But the studies don’t tend to leave the shelf. "There’s often not a great deal of uptake across the board in terms of
translating those findings into specific interventions that students can benefit from," she said.

That’s where the Jed Foundation and the Steve Fund see an opportunity. The two organizations are working with McLean Hospital, in Massachusetts, to review current literature on minority students and mental health, and they plan soon to survey dozens of colleges to see what kinds of programs have been developed for those students and to gauge which ones have worked.

A group of experts will evaluate the findings and develop recommendations for college administrators and counselors, as well as parents and students, said Victor Schwartz, medical director at the Jed Foundation. The recommendations will include a range of specific, evidence-based best practices, he said.

Given that it’s such a pressing issue, the plan is to release the recommendations within a few months, said John MacPhee, executive director of the Jed Foundation.

Dr. Schwartz stopped short of saying that colleges are, on the whole, not adequately supporting minority students; some institutions, he said, "are really trying to do a lot of work in this area." The problem, he said, is that colleges "tend to reinvent the wheel" because they don’t know what solutions are out there. "We want to publicize strategies that have worked and that, by the consensus of our expert group, we hope will work," he said.

One college that’s ahead of the curve is the University of Virginia, Dr. Breland-Noble said. John Edwin Mason, an associate professor of history, started a peer-counseling program called Project Rise a decade ago.

He had noticed, Dr. Breland-Noble said, that many black students "would get to campus and flounder a little during their first year." So he began training a group of
student counselors who could help their peers discuss issues openly and point them to support services on the campus.

Encouraging such conversations is critical, Dr. Breland-Noble said. Minority students don’t always recognize that they’re experiencing a mental-health problem, she said, in part because it’s not often talked about in their social circles.

"They hear people saying, I’m tired, or I’ve got the blues," she said. "They haven’t heard people saying, I’m medically depressed."