Mizzou should fire the professor who pushed reporters away from protesters, board member says

In the fall, protests over race and bias incidents at the University of Missouri made national news, as a student went on hunger strike, the football team refused to play, and the university president and system chancellor resigned.

In the days that followed, another scene went viral: An assistant professor in the communication department was videotaped pushing a student journalist away from the protesters as he tried to report the story, and demanding “muscle” to get him out of there.

Many faculty members later emphasized the principle of academic freedom and defended Melissa Click, who apologized and resigned her courtesy appointment in the journalism department. But more than 100 lawmakers demanded that the Board of Curators insist on her termination, saying she had smothered free speech and worsened the tensions on campus. Click did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

David Steelman, an alumnus, former legislative leader, lawyer and member of the Board of Curators, writes his opinion here. He has tried to remain open to other possible options, as well, he said, but has publicly called for her termination:

By David L. Steelman

intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

The University of Missouri has long recognized Dr. King’s truth through what it refers to as its four values—respect, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. Unfortunately, unless the university is willing to live those values they are mere words.

During the demonstrations following the resignation of the university president, more than one university employee trampled the rights of students and journalists by selectively barring some from public areas of the campus. In addition, more than one employee, which we know of, physically interfered with student journalists attempting to accurately capture an important moment in the history of the university.
One of those employees, Melissa Click, a professor with a courtesy appointment to the school of journalism, not only attempted to intimidate a student, but when he would not yield to her demands, she called for “muscle” to physically remove him from a place he had every right to be.

Most of the world recognized Professor Click’s actions as a clear and dangerous abuse of authority.

The governor delivered a forceful statement of the public’s justifiable anger, and an overwhelming number of legislators have called for her termination.

Finally, admissions to the University of Missouri are down, and while not all reasons are known, it seems reasonable to assume that there are parents and prospective students who have watched Professor Click’s actions, imagined themselves or their children exposed to her abuse, and applied elsewhere.

To date the university’s sole action has been to place what I consider a meaningless admonishment in her file.

In my opinion, this tepid action does not reflect a particularly strong commitment to our values; moreover the inaction indicates an institutional narcissism that undermines our values and responsibilities to the broader society.

That narcissism, the desire to look only inward, and to worry more about the perks and privileges of faculty was unfortunately made even more clear when over 100 faculty members signed a letter in support not only of Professor Click’s employment, but of her actions.

Their exact words were that her actions were, “at most a regrettable mistake . . .”

That is absurd understatement.

Professor Click’s actions were at a minimum in reckless disregard of student rights and safety; and they were clearly disrespectful.

When The University of Missouri allows its employees to ignore our stated values and when the university’s faculty, deans, administration, and board refuse, for whatever reason, to take responsibility, our students learn that those nicely packaged and presented words like respect and responsibility are less important than protecting members of the club.

Consider what has occurred to the student who recorded Professor Click’s actions. He was also the target of her threats. His video has been one of the most important contributions to the unfortunate events on our campus. However, he has now received a letter from the editor of the Maneater; Mizzou’s highly regarded independent newspaper, indicating he should no longer associate himself with the paper. At the time of the incident the chairperson of the faculty committee that advised the Maneater was Professor Melissa Click.
Unfortunately, Melissa Click has become the face of the University of Missouri for many.

This underscores the importance of the university taking action that is consistent with our values.

Inaction will confirm the growing public perception that we are hypocrites.

Many of our greatest institutions are failing because the leaders of those institutions forgot they exist to serve a higher purpose than mere self interest.

The university should stand for character, respect, and responsibility.

That means rejecting the narrow self interests of the faculty who signed a letter merely to avoid accountability and responsibility for those whose acts bring shame to the University of Missouri.

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**Early spring enrollment numbers at MU similar to past years**

By Megan Favignano

Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri’s spring enrollment is not significantly down compared to previous years, according to numbers provided by MU.

When the spring semester started Tuesday, MU reported 32,525 total students — a 0.2 percent drop from this past spring’s 32,588 students. Of those students, 25,254 are undergraduates. The number of undergraduate students taking classes this spring at MU represents a 0.3 percent increase from spring 2015.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said MU views the 0.2 percent drop and the 0.3 percent increase as insignificant changes. When comparing spring enrollment data for the past three years, Basi said there were no significant differences.

“It’s telling us our undergraduate population and total population is remaining stable,” Basi said.

Basi said enrollment numbers tend to fluctuate at the start of a semester, so the university records enrollment numbers on the 20th day of classes. Enrollment at 4 p.m. Wednesday already had increased by more than 300 students compared with opening-day numbers from midnight.
Tuesday, Basi said. MU should have its complete enrollment information and demographic information by March, he said.

The total number of minority students enrolled on the first day was 4,989, which represents a 2.1 percent increase compared with spring 2015.

Basi said the university expects spring enrollment to include fewer students than fall because of December graduation. Fall enrollment was 35,448, and 2,401 students graduated in December. Basi said the number of December graduates has increased over time.

Meanwhile, MU’s six-year graduation rate has increased about 11 percent over the past 18 years. The university’s graduation rate in 2015 was 68.7 percent.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies, attributes the increasing graduation rate to changes a university task force started making about six years ago.

“That group began to evaluate the data that we had so we could understand what barriers were preventing our students from being successful,” Spain said. “The biggest thing was financial — students were leaving us because they couldn’t afford to continue to be at” MU.

The task force worked with the cashier’s office and financial aid office to improve efforts to call students and follow up with those who are financially struggling, he said.

The group also tried to identify students struggling academically before informing students of tutoring available on campus and encouraging them to discuss their course workload with an academic adviser.

**MISSOURIAN**

MU graduate enrollment down, minority numbers up as new semester begins

IDA SOPHIE WINTER, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **MU enrollment on the first day of the new semester showed a slight increase in the number of undergraduates compared to last year, MU reported Thursday.**

The enrollment figures included a 1.7 percent decline in graduate student enrollment from 6,202 on the first day of the spring 2015 semester to 6,095 on Tuesday when classes began. Overall graduate enrollment was similar to the beginning of the spring 2014 semester.
There was also a 2.1 percent increase in minority students — those who did not identify as Caucasian or international — from 4,888 to 4,989 despite student protests sparked by reports of racial discrimination and diversity issues on campus during the fall semester.

Overall first-day enrollment decreased slightly from 32,588 to 32,525 graduate, undergraduate and professional students.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said on Thursday that the overall number of students increased by more than 300 since classes began on Tuesday. He said that number is expected to keep rising over the next few weeks as more students enroll, many of whom may be taking online courses.

Official enrollment figures will not be determined until the 20th day of classes, Basi said.

**Concerned Student 1950 will be honored at NAACP Image Awards**

**Watch story:** [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=32263&zone=5&categories=5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=32263&zone=5&categories=5)

COLUMBIA - **Concerned Student 1950 will be honored at the 47th NAACP Image Awards for its work to improve race relations on the University of Missouri campus.**

The ceremony will air on Feb. 5 during a two-hour special airing on TV One.

Concerned Student 1950 will be one of eight honorees at the event. The NAACP National Board of Directors Chairman Roslyn M. Brock will present the NAACP Chairman's 2016 Award. Brock stated it is a "rare privilege" to present the award to a group of leaders all under the age of 50.
Ayanna Poole, Concerned Student 1950 organizer, said she was excited when she heard the news.

"I have been involved with the NAACP since I was two years old," Poole said. "The Image Awards show is always incredible to watch, and I always admire everyone who gets honored. For it to be us, Concerned Student and the black community at Mizzou, is amazing. It feels really good."

The group is only sending one representative to the award ceremony.

Brock said the award symbolizes the message: "Courage Will Not Skip This Generation."

The other seven honorees are Justice League NYC, The University of Missouri NAACP College Chapter, Brittany "Bree" Newsome, Jussie Smollett, Rev. Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant, Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III and Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley.

"The five individuals and three organizations have raised awareness of social, educational, and economic injustice from college campuses, church pulpits and streets," Brock said.

MU forms committee to focus on protests, free speech

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri has formed a committee on protests, public spaces, free speech and the news media.

The group will recommend how public spaces can be regulated on campus and suggest how the university might handle “future conflicts should they arise concerning the use of public spaces on campus,” interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley said in a letter.

The committee’s purpose, according to the letter, is to help the campus understand the rights and responsibilities the university has related to campus protests and the use of public space. The committee will examine recent events on campus to see what lessons can be learned.
Former UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned Nov. 9 after weeks of student protests calling for his removal and criticizing him for his response to race issues on campus. Students held a demonstration on Carnahan Quadrangle after Wolfe resigned.

Melissa Click, an assistant professor at MU, and Janna Basler, associate director in MU’s Department of Student Life, confronted a photographer and a videographer during the student protest. Numerous lawmakers have since called for Click to be fired.

The 13-member committee is composed of six faculty members, five administrators and two students. The group will be chaired by Bob Jerry, a law professor at MU.

New committee on MU campus promises to protect rights and free speech of others

Columbia, MO — University of Missouri Chancellor Hank Foley and the faculty council announced this week the university had formed an Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech and the Press.

This committee will examine the events surrounding last semester’s protests to see what lessons can be learned.

Media Law Professor Sandy Davidson sits on the committee.

She said it was formed to recommend how to properly regulate the spaces on campus during protests.

"Our charge is to try and come up with guidelines to protect the rights and the safety of everybody involved when we have future protests, the rights and responsibilities of the protestors, of bystanders and of journalists," Davidson said.

The committee includes six faculty members, four administration, one counsel and two students.
Foley said last semesters events have left many unsure of how the university regulates public spaces on campus, especially during protests.

Davidson said the formation of the committee shows that the campus administration is responding to a need.

"We can foresee that there will be protests in the future there may potentially be some clashes so if we set out guidelines that help people understand their rights and their responsibilities, maybe that'll help keep everything in check," Davidson said.

She also said the university goal is for everybody's first amendment rights to be respected.

The first committee meeting will be held in February.

Faculty Council proposes examining MU and UM System’s relationship

“They’re supposed to be a support function, but somehow they are dictating academics ... so what value is (the) system supposed to play?” council member Jung Ha-Brookshire asked.

Faculty Council focused on a proposed resolution to examine the relationship between MU and the UM system during its first meeting of the year Thursday.

Proposed Resolution

Art Jago, management professor and Student Affairs Committee chairman, presented the proposal to the council.

“In the 53-year history in the University of Missouri System, this is the only time both the presidency of the system and the chancellorship of MU have been vacant at the same time,” Jago said. “We should view this as an opportunity to reassess the relationship between the system and our campus.”

The proposal suggests an examination of the organizational structure of the UM System, the relationship between MU and the UM System and a possible consolidation of the offices of the UM System president and MU chancellor.

Jago said this would be an opportunity to examine the role the UM System plays across all four campuses and determine what value the system provides the four schools.
According to the proposal, if value can be identified, then the UM System should consider expanding to include other public Missouri schools such as Missouri State and Truman State to better serve the taxpayers. The proposal also stated, however, that it may be more academically efficient to disband the UM System due to differences between the four campuses.

The proposal cited other universities that are not part of a system as well as schools that are part of a system but have one individual who is both chancellor of the flagship school and president of the university system.

Jung Ha-Brookshire, associate professor of textile and apparel management, said she felt it was important to evaluate what values MU and the UM System can offer each other.

“What role is (the) system supposed to play?” Ha-Brookshire asked. “They’re supposed to be a support function, but somehow they are dictating academics … so what value is (the) system supposed to play?”

Other faculty members discussed the language of the proposal and suggested that some of the wording be changed to be less vague.

The proposed resolution will be voted on at the Feb. 11 meeting.

Library

Ann Riley, interim director of MU Libraries, and Rabia Gregory, chairwoman of the Library Committee and associate professor in religious studies, spoke to the council about library funding.

Due to the failure of the library fee in November, the libraries will be cutting their budgets.

“We do have significant budget challenges ahead,” Riley said.

Gregory and Riley said they were unsure of the libraries’ budget for the next year, but are hoping through fundraising, they will not have to cut the budget for electronic journals. Due to monopolies, however, costs for journals are often high and there has become a pattern of cutting books to fund journals.

According to a printed handout summarizing facts about the libraries, possibilities for the future include seeking increased general revenue allocation and continuing to shrink staff. Other options also include reducing hours and locations and increasing open access to cut costs.

Faculty Representation

The current bylaws of the council state that there should be between 25 to 30 representatives on the council. The number of representatives on the council is determined by the full-time, tenure-track faculty in each division at a ratio of one to 50.
Due to the number of faculty for the 2016-17 school year, the College of Arts and Science and College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources will lose representatives, bringing the total number of council members to 24. Tony Lupo, Faculty Affairs Committee chairman and associate professor of atmospheric science, presented the proposal. Under the proposal, the divisor would change from 50 to 44, bringing the total number of representatives to 29.

“Twenty-nine is not an unusual number for council,” Vice Chairwoman Nicole Monnier said. “I think the more representatives around the table, the better.”

The council voted on and passed the proposal.

Diversity Enhancement

Angela Speck, the Diversity Enhancement Committee chairwoman and associate professor of astronomy, gave an update to the campus-wide diversity requirement that is in the process of being created.

“Obviously, the diversity enhancement last semester was enhanced,” Speck said. “A lot happened without much result, but the biggest thing we achieved is developing a campus-wide diversity requirement.”

Speck said there are representatives from every college on a committee currently deciding what to include in the curriculum and are hoping to be finished by mid-February.

Lawmakers meet with Mizzou alumni


COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri's future and some of the recent past made up the dialogue tonight, as state lawmakers met with members of the Mizzou Alumni Association.

The gathering of the Boone County Alumni Chapter and many of the area's legislators was held at the Grand Cru restaurant in Columbia.

Democratic Representative Stephen Webber was first to speak to the crowd of around 80 people. He talked about the importance of keeping Mizzou financially strong, especially for the university’s research reactor.
Republican Representative Caleb Rowden called the series of events that brought national media attention to the Columbia campus "a perfect storm." He said he has complete confidence in the current leadership on campus including Chancellor Hank Foley.

Chancellor Foley said, “It's absolutely crucial that we all talk and find informal ways of talking about the issues. The university is a big place, very important to the state, very important to the region. We've got a lot of issues, we know that. We're doing a lot of great things at Mizzou, as well though. And, it's important to re-emphasize those."

One of those issues the chancellor mentioned is, undoubtedly, the continuing controversy surrounding Assistant Professor Melissa Click. For her behavior during the November protests, Representative Caleb Jones does not beat around the bush on how he feels about the issue. He says, “I think we should fire her. I think she violated the U.S. Constitution. I think she criminally assaulted a student. So, I think that anytime you task someone to take care of youth and educate (the youth) and turn them into young adults, and you violate that trust and the institution that the University of Missouri is...you shouldn't be able to work there again." But, Representative Jones did say individual personnel issues should have no effect on the university's funding.

Funding for the university could be determined by lawmakers as soon as February.

MISSOURIAN

First public chat with MU interim chancellor is Friday

PAYTON LIMING, 17 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **Starting this week, MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley will host public Chats with the Chancellor. These sessions will be held from 4 to 5 p.m. Fridays in the rotunda of Jesse Hall.**

Foley has wanted to establish a consistent dialogue with members of the university community, and this is one way to make that happen, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

"He is hoping that people from all over campus can come to these chats and share thoughts and concerns and successes," Basi said.
MU details former football coach Gary Pinkel’s new role with athletic department

Pinkel will receive $950,000 over a three-year contract for fundraising/public relations duties

He retired from coaching after 2015 season

BY TOD PALMER
tpalmer@kcstar.com

Missouri has defined a new role for former football coach Gary Pinkel.

The University of Missouri System Board of Curators approved a three-year, $950,000 contract that transitions Pinkel, who has retired as Mizzou’s football coaching victory leader, into a fundraising/public relations role.

“I am very grateful to the Board of Curators and to President (Michael) Middleton, Chancellor (Hank) Foley and to (MU athletic director) Mack Rhoades for this opportunity,” Pinkel said in a release from the athletic department. “I’ve said all along that when my coaching days were done I would still need to be involved in a meaningful way, and this does that for me. I’m excited to be in this role where I can still provide an impact for a place that means so much to me and my family.”

Pinkel, who was the second-longest tenured coach in MU history, was hired in 2001 and helped Missouri reach national prominence with five division titles and
10-win seasons since 2007, including back-to-back SEC Eastern Division championships in 2013 and 2014. He announced Nov. 13 that he had follicular lymphoma, a non-Hodgkin form of cancer, and would retire at the conclusion of the 2015 season.

Pinkel will receive $350,000 in 2016 and 2017 and $250,000 in 2018 to assist with fundraising opportunities, including donor/fan engagement as well as public appearances, according to the athletic department. Pinkel, if he remained the football coach, was set to make $4.12 million plus possible incentives with a $100,000 automatic annual raise under the terms of a contract extension he signed last April.

“We’re really pleased to have Coach Pinkel continue as part of our team,” Rhoades said in the release. “It was very important for us to find the right way to keep the winningest coach in Mizzou history engaged, and we’re excited for the value Gary can bring to the table going forward. Schools around the country are finding ways to keep institutional treasures like Gary Pinkel, (former Virginia Tech football coach) Frank Beamer and (former South Carolina football coach) Steve Spurrier in the fold even after they are done carrying a whistle.”

Mizzou gives Pinkel contract to be fundraiser, ambassador

Former University of Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel will remain at the university as a fundraiser and ambassador, earning nearly $1 million over the length of a 3-year contract.

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Former University of Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel will remain at the university as a fundraiser and ambassador, earning nearly $1 million over the length of a three-year contract.

The university announced the contract Thursday. It calls for Pinkel to earn $350,000 in both 2016 and 2017, and $250,000 in 2018.
Pinkel announced his retirement in November. He was diagnosed with a form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma in the spring but kept the diagnosis quiet until his retirement announcement. Pinkel, who is 63, led Missouri to a 118-73 record and 10 bowl appearances in 15 seasons.

The university says his new role will include assisting with fundraising and "donor/fan engagement," along with serving as an adviser and an ambassador for the university at public appearances.

MISSOURIAN

Initial details for Gary Pinkel's new role approved

ANDREW HODGSON, Updated 16 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Gary Pinkel is staying with Missouri athletics.

The University of Missouri Board of Curators approved initial employment terms for Pinkel to take on a new role within the athletics department. His new duties will include assisting with fundraising opportunities and donor/fan engagement, serving as a general ambassador related to public appearances and advising as requested on matters related to football and other issues.

The deal would run through Dec. 31, 2018, if finalized, paying Pinkel $350,000 in 2016 and 2017 and $250,000 in 2018. His $350,000 salary would be more than the base salaries of men's basketball coach Kim Anderson, women's basketball coach Robin Pingeton and deputy athletics director Wren Baker.

Pinkel announced he was retiring as Missouri's football coach on Nov. 13 because of health-related reasons. He retired with the most wins for a coach in program history with 118.

The details of the contract will be released once it is officially completed, according to Missouri athletics.
Curators approve terms for Pinkel’s new employment with Mizzou Athletics

Mizzou Athletics announced Thursday that the UM System Board of Curators approved new employment terms for former football coach Gary Pinkel.

Pinkel’s new role entails “assisting with fundraising opportunities and donor/fan engagement, as well as serving as a general ambassador” for public appearances and advising as requested on football-related matters, according to a news release from Mizzou Athletics.

Pinkel, who retired at the end of last season due to health reasons, began his three-year contract Jan. 1. For the first two years, he will be paid $350,000. From Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2018, Pinkel will be paid $250,000.

"I am very grateful to the Board of Curators and to President Middleton, Chancellor Foley and to Mack Rhoades for this opportunity," Pinkel said in a statement. "I've said all along that when my coaching days were done, I would still need to be involved in a meaningful way, and this does that for me. I'm excited to be in this role where I can still provide an impact for a place that means so much to me and my family."

Pinkel currently holds the title of Mizzou’s all-time winningest coach, with 118 wins in 15 seasons.

"We're really pleased to have Coach Pinkel continue as part of our team," Director of Athletics Mack Rhoades said in the release. "It was very important for us to find the right way to keep the winningest coach in Mizzou history engaged, and we're excited for the value Gary can bring to the table going forward. Schools around the country are finding ways to keep institutional treasures like Gary Pinkel, Frank Beamer and Steve Spurrier in the fold even after they are done carrying a whistle."

Pinkel’s contract will be released in full once it is completed.

Mizzou's Beckner suspended after marijuana arrest
In his first high-profile discipline matter as Missouri’s new head football coach, Barry Odom suspended defensive tackle Terry Beckner Jr. after the star freshman was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of marijuana possession in Columbia.

MU police stopped Beckner at 9:34 p.m. for driving without his headlights near the intersection of Conley Avenue and Missouri Avenue on the MU campus, Major Brian Weimer said Thursday.

Officers detected the smell of marijuana coming from the car and found a clear Ziploc bag containing marijuana. Beckner was arrested on suspicion of possession of less than 35 grams. He was processed at MU police headquarters and released on summons.

“I’m disappointed to learn of Terry’s actions,” Odom said in a statement released Thursday. “We take this very seriously and in line with our department policies, Terry has been indefinitely suspended and will face team disciplinary measures. I don’t want this incident to be viewed as a representation of our athletic department or football program, but we certainly understand the impact one poor decision can have. While this behavior is not acceptable, this is a very challenging societal issue that is dealt with everywhere on a daily basis, and we will use this as a learning opportunity for Terry and our program.”

According to Missouri statute, possession of less than 35 grams is a Class A misdemeanor.

Beckner, named a Freshman All-American by several outlets last season, suffered a season-ending knee injury on the first play of MU’s 10th game in 2015. He’s been recovering from anterior cruciate ligament surgery but was expected to recover in time for the start of the 2016 season.

Rated the No. 1 defensive tackle in the 2015 recruiting class, the East St. Louis native didn’t disappoint as a freshman, finishing with 27 tackles, eight tackles for loss and three sacks. Beckner was rated the nation’s No. 2 player overall by ESPN when he signed with Mizzou last February.

The Tigers signed the nation’s top-rated recruit, wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham, in 2012. Green-Beckham, who now plays for the NFL’s Tennessee Titans, was arrested twice during his two-season Mizzou career in drug-related incidents.

Under former coach Gary Pinkel, players arrested for similar offenses were suspended for one game.

Pinkel has retired from coaching but isn’t leaving the Mizzou payroll. Pinkel agreed to a three-year contract to serve as a fundraiser and ambassador for the athletics department, the school announced Thursday.

Pinkel, who retired after the 2015 season as Mizzou’s career wins leader, will be paid $350,000 for each of the first two years of his contract and $250,000 for the third year. The contract, approved in
December by the University of Missouri System Board of Curators, is effective Jan. 1, 2016 through Dec. 31, 2018. Pinkel announced in November that he was diagnosed with a form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma in the spring.

In his new role, he will assist with “fundraising opportunities and donor/fan engagement” and serve as “a general ambassador related to public appearances and advising as requested on matters related to football and other issues,” plus other possible duties.

“I’ve said all along that when my coaching days were done, I would still need to be involved in a meaningful way, and this does that for me,” Pinkel said. “I’m excited to be in this role where I can still provide an impact for a place that means so much to me and my family.”

“We’re really pleased to have Coach Pinkel continue as part of our team,” MU athletics director Mack Rhoades said. “It was very important for us to find the right way to keep the winningest coach in Mizzou history engaged, and we’re excited for the value Gary can bring to the table going forward. Schools around the country are finding ways to keep institutional treasures like Gary Pinkel, Frank Beamer and Steve Spurrier in the fold even after they are done carrying a whistle.”

When Pinkel retired he had six years left on his most recent coaching contract that paid him $4.02 million annually. Pinkel, 63, guided Mizzou to a record of 118-73 from 2001-2015 and 10 bowl games.

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Terry Beckner Jr. suspended from Mizzou football team after arrest for marijuana possession

Freshman defensive tackle was cited Wednesday following traffic stop

MU coach Barry Odom said Beckner would face disciplinary measures from the team

Beckner was a Freshman All-American for the Tigers last season before knee injury

BY TOD PALMER

tpalmer@kcstar.com
Freshman defensive tackle Terry Beckner Jr. was suspended indefinitely from the Missouri football team Thursday following his arrest and citation the previous day for possession of less than 35 grams of marijuana, a misdemeanor.

MU coach Barry Odom said Thursday that Beckner also would face disciplinary measures from the team.

“I’m disappointed to learn of Terry’s actions,” Odom said in a release announcing Beckner’s suspension. “We take this very seriously.”

According to University of Missouri police, officers stopped the 2012 Chrysler 300 that Beckner was driving at 9:34 p.m. for driving without headlights at Conley and Missouri avenues in Columbia.

“When the officers approached the car, they observed the strong odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle,” Maj. Brian Weimer said. “Through investigation they found a clear, plastic, Ziploc-style bag in the vehicle with marijuana in it.”

Beckner was arrested and released on a summons. Police said there was a passenger with Beckner, but nobody else was cited or arrested.

“I don’t want this incident to be viewed as a representation of our athletic department or football program, but we certainly understand the impact one poor decision can have,” Odom also said in the release. “While this behavior is not acceptable, this is a very challenging societal issue that is dealt with everywhere on a daily basis, and we will use this as a learning opportunity for Terry and our program.”

Beckner, an East St. Louis (Ill.) High School graduate, was selected to the All-Southeastern Conference freshman team and made various freshman All-America lists last season despite missing Missouri’s final two games. Beckner sustained a torn ACL and MCL, meniscus damage and a bone bruise in his right knee on the first defensive snap against BYU on Nov. 14 at Arrowhead Stadium. The Tigers’ medical staff said at the time Beckner should be ready in time for August’s fall camp.
Despite playing in only 10 games, Beckner — at 6 feet 4 and 300 pounds — tied for the team lead among interior linemen with 27 tackles, including eight for a loss with three sacks, which ranked third for Missouri.

Beckner, who also had two quarterback hurries with a forced fumble and a pass breakup, was a five-star recruit, according to ESPN and 247 Sports. He was ranked No. 2 overall in the ESPN 300 for the 2015 recruiting class and was ranked No. 8 nationally by 247 Sports.

Beckner suspended indefinitely after arrest on suspicion of marijuana possession

By David Morrison

Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Missouri rising sophomore defensive tackle Terry Beckner Jr. was arrested on suspicion of misdemeanor possession of 35 grams or fewer of marijuana Wednesday night, according to the University of Missouri Police Department arrest log.

The arrest happened at 9:48 p.m. Wednesday, according to the log.

In a statement, Missouri Coach Barry Odom said Beckner has been suspended indefinitely.

"I'm disappointed to learn of Terry's actions," Odom said in a statement. "We take this very seriously and in line with our department policies, Terry has been indefinitely suspended and will face team disciplinary measures. I don't want this incident to be viewed as a representation of our athletic department or football program, but we certainly understand the impact one poor decision can have.

"While this behavior is not acceptable, this is a very challenging societal issue that is dealt with everywhere on a daily basis, and we will use this as a learning opportunity for Terry and our program."
An MUPD officer made a traffic stop on at the corner of Conley and Missouri avenues at 9:34 p.m., according to police, after observing Beckner driving his 2012 Chrysler 300 sedan with no headlights on.

The officer "observed a strong odor of marijuana emanating from the interior of the vehicle" and, upon searching the vehicle, found a clear plastic bag containing marijuana in the center console, according to police.

Beckner was arrested and transported to MUPD headquarters, where he was processed and released on summons.

Beckner, 18, is coming off a true freshman season in which he recorded 27 tackles, eight tackles for loss and three sacks over 10 games with five starts, earning freshman All-America honors.

He severely injured his right knee on the first defensive snap of Missouri’s Nov. 14 win over BYU. The Tigers expect him to be back by the start of fall practice.

Beckner was also involved in a car accident Sept. 18 in which a sport utility vehicle he was driving — which also contained football players DeSean Blair, Keyon Dilosa and Trevon Walters as passengers — hit another SUV at the corner of College and University avenues. Beckner had the green light and the other driver was turning left on flashing yellow, according to police.

Beckner was treated at the scene and played in Tigers’ win over Connecticut the next day.

The 6-foot-4, 300-pound Beckner was one of the top-rated players in the recruiting class of 2015 coming out of East St. Louis, Ill., High School.

Cornerback Aarion Penton was the last Missouri player to be cited for marijuana possession, during a traffic stop on Nov. 7, 2014. He was suspended for one game and reinstated the next week.

MU football player Terry Beckner Jr. arrested by campus police

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Updated (12:54 p.m.): Mizzou defensive lineman Terry Beckner Jr. was arrested Wednesday night on suspicion of misdemeanor marijuana possession, MUPD confirmed Thursday morning.

According to the Major Brian Weimer of MUPD, an officer stopped Beckner on the intersection of Conley Avenue and Missouri Avenue Wednesday night. The report states Beckner was driving without his headlights on. During the stop, the officer detected a "strong odor of marijuana emanating from the interior of the vehicle," according to MUPD.

The report says the officer searched the vehicle and found marijuana in a plastic Ziploc bag. Beckner was arrested, booked and processed at the University of Missouri Police Department. Police then released Beckner on summons for possession of less than 35 grams of marijuana.

Possessing 35 grams or less of marijuana is a Class A misdemeanor in the state of Missouri. It carries a maximum one-year jail sentence and $1,000 fine.

Mizzou Football coach Barry Odom released a statement, saying he is disappointed in Beckner. The team suspended Beckner indefinitely. The lineman is currently rehabbing ACL and MCL injuries he sustained in November.

Here is the full statement from Barry Odom: “I’m disappointed to learn of Terry’s actions. We take this very seriously and in line with our department policies, Terry has been indefinitely suspended and will face team disciplinary measures. I don’t want this incident to be viewed as a representation of our athletic department or football program, but we certainly understand the impact one poor decision can have. While this behavior is not acceptable, this is a very challenging societal issue that is dealt with everywhere on a daily basis, and we will use this as a learning opportunity for Terry and our program.”

Civil rights activist Diane Nash shares experience as student activist

By Megan Favignano

Thursday, January 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Civil rights activist Diane Nash met with several University of Missouri student activists Wednesday night, about two months after student protesters at MU made national news.

“They remind me of me,” Nash said.
Former UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned Nov. 9 after students called for his removal and said he was negligent in addressing race issues. MU students have continued to call for changes on campus.

Nash said the students asked her for advice. She told them to make choices that would allow them to respect themselves.

“When I’ve had decisions to make, I always try to make the decision that would make me admire the person I see in the mirror,” Nash said. “A person’s relationship with oneself is the most important relationship we have. So if you respect that person you see in the mirror, that has caused me to lead a life that I find satisfying from a deep place.”

Nash was the featured speaker at MU’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration on Wednesday night at the Missouri Theatre. Nash met privately with student protesters before the event. A Chicago native, she got involved in the nonviolent civil rights movement in 1959 when she was a student at Fisk University. She became the chairwoman of the student sit-in movement in Nashville, Tenn., the next year and helped make Nashville the first Southern city to desegregate its lunch counters.

Nash was arrested several times and was imprisoned, while pregnant, for 30 days in 1961.

When Nash first got involved in the civil rights movement, she and others were unsure whether nonviolence could create change. Now, she said, people know nonviolence works.

She coordinated the Freedom Ride from Birmingham, Ala., to Jackson, Miss., in 1961. The rides involved activists traveling through Southern states protesting segregation in interstate bus terminals.

Stephanie Shonekan, chairwoman of the Black Studies program at MU, said Nash’s lecture provided context for how people should think about student activism.

“Student involvement in the civil rights movement was significant and critical,” Shonekan said.

Nash said she has been pleased to see students at MU and nationwide get involved in activism.

“We went to sleep for a couple of generations,” Nash said. “People across the country including me are very proud and admire the students on this campus.”

She said it’s important for citizens to learn how to use nonviolence and take action. Elected officials have not and are not going to do what is necessary to protect the country’s interests, she said.

“Can you imagine if we had waited for elected officials to desegregate lunch counters, restaurants, interstate bus travel, get the right to vote?” Nash said. “We’d probably still be waiting.”
Before Nash’s lecture Wednesday, MU awarded Youth Empowerment Zone and Gene Robertson with Martin Luther King Jr. service awards. Youth Empowerment Zone helps Columbia’s youths secure jobs by providing training and encouraging education.

Robertson was one of the first black MU faculty members. He has been involved with multiple community organization boards, including serving as a longtime leader in the Minority Men’s Network.

“Open yourself up to the community,” Robertson said. “It has a lot to offer you.”

Diane Nash discusses student activism, nonviolent action

Nash: “We were trying to bring about the best society we could for (this generation) to be born into and come of age into. Future generations are going to look to you to do the same.”

Even before Diane Nash walked on stage in the Missouri Theatre on Jan. 20, she received a standing ovation. In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Nash was invited to give a speech about her life as an activist during the Civil Rights era.

Nash’s speech focused on her experiences leading nonviolent civil rights campaigns throughout the 1960s.

Senior Kaiya Brown, who has been coming to the Martin Luther King Jr. Day lectures for four years, said this past semester at MU was historic, though many students might not realize it. Brown believes Nash’s speech is relevant to what’s going on now.

Last semester, protests led by multiple student organizations such as Concerned Student 1950 culminated in national media coverage and the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Addressing some of the problems concerning our university system, Nash offered her support to the students by emphasizing the importance of facing challenges in everyday life.

“When I’ve had decisions to make, I’ve always tried to make the decision that would make me admire the person I see in the mirror,” Nash said. “Every individual and every generation has challenges and I hope they step up and accept the challenge.”

Graduate student Khalilah Henderson agrees with Nash’s call for action.
“We are the change and we have to step out and do something,” Henderson said.

Nash credits a nonviolent method of fighting for civil rights for her many accomplishments.

“Nonviolence is one of very few effective methods of struggle available today to people who want to make social change,” she said.

Nash first began to get involved in activist work as a student at Fisk University in 1959. In 1960, she led a student sit-in in Nashville and was a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

The next year, she helped coordinate the Freedom Ride from Birmingham, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi. Nash was an influential instructor in teaching new generations the basics of a nonviolent campaign, but she was imprisoned in 1961 for her teachings. She has won many awards for her work in the civil rights movement, including the Distinguished American Award presented by the John F. Kennedy Library.

Nash and her companions looked to Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings of nonviolent warfare to combat issues in society.

“What Gandhi invented was a way of waging war without weapons of violence,” she said.

However, they were often dissatisfied with the word “nonviolence” to describe their civil rights movement. The word in itself has a negative connotation, and the group did not want to align themselves with negativity, Nash said.

Nash eventually decided on “agapic energy” as the new name of their movement. Agapic energy comes from the combination of the Greek word agape, which means brotherly love or love for humankind, and energy, or a power or force. Therefore, agapic energy is “the power produced by love of humankind.”

“It is not just the absence of violence; it is the use of a power,” Nash said. “It is not passive; it is active. Users of agapic energy are not pacifists; we are activists.”

Agapic energy can be further explained by two basic principles. The first principle is “people are never your enemy.” Nash urges campaigners to love and respect people as humans while attacking their prejudiced attitudes.

Nash gave an example of this first principle by her experience desegregating lunch counters in the 1960s. For two years, her team targeted six different lunch counters per year. In the second year of their project, one of the managers from the first year visited all the owners and managers of the new lunch counters and urged them to desegregate their counters because they would not lose profits.

In this case, Nash said: “It was not the person that was the enemy. It was the racism.”
The second principle Nash explained was “oppression always requires the cooperation of the oppressed.” When the oppressed opt out of an oppressive system, the system will dismantle, she said.

For the Montgomery bus boycott, Nash pointed out that in order for there to be segregated buses, black passengers had to segregate themselves by sitting in the back of the bus.

“The day the blacks decided there would be no segregated buses in Montgomery, there were no longer segregated buses in Montgomery,” Nash said.

Nash’s campaign has constantly been looking toward the future, and she encouraged students to do the same.

“We were trying to bring about the best society we could for (this generation) to be born into and come of age into,” Nash said. “Future generations are going to look to you to do the same.”

COLUMBIA — A Malcolm X quote guides Lorenzo Lawson in his work helping Columbia's young people get jobs and avoid the pitfalls of dropping out or substance abuse: "By any means necessary."

Lawson, the executive director of Youth Empowerment Zone, works with just three employees to mentor and provide job skills training to those most at risk for incarceration, truancy and drug abuse, so there's not a lot of time to think about winning awards.

But when Youth Empowerment Zone joined William E. “Gene” Robertson as recipients of MU’s Dr. Martin Luther King Service Awards at the school's celebration of the civil rights leader Wednesday night, Lawson got a short reprieve.
“One of the things we have done intentionally is flying under the radar,” Lawson said in an interview Thursday. “The reason being is because we only have three staff members, and we don’t have very much funding.”

But Lawson said being understaffed doesn't keep the organization from achieving its mission.

"I believe Youth Empowerment Zone is worthy of the reward because it has prevented hundreds of youth from falling prey to the mass incarceration epidemic," Lawson said during the ceremony. "We don’t just get a youth and move along. We assess them and see what is hindering them from being successful and prosperous in this society."

Lawson thanked God and his staff members, whom he called miracle workers, for helping young adults with low self-esteem or self-hatred begin to see themselves as “leaders and kings and queens.”

Robertson wasn't expecting an award for a different reason. Despite living in Columbia for more than 40 years and being promoted through MU's ranks as a faculty member, he'd never won anything requiring a vote of his colleagues. Robertson, an MU Community Development professor emeritus and the second black faculty member hired at MU, said he saw this as systemic discrimination.

“I thought my time was over, and I didn’t expect anything from the university,” Robertson said the day after receiving the award. “But I’m pleased to have received this award, and I appreciate the faculty member who nominated me, who was a white faculty member, and I appreciate their generosity for awarding it to me.”

Robertson has also worked with organizations such as Fun City Youth Academy, which works to bridge the academic achievement gap for kids in lower-income families, and Minority Men’s Network, a group of predominantly black professionals who serve as role models and award scholarships to students of color.
Robertson, who grew up in a segregated Columbus, Ohio, emphasized the importance of working toward a unified community in his acceptance speech Wednesday night.

"My big plea is to open yourself up to the community," Robertson told the Missouri Theatre audience. "It has a lot to offer you. I take this as a symbol, but let me say my reward has come from activity with those folks in the community."

**Academic Minute: Brick Johnstone, University of Missouri – Empathy and Sense of Self**

Being more self-involved may also mean being more empathetic.

Brick Johnstone, professor of health psychology at the University of Missouri, discusses his research into empathy and self-awareness.

Johnstone recently returned from Oxford University, where he spent the summer studying the intersection of science and religion. Prior to his time at Oxford, Johnstone completed a nine-month fellowship at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey, where he explored religious experience and moral identity. Johnstone recently served as a contributing expert for a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, “Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States: Epidemiology and Rehabilitation,” which was presented to Congress.

Empathy, or the ability to identify with others’ feelings, often is considered an important relational skill. My colleagues and I hypothesized that in order for individuals to be empathetic, they needed to be selfless. However, we found just the opposite: individuals who were more self-aware had higher levels of empathy.

My previous research found that the less individuals focus on themselves, the more able they are to connect with a higher power and have a spiritual experience. Our current research also found selflessness makes individuals more forgiving. We thought the same would be true for empathy, but that wasn’t the case.

For the study, we gave neuropsychological evaluations to 31 individuals with traumatic brain injury. The participants also answered questions about empathy. Twenty participants also received MRI scans of their brains.
The results showed that individuals who were more empathetic appeared to have increased functioning in their right parietal lobe, which is the area of the brain associated with self-orientation. Additionally, greater empathy was associated with increased volume of the insular cortex, which perceives information about the internal states of the body, or self.

One possible explanation, according to previous literature, is that individuals have to understand themselves before they can understand others’ situations and feel what others feel. If individuals don’t have a strong sense of self, it’s hard for them to know what the other person is going through or be able to feel what they are feeling.

Empathy is a more complex process than the study conclusions suggest, but the study provides a basis for future research on how self-orientation relates to empathy. Creating interventions that help individuals develop their sense of self may help them become more empathetic.

MU professor to inspect Columbia's bridges, other crossings


COLUMBIA, Mo. - A University of Missouri professor will decide what work will keep Columbia's bridges in good shape for a longer period of time.

Columbia Public Works will split the cost with the federal Midwest Transportation Center to study the 42 bridges and nearly 100 other crossings Columbia maintains. Engineer specialist Seth Nelson said the city will use the inspection data compiled to develop a maintenance timeline, and a cost-effective way to extend the "life" of a bridge.

"We could build a bridge and just not touch it, and it would last for twenty years," Nelson told ABC 17 News. "But if we did some preventative maintenance on it, we might get fifty or sixty years out of the bridge that was built for twenty years."
Dr. Glenn Washer, a civil engineering professor at MU who specializes in "non-destructive" methods of inspecting and fixing bridges, will perform the work. Dr. Washer, whom Nelson worked for as a graduate student in 2013, said he will visually inspect the ways the different bridges in Columbia are built, and the different problems they have.

"Repairs to things like decks are expensive, and they disrupt traffic," Dr. Washer said. "So, the guidebook that we'll try to develop for them will give them actions they can take in the interim that will extend the life of bridges, and delay that type of repair."

Columbia's exclusive use of road salt to combat icy roads also can quickly deteriorate the metal in those crossings, both Nelson and Dr. Washer said. When water washes the salt into the metal joists and into cracks in the road, the combination corrodes the beams.

MoDOT performs inspections on Columbia's 42 crossings 20-feet and longer, Nelson said. While the inspections help them realize problems, such as issues on Ridgemont Bridge off College Park and Ridgemont Drive, Nelson characterized the changes made as "reactive." For Ridgemont, Nelson said the city lowered the weight limit to five tons last year, and are working with a consultant to find the best ways to fix it. Nelson said Dr. Washer's work will help them decide what methods of "preventative" maintenance they can do on the crossings within the city's means, rather than relying on a third-party company to perform the work, such as deck flushing and pavement sealing.

The contract will last until December 2016.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Watch What You Say

How fear is stifling academic freedom

By Fredrik deBoer, an academic and writer. He teaches at Purdue University.

The negotiated settlement between Steven Salaita and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has brought that sad episode to a close. Salaita, a scholar of indigenous studies, gave up a tenured position at Virginia Tech for the Illinois job, but following a series of tweets critical of Israel’s assault on Gaza in the summer of 2014, he was fired before he ever taught a class. This was a clear-cut attack on academic and political freedom, and the situation became a major embarrassment for the university, resulting in formal censure by the AAUP and a lawsuit from Salaita. After months of protracted legal maneuvering, including discovery filings that revealed the extent of donor influence on the decision to fire Salaita, a settlement was reached in November.
We can respect Salaita’s decisions, and his take on the settlement, while still being clear about the overall effect of the entire affair. Few within the American university system could avoid recognizing UIUC’s actions as a further erosion of faculty independence. Nor could the faculty fail to recognize that, in terminating the nascent employment of a tenured professor, the university deepened the notion of a Palestinian exception to academic freedom. These conditions are notable, and disturbing, on their own. But I further believe that they demonstrate one of the most profound and disturbing evolutions in the contemporary university: a pervasive culture of fear. As someone who has spent his life in the academy, having grown up on a college campus, spent five years as an undergraduate student and six as a graduate student, and who now works at a university, I am struck again and again by the fear that attends so much of academic life.

I’ve witnessed this fear myself on the job market. Like most who pursue an academic job, I’ve consumed a great deal of advice in a variety of forums — books, websites, social media, conferences, conversations with peers and mentors. Amid all the details about CV formatting, whom to ask for letters of recommendation, and similar logistics, a single strident piece of advice emerges repeatedly: Watch what you say. This advice is voiced in a variety of ways, sometimes as an explicit directive against speaking out about specific issues, sometimes as counsel against engaging politically at all, sometimes as a vague admonition that "people are always watching."

Regardless of its particular form, advice of this nature tells early-career academics that a key aspect of securing a job is to present oneself as entirely unobjectionable, to sand away the aspects of one’s self-presentation that might offend, well, anyone. This advice, undoubtedly, is well-intentioned. Indeed, if your only concern is building a career in the academy, it’s probably correct advice: Refusing to engage in any behavior or speech that suggests controversy probably does help to secure a job. But if we take a broader view of the traditional role of the academy as an incubator of provocative and dangerous ideas, this situation is a slowly unfolding disaster.

Note that this advice to carefully watch one’s words comes at precisely the same time that more and more people, both within and outside academe, are calling for more public engagement by professors. Many have counseled that we must define our value to the broader public, particularly at institutions that are funded partially through public money. I agree with all of these calls for more public expression, but consider the deep unfairness of asking for it at the same time that young scholars are being told to watch what they say. Graduate students, tenure-track faculty, adjuncts, and instructors — all are being asked to participate in the public conversation, yet do so under fear of profound consequences for saying the wrong
thing. The Salaita affair was an extreme case. But that case sent a clear message to administrators at universities that would prefer to avoid political controversy: It’s easier to stop controversial hires, like Steven Salaita’s, before they are made. In a brutally competitive employment landscape, it’s best to deny entry to potential headaches than to remove them.

And for administrators, social media is an obvious place to start. Many observers of the academic labor market argue that Twitter and Facebook are becoming essential to developing a professional reputation and can mean the difference between a hiring committee recognizing your name or simply seeing you as another faceless CV on a pile.

It can be easy for graduate students and other pre-tenure academics to feel like they can’t afford not to engage on social media. Then, the problems reveal themselves. Set aside the specific question of Israel and the passionate engagement of someone like Salaita. The cultures of Twitter and Facebook are quite different from those of academe. Social media is often insouciant, off-the-cuff, and subtle in its vocabulary and signals. It can also often be vulgar, in a way that makes sense within these cultures but that can be off-putting to those outside of them. That’s the fundamental fear: that the pressure to be on social media compels people to interact in a forum where it is very easy to be misunderstood.

*The Atlantic*’s Robinson Meyer put this danger brilliantly, writing that "on Twitter, people say things that they think of as ephemeral and chatty. Their utterances are then treated as unequivocal political statements by people outside the conversation. … [W]hen you write (or make a video or a podcast) online, what you’re saying can go anywhere, get read by anyone, and suddenly your words are finding audiences you never imagined you were speaking to." This is precisely the fear that I’ve heard many times from graduate students: that their engagement on social media will be picked over by members of job committees who will misinterpret what they’ve said and hold it against them. Damned if you do, damned if you don’t.

This kind of Catch-22 has contributed to the pervasive sense of fear that is already endemic on many campuses. The labor issues really drive the problem. In a healthy job market, academics wouldn’t need to fear the consequences of political speech nearly as much. Scholars who were fired for voicing controversial opinions, or who felt that their ability to speak freely was being obstructed, would be able to obtain employment elsewhere. Meanwhile, institutions eager to hire the best people would find that a reputation for resistance to free expression would hamper those efforts. But in the contemporary academy, where openings for full-time faculty members are few and adjuncts fill the gaps, the leverage lies in the hands of institutions. With so many underemployed Ph.D.s, controversial faculty can be
swiftly replaced. The difficulty of obtaining a new job, meanwhile, compels employees to keep their mouths shut. The academy is hardly alone in this condition. Since the Reagan/Thatcher era, the general drift of the working world is toward less- and less-empowered workers, who are correspondingly more and more subservient to the employers who dominate them. The university is a particularly intense example of this trend.

In order to chip away at the atmosphere of fear on campus, we’d need to rebuild a functioning academic labor market. Though many are fatalistic about this possibility, I maintain hope. The increasing focus on undergraduate teaching should be an opportunity to insist on the importance of faculty. Several pieces of large-scale research, such as the Gallup-Purdue Index, demonstrate that faculty are the key to effective undergraduate learning. This presents us with an opportunity to argue for the value of experienced and highly trained instructors. In the broader sense, the rise of the Fight for $15 minimum-wage protest movement, the presidential candidacy of the Democratic socialist Bernie Sanders, and the growing anger over inequality and flat wages make improvements to academic labor conditions more likely. The faculty must join a broad pro-worker movement that insists that too many are being left behind in a winner-take-all economy, and a movement that demands structural reform from our institutions.

In calling for a reinvigorated academic labor market, I am obviously not making an argument that many will find controversial. More vexed, and more sensitive, is the way in which deepening political battles on campus risk contributing to this culture of fear. The past months have seen the rise of a new campus protest movement. This has created a period of flux in the university, a moment of potential for both good and bad. If it unfolds as a movement for labor solidarity, it could help to restore the academy’s place as an incubator of provocation and challenge. If it unfolds as an appeal to administration and establishment power, it could deepen the conditions I’ve described.

I understand why so many who are invested in undergraduate teaching and believe in these protests are eager to stand with student activists in all cases. But this has led to a resistance toward the kind of skeptical analysis and critical discrimination that are essential to effective left-wing practice. Yes, there is indeed a large and growing national movement of campus protesters, and in many ways, the various groups that make it up share goals and tactics. But within that broad coalition are a vast number of groups and individuals with profound differences from campus to campus. The desire to support this movement has led to a strange embrace of neoliberal policies by many leftist academics. That’s a strange and unfortunate situation, and one that begs for deeper analysis.
Take, for example, student protesters at Wesleyan University. Wesleyan’s proud tradition of radical activism stretches back decades, making the university a natural site to take part in the nationwide protest movement. Yet the initial demands of student protesters were far from radical:

- A statement of accountability by administration, essentially dictated by the protesters.
- Hiring an "equity officer," an administrative position housed in the Office of Student Life with the mandate to "engage with students regarding equity within the confines of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, religion, culture, gender-identity, and physical or mental disability."
- The establishment of a multicultural center.
- A system through which students could anonymously inform on faculty members and staff whom they considered guilty of "microaggressions."

These are not radical demands. In fact, they’re straightforwardly conservative demands, in that they increase rather than decrease administrative control of day-to-day campus life. If the students get their wish, it will ironically strengthen the hand of those in charge of the very institutions student activists seek to change. Accountability statements are precisely the type of solutions, if you can use the term, that administrators prefer: heavy on symbolism, light on material change. Hiring an equity officer and establishing a multicultural center might have a positive overall impact on university life, but both actions will continue to expand the administrative bloat that has done so much to define higher education in the past several decades. Worse, however independent these entities might strive to be, and whatever the integrity of the individuals who staff them, they will ultimately be part of the institution, and serve the needs of the institution, rather than the needs of students.

The demand for a system of anonymous faculty surveillance, meanwhile, is positively Orwellian, a nightmare scenario for any instructor. It’s hard to imagine a system better designed to create an atmosphere of oppressive fear on campus. And such a system is directly contrary to one of the left’s most cherished, longstanding commitments: opposition to workplace tyranny. The burden of fear would fall hardest on instructors who do not enjoy the benefit of tenure, making those already precarious positions even riskier. The anonymity of the system would make it impossible for instructors to meaningfully respond to complaints. We’d be left with instructors living with constant, low-level fear that their classroom conduct would result in an unanswerable complaint, one surely handled by some bureaucrat.
with his or her own agenda and interests. How could this outcome be conducive to the left-wing philosophies that these protests spring from?

Contrast this with the kinds of demands Wesleyan students could have made instead. For decades, Wesleyan had need-blind admissions. At various times, higher administration attempted to do away with the policy, only to capitulate to vociferous student protest. But several years ago, the university finally abandoned the policy, with only muted disapproval from campus activists. Need-blind admissions strike at the very heart of the inequality that campus activists are protesting. How could the policy’s return not be on their list of initial demands? Similarly, Wesleyan employs a large number of low-wage staff members, as most universities do. Many of these employees are people of color. Why not focus student protest on their needs, given that these are among the most vulnerable members of the entire campus community? And yet the demands are silent on the welfare of these workers.

These protests are spreading out of a very deep and real concern with racial inequality and injustice on campus, and they represent the best tradition of students’ raising their voices. But there is a world of distance between radical intent and radical effect. Far too many of these protest movements seem to be falling into the trap of the Wesleyan students. For example, Brown University has pledged to spend millions on campus diversity, and to create new administrative positions to address student concerns. The attention to equality is admirable, but we should be clear: Cutting checks and hiring more administrators is not some radical alternative to business as usual. It is business as usual. This development may prove to be a boon to minority students at Brown, and if so, it’s worth celebrating. But the tendency for these organic, grass-roots protests to end up as just another vehicle to empower the administration should concern all of us who care for the university, even those of us who support the broad goals of the protesters. If we honor what they fight for, we have to maintain the right to identify when they’ve gone wrong. The academic community, in other words, needs to engage in both support and criticism of these movements, without fear of reprisals.

The campus protests are an opportunity for everyone to grapple with the central questions of the university’s future, questions that are far too often answered by unaccountable power holders. **Protests like that at the University of Missouri mark an excellent development: a reminder that a college, ultimately, is made up of its students and its faculty. Those students demanded to be heard, and they did not give up until their demands were too loud to ignore. This is altogether good news.** All of us can work to make our institutions more equitable, more just, and more free. But in a culture of ambient fear, with students and the faculty frequently represented as antagonistic toward each other, this moment
could easily turn toxic. The only way forward is to engage in vigorous and open dialogue, taking both student complaints and faculty rights seriously.

We have examples to draw from. Look to the University of Missouri protesters, who deposed a campus president despite the risks involved, despite the temptation to just put their heads down and carry on. Look to Steven Salaita, who fought not only for his own job but for the academic freedom of all of us. Another campus culture is possible. We need courage in the face of fear to rebuild our institutions and the values they have stood for. It’s a worthwhile goal, and worth fighting for.

Missouri graduate students consider creating union

Forum on Graduate Rights expects to hold an election this spring

The union would be called the Coalition of Graduate Workers

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri graduate student workers have drafted bylaws for a potential union.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that the Forum on Graduate Rights expects to hold an election this spring on whether to create the union. Committee members with the forum need a petition with signatures of a majority of graduate student workers to hold the election.

Connor Lewis, a graduate student and co-chairman of the committee leading union efforts said, “We understand that we want to start charting a path forward, and we want to make sure that a union is part of the path forward.”
Anahita Zare, a graduate student and spokeswoman for the Forum on Graduate Rights, said making the draft bylaws available to graduate students early is important to the group’s leadership. Zare said they want to get as much feedback from graduate student workers as possible.

The union would have elected officers, and each department or program on campus that has graduate student workers would have the right to nominate a representative to the union’s representative assembly, which would make policy.

The union, which would be called the Coalition of Graduate Workers, has affiliated itself with the Missouri National Education Association and the National Education Association. Both associations are large teacher unions.

Members of the student union would have to pay dues to the union on campus, and the affiliated teacher unions as well.

Demonstrations by graduate students seeking better benefits and pay were sparked after university officials told graduate assistants in August that health insurance subsidies would no longer be offered. The school later rescinded its decision.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

JANUARY 22, 2016 6:52 AM

Triple murder suspect in Kansas City weds ‘essential’ witness against him

Woman was the only eyewitness to slayings
Her then-boyfriend was charged
Marriage may let her avoid testifying

BY MATT CAMPBELL
mcampbell@kcestar.com
KANSAS CITY, MO. - A Kansas City man accused of killing three people, including a 1-year-old boy, has married the essential witness against him, possibly affecting the state’s ability to secure a conviction.

Joseph L. Nelson, 23, is accused of killing his former girlfriend, their son and the woman’s current boyfriend by shooting each of them numerous times in September. The slaying of the child especially outraged the community.

“It is alleged that (her) actions were intentional efforts to hinder the prosecution of a triple homicide,” the state said in a court motion.

In another filing, prosecutors said, “The state is unaware of any other witnesses to the subject event. As such, Shellana Victoria A. Davis is a necessary and an essential witness for the state.”

“Further,” prosecutors continued, “Ms. Davis’ testimony, in some respects, could become unavailable to the state after she is married to the defendant.”

According to court documents, Davis told police she and Nelson drove to the home of Bianca R. Fletcher, 17, because he wanted to upset her for creating drama between himself and her new boyfriend. Davis said Nelson walked in unannounced and then summoned her to also come inside. Davis said Nelson displayed a gun and told the victims to sit down. Davis said Nelson and Fletcher argued, and Fletcher threw an object at him. Davis said Nelson then shot Fletcher and the others and instructed Davis to help him collect the shell casings. They found 14 of them.

In announcing charges against Nelson, Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker praised witnesses “that told us what happened.”

In a court filing, the state said, “In her statement to police Shellana Davis detailed her eyewitness account of the events that form the basis for the felony charges filed in this matter.”

Baker’s office declined Thursday to comment on an ongoing case.

The people killed Sept. 8 at 5915 E. 84th St., near Hillcrest Road, were Fletcher, 18-year-old Shannon Rollins and 1-year-old Joseph Fletcher.

Fletcher was Nelson’s former girlfriend, and Joseph was their son. Rollins was Fletcher’s current boyfriend.
Nelson was interviewed Sept. 16 and denied any involvement in the murders. He was arrested and charged with three counts of first-degree murder. Bond was set at $1 million cash.

Nelson and Davis later applied for a marriage license. Nelson filed as an “absent applicant” because he was in the Jackson County jail.

On Nov. 6, prosecutors filed a motion to formally interview Davis on tape, in the presence of Nelson and his attorney, before they became married. But the two were married before the court had ruled on the state’s motion.

The same day the marriage became official, prosecutors obtained a warrant for Davis’ arrest on one count of first-degree burglary and two counts of tampering with evidence. She was arrested and jailed in lieu of a $75,000 bond.

Davis’ public defender filed a motion to reduce that to a signature bond. The woman, now 20, had graduated high school and was working before she was arrested. The motion said she would stay with her mother in Kansas City, Kan., until trial.

Prosecutors argued against the bond reduction. A hearing is scheduled for Jan. 27.

**Frank O. Bowman III, a professor of law at the University of Missouri, said the case appears to present “interlocking problems.”**

“On the face of the statute, she (Davis) would be able to decline to testify at all,” he said. “The privilege covers essentially the active testimony about anything, whether it occurred before, during or after the marriage.”

Bowman said spousal privilege would probably also rule out the admission of statements Davis made to police because they would be considered hearsay and would violate the constitutional right for Nelson to confront his accuser.

Motions filed by prosecutors indicate they are at least concerned about securing Davis’ testimony.

The theory behind spousal privilege, which is based in common law, is to encourage marital harmony by not forcing people to condemn, or be condemned
by, their spouse. It applies in civil and criminal cases and applies to communications between spouses as well as to testimony.

There are exceptions that vary from state to state. In Missouri, the exceptions include murder, rape and child abuse and endangerment when the victim is under 18. Other common exceptions include when one spouse is charged with a crime against the other one.

In a famous case in Texas in 1996, the wife of Minnesota Vikings quarterback Warren Moon was forced to testify against her husband in a domestic abuse case. She was compelled after a change in state law that struck down spousal privilege in such cases. Moon was acquitted by a jury.

Spousal privilege can also be challenged if there is reason to think it was a sham marriage, entered into to avoid testimony. In such cases, prosecutors would have to make that case and a judge would decide.

In the Kansas City murders, court documents provide a fairly detailed account of what allegedly happened that night and the next day. The bodies were discovered about 9:45 p.m. by Fletcher’s brother, who ran to get help. He told police that Nelson was his sister’s ex-boyfriend.

Another person told police that Nelson told him that night, “I did something bad. I did something I don’t think I can live with.” He also allegedly said, “I killed them. I killed them.”

The person said Nelson told him Fletcher threw a diaper box, which struck him in the head. Nelson allegedly said he “lost it” and shot her, adding that he shot Rollins and the child because they were witnesses and he did not want the boy’s crying to alert neighbors.

A separate person told police that Nelson later burned clothes in an outdoor grill. The witness told police that Nelson said he had robbed a store nearby. But police confirmed there were no armed robberies that day.

Yet another person told police that Nelson said the next morning he had gone to Fletcher’s home to “chill” but got into an argument with her and she threw a diaper at him. Nelson reportedly said someone else shot her.
“I was there and saw it, so other things had to be done,” Nelson allegedly said, adding that the shell casings were collected and he had showered numerous times and washed his hands with bleach.

That morning, Nelson went to a police station to report two guns, a magazine and ammunition were stolen from his 1999 Buick four-door.

Court records indicate evidence in the case also includes surveillance video from the Days Inn at 8601 Hillcrest Road.

Separate public defenders for Nelson and Davis did not return calls Thursday.