Amid an uproar over Melissa Click, a Mizzou faculty leader raises questions of due process

7 hours ago • By Koran Addo

A faculty leader at the University of Missouri-Columbia said Monday that recent events raised concern over the university’s ability to fairly deliberate the future of embattled professor Melissa Click.

That concern from Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg came a day after the university’s interim chancellor blasted Click’s behavior in a recently released video. In it she was seen cursing at a police officer during a confrontation between police and students at the university’s October homecoming parade.

Student protesters had blocked the vehicle then-system President Timothy M. Wolfe was riding in. The video shows students chanting with their arms interlocked.

When officers ordered students to get on the sidewalk, Click is seen positioning herself between police and the protesters and telling police repeatedly to back up. Later, she curses at an officer who touched her arm.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said Sunday that Click’s conduct was “appalling” and that he was angry and disappointed at her “pattern of misconduct.”

Click was seen on video in November confronting student journalists and calling for “muscle” to keep them away from students demonstrating after Wolfe’s resignation. Students were celebrating the departure of a leader many say was indifferent to racist incidents on campus.

Trachtenberg, the faculty council chairman, said he understood why Foley would speak out about the second video.

“It’s hard to argue that the administration can’t comment on issues of great concern to the university,” he said. But he added that Foley’s strong words could potentially “create difficulties since ultimately Foley has final decision on tenure applications.”

Click, who was suspended by the university’s Board of Curators in January, is currently seeking tenure. Tenure committees, which include top university administrators, have until Aug. 1 to decide who will be granted that coveted status.
Perhaps more troubling, Trachtenberg said, was the board’s decision last month to suspend Click without first holding a hearing.

Click has been a controversial figure on campus since the first video surfaced Nov. 9. Since then, a number of people, including more than 100 state lawmakers, have called on the university to fire her. This month, student demonstrators twice interrupted the university’s board meeting expressing support for Click.

Last month, Foley resisted calls to fire Click, saying he would wait for due process to play out. The university’s general counsel is conducting an investigation to determine whether discipline on top of the suspension is warranted.

Trachtenberg said that unless faculty members posed an immediate danger to the campus, the university’s bylaws generally afford them a hearing before they are suspended.

“There is a huge diversity in opinions among faculty about her conduct,” Trachtenberg said. “We’ve got almost 2,000 members. I’ve never heard anybody suggest that she represents such a grave emergency” that she be suspended without a hearing.

Board of Curators member David Steelman disagreed. Because the board suspended Click with pay, it gave the university a little more leeway to take action, he said on Monday.

Steelman, who has said his choice would be to fire Click, later pointed his finger back at the faculty, who he said failed to police one of their own.

“I don’t think the faculty acted responsibly,” he said. “They could’ve held their own hearings” over Click’s behavior, but they didn’t.

“A rigorous faculty would have done something,” he said. “And not just sit back and do nothing and then complain when somebody does.”
Mizzou Chancellor Condemns 'Verbal Assault' By Melissa Click During Homecoming Parade

New footage emerged of the controversial professor clashing briefly with police in October.

The University of Missouri's interim Chancellor Hank Foley said Sunday night that communications professor Melissa Click has engaged in a "pattern of misconduct" after new footage emerged from an incident in October.

Video posted over the weekend shows Click getting into a confrontation with police a month before her infamous encounter with student journalists during November protests on Mizzou's campus.

Click received widespread backlash following a Nov. 10 incident in which she blocked the student journalists from entering an area of the campus where protesters were camping. During that November episode, which was caught on camera, Click directed dozens of students to form a human wall to keep the journalists away. She has since been charged with assault and has agreed to community service in exchange for deferred prosecution. The university also suspended her.

On Saturday, the Columbia Missourian published a profile of Click that included footage from police body cameras during the Oct. 10 homecoming parade for the university.

The video shows Click joining student activists who had stopped the vehicle carrying then-MU system president Tim Wolfe. Click hugs the students and then stands between them and the city police trying to keep the activists back from the parade.

"I remember thinking, stupidly, that if as a white person I put myself in front of the students, that maybe they wouldn’t push me," Click explained to the Missourian.

Click can be heard on the video yelling at the cops, "Get your hands off the children," and after a moment shouts, "Get your fucking hands off me!"
In his statement Sunday night, Foley characterized this as Click "directing a verbal assault against members of the Columbia Police Department during the homecoming parade."

"Her conduct and behavior are appalling, and I am not only disappointed, I am angry, that a member of our faculty acted this way," Foley said. "Her actions caught on camera last October, are just another example of a pattern of misconduct by Dr. Click -- most notably, her assault on one of our students while seeking 'muscle' during a highly volatile situation on Carnahan Quadrangle in November."

Foley did not say whether he'll seek any further sanctions on Click, who is tenure-track, but said he will "address these new revelations with the Board of Curators," the university's governing body.

Missouri state lawmakers have pointed to the university's response to Click's actions as a reason for why they are seeking to financially punish Mizzou. Mark Schierbecker, the student who shot the widely seen footage of Click from November, said this weekend, "I think they are using my video as an excuse for the budget cuts they already wanted to make."

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Suspended Missouri professor caught shouting at police

COLUMBIA, Mo., Feb. 15 (UPI) -- The University of Missouri assistant professor who was suspended after asking for "some muscle" against a student journalist in a video shot last November is in trouble again for shouting at a police officer on campus.

Another video, released by the Columbia Police Department and first published in the Columbia Missourian, shows Melissa Click shouting obscenities at an officer during a campus homecoming parade about a month before the first video was shot.

Click is not a tenured professor at the university, but had applied for it when a video was released of her trying to intimidate a videographer from the student newspaper during a campus protest in November over the university's racial issues. She was suspended shortly after that.

Click appears to be part of earlier protest in the newly released video. As an officer attempts to clear a campus road for a homecoming parade, Click is a member of group trying to block the road. When the officer moves Click and the group back to the sidewalk, she is seen shouting obscenities in the face of the officer.
Interim chancellor Hank Foley, who has so far resisted calls for her dismissal, issued a strongly worded statement Sunday night:

"Last night, like many in our community, I watched newly released footage of Dr. Melissa Click directing a verbal assault against members of the Columbia Police Department during the homecoming parade in October 2015.

Her conduct and behavior are appalling, and I am not only disappointed, I am angry, that a member of our faculty acted this way. Her actions caught on camera last October, are just another example of a pattern of misconduct by Dr. Click—most notably, her assault on one of our students while seeking 'muscle' during a highly volatile situation on Carnahan Quadrangle in November.

We must have high expectations of members of our community, and I will address these new revelations with the Board of Curators as they work to complete their own review of the matter."

Click has hired a public relations firm to help her keep her job.

MU Chancellor, curator "appalled" by new Melissa Click body camera footage

By Caitlin Campbell

Monday, February 15, 2016 at 2:00 pm

A member of the University of Missouri Board of Curators and interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley say they will take a harder look at Melissa Click’s conduct after video footage surfaced that shows Click verbally assaulting officers with the Columbia Police Department during the university Homecoming parade in October.

In the footage taken on Oct. 10, Click, an assistant professor of communication, can be seen joining arms and chanting with protesters in the street as they block former UM President Tim Wolfe’s vehicle in the parade at Ninth Street and University Avenue. Police officers approach the protesters and physically guide them out of the street onto the nearby sidewalk while repeatedly yelling “get out of the road.”

Click protests the officers’ actions and, while standing in the street, places her body between Concerned Student 1950 protesters and repeatedly demands one officer “back up” and “stop
touching” people. A second officer grabs her shoulder and she yells at him to, “Get your f---ing hands off me.”

In a statement released Sunday after the Columbia Missourian published the video on its website, Foley called Click’s behavior “appalling.” Foley said he is disappointed and angry that a member of the university faculty would act as Click did and that he would address her “pattern of misconduct” and the new video with the curators, who had ordered an inquiry into her conduct.

Click gained national attention in November during a series of protests on the Mel Carnahan Quadrangle by the group Concerned Student 1950. She was captured on film by student Mark Schierbecker calling for “muscle” in an attempt to get him to leave the public space. After the Nov. 9 incident, Click has faced: a Title IX complaint against her by a former associate dean of the journalism school; a misdemeanor simple assault charge — which was deferred — connected to a complaint by Schierbecker; suspension from teaching; and a review by the Board of Curators regarding her status at the university.

“We must have high expectations of members of our community, and I will address these new revelations with the Board of Curators as they work to complete their own review of the matter,” Foley wrote.

Curator David Steelman said Monday the new video not only highlights more “inappropriate” behavior by Click, but also the failure of the University of Missouri faculty to take responsibility to govern its own employees. Steelman said the Board of Curators has faced significant criticism for stepping in to investigate Click’s behavior — but it did so only because the faculty failed to adequately respond to one of their own threatening a student.

Steelman said a December letter written in support of Click, which was signed by more than 115 faculty members, “rushed to judgment that those moments captured on film were the worst of” Click’s “life and not a pattern.” He said the newly revealed body camera footage should have been uncovered during a proper investigation before anyone judged Click.

The letter said the faculty members wished to voice “in no uncertain terms our support for Click as a member of the University of Missouri faculty who has earned her position through an outstanding record of teaching and research.”

“We simply as the university family have not done our job,” Steelman said. “The new video coming out has indicated we need to look very carefully at whether or not Ms. Click is conducting herself in accordance with university standards.”

Faculty Council chairman Ben Trachtenberg did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment Monday.

Click did not respond to a message Monday but spoke with the Tribune last week about the incident on the Carnahan Quadrangle. Click said her behavior in the highly-publicized November video was “a mistake in a high-stress moment” when “there wasn’t a lot of time for deliberation.”
“I acknowledge I made mistakes that day, but my goal in what I had accomplished in the rest of the day is standing up for MU students and trying to be a support for students expressing they felt excluded,” Click said.

MU alumni pull $2 million in donations after campus tension last fall

Vice Chancellor of Advancement Tom Hiles said the losses came from donors upset about controversial events like Concerned Student 1950 protests and Planned Parenthood.

After students linked arms in celebration of the resignation of former UM System President Tim Wolfe, over 2,000 people called the MU Advancement office asking about the university, according to Vice Chancellor of Advancement Tom Hiles. Many of these calls weren’t just empty threats.

“Currently Mizzou has lost $2 million in gifts,” Hiles said. “The pledges were made, and now donors are saying that they’re not giving the money.”

Hiles said the reasons for pulled donations varied from the build-up of controversial events last fall, including controversies over MU’s affiliation with Planned Parenthood and the Concerned Student 1950 movement. Between five and 10 larger donors are zipping up their wallets.

“We track these calls on a heat app, and even though they’re split up between controversies, the most were concerning the student strikers,” Hiles said.

In October, MU announced the “Our Time to Lead” fundraising campaign, with a goal of raising $1.3 billion in order to invest more in campus institutions and provide more scholarships to students. Even though $2 million in donations were pulled, Hiles said this is a small percentage out of the total $700 million in donations, and that the student aid for next semester won’t decrease.

“Right now, our numbers are holding up, and we’re still tracking our second-best year in history with donations,” Hiles said. “Virtually all of our major donors are staying with us. They were confused and upset by what was happening, but just wanted to hear from us.”

According to previous Maneater reporting, some MU alumni re-examined their campus pride following fall events. Marcia Chatelain, who graduated from MU in 2001, tweeted a photo of a letter she would be sending to MU with a penny taped to the inside, writing it would be her “#lastpenny” donated until the demands from Concerned Student 1950 were met.
MU graduate Chris Brown, a graduate from 1994, was unhappy with the events in the fall, saying that it could be a long time until he decided to donate to MU again.

“I’m pretty irritated with how things have gone,” he said last November.

Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations Todd McCubbin said the pace of annual donations fell by 19 percent in December.

“We definitely took a bump,” McCubbin said. “The overall mood of our alumni indicated how we fell in December. After the issues on campus, they’re unsure and uncertain.”

However, January numbers indicated that donations were only 3 percent lower than the expected pace for annual gifts.

“That gives you an idea of the roller coaster we’ve been on, and hopefully we’ll level out,” McCubbin said.

Moving forward, Hiles said he is working around the clock to ensure direct communication with donors and to keep the office stable.

“Not long ago, Chancellor Foley addressed Mizzou, and in that week we had Melissa Click charged with a misdemeanor and the Tim Wolfe email came out bashing former Chancellor Loftin,” Hiles said. “The greatest challenge is the uncertainty.”

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Where Are the Minority Professors?

An examination of the demographics of more than 400,000 professors at 1,500 colleges shows where those of each rank, gender, race/ethnicity, and tenure status can be found.

By Ben Myers FEBRUARY 14, 2016

On average, 75 out of every 100 full-time faculty members at four-year colleges are white. Five are black, and even fewer are Hispanic. But that’s not the whole story. Among the higher ranks and at certain types of institutions — say, small, private master’s universities — the faculty is even less diverse.

To view the racial and ethnic breakdowns of all types of professors and institutions go to the link: http://chronicle.com/interactives/where-are-the-minority-professors
MU School of Medicine names leader for Springfield campus

A leader has been selected for the new Springfield Clinical Campus of the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

Andrew L. Evans, a hospital-based physician at Mercy Clinic will serve as associate dean and chief academic officer for the medical school's new clinical campus. He will also serve as associate professor of clinical medicine.

The appointment starts Monday.

“I believe this is a great opportunity for the future of medical education in the state of Missouri,” Evans said, in a news release. “I’m looking forward to working with CoxHealth, Mercy and MU to expand exceptional educational opportunities for future physicians.”

In a few months, the first cohort of University of Missouri medical students will be relocated to Springfield to complete two years of the intense training required to become a physician. They will learn directly from top physicians in the CoxHealth and Mercy Springfield health systems.

The new clinical campus — a partnership among Mizzou, CoxHealth and Mercy — is expected to create 3,500 new jobs, add more than $390 million a year to the state economy and add 300 physicians, practicing in Missouri, within the next 20 years. It is part of an effort to address a critical shortage of physicians in the state and U.S.

To prepare for the new campus, the MU School of Medicine expanded its medical school class size from 96 to 128. The new Springfield campus will open this year and a new medical education building in Columbia will open next year.

James Stannard, interim dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, appointed Evans.

“Dr. Evans is an excellent teacher, clinician and administrator who has been actively involved since 2011 as a member of the management group for the medical school’s Springfield campus expansion,” Stannard said, in a news release. “His passion for medical education, proven track record of administrative and leadership abilities, and his extensive relationships with Springfield and Columbia stakeholders will be invaluable as we expand the MU School of Medicine to educate more doctors for Missouri.”
Evans has been a hospital-based physician at Mercy since 2003 and is board-certified in internal medicine. He received a bachelor's degree and master's degree from Drury University. His medical degree from the University of Washington in Seattle and completed a residency in internal medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

In the new role, Evans will work closely with leaders in Springfield and Columbia. According to the release, he will be responsible for making sure that the educational programs on the Springfield campus align with and support high quality, effective patient-centered care.

**MISSOURIAN**

**FROM READERS: AAUW helps fund girls robotics teams**

KAITIE WALLACE/MISSOURIAN READER, 1 hr ago

*Kaitie Wallace is the publicity intern for the Columbia Branch of the American Association of University Women. Wallace is an MU junior studying journalism.*

On Jan. 30, MU hosted the FIRST LEGO League Championship Tournament. Children in grades four through eight built and designed autonomous LEGO robots and then competed with other teams in various events. This competition allows elementary students a chance to be exposed to science and technology. Through their involvement, students gain valuable knowledge and learn about future careers.

The Columbia Branch of AAUW helped fund two all-girls teams from Benton Elementary. The Queen Beebots and the STEM GEMS each have about seven girls, and they practiced every week starting in September.

Marianne Fues, president of the Columbia branch of AAUW, emphasized the importance of women in STEM related fields.

"In order for society to find more women in STEM careers, we must encourage girls to think about those fields at an early age. Lego robotics is a fun and challenging way to entice girls to
consider STEM fields in elementary school. The competition is a goal for them to work toward and to see how they are doing along with their peers," Fues said.

The competition had several events, and the challenge for this competition was to find ways to reduce trash. The Queen BeeBots' solution to this challenge was to turn wire hangers into ornaments, and the STEM GEMS proposed creating hair bows out of candy wrappers.

STEM Specialist Heather McCullar coaches the two teams, and she said that the girls did great at the competition; especially considering it was the first time for many of them. The STEM GEMS placed 10th, and the Queen Beebots placed eighth in the robot table competitions.

"Both teams received some good feedback with regards to their challenge solution, teamwork challenge and robot design. The girls had a great season and enjoyed the competition experience," McCullar said.

**MISSOURIAN**

City Council: Rise Apartments moves forward, Douglass Park to get a skate spot

DAVID SOLER CRESPO, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Here's what the Columbia City Council did and considered on Monday night during its second regular meeting in February.

This article was updated as the meeting unfolded and is organized in reverse chronological order.

Public comments

Columbia resident Richard Hayes and Jacob McFarland, Hayes' neighbor, said they had filed a petition with the Public Works Department to implement traffic calming measures on West Rollins Road.
Hayes said they were pleased that Rollins Road was given a higher priority and they hoped their petition was taken care of this year. Both said they thought signs were not enough to reduce speeding. Hayes said he and neighbors would like to see speed humps installed or decreasing the speed limit to 35 mph.

**Downtown noise complaints**

The council heard a report from the Columbia Police Department about complaints from downtown residents about noise coming from Harpo's. Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas asked for the report in September, noting that far more people live downtown now. The report said police have received 11 complaints about noise at Harpo's over the past two years but none since mid-October. A city ordinance prohibits any noise audible from 50 feet or more between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

City Manager Mike Matthes said Harpo's wasn't fined following a conversation about how the bar could be a better downtown neighbor.

**Neighborhood traffic**

The Public Works Department offered a report outlining priorities for neighborhood traffic calming projects. It said the top priorities are Stewart and Rice roads and Kelsey Drive. It also wants to take a look at whether Sexton Road needs attention, especially in light of ongoing planning in west-central Columbia.

The report will be presented in the future as a resolution or public hearing to give an opportunity to the public to speak about the projects.

**Flat Branch sewer and Elm Street scramble**

The council introduced an ordinance authorizing the staff to seek bids on a third Flat Branch relief sewer project, along with storm-drain work on Ninth, Elm and Hitt streets downtown and a pedestrian scramble project at Ninth and Elm streets. The projects altogether would cost $3.03 million, $2.3 million of which would be spent on the sewer. The bill will be up for a final vote at the council's March 7 meeting.
East-side trail agreement

An agreement with TranSystems Corp. for engineering work on the Shepard to Rollins East-West Trail Connection was introduced and approved on first reading. The agreement would authorize the city to pay the consultant $152,870 for the work. The trail route, which the council already has approved, would begin at Williams and Rollins streets, move generally south around facilities at the MU School of Veterinary Medicine, then cross Hinkson Creek with a bridge and end at Bluff Dale Drive. The bill is scheduled for a final vote on March 7.

Discovery Office Park development

A request for approval of a development plan for property at Ponderosa Street and Philips Farm Road was pulled off the consent agenda by Sixth Ward Councilwoman Betsy Peters for extra consideration before it was approved. Plans call for building several office buildings on the 5-acre property. Peters inquired about the status and effect of the transportation development district associated with development of the Discovery Office Park; the request was unanimously approved after discussion.

Replat for Rise Apartments

A request to combine two lots into one on Tenth Street downtown to accommodate plans by Fields Holdings, LLC, to build a 10-story apartment building won the council's approval after a lengthy discussion about possible legal liability should the council turn down the request.

The project will require the demolition of James Condominium and the buildings that house Quinton's Bar and Deli and Britches clothing store. Fields Holdings asked the city to combine the condominium property at 121 S. Tenth St. with the parking lot that serves it.

Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala cast the lone dissenting vote. He said the public health and welfare must be taken into account and said he voted against the request "so I could sleep tonight."

Fifth Ward Councilwoman Laura Nauser said public health and safety wouldn't be negatively effective because sanitary sewer, stormwater and electric capacities were sufficient.
Douglass Park skate spot

Several people spoke at a public hearing about $225,000 worth of projects planned for Douglass Park before the council voted unanimously to move forward. The projects include new shelters, a skate spot, accessible sidewalks, new playground equipment and additional lighting. The money will come from the city's parks sales tax.

Parks and Recreation Director Mark Griggs said the skate spot had been requested for a long time by students at Douglass High School.

Gabe Huffington, a city park services manager, said the skate park will not be able to accommodate BMX bikes because of its size after Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp questioned whether BMX bikers would be able to frequent the park.

The Broadway Hotel TIF report

The council held a public hearing on the progress of the tax increment financing project that saw the Regency Hotel redeveloped as The Broadway Hotel. Such a hearing is required every five years under state statutes governing tax increment financing districts. No residents commented.

Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine reported that the redevelopment plan was making satisfactory progress.

In February 2014, Boone County Counselor C.J. Dykhouse filed a lawsuit at the county's behest challenging the city's authority to use TIF. Thirteenth Circuit Judge Gary Oxenhandler ruled in the county's favor on Dec. 14 and banned the city from approving future TIF projects until 2020.

Mayor Bob McDavid said the lawsuit was "unfortunate" and said the city had used TIF judiciously in his time on the council. Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala said TIF could be a "useful tool" but said it should be used on a case-by-case basis.

More transparency in policing

Lynn Maloney of Race Matters, Friends spoke to the council about the "Policies and Oversight" pillar of the President's Task Force on Policing for the 21st Century. She questioned whether the Columbia Police
Department was operating openly enough, saying there was a "lack of transparency and core communication" between patrol officers and their supervisors.

**Appointments to boards and commissions**

The city will have to readvertise to find applicants for vacancies on nine boards or commissions that no one expressed interest in filling. The council did fill vacancies on four commissions.

**Special items**

Mayor Bob McDavid was awarded the Public Official Achievement Award from the Missouri Park & Recreation Association. The award is given to an elected official or public leader who has shown support for parks, trails and other recreational elements.

**Shared Governance in Crisis**

**No MU Mention**

The highly publicized student protests this past fall often challenged the notion of shared governance as it has been historically practiced. Student demands at institutions public and private, large and small, have sought to substitute the judgment of students for that of the faculty in areas such as the curriculum, hiring, tenure, promotion and the grading system.

Many students understandably are not aware either of how decisions are made on their campus or who is responsible for which aspects of their institution. As a result, a number of presidents have responded to student demands by reaffirming the importance of shared governance, approaching the protests as offering opportunities for (with apologies for the cliché) teachable moments. Some have noted that student protests have long had a place in higher education. And many of course have supported such goals as fostering greater diversity and seeking to end both systemic racism and the kinds of microaggressions that can cause pain to students.

The events in recent weeks at Mount St. Mary’s University and Suffolk University are a different matter. The Mount’s president and board chair and the actions of the Suffolk board have abruptly shattered notions of shared governance, to the detriment of their
Principles of Shared Governance
Although institutional history, culture and mission all affect the details on each campus of how shared governance is implemented, most colleges and universities have generally embraced the notion of shared governance as defined in the 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities. According to the statement, formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the Board of Trustees -- ideally in partnership with the president -- is entrusted with the long-term health of the institution, its mission, its policies and its finances. The board is also responsible for hiring, evaluating and firing the president.

Effective boards, however, focus on strategy, not tactics, and they delegate to the president the operation of the institution. The president then delegates to the faculty primary responsibility for the educational program, most notably the curriculum, academic standards and the hiring, retention and promotion of the faculty. For their part, students have no formal role in governance on most campuses, although they may serve as representatives to trustee committees and ex officio without a vote on boards of trustees, as well as participate fully in campus committees and planning processes.

Student protesters have often mistakenly assumed that their president is responsible for everything that happens on their campuses, failing to understand that new required courses, new programs in areas such as Black Studies and Latino/a Studies, and the hiring of significantly increased numbers of faculty of color are all matters that require faculty action.

For example, protesters at Oberlin College identified specific employees they wanted fired and faculty members they wanted to receive tenure. They sought to oversee a revision of the grading process. They argued that since students in the conservatory studying classical music were not required to take courses in jazz, jazz students "should not be forced to take courses rooted in whiteness." In response, Oberlin President Marvin Krislov sought to educate the campus about how decisions are made at Oberlin, explaining that he would "not respond directly to any document that explicitly rejects the notion of collaborative engagement. Many of [the document's] demands contravene principles of shared governance."

Student protesters at Amherst College had even greater expectations of President Biddy Martin when they demanded that she apologize "to students, alumni and former
students, faculty, administration and staff who have been victims of several injustices including but not limited to our institutional legacy of white supremacy, colonialism” and racism and discrimination against a wide array of groups.

While acknowledging the pain that many students experienced as a result of systemic racism, and supporting both the right of students to protest and their goals, Martin, like Krislov, reaffirmed the importance of shared governance: “The formulation of these demands assumed more authority and control than a president has or should have. The forms of distributed authority and shared governance that are integral to our educational institutions require consultation and thoughtful collaboration.”

Unfortunately, and in marked contrast, the president at Mount St. Mary’s and his board chair and the board chair and other trustees at Suffolk were either ignorant about or chose to ignore the basic principles of shared governance -- including collaboration, consultation and distributed authority. Although circumstances continue to evolve at these institutions, what has happened to date provides some important lessons for other colleges and universities.

Mount St. Mary’s: Violating Best Practices
The actions of President Simon Newman have been breathtaking in their disregard not only for shared governance but also for the following central tenets of academic life:

- Presidents are responsible for ensuring that their institution acts in ways that are consistent with its mission and its stated policies.
- Campuses are places where all members of the community are encouraged to ask questions and engage in healthy debate, without fear of retaliation.
- Faculty members are valued for being independent, critical thinkers who encourage their students to be the same.
- Policies governing the termination of employees are designed to ensure fair rather than arbitrary treatment.
- Tenured faculty members are assumed to have lifetime employment unless they commit flagrant violations of institutional policies or commit criminal acts or if the institution is facing financial exigency.
- Faculty members participate in the selection of the chief academic officer, which generally requires a national search.
- Student newspapers are not part of the public relations efforts of the institution but rather educate and encourage student journalists to be professional and independent in their reporting.
- Personnel decisions are confidential.
- Boards and administrators should never demonize the faculty, students or alumni.
When confronted with faculty opposition to his plan to weed out students in an effort to improve the university’s retention numbers, a key factor in its ranking in U.S. News & World Report and elsewhere, Newman violated every one of those principles. The process began when, after less than a year in office, Newman became the poster child for ignoring the best practices of shared governance, for violent language and for disregarding that part of the institution’s Catholic mission that values respecting “the dignity of other persons.” As the Mount’s student newspaper, The Mountain Echo, reported, Newman responded to the several faculty members who questioned his approach to student retention by telling them, “This is hard for you because you think of the students as cuddly bunnies, but you can’t. You just have to drown the bunnies … put a Glock to their heads.”

But as dismaying as Newman’s plan and language were, his subsequent actions, supported by his board chair, were as egregious. He relieved the provost, who had served as chief academic officer at the Mount since 2007, of his administrative responsibilities, reportedly because the provost raised questions about Newman’s retention plan. Newman then immediately appointed a new interim provost from outside the institution, without a search committee and apparently without any consultation with the faculty. Soon after, Newman fired a tenured faculty member who had disagreed with him. Faculty members report that Newman took this action unilaterally, without any formal process. He next fired a professor who was head of the pre-law program and faculty adviser to the newspaper, also without any formal process (even though this faculty member had previously been a trustee). The precipitating issue was that the paper reported Newman’s retention plan and his statement about the students as bunnies who needed to be drowned and shot.

Newman’s actions run counter to the Mount’s Catholic mission. His plan to dismiss at-risk students directly contradicts the university’s stated learning commitment “to supporting the academic development of all students within our campus community, regardless of disability or academic challenge, by creating a purposeful, learner-centered environment that inspires academic discovery.”

Most recently, in a letter to parents, Newman violated the principle that all personnel matters should be confidential when he made the unsubstantiated accusations that the terminated faculty members had violated the institution’s code of ethics and had conducted themselves in ways warranting their being fired.

These latest episodes are sadly not the first in which Newman, who came to his position from outside the academy, showed disdain for his colleagues, for the institution’s mission and for its students. Earlier, he reportedly referred to some students as
“Catholic jihadis” and told some alumni, “Twenty-five percent of our students are dumb and lazy and I’d like to get rid of them.”

In such circumstances, one would hope that the board would intervene. Sadly, the chair, John E. Coyne III, instead in a written statement joined the president in demonizing faculty and alumni critical of the president, going so far as to suggest they were engaged in a conspiracy to “undermine and ultimately cause the exit of President Newman.”

In another statement, after offering his own disclaimer that he could not discuss personnel matters, Coyne accused the newspaper’s former adviser of having “manipulated the student journalists into portraying the retention program negatively,” according to The New York Times. He further criticized the students for “the damage you will render to this university and to its brand,” called them "quite frankly irresponsible," and claimed they violated the college's code of conduct.

At this writing, the university has reinstated the two fired professors. The faculty has voted 87-3 to ask the president to resign, while many students are backing him. The board continues to support him.

Suffolk University: Inappropriate Oversight

Before coming to Suffolk University as president, Margaret McKenna had already had a distinguished career, including 22 years as the president of Lesley University and, more recently, four years as the head of the Walmart Foundation. Nevertheless, Suffolk’s board sought her resignation only seven months into her presidency. Reportedly, and in violation of best practices, she had not been formally evaluated and the board had not met formally and with her knowledge to consider and debate such an action. (It is interesting to note that McKenna is the fifth president, including two interims, at Suffolk in five years and that one of her predecessors was removed abruptly and without explanation.)

Board members were also already courting former Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley to replace McKenna, even though McKenna had not resigned and there had been no formal search or consultation with others on the campus. In the face of the negative publicity, Coakley eventually said she would not be a candidate. The Suffolk board clearly had not learned the lessons from the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors’ abortive effort in 2012 to remove President Teresa Sullivan in her second year. The outcry from administrators, faculty members, students, alumni, public officials and former board members led to a reversal of that decision. Sullivan is still in office.
And, in fact, many Suffolk students, faculty and staff members, and alumni were outraged about the effort to unseat McKenna and rallied in her support. The faculty immediately voted confidence in her, and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh publicly endorsed her leadership, admonishing the board for playing the situation out in the press. Walsh also said that his message to the board was “to sit down and have a conversation and figure this out, work this out.”

Evidence suggests that the Suffolk chair and board members have ignored other best practices of shared governance. They have reportedly inserted themselves in an array of operational matters at the institution. In fact, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges made it clear in its April 2014 reaccreditation report of Suffolk that the board needed to stop micromanaging, to embrace best practices of governance and to move to a “more appropriate oversight and advisory role.”

NEACS also made it clear that at Suffolk’s next review in fall 2017, “we seek to be assured that clear lines of authority, responsibilities and relationships among the board, the administration and faculty have been established to ensure an effective governance structure.” The report went on to cite NEACS governance standards, most notably that “the board delegates to the chief executive officer and, as appropriate, to others the requisite authority and autonomy to manage the institution compatible with the board’s intentions and the institutional mission.” Trustees rebuked McKenna, for instance, for hiring eight people, including a chief of staff and an assistant chief of staff, without board approval -- actions that on most campuses would have been considered operational matters that did not rise to the level of board involvement.

McKenna herself, during the interview process, made it clear that she expected the board to delegate university operations to her. The Boston Globe reported that she said she told the trustees, “You hire me, you give me the keys. I’ll report to you. You’ll never be surprised. ... You have got to trust me to make the right decisions.”

Suffolk trustees also violated at least two other central tenets of higher education: the standard policy that all personnel matters are confidential and the expectation that trustees do not have conflicts of interest. In recent weeks, they openly criticized McKenna for for having an “abrasive manner” and making what they said were unauthorized expenditures, charges that she has challenged. They also appear to have sanctioned conflicts of interest. For example, in 2008, they put George Regan on the board even though his PR firm had an annual contract with Suffolk dating back to the last 1980s. In the face of adverse publicity, he withdrew from the board.

Nevertheless, Regan continued to exert a good deal of influence. According to the Boston Business Journal, Regan “personally recommended the appointment of at least seven of Suffolk’s 28 board members,” a number of which were clients or former
clients. And despite the contract with his firm, one of Regan’s employees also serves on the board.

Walsh got what he wanted. The board and McKenna have come to an agreement. The board chair will resign, effective this May, and the president has announced that she will step down before the 2017-18 academic year. Although the board plans to begin a national search for its next president in the fall and although McKenna has been clear that she will not be a candidate, the campus community hopes to retain her beyond that date. She has ended the contract with Regan’s firm.

Lessons to be Learned
In the midst of these governance crises, one can find some bright spots. Both campus communities have been clear about, and stood up for, the values that undergird higher education at its best. But most of all, Margaret McKenna has unhesitatingly put the welfare of the institution she leads ahead of her own interests. She also has prevailed in her insistence that the Suffolk board adopt the best practices of shared governance. As she put it, “There were two principles for me that were critical to any agreement. First, that there be significant and lasting change in the governance policies and practices of the university. Second, any transition would come only after these policies were in place, and after a thorough and inclusive search was undertaken in a time frame that guaranteed no need for interim leadership. This ensures stability for the institution.” The Suffolk board has promised to develop and adopt new bylaws by May.

Today, when institutions are confronting economic pressures, changing demographics and growing public skepticism about whether higher education is worth its cost, collaboration among the faculty, administration and board is more essential than ever. Student success is dependent on a dedicated faculty that teaches well and creates an effective educational program. Institutional sustainability requires an administration that operates the institution responsibly and not only supports but also actively advances excellent teaching and learning. And when institutions must make cuts, reallocate resources or even modify their missions, those decisions benefit from the perspective of the faculty and staff as well as the administration. Boards, who need to be committed to the health and integrity of their institution in all its aspects, therefore need to appreciate these dynamics and foster that collaboration.

We can only hope that Mount St. Mary’s and Suffolk survive their current fraught circumstances and serve as cautionary tales that encourage other institutions to embrace effective shared governance.