UM curators question supplemental fee increases

By ASHLEY JOST

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 3:52 pm Comments (3)

The University of Missouri Board of Curators have concerns about supplemental fees for the 2015-16 school year, particularly at the system’s Columbia campus.

The curators held a special teleconference Thursday morning to discuss updated fee proposals ahead of the Feb. 5-6 meeting where they will vote on the fees.

At the December curators meeting, administrators suggested a 1.8 percent increase for in-state undergraduate students for all campuses except St. Louis, where a 9.1 percent increase was proposed because of a fee for a new recreation center approved by a student referendum.

The proposal has changed. Missouri law limits public schools from increasing tuition at a rate higher than the consumer price index. According to the board documents prepared by UM System staff, 1.2 percent is now being used for planning, but the final CPI will be released by the state on Friday.

Curators in December were promised an update on increases in supplemental fees — charges assessed on students in certain programs or colleges on the four campuses. Since then, UM System President Tim Wolfe said his staff worked with campus budget officers to understand why the increases are necessary and make sure they have been spent appropriately.

“Rest assured the in front of you are justified,” Wolfe told the board. In a letter to the curators last week, he said the number of supplemental fee proposals, “including those that increase greater than the rate of inflation and new supplemental fees,” was reduced from 25 to 18. Five of those apply to graduate and professional students only.

Discussion Thursday morning largely centered on the $90 per credit hour increase to the undergraduate course fee for 310 students in the Sinclair School of Nursing. The annual estimated average impact per student is expected to be $880 for that fee.

Judith Miller, dean of the MU nursing school, explained that because the college doesn’t charge lab fees for students, like most nursing schools do, it lacks a revenue stream that would help meet the
college's needs. She explained the college tried to maintain an 8:1 student-to-faculty ratio, which has increased to 10:1 because of the lack of resources.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said limited facilities are constraints.

Curator David Steelman said he was concerned about adding more cost to students through fees, but said he thought it was justified for the School of Nursing, considering the 100 percent employment of graduates who don't immediately pursue graduate school. Those employed alumni average around $40,000/year starting salaries. Steelman, a new curator, had his appointment confirmed by the Missouri Senate on Thursday morning.

Other proposals at MU include a $5 increase to the supplemental fee for the College of Arts and Science, bringing the fee to $30 per credit hour for 9,691 students. The fee will apply to only 2000-level courses and higher, Dean Mike O'Brien told the curators, which is about half of the total classes taught by the college.

Though state law mandates tuition increases stay at or below the CPI, that statute doesn't restrict colleges from increasing the supplemental fees.

“As I look through how these fees are being distributed and the spread between the highest increase and the lowest increase, it does seem to be supportive of the idea that different programs may cost ... different amounts and maybe ought to be priced differently,” curator John Phillips said. “But, I think it's a Band-Aid approach to do it through fees as opposed to differential pricing on tuition. So, I sound that alarm and I guess we'll talk more about it in February.”

The board meets Feb. 5-6 at MU, where it will vote on the final proposed fee increases.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM System Board of Curators considers tuition increase for 2016-17

Thursday, January 15, 2015 | 7:40 p.m. CST; updated 6:55 a.m. CST, Friday, January 16, 2015
BY ALLEN FENNEWALD

COLUMBIA — Tuition throughout the four-campus University of Missouri System could increase by 1.2 percent for residential students and by 3 percent for non-residential students in the 2016-17 academic year.
UM System President Tim Wolfe outlined proposed tuition and supplemental fee increases during a Thursday morning meeting of the UM System Board of Curators' finance committee. Wolfe said the system's current tuition and supplemental fees lag behind those of comparable colleges across the country.

The curators are scheduled to vote on the increases Feb. 5. The UM System includes MU, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Missouri Science & Technology University in Rolla and University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Wolfe said the fee increases are necessary to ensure the system continues to deliver quality education, research and economic development opportunities.

"It is the last resort, but we are in a situation that we have continued to squeeze efficiencies and effectiveness out of doing business," Wolfe said. "We will continue on that never-ending journey of finding additional resources through automation and consolidation of the workloads. But we are at a state right now that we need these incremental resources to fix lapses, hire additional faculty and do the necessary service to maintain quality so that we can meet and exceed goals that we've supplied in our strategic plan."

Wolfe said all the proposed tuition increases comply with the Higher Education Student Funding Act, which caps residential tuition increases at the rate of inflation as defined by the consumer price index. A report to the curators estimates the increase, which is to be announced Friday, would be between 1 percent and 1.4 percent. A 1.2 percent estimate was used for planning purposes.

System administrators also are seeking a 3 percent increase in non-resident tuition.

With the planned increases, full-year tuition would rise by $123.43 for resident students taking 14 credit hours per semester. That would put the annual cost at $10,409.

Non-resident tuition would rise by $729.36 per year, putting the cost at $25,041.

Among professional programs at MU, students pursuing a Juris Doctor would pay 5 percent more, while those studying for a Master of Laws degree would pay 4.4 percent
more. Medical students would pay 1.2 percent more, and veterinary students 6 percent more.

Wolfe also outlined several proposed increases in supplemental fees, ranging from a high of 28.6 percent in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing to a low of 3.5 percent in the College of Engineering. Each of those increases, he said, has a specific purpose:

- The MU College of Engineering would purchase lab resources, equipment support and instructional enhancement.

- The MU College of Arts and Science would upgrade teaching labs, studios and other facilities; hire faculty members; increase faculty salaries; and expand study abroad and experimental learning methods.

- The Trulaske College of Business would hire more faculty and use the extra money to manage enrollment.

- The College of Human Environmental Sciences would upgrade equipment, improve salary support, increase scholarships and hire more faculty at the Integrated Behavioral Health Clinic.

- The Sinclair School of Nursing would maintain its Clinical Simulation Learning Center, hire faculty and increase salaries.

The chancellors of each campus and program deans were present at the meeting to answer questions.

Curator David Steelman asked Sinclair School of Nursing Dean Judith Miller whether the supplemental fee increases were appropriate and manageable when considering the job placement ratio for graduates and average starting salaries in the field.

Miller said 100 percent of the program’s graduates are employed, unless they are furthering their education. She said that most students find jobs even before they graduate and that the average starting salary is about $40,000.

Steelman asked the same question of Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science. Steelman said he had read that arts and science programs across the country have had trouble with job placement and low average salaries.
Arts and Science, which ranges from fine arts to biology, is the largest college at MU, comprising nearly half its students. Job placement and salaries of recent graduates vary greatly. O'Brien said he was satisfied by job placement, which is about 83 percent.

UM Curators Consider Tuition Fee Increases

Tonight leaders from the University of Missouri are talking about boosting tuition for the upcoming school year. Today curators from UM system discussed the future fee hikes at Ellis library on the Columbia campus. But officials tell us the board isn't taking a final vote on the changes until their next meeting. That's going to happen in early February.

Link to video on KMIZ-TV (ABC) Columbia, Mo.: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=249055d1-5efe-4114-a6e4-2679c4e53194

Steelman confirmed as UM System curator

Thursday, January 15, 2015 | 7:09 p.m. CST

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFERSON CITY — David Steelman has been confirmed as a new member of the UM System Board of Curators.

Missouri senators on Thursday confirmed Steelman and a dozen other appointments by Gov. Jay Nixon to various state boards and commissions.
Steelman is a Republican attorney from Rolla who served for six years in the Missouri House starting in 1979, including as the minority party leader. He ran unsuccessfully for attorney general against Nixon in 1992.

Steelman works as a trial attorney in Rolla and graduated from MU.

Senators also confirmed Paul Kincaid to the State Lottery Commission. The independent from Springfield retired in October 2014 as chief of staff and assistant to the president for university relations at Missouri State University.

Link to video on KRCG-TV (CBS) Jefferson City, Mo.: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=7ceca37a-f91d-4baf-99d0-f2ce16621f5d

MU Health Care hires new CFO

By ASHLEY JOST
Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (3)

The University of Missouri announced a new administrative hiring Wednesday, bringing aboard a new chief financial officer for its medical operation.

Brian Steines, the former vice president of financial operations for Scottsdale Lincoln Health Network’s Arizona Market, started as MU Health Care and the MU School of Medicine’s CFO on Dec. 29, MU Health spokesman Derek Thompson said in an email.

Steines’ salary is $465,000 per year, MU Health spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said.

Steines follows Kevin Necas, the former CFO who retired effective Oct. 31. Jenkins said the announcement about Steines’ hiring was made internally in October. Necas’s 2014 salary was listed at $356,388 annually.

The CFO is responsible for leading development, implementation and monitoring financial planning, accounting, budgets, patient accounting and government reimbursements and reporting, according to a news release.

Steines has held executive leadership positions with Vanguard Health Care, Health Management Associates Inc. and Catholic Healthcare West.
“With a background deeply rooted in health care and experience leading financial operations for a large health network, Brian will be involved in all aspects of the financial oversight of the School of Medicine and MU Health Care,” Hal Williamson, executive vice chancellor of health affairs, said in a news release.

Steines has served as a board member for A.T. Still University, which has campuses in Kirksville and Mesa, Ariz., the YMCA and the Arizona Chamber of Commerce.

He earned his master’s degree in business administration in health care administration from the University of Phoenix, and a bachelor’s in business and public administration with an emphasis on accounting from the University of Arizona-Tucson. Steines wasn’t available for comment Wednesday and Thursday.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Health Care announces new chief financial officer
Thursday, January 15, 2015 | 9:01 p.m. CST
BY SARAH ROTHBERG

COLUMBIA — MU Health Care announced Wednesday that it has named Brian Steines the chief financial officer of MU Health Care and the MU School of Medicine.

Steines replaced Kevin Necas, who retired at the end of October.

After Necas’ retirement, MU interviewed eight candidates and appointed Steines to the position in October.

His annual salary will be $465,000.

Steines will be in charge of all policies and practices concerning budgets, financial planning, accounting, financial planning and government reimbursement.

Steines formerly served as vice president of financial operations for Scottsdale Lincoln Health Network’s Arizona Market, a delivery network including five acute-care hospitals with $1.5 billion in net revenue. He also has held executive positions with Vanguard Health Care, Health Management Associates Inc. and Catholic Healthcare West.
He received a master's degree of business administration in health care administration from the University of Phoenix and a bachelor of science degree in business and public administration from the University of Arizona at Tucson.

**MU to bring civil rights activist for Martin Luther King Jr. celebration**

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri is hosting Myrlie Evers-Williams, a civil rights activist and former National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chairwoman in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Evers-Williams will give a presentation called “Not exactly what you thought” at 7 p.m. Jan. 28 in the Missouri Theatre, 203 S. Ninth St.

The event, sponsored by the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, is free and open to the public. Tickets are available at the Missouri Theatre and Missouri Student Association and Graduate Professional Council box offices.

Evers-Williams is an activist who works to preserve the legacy of her late husband, Medgar Evers, a prominent civil rights leader in Mississippi who was murdered outside of their home in 1963, according to a news release.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day events in Columbia**

Thursday, January 15, 2015 | 7:33 p.m. CST; updated 8:32 p.m. CST, Thursday, January 15, 2015
BY MAY MA

COLUMBIA — Martin Luther King Jr. would have turned 86 this year. Several events are scheduled throughout Columbia on Monday to celebrate his legacy.
**MLK Day of Service**
- The Columbia Volunteer Program is offering volunteer opportunities for eco-cleanups from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday.

- For more information, contact Andrea Shelton at 874-6271 or by email at pw-volunteer@gocolumbiamo.com.

**Poor People's Breakfast**
- The annual breakfast will be held from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Monday at St. Luke United Methodist Church, 204 E. Ash St.

- The event is free, but donations are welcome.

- For more information or to make contributions, contact Kentrell Minton by email at almetacraytonaccp1@gmail.com.

**Columbia Unit of the NAACP Celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- The Columbia NAACP will host the annual event at 11 a.m. Monday at the Martin Luther King Memorial at Battle Garden, 800 W. Stadium Blvd.

- After a brief ceremony, a motorcade will be held from the memorial to Second Baptist Church. A celebration will follow at 11:30 a.m. at Second Baptist Church, 407 E. Broadway.

- A free lunch will be served.

- A speech will be delivered by the Rev. Howard from Waynesville, Missouri.

- For more information, contact Mary Ratliff at 881-0163 or by email at marrat300@aol.com.

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Candlelight Walk and Celebration**
- The walk will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Douglass High School, 310 N. Providence Road, and will conclude with a celebration at St. Luke United Methodist Church, 204 E. Ash St., where a service will be held at 7 p.m.
- The annual "Dr. King Awards" will be presented during the service.
- This event is free and open to the public.
- For more information, contact Parks and Recreation at 874-7460.

**MU Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture**
- **The MU Chancellor's Diversity Initiative will host a presentation Wednesday, Jan. 28 at Missouri Theatre, 203 S. Ninth St.**
- Myrlie Evers-Williams, a civil rights activist and former chairperson of the NAACP, will deliver a speech titled "Not Exactly What You Thought" at 7 p.m.
- Tickets, which are required but free of charge, are available at the Missouri Theatre and MSA/GPC Box Office located in the MU Student Center.
- **For more information, contact the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative at 884-0640, or go to diversity.missouri.edu/mlk/.**

City offices will be closed Monday, and the regular Columbia City Council meeting will be held Tuesday.

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**THE TRIBUNE'S VIEW**

**Happenings**

This 'n' that in the news

**By HENRY J. WATERS III**

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (3)

**High time for Wally.** Wally Pfeffer is a well-known agitator for the University of Missouri. In fact, he is probably the most prolific promoter of the flagship campus. Locals are well aware of Wally's prodding and reminding and announcing of ways to honor the U, its officials and notable alums.
How many such blessed targets have received honors from the institution because of Wally’s attention?

How many times has the institution received similar benefits thanks to Wally?

So it’s high time Wally got his due, at least partially. On Monday the Mizzou Alumni Association gave Wally the Geyer Award, an annual recognition given to a public citizen who has had a significant impact on higher education and the university.

This is very nice, and Wally is pleased, but from this perspective it seems Wally deserves more. Perhaps an even more prestigious award is in order. Wally’s unremitting love for and promotion of MU are unique and, I daresay, unequaled.

High time for Beulah. Amid loud applause, the Columbia Board of Education decided unanimously to name its next elementary school after Beulah Ralph, one of the central figures in the transition of Columbia’s public schools through the treacherous rapids of desegregation and beyond.

Ralph worked at Douglass High School for 58 years. She deserves recognition right alongside Muriel and Eliot Battle. She stood astride the gap between black and white, helping students manage the rigors of growing up. She concentrated on minority students who demonstrated the most need, her work later becoming the home-school communicator program, but many a white student gained from Beulah’s concern as well.

Now the new school in southwest Columbia will bear her name. Fitting, indeed.

Poking the sleeping dog. No fair. The MU Tigers basketball team had to play the Kentucky Wildcats in Rupp Arena soon after the nation’s No. 1 team had barely survived overtime wins to remain undefeated. One can almost hear UK Coach John Calipari in the dressing room before the game: “So you’re supposed to be the No. 1 team in the nation? Can’t tell it by how you’ve played in the last three games. Time to get back on top in a hurry — tonight.”

And so they did, piling up statistical advantages best forgotten if you’re a Tigers fan.

We never were slated to win this game, but this was an unforgiving stomping — a learning experience, Tigers Coach Kim Anderson might be telling his bruised and battered charges.

Despite Monday’s rassling, we should be proud and encouraged. Our team is looking better than many imagined, already beating LSU in the SEC conference and promising more to come.

Locals in power. Three local legislators have received General Assembly committee chairmanships, a good thing for our neighborhood. All are Republicans representing their legislative majority.
Sen. Kurt Schaefer again will head the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, beginning his fifth year. The chairman must work with the entire body to craft a budget, but if he has a few priorities, they almost always will make it through the meat grinder.

Rep. Caleb Jones once again will head the Select Committee on General Laws. Rep. Caleb Rowden will be rewarded for his re-election with appointment as chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and of the new Business Attraction and Retention Committee.

Next time you have a chance, hug your favorite committee chairman.

**REDI board votes to nix local endorsements**

By ALICIA STICE

Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (6)

Months after members penned a controversial letter about a November ballot measure, the Regional Economic Development Inc. board of directors voted Wednesday to steer clear of making endorsements on local ballot issues or initiatives.

For Regional Economic Development Inc., or REDI, the issue of endorsements has been a sticky one, particularly in recent months. REDI receives much of its funding from the city of Columbia, Boone County and the University of Missouri, along with members of the private sector who pay membership fees. REDI staff members are city employees, with the REDI president also serving as the city's economic development director.

This quasi-public status makes politics a tricky issue for REDI because city staff, including those who work for REDI, cannot make political endorsements. But in October, Paul Land of Plaza Commercial Realty asked the board to condemn Proposition 2, a proposed increase in development fees that failed at the polls in November.

The board decided to write what it called a “letter of concern,” not an endorsement, in which it said the proposition could stifle Columbia’s economic growth. In the letter, board Chairman Todd Culley of Boone Electric Cooperative said the opinions reflected only the views of the board of directors. Even so, the move drew sharp criticism from some, including Third Ward City Councilman Karl Skala, who said at the time that his inclination was that the letter was “improper.” Skala felt that
REDI, which receives city money, had taken a stance against something the city council had voted to put on the ballot.

The letter “created heartburn on council staff,” said City Manager Mike Matthes, who is a voting member of the REDI board. Matthes abstained from weighing in on the Proposition 2 discussion in October. The city is “the single largest investor, by a big order of magnitude, in REDI, and if you work against our interest, that’s kind of odd,” he said before the meeting Wednesday.

At the meeting, Matthes explained to board members the complications that can arise when city employees are perceived to be advocating for political issues.

“It’s sticky, and it does put us on a nerve-wracking path as a staff,” he said. “There are three levels of law that bind us as staff. We can educate, we can present facts.”

At the meeting, Land said he felt the organization had a responsibility to speak out on local issues that could affect economic development and the community’s ability to recruit businesses.

“To sit by and idly watch that go by would be a breach of duty,” he said. “When an issue flies in the face of the organizations or its duties, I think not having" the ability to speak out “effectively neuters the organization.”

Land cast the only dissenting vote when the board approved the new policy. The board discussed including language that allowed the organization to weigh in on state and national issues, but decided to leave that decision for another time.

The letter of concern was the most recent instance in which REDI ventured into the political arena. In April, REDI endorsed bond issues to support Columbia Public Schools and the Boone County Fire Protection District, much less controversial issues than Proposition 2. Several years ago, REDI was at the forefront of a city proposal to establish an enhanced enterprise zone. At the time, some people questioned why REDI would weigh in on the issue.

The board has been “wrestling with this question for years, and I think, quite honestly, this latest argument is helpful,” Matthes said. “We really ought to define our role in that way.”
Mizzou Students Help The Ronald McDonald House

Posted: Jan 15, 2015 11:05 PM CST Updated: Jan 15, 2015 11:05 PM CST


CORPUS CHRISTI (Kiii News) - The Ronald McDonald House here in Corpus Christi got some big help this week thanks to some out-of-town college students. Scholars from the University Of Missouri drove nearly a thousand miles to come and lend a hand as the non-profit prepares for it's big rummage sale.

January 16, 2015

When Does Unwanted Sex Become Rape?

In ambiguous encounters, students and colleges try to find the line

By Robin Wilson

NO MU MENTION

After a long Saturday of drinking, a female student was hanging out with a male classmate she’d been flirting with for years. He was charming but also a player. They’d talked about his various sexual conquests, and she didn’t want to be one.

But that night they started making out. It was exciting, she said, fun. When he grabbed a condom, though, she realized she didn’t want to have sex. But she kept quiet, flashed him an occasional fake smile, and stared at the ceiling waiting for it to be over.

"Maybe I didn’t want to disappoint him," she wrote a few months ago for the website Total Sorority Move. "It was easier to just do it." But part of her thought she’d been violated, she said. She described "this weird place in between consensual sex and rape," calling it "rape-ish."
Common understandings of rape tend to involve force, coercion, or victims who are passed-out drunk. Many students have come forward in recent years to share such experiences. Last summer The New York Times published a front-page article on an alleged rape at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in which several people looked on as a football player assaulted a young woman bent over a pool table.

Other cases are less clear. Sexual interactions can be ambiguous, especially if students have been drinking but aren’t incapacitated. Research shows that women engage in sex they don’t want for a variety of reasons—including to avoid conflict, because they don’t want to be labeled a tease, and because they feel obligated. A response to the Total Sorority Move story on the website Her Campus says rape is "a big word," but "‘less rapey’ situations" should still be acknowledged.

As campuses grapple with preventing and responding to sexual assault, how students and colleges define rape is pivotal. And the definition may be evolving. What some people, including researchers, have seen as unwanted sex, others may consider rape. But conflating ambiguous sexual encounters and misconduct, some observers say, dilutes the concept of assault, and makes it hard for students to learn where the boundaries are.

At Washington and Lee University last winter, a couple of students were drinking at an off-campus party before going back to the young man’s fraternity house. The young woman allegedly said she didn’t usually agree to have sex with someone she had just met. But according to a lawsuit the man later filed, she took off her clothes and got into his bed. They had sex, the lawsuit states, later exchanged Facebook messages that they’d had a good time, and had sex again the next month.

Seven months after that, according to the lawsuit, the female student filed a report to campus officials alleging that the first encounter was assault. It is common, advocates for victims say, for someone to take days or months to come to view a sexual experience as traumatic.

In the ensuing case at Washington and Lee, the young man was found responsible for nonconsensual sex and expelled. He then sued the university. Officials there said in a written statement that their policies were consistent with federal regulations and that they were committed to treating all students fairly.

The long-held notion of rape as violent is slowly shifting, says Estelle B. Freedman, a scholar of women’s history and feminist studies at Stanford University. "Most people think that to be raped you had to have bodily harm," she says. "We aren’t quite used to naming coercive nonconsensual sex that doesn’t involve physical harm as a crime. It still has the aura of a bad experience."

The level of drinking can be crucial. "Enough alcohol to call it rape?" the Yale Daily News asked in November in reporting on an alleged assault involving neither force nor the word "no." A young woman drinking with friends had exchanged text messages with a former sexual partner over the course of an evening last March, telling him she was getting drunk and mentioning the possibility of sex. "Don’t let me try to seduce you," she wrote. "Sex is awesome ... and I might try to get it from you. But I shouldn’t. I don’t think."

The two ended up having sex twice that night and once the next morning, according to a Yale investigation the student newspaper obtained. The female student charged her male classmate with assault. He had inferred consent, he said, based on her texts and actions. But she was "too intoxicated,"
according to her account in a university fact-finder’s report, "to have the cognitive or emotional ability to find another solution and simply capitulated."

Even when both partners are sober, says Kathleen A. Bogle, an assistant professor of sociology and criminal justice at La Salle University, it can be difficult for one to know the other is uncomfortable if that remains unspoken.

"My concern is that as advocates push for every scenario counting as assault, including ones where a person was secretly in their mind having doubts about it but didn’t communicate that, it’s problematic," says Ms. Bogle. "It will undermine the whole movement of getting people to take rape seriously."

‘Dance of Ambiguity’

Sexual communication is full of ambiguity. Researchers say that in consensual or even unwanted encounters, both partners are often unclear about their preferences.

Women are socialized to be gatekeepers when it comes to sex, says Kristen N. Jozkowski, an assistant professor of public health who teaches human sexuality at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. If they come right out and say they’d like to have sex, they can be seen as sluts. Even if they want to, she says, women may feel they have to wait for men to initiate sex.

Men communicate in code, too, her research shows. "They say, ‘If it’s 2 a.m., and I text her, 'What’s Up?’ she knows that means I’m interested,'" says Ms. Jozkowski. "That way, no one has to say ‘sex.’"

Sexual interest and consent tend to be expressed through innuendo, says Deborah Davis, a social-psychology professor at the University of Nevada at Reno. "Many attempts to reject sexual advances are performed through hints, nonverbal signs of uninterest, ignoring advances, and other indirect signals," she writes with two co-authors in a chapter of a book to be published by Oxford University Press.

They call this the "dance of ambiguity," and say it serves both parties. "The initiator can try to advance the sexual agenda, but with plausible deniability that can protect the ego in case the advance is rejected," they write. "The target can accept the sexual advance without having to explicitly admit it is wanted or can reject it without explicitly rejecting the suitor."

The problem comes when people ignore or miss those signals. After an encounter, Ms. Davis says, a woman "might falsely remember saying things that she thought about but did not say to stop the situation," and a man may "falsely remember doing things that he did not do to verify the woman’s consent."

But assault isn’t a matter of miscommunication, victims’ advocates argue. It’s about one partner disrespecting and violating the other. In a study published last month, about a third of college men said they would force a woman to have sex if there were no consequences. Only 14 percent said they would consider that "rape."

‘Yes, Exclamation Point’

Researchers and advocates for victims say the only solution to stop unwanted sex is caution. And the responsibility for exercising that caution, they seem to agree, falls on men.
"What we hear a lot is that the space between consensual sex and rape is a gray area," says Nicole E. Conroy, a Ph.D. candidate at Syracuse University who has studied why women may acquiesce to unwanted sexual activity even without pressure from a partner. "But if you think there are mixed signals, err on the side of caution. If the man notices his partner just isn’t into it, or she is just laying there or giving token resistance, that’s an indication the partner doesn’t want it."

Many colleges have recently adopted affirmative-consent policies that require students to ask their partners whether they want to be intimate and to wait for a clear response—either a verbal yes or unambiguous body language. Students should obtain consent each time the encounter escalates to a new form of physical activity, some policies say.

Wesleyan University, which has a policy that requires "mutually understandable words and/or actions that clearly indicate a willingness to engage in sexual activity," suspended a male student last spring for nonconsensual kissing. Two female students had reported him: In one case, the university found him responsible, in the other not. He has sued Wesleyan. In a statement, the university said it was confident that it had handled the proceedings appropriately.

No matter the campus rules, victims’ advocates say students should be crystal clear about what they want. "A policy is never going to fit perfectly onto the complexity of human emotions," says Alexandra Brodsky, founding co-director of Know Your IX, a network "empowering students to stop sexual violence." All students, she believes, should strive to achieve affirmative consent in intimate interactions. Any mixed messages mean no, she says. "You want your partner to say yes, exclamation point."

In the case at Yale—where the young woman said she never consented to sex but was too drunk to have the cognitive or emotional ability to object—a university panel decided that the encounter was not assault. Even though she had been drinking, the panel said, in a decision published in part in the Yale Daily News, the young woman was aware of her actions. "Alcohol may have reduced [her] inhibitions on the night of 22 March, but her actions, taken as a whole, do not indicate that she lacked the ability to make or act on considered decisions," the panel said.

Learning to deal with mixed feelings about sex is part of becoming more mature, some experts argue. Carol Tavris, a social psychologist and a fellow of the American Psychological Association, says it’s natural for a person who ends up feeling a sexual interaction was unwanted to try to find fault. And campuses are encouraging students to do that, she says, rather than to take responsibility for themselves.

"When people do something they later see as being foolish or wrong, or they were drunk, or they regret it, the easiest route of resolution is to blame the other guy," says Ms. Tavris, who speaks and writes about sexual communication. But blame is not always the best outcome, she says. "Many young women and men don’t understand that when it comes to sexual interactions they need to learn and experiment. Sometimes they will make the wrong decision, in which case they are better off saying: ‘That was a stupid thing to do. What was I thinking?’"