MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

February 23, 2015
Friends of injured MU student launch hashtag to support recovery


COLUMBIA, Mo. - Thousands of Mid-Missourians are rallying behind the Columbia woman who was critically injured in a sledding accident Tuesday -- showing their support on Twitter.

**Friends of 20-year-old Kathleen Oglesby launched the hashtag #1DforOglesby Wednesday, to try and get the MU student's favorite band to send her a message of recovery. Since then, the hashtag has gone viral, garnering over 11,000 tweets.**

"Kathleen is really goofy, really funny, really sweet. She's just an angel," Jamie Stanley, Oglesby's friend, said. "I hope this helps her get better soon."

Oglesby is facing a long road. According to her family, she broke five ribs, shattered several vertebrae, and fractured her wrist, collarbone, and shoulder blade when she lost control of her sled and hit a tree.

"She's doing better now," Stanley said. "She's out of the ICU and breathing on her own. Her back surgery went well."

Her family said she's made remarkable improvements so far. But she still hasn't been able to feel or move her legs yet.

Oglesby's friends said they hope the hashtag will bring her some positive inspiration as she recovers.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, former MU basketball player Kim English, former MU quarterback James Franklin, actress Hayley Atwell, and Olympic gymnast Mikulak have all tweeted the hashtag from their personal accounts to support the cause.

Oglesby is in Alpha Phi and several sororities told ABC 17 they want to work together to do some sort of philanthropy for her, but they haven't decided what just yet.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Friends of MU student injured in sledding accident launch hashtag in support
Friday, February 20, 2015 | 3:40 p.m. CST; updated 8:24 p.m. CST, Friday, February 20, 2015
BY CHEYENNE ROUNDTREE

COLUMBIA — Friends of a Columbia woman involved in sledding accident Monday have rallied behind her recovery and created a Twitter hashtag in her honor that has spread beyond Columbia in the past two days.

MU student Kathleen Oglesby was admitted to University Hospital after she hit a tree while sledding during MU’s snow day Monday. A representative for the hospital said Oglesby was in good condition as of Friday morning.

Oglesby's boyfriend, Kory McDonald, and sister, Olivia Oglesby, created a Twitter hashtag to draw the attention of Oglesby's favorite band, One Direction, in hopes that the band members would leave her a video message to lift her spirits.

McDonald enlisted Christopher Sovich, a friend of Oglesby's since kindergarten, to think of a clever hashtag to get the word out, Sovich said.

Sovich launched #1DForOglesby on Wednesday afternoon, and the hashtag has reached more than 9,000 tweets and mentions since the initial tweet, according to Topsy, a web analytics monitor. Sovich said the hashtag has been tweeted in Illinois, Texas, Colorado and Kentucky.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, former Missouri quarterback James Franklin, former Missouri basketball player Kim English, Olympic gymnast Sam Mikulak, actress Hayley Attwell and satirical Twitter account MOGirlProbs have all used the hashtag to boost awareness for the cause.

"It is amazing to see all of the support that has come in during this time," Sovich said. "I'm just happy that I'm able to bring a smile to her face."
Even if One Direction does not make a video for Oglesby, she now has the opportunity to see them in concert this summer. Pascale's Pals, a group that benefits patients and families at MU Women's and Children's Hospital, gave Oglesby a pair of One Direction concert tickets.

Pascale's Pals president Sylvie Carpentier said that when the group learned of Oglesby and her accident, it wanted to help.

"We wanted to give her hope and to give her something to look forward to," Carpentier said.

Oglesby's family, friends and supporters continue to use the hashtag in hopes that One Direction will respond.

Unblinking eyes: Body cameras clarify disputes, add extra costs for departments

By Alan Burdziak

Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 12:00 am

When a handful of officers began patrolling as the Columbia Police Department’s newly created Downtown Unit in 2009, the complaints started rolling in.

Residents claimed officers acted inappropriately, and some bar owners felt police were stopping by too often, hampering business. Chief Ken Burton decided to put cameras on the officers.

“What started happening,” Burton said, “was that every once in a while I’d get a call from a parent from St. Louis or Kansas City saying their little angel ... says this police officer was mean to her and she wasn’t drinking or anything.”

In one instance, Burton said, "this young lady’s slobbering drunk, she’s not cooperating with the officers, so it’s all on video."
He called the father, who said he would contact Burton when he was in Columbia soon afterward to meet and watch the video.

“He never showed up,” Burton said.

That early experiment in video technology sparked a departmentwide change. In late July, Burton rolled out a program that outfitted all uniformed Columbia police officers, a little more than 100 cops, with body cameras.

“We immediately saw the benefit of them recording a version of an incident, unbiased, so you could use that to further investigation, if it was a criminal violation, or intercede in a complaint,” Burton said.

The cameras will increase police accountability, Burton said, and encourage people who come in contact with officers to behave better.

Anyone who interacts with law enforcement within Columbia’s city limits can reasonably expect the encounter will be recorded. But the proliferation of the technology raises issues such as cost, privacy and who has a right to access the images.

Body cameras also have brought an increased workload for police and prosecutors in Boone County.

As the national outcry over police shootings of unarmed men leads to calls for all cops to wear body cameras, Columbia is one of a handful of places in the United States where the experiment is already in full swing. Burton made his announcement in late July, just weeks before white Ferguson police Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was unarmed and black, on Aug. 9. Not only did Brown’s death lead to the call for cameras, but it sparked a national debate on law enforcement policy and relations between police and minorities.

Law enforcement officials, legislators, media and others are divided, not only on what the issues are but on how to solve the problems that come with such a potentially intrusive mechanism. Detractors question if the technology is worth the money; whether it’s worth it to mandate that all departments have body cameras, even tiny agencies with a handful of employees and minuscule budgets, and whether the investment will pay off during a close encounter between police and a suspect.

Columbia was the first department in the state to equip all of its uniformed officers with cameras, representing one of the largest deployments of the technology in the Midwest. **In November, the University of Missouri Police Department quietly did the same, giving 34 commissioned officers and seven security guards body cameras.** Boone County Sheriff Dwayne Carey is exploring options for a pilot program to see if his department will do the same.

Departments around the country are trying body-worn cameras. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti announced in December that he would allocate funding to buy 7,000 cameras for the
city’s police department. The LAPD already has 800 cameras paid for by private donations, the L.A. Times reported in January.

Police departments in New York City, Las Vegas and Minneapolis also are experimenting with body cameras.

The police department in Rialto, Calif., a city of around 100,000 people about 54 miles east of L.A., first rolled out the program in February 2012, and by September 2013 all of its 66 uniformed officers had the technology. According to a study by an L.A. law firm on the first year the cameras were in use in Rialto, use-of-force incidents decreased by 59 percent and citizen complaints declined by 87.5 percent.

Columbia police signed a contract with Taser International last summer for 102 cameras at a cost of about $110,000. In all the department has bought 120 cameras and hopes to buy 10 more, said Assistant Chief John Gordon, who heads the program in Columbia. The department also entered into a contract for cloud storage with evidence.com. Footage is accessible only to police and prosecutors, who share it with defense attorneys. Columbia police pay evidence.com $40,000 annually for storage.

As of Wednesday, Gordon said, Columbia officers had uploaded 3.93 terabytes of footage, and the department is holding 1.35 terabytes on evidence.com. In the past 30 days, officers uploaded 595 gigabytes of video.

Footage not flagged as evidence is automatically deleted after 60 days. Video used in court, except when statutes require that it be kept longer, is deleted after the case is disposed. After a year in use, Burton said, the program will be evaluated and the information included in the use-of-force report submitted to the Citizens Police Review Board in March 2016.

Gordon said there is little chance the department will surpass the storage limit on evidence.com. "We went with one of the highest ones to ensure we would never go over,” Gordon said, “and even then, Taser would work with us because we’re one of the larger deployments in the Midwest.”

Gordon, two lieutenants and one officer in the evidence unit are the only officers with administrative access to the videos. They are the only four who can delete videos or move them from one area to another on the cloud, such as shifting a video to Internal Affairs for review. Burton can’t delete the footage himself, Gordon said.

Gordon said giving access to only a handful of commanders was done to alleviate concerns about manipulating footage, which would amount to tampering with evidence, a felony.

At the Boone County Sheriff’s Department, Carey said he is looking for a vendor that sells cameras compatible with the department’s L3 dashcam system to launch a pilot program.
“I’m not opposed to the body cameras, but I’m wanting to do the due diligence on the research,” Carey said. He expects to have a couple of deputies outfitted with the cameras sometime this year to see how it goes.

Privacy issues, storage costs and whether the cameras will deliver what police and the public expect are all things Carey is looking at.

“Those are concerns of mine,” he said. “What happens if you and I get into a tussle and the camera comes off or the camera doesn’t capture you trying to reach for my gun?”

If the camera comes off or breaks and a deputy uses lethal force, he said, alluding to Brown’s shooting, then the issue is moot.

“So you’re back to the same starting spot” as ”if you weren’t wearing body cameras,” Carey said. “There are so many issues that I want to look at or explore if we want to make a commitment one way or another.”

Boone County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Knight said his office was so inundated with the increased workload from having to review body camera footage that he asked the Boone County Commission for funds to hire a 13th assistant at a $57,137.60 salary. The request was approved, and the new assistant prosecutor will start in the role March 9.

“In all these cases, we now have body cameras the Columbia Police Department is handling,” Knight said. “So instead of a prosecutor taking a look at a case that maybe has five pages of police reports that might take 30 minutes to evaluate … there very well could be five hours of videotaped statements that the prosecutor would need to evaluate.”

With his experience running the video system at one of the largest departments in the region with full implementation, Gordon has traveled to other agencies to talk about the program and share his force’s experience. The technology has appeal, he said: It reduces legal liability, increases transparency and helps maintain the integrity of evidence. Gordon thinks use of body cameras will only grow.

“I just think that law enforcement across the United States might as well get ready for this,” he said.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said his department decided to go with the same vendor for its cameras and data storage as Columbia police.

“The city of Columbia was having good results with it,” Weimer said. “Obviously it was another way to show what was going on with our officers. It’s another way to gather evidence.”
MU police purchased 45 cameras and inked a five-year deal with evidence.com for a total one-time price of $229,695.62, which includes warranties, repairs and maintenance on all cameras and associated equipment.

Columbia police Officer Kyle Gilliam demonstrated how the cameras work for two Tribune journalists on Feb. 13. The camera, affixed on the shirt lapel, sits in a small, square box and is activated when the officer double-taps the lens. The devices continuously record, so the camera also captures a 30-second buffer clip without sound before it is "turned on." A light on the top of the camera turns from solid green to solid red to indicate it’s in use.

The camera remains on during the interaction between the officer and the subject. Every couple of minutes, the device beeps twice to remind the officer it is recording. When the camera is turned off, the officer has to say why recording has stopped.

Gilliam said he has forgotten to turn his device on a few times since the cameras were rolled out, but now it’s habit. He agrees with the command staff that the technology works both ways.

“It protects and it serves the citizens as much as it does us,” Gilliam said.

The cameras offer an assurance to the public that if an officer does anything improper, it will be captured, and vice versa. In most cases, the cameras can settle disputes between police and those who complain they were treated badly during police interactions.

As an investigative tool, the cameras help officers remember not just what suspects said or did, but what victims and witnesses say. Gilliam said he turns his on when he does phone interviews with subjects, even though it will only capture what he’s saying.

“I generally do, just so I can recall what I talked about,” he said.

Each officer has his or her own camera, with a few extras for when detectives or other police want to use them, or in case one breaks. At the end of a shift, the officer docks the camera, simultaneously charging the device and uploading all the video to evidence.com. At some point during a shift, officers have to review all their videos and decide which ones to flag as evidence.

Burton said aside from flagging videos for pending investigations, officers are instructed to flag any encounter with the public that might result in a complaint. He wants his cops to anticipate issues, because citizens have a year to file the complaint.

The body cameras also feature Bluetooth compatibility, and officers can sync their phones with the camera via an application that allows officers to check the footage when they have downtime. Gilliam said he tries to do that when he can, but usually he ends up reviewing all the footage at the end of a shift, which takes between 60 and 90 minutes.

Also, Gilliam said, the Bluetooth feature allows him to take the camera off his lapel and face the lens around a corner to check what he might be approaching. However, he said he hasn’t done that in the field, only during a test at the station.
The only way to measure compliance, Burton said, is by having sergeants randomly review footage to ensure officers are following policy. The alternative is to watch hours and hours of footage.

If an officer doesn’t use the camera in an interaction with the public, it must be noted, and if the officer violates the policy in any way, Burton said, he or she has to fill out a “Blue Team” slip, the name of the system the department uses to track use of force. Those are reviewed by the officer’s supervisor and sent all the way up the chain of command to Burton.

“The only thing worse than not having these cameras is having them and not having them on when you need them, so our default is, it’s on,” Burton said.

Infractions are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, Burton said, and discipline can range from minor penalties to suspensions and, if violations are egregious or ongoing, termination.

Burton said Missouri's Open Meetings and Records Law might need to be tweaked for clarification on what videos can be released to the public when an investigation isn’t pending, and a statewide agency, such as the Attorney General’s Office, should offer advice and set precedent with the decisions it makes.

Some legislators want to close all body camera footage, along with dash camera video.

“I don’t even see it as an issue,” Burton said. “We’re going to be respectful of people’s privacy to the extent we can under the law.”

Gordon said he hopes the General Assembly will help clarify what videos are open and closed records. He said the department, in addition to evidence footage, will not release videos showing juveniles or sexual assault victims.

For now, the department is responsible for interpreting how current law applies to body camera footage.

“Right now we’re in a position of having to do that on our own,” Burton said, “and you just take the risk, but if the person doesn’t like the answer that they get, whether it’s yes or no, the city can be sued.”
MU medical school expansion tied up in budget fight

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 12:00 am

After about seven years of planning, the University of Missouri School of Medicine accepted an expanded first-year class last fall.

The expansion was possible because of a partnership with two hospitals in Springfield, which will allow about a third of the students to spend their clinical years — years three and four of their education — at the hospitals in southwest Missouri.

But the project suffered a major blow when Gov. Jay Nixon withheld $10 million from the 2015 budget for the college’s clinical campus in Springfield and a new building in Columbia.

Earlier this month, Nixon released almost half of the project money, which organizers say could allow the medical school to admit eight more first-year students this coming fall — shy of the 32-student annual goal. But the funding falls short of what administrators say they need for a new building to relieve crowding and provide teaching space for the two years all students spend at the Columbia campus.

The project aims to address the physician shortage in southwest Missouri, and the state in general. Weldon Webb, associate dean for the Springfield clinical campus implementation, said roughly 44 percent of MU medical school students practice in Missouri after graduation.

Webb calls the expansion a logical extension of the effort to increase practitioners statewide.

Under the program, all MU medical students spend their first two years in Columbia, Webb said, and then about a third of the students spend their third and fourth years — clinical training years — working with physicians at CoxHealth or Mercy hospitals in Springfield.

Steve Edwards, CoxHealth president and CEO, said physicians at his hospital “love the idea” of allocating some of their time to teaching.

“We think this will raise the level of patient care because you’ve got to be on your A-game while teaching,” he said. “It also helps us in recruiting because there are candidates that want to be in a
patient-care focused hospital, but they also want an academic side. This would make us very attractive to recruits.”

About 22 employees and an associate dean would work for MU at the Springfield medical campus.

In a given year, 64 students would be at the clinical campus — 32 at each hospital. Project organizers tout the benefit of having two competing hospitals in Springfield onboard as a sign of the need for the program.

“Even as competitors, our missions are very similar,” Edwards said about CoxHealth and Mercy. He said hospital leaders were approached several years ago about starting a medical school in Springfield from scratch, which would cost $1 billion, exponentially more than the $10 million budget for the MU project. “We’re asking the state to invest $10 million, and the economic impact is more than tenfold. It’s frustrating to us. Whether you’re a Democrat or a Republican, this is a no-brainer.”

The clinical campus is expected to provide more than 300 additional doctors in the state and more than $390 million in economic impact in 27 years, supporters claim.

Funding started with a 2009 initiative called Caring for Missourians, which provided money to Missouri’s two- and four-year schools for health training programs. MU received $9.4 million.

When the project took off, MU endorsed the use of revenue bonds, tuition money, $12 million in savings and an annual $10 million state appropriation to sustain the program.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, who leads the appropriations committee, chided the governor for withholding the money and not including the $10 million budget line in his proposal for fiscal 2016.

“He basically gutted the program,” Schaefer said. “The fact he released half is a political stunt because he’s getting pressure from southwest Missouri. But half of that money isn’t going to do anything.”

Nixon’s spokesman, Scott Holste, said in an email the administration will continue monitoring state revenue and “make those budget decisions based on the funds available.”

Missouri tests a carrot-and-stick approach to higher education

By Koran Addo, Alex Stuckey
Depending on whom you ask, Missouri’s recent foray into rewarding colleges and universities with extra money for improved academic performance has been either a fantastic success or a bit of a sham.

Supporters say the promise of extra money keeps schools accountable to taxpayers. Opponents say it’s a flawed policy that makes it too easy for schools to cash in.

The concept behind performance funding is simple. Each year, schools compete for a share of money set aside by the Legislature. School choose five categories — out of a possible 11 — to be judged on.

The categories generally center around how well schools keep students enrolled and move them toward graduation. Other measures focus on how well students fare on tests and how much money schools spend on instruction, research and public service.

Schools that meet their performance targets earn a share of the money.

Based on the numbers tallied last fall, every public college or university in Missouri earned at least a partial share of the money.

Missouri’s four-year institutions performed particularly well. All but one met all five of their performance measures, and will get 100 percent of their share of the money. Missouri Southern State University met four out of five categories, and will get 80 percent.

That kind of overwhelming success has set off alarms for some people who suspect the performance criteria are too easy for schools to meet. One of those people is state Senate Appropriations Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia.

Schaefer, last week, said the performance goals for schools need to be tougher, although he doesn’t think the current Legislature has the appetite to take up the issue.

“We need to take a broader look at the value of each institution,” he said. “Not just (their) self-imposed criteria.”

A number of college leaders, however, said Missouri’s performance criteria are sufficiently rigorous.

“You can’t say it’s too easy just because most everyone passed all five (measures),” said Kenneth Dobbins, president of Southeast Missouri State University. “I understand why people might come to that conclusion, but that’s not the conclusion I would come to.”

Dobbins said schools are constantly working on ways to improve performance, so when the Legislature started attaching money to it, schools were ready to compete.

“You have to remember, we knew performance funding was coming three or four years ago. We have been preparing for this,” he said.

Community colleges had mixed results, with only four of 12 meeting all five standards.

**TOE DIPPING**

Uncertainty over the effectiveness of performance funding isn’t just a Missouri thing. More than half of all states have adopted some type of cash-for-performance policy for their public colleges and universities.
So far, national research is mixed on whether it’s good policy. Some experts say performance funding causes school administrators to focus more heavily on areas such as counseling and tutoring, which can go a long way in helping struggling students graduate.

Others say performance funding encourages schools to “game” the system either by turning away students less likely to graduate, steering students toward easier programs, or — in its most underhanded form — assign passing grades to failing students.

Compared to other states, Missouri is just dipping its toe into performance funding. The state Department of Higher Education began using the concept in 2012. The policy became a law last year. Other states have been at it for decades.

Additionally, Missouri ties only a small fraction of its higher education dollars to performance. Gov. Jay Nixon has recommended an extra $12 million be set aside for the 2016 fiscal year, out of a total higher education budget expected to exceed $1 billion.

Research shows that states including Pennsylvania and Tennessee which have made more of a commitment to performance funding have seen only up and down results.

**A BIG CARROT**

University of Missouri-St. Louis Chancellor Thomas George said he supports the performance funding concept, if only because it gives the public some reassurance that colleges are striving to excel.

But George acknowledged, the policy hasn’t changed how things operate on his campus.

“We’ve been tracking all of these performance measures already,” he said. “We hold ourselves accountable. The system president holds the chancellors accountable. We really haven’t had to do anything differently.”

Despite a lack of clear proof that performance funding works, the money attached to it makes it meaningful to college leaders.

Dobbins, the SEMO president, said any extra funding is a big carrot to public colleges and universities that have seen their utility, insurance and employee retirement costs go up year after year, without a corresponding infusion of state or tuition dollars.

“It’s important for people to understand that, in Missouri, we’ve raised our fees less than any other state over the past five years,” he said. “At the same time, our funding is in the bottom five or 10.”

Of the $2 million SEMO banked in performance funding recently, Kathy Mangels, SEMO’s vice president for finance and administration, said the university reinvested a portion in areas that should help reach future performance goals.

In addition to hiring six faculty members, Mangels said SEMO expanded both group and individual tutoring capacity.

Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg, sponsored the bill last year that made the performance funding model a state law.

This week, he said he would be open to revisiting the law down the line if schools continue to get perfect scores.

Leroy Wade, a deputy commissioner with the state Department of Higher Education, said schools, particularly four-year schools, meeting their performance targets shouldn’t be looked at as a drawback.
“It shows that the institutions are taking it seriously,” he said.

### Performance funding: universities

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### Performance funding: community colleges

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Op Ed: Mizzou Gets an F on Transparency

By JOHN WRIGHT

Sunday, February 22, 2015 at 12:00 am

It seems absurd that a public university would treat the content of its courses as a closely held secret. Unfortunately, the University of Missouri is doing just this by shielding course syllabi from state transparency laws.

In 2012, the University of Missouri refused to release course syllabi, which are outlines of the content included in a course of study, to the National Council on Teacher Quality. Under Missouri’s Open Meetings and Records Law — aka the Sunshine Law — most government records are supposed to be accessible to the public. However, MU took the position that course syllabi are exempt from the Sunshine Law because they are copyrighted.

Unfortunately for open-government advocates, the courts refused to require MU to disclose these records. Now it appears that, absent a policy change, members of the public might be left in the dark about this important aspect of public higher education. Worse still, government agencies that wish to avoid public scrutiny might try to use copyright as an excuse not to produce public documents. MU’s refusal to operate in a forthright and transparent manner stands in stark contrast to my experience as a student at the school.
When I did my undergrad at MU, I felt like I was a part of an enlightened institution that valued free inquiry, rationality and open society. I listened to impromptu debates at Speakers Circle, socialized with journalism students excited about making their first Sunshine request and heard lectures from professors on the nature of civil society. My alma mater seemed so committed to the idea of open society that I’m almost surprised that syllabi aren’t already posted online for anyone to see.

Of course, I’m not really surprised. If the University of Missouri allowed the public to see course syllabi, it would invite public scrutiny. In all likelihood, there’s some professor teaching a class at MU this semester that’s full of substandard or inappropriate content. Rather than deal with the inevitable criticism that a transparent institution would invite, the people in charge have decided to shield the university from the state’s transparency laws.

Certainly some of the criticisms of course content would be unwarranted. But does that even matter?

A conviction I picked up at MU was that the solution to some bad speech is more good speech and that in an open society, the truth will win out in the marketplace of ideas. Public scrutiny is no enemy of free inquiry. On the contrary, I would argue that scrutiny can help foster it.

The University of Missouri is a government institution. Its operations are paid for in part with tax revenues, and it serves the public. MU should not let fear of criticism and a legal loophole in state transparency laws prevent it from being just as committed to the values of an open society as I remember it being.

John Wright is a policy researcher at the Show-Me Institute.

MU fraternity members charged with disturbing the peace in hazing incident

By Ashley Jost

Friday, February 20, 2015 at 2:00 pm
Six University of Missouri fraternity members arrested on hazing charges ultimately pleaded guilty to peace disturbance by fighting after a fraternity-sanctioned game similar to hide-and-seek caused a stir on campus.

The six Phi Kappa Theta brothers pleaded guilty earlier this year and were sentenced to one year of unsupervised probation.

According to the probable cause statement, the new members — or pledges — were taking part in a “walkout,” where they had to avoid older fraternity members; if a pledge is caught, it’s common for his hands to be bound as he is taken back to the fraternity house.

The incident took place around 10:20 a.m. Dec. 5, when a pledge was chased by older members near the north side of Lathrop Residence Hall. According to the probable cause statement, witnesses watched the older members put the pledge in a chokehold and bound his hands before deploying a pink stun gun to his neck.

Boone County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Brouck Jacobs said the older members did not use the stun gun on the pledge but instead discharged the device into the ground near his head.

“From the reports, it looks like the pledge introduced the Taser as a joke and, when he was tackled, the brothers took it and discharged it near his face, also as a joke. Obviously, if something had gone wrong, it would not have been very funny,” Jacobs said. “Had we thought that the pledge had actually been” subdued with the Taser, ”this probably would have been filed and remained a felony hazing charge, not the misdemeanor hazing that they were arrested for.”

The six arrested fraternity members are Jack R. Berry, 20; Steven R. Savio, 21; Kevin D. Meyers, 19; Joseph A. Wiss, 19; Remy J. Hoffmann, 19; and William T. Ismert, 20. Bill Tackett, the attorney for the six men, declined to comment, as did the president of the fraternity.

Jacobs said he understands the fraternity faced “collateral consequences” through the national fraternity and MU, which was a factor in charges brought against the men. A spokesman for the national fraternity did not respond to a request for comment.

Janna Basler, director of Greek Life at MU, forwarded a list of nine sanctions imposed on the fraternity by the university. They include monthly meetings with staff and educational presentations about hazing, and social event probation for the semester. Phi Kappa Theta is also not allowed to participate in Greek Week 2015.

The fraternity violated two conduct rules for hazing and threatening or endangering conduct.
COLUMBIA — In 15 years, the United States will have an estimated 72 million residents over the age of 65.

Learning how to care for them is especially important for medical students, who will likely be in the prime of their careers by then. Regardless of specialty, every future doctor will most likely have some interaction with older adults.

Older adults often have chronic health conditions that require different types of care than acute illnesses. That difference makes programs such as the Heyssel Senior Teacher Educator Partnership at MU an important learning tool for medical students.

**STEP was created in 2001 to help first- and second-year MU medical students understand senior citizens and their health needs. The program matches students with older residents in the community so students can see the aging process from the volunteer's perspective.**

The program is voluntary for both students and seniors. Yet, 77 percent of the first-year medical school class signed up this year, and more than 600 students have participated in the program since its creation.

"** Older adults actually become teachers for the students, and the students taught their partners a bit about health care. Everyone has stories; that is the way we get to know each other," said Michael Hosokawa, professor of Family and Community Medicine at MU and co-founder of STEP."
"The senior partners had a wealth of stories they could share with the medical students," he said.

**Lasting connections**

Darlene Ornburn* has been a STEP mentor for three years and now sees herself as a cheerleader for her student partners.

“I request a schedule of their study blocks in order to send emails or cards of encouragement prior to tests,” she said. “I try to be a good listener when they need to talk.”

STEP partners often form close bonds, especially for first-year students who are still adjusting to the demands of medical school.

"I often hear that students consider their senior mentors as another family member or grandparent in the community," said Peggy Gray, coordinator of STEP. "It’s nice for them to have that kind of support when they are going through medical school."

By forming relationships with STEP mentors, students can build an understanding of patients outside the classroom.

"As a medical student, STEP allows me to see integrations of patient life with medicine. It seems health care providers often overlook the difficulties of assimilating treatment plans into life outside of hospital and clinic walls," said Jacqueline Ross, a second-year medical student.

Ross participated in the program last year and still keeps in contact with her STEP mentors, Marty and Rollie Hausman. The Hausmans said they make a point to keep in touch with their STEP partners and are still connected to their first student in the program, now in her residency.

The couple agreed the STEP program helps keep them young.

"Associating with young, sharp people helps you learn how they think, and they learn how we think. It gets us back to thinking younger," Marty Hausman said.

Students and their mentors are required to attend six STEP events a year, including a luncheon and a program about aging and health. Beyond that, mentors are encouraged
to invite their students into their daily lives so they can better understand how medicine and medical problems impact them.

The program doesn’t specify what partners must do together, but many get coffee, go out to dinner or email back and forth in order to catch up and learn more about one another.

The Hausmans typically invite students over for a meal or to watch a basketball game.

"We make them a part of what we do and a part of our routine," Rollie Hausman said.

**Growing need**

Interactions between mentors and students promotes a clearer understanding of older patients and encourages students to treat older patients as individuals rather than clinical studies.

"By getting to know people and their stories, future physicians care for the patient as a person and not a diagnosis," Hosokawa said. "Knowing about a patient's background, dreams, aspirations and fears promotes quality patient care."

For Kayla Matzek, a second-year medical student who participated last year and is Darlene Ornburn’s former partner, STEP has been a great learning tool.

"It gave me the opportunity to talk to my STEP partner about her experiences working with doctors," Matzek said. "She was able to tell me the good and bad things about her experiences."

Another student participant, Alyssa Bujnak, believes STEP has helped her to learn how to become a better physician.

"In my practice, I hope to be the type of physician that can have a strong relationship with my patients that will, overall, allow me to provide them with the best care," she said.

**Continuing impact**

The idea of STEP originated from Steve Zweig, director of the MU Interdisciplinary Center on Aging.
He created the program after observing that medical students cared for older adults only after they were sick and did not get to know them as active, vibrant members of the community.

Ross said her time in STEP has already added to her knowledge about caring for the elderly.

"I believe STEP is a great experience for students to interact with a patient population they will most likely have extensive exposure to in their careers," she said. "STEP helps students to develop greater communication skills and empathy."

Gray concurred, from an administrative perspective.

"I think the STEP helps students become the physicians that they would want their own parents and grandparents to have," Gray said. "I think ours is one of the most successful mentor programs by far, and I'm really proud to be a part of it."

Sunday marks one year anniversary of Columbia firefighter death

COLUMBIA- Columbia firefighter Bruce Britt died exactly one year ago Sunday while trying to rescue residents trapped by a walkway collapse at the University Village apartments.

Britt died when a walkway collapsed underneath him. According to a report issued in January by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Britt's cause of death was officially listed as suffocation from being crushed by debris.

The report said the main factors leading to Britt's death were the building's deterioration and the University of Missouri's failure to report the building's condition.
The university closed the apartment complex after Britt's death, and turned the area into a parking lot for MU students.

The University of Missouri also hired Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw, Inc. to investigate the safety of the remaining campus buildings. Of the 376 campus building in Columbia, 18 were identified as having "immediate concerns," which the university said it addressed earlier this year.

Britt's family has a wrongful death lawsuit pending against the UM System Board of Curators.

Editorial: If facts mattered, Medicaid expansion in Missouri would be slam dunk

February 22, 2015 6:00 am  •  By the Editorial Board

When it comes to Medicaid expansion, it’s time for the Missouri Republicans who control the Legislature to play a high-stakes game of truth or dare.

If legislative leaders like Speaker of the House John Diehl, R-Town and Country, and Senate President Pro Tem Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles, really don’t believe that Medicaid expansion would be good for both the Missouri economy and the general revenue budget, then they should hold a hearing and prove Medicaid expansion advocates wrong.

One real hearing. One wide-open debate. One moment where the truth matters.

You would think that a party that is so convinced that Obamaca re is the job-killing scourge of a nation that it must be stopped at all costs wouldn’t be afraid to make its case, right?

You would be wrong.

Various Democratic proposals to expand Medicaid have been summarily ignored for the past three years. Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City, gave it a good two-year try but his colleagues wouldn’t listen when he laid out the financial reality: bringing in billions of federal dollars to Missouri’s health care industry actually improves the state’s budget picture.

And in the Senate? State Sen. Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, can’t even get a hearing on his proposal to expand Medicaid, even if it is just to Missouri veterans and their families, who, for the record, have come strongly out in support of Mr. Silvey’s plans.

So what are Mssrs. Diehl and Dempsey so afraid of?

Kentucky.

This month, the office of Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, a Democrat, issued a report on his state’s first year under an expansion of Medicaid to the working poor, as called for in President Barack Obama’s Affordable Care Act. The report, prepared by Deloitte Consulting LLC found that everything promised by Medicaid
expansion proponents came true. The same thing has happened in most every one of the 28 states that, unlike Missouri, have expanded Medicaid to cover people making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level. The Kentucky report should be particularly persuasive to Missouri lawmakers, as the two border states have so much in common economically, politically and culturally. Kentucky is a state with two Obamacare-hating Republican U.S. senators who realize that the Medicaid expansion part of the ACA has been good for their state.

How good? An increase in 12,000 jobs and a $1.6 billion economic impact in one year. Kentucky had the second-largest decrease in its uninsured population in the nation. It doubled projections of the number of people who would sign up for new insurance through its state-run marketplace, adding 310,000 insured through Medicaid expansion. Based on the first year numbers, the report projects that by 2021, Kentucky’s budget will experience a net-positive impact of more than $900 million. The projected overall economic impact during that time? $30 billion.

Here’s what Mr. Beshear said about the report in a news release:
“For all the naysayers who claimed that expanding Medicaid was a budget-busting boondoggle, take a look at the facts. It’s working, and it’s literally paying off. The state is saving money, hospitals are earning more, and our people are getting healthier. The facts are overwhelming. We would have lost money in the state budget and lost opportunities for job growth, not to mention allowed our people to suffer continued poor health, if we had allowed this opportunity to pass.”

None of this should be surprising to anyone living in a fact-based world.

The University of Missouri predicted similar results for Medicaid expansion in the Show-Me State. Lawmakers brushed off the numbers. Health care officials told lawmakers the state would lose jobs if it didn’t expand Medicaid. Indeed, there have been layoffs in the industry in Missouri. One southwest Missouri hospital CEO took his jobs across the border to Arkansas, which also expanded Medicaid.

Even as they work on next year’s budget, key Republican lawmakers in Missouri are strenuously ignoring data provided them by Linda Luebbering, Gov. Jay Nixon’s budget director. The number show that $117 million more would be available to next year’s very tight budget if Medicaid is expanded.

The same is true each of the next several years, because even as Missouri’s portion of Medicaid expansion rises to a high of 10 percent, the amount of additional federal money pouring in and improved health outcomes on the population create a financial windfall in terms of increased tax revenue and economic activity.

The math isn’t lying, and the experience in Kentucky drives that point home.

Missouri’s Republican leaders are purposefully choosing fewer jobs, less revenue, a worse economy and poorer health outcomes for the state’s citizens simply to appease anti-Obamacare know-nothings. These “leaders” don’t have the courage to go where facts say they should go.

They won’t help veterans who want health care for their families.

They won’t admit that they are hurting the Missouri economy and costing real people their lives because they can’t access the health care system.

They are afraid to allow an actual Medicaid expansion debate. They can’t handle the truth.
Second UMKC Professor Resigns in Ranking Scandal
February 23, 2015

NO MU MENTION

The University of Missouri at Kansas City on Friday announced that John Norton has resigned as a faculty member of the Henry W. Bloch School of Management. He is the second faculty member to quit who was involved in efforts to provide false information to the Princeton Review for its ratings of business schools. In a statement released by the university, Norton said: “I am as passionate as ever about teaching entrepreneurship and innovation to our excellent Bloch School students, but I have reached the conclusion that my role in events of recent weeks may distract from that mission.”

February 17, 2015 by Charles Huckabee

Professor at Center of Rankings Scandal in Missouri Resigns

NO MU MENTION

The professor at the heart of a rankings scandal at the University of Missouri at Kansas City’s Henry W. Bloch School of Management has resigned, The Kansas City Star reported. The controversy centers on an innovation-management program that the professor, Michael Song, founded in 2005 and led until last year.
In 2012 a journal article ranked the university as the top institution in the world in the field of innovation management, and Mr. Song as the field’s top researcher. But an investigation by the Star last year raised questions about how the rankings had been obtained, and suggested that Mr. Song had been inappropriately involved in preparing the journal article. The newspaper also questioned whether he had played a role in the submission of misleading data about the Bloch School to Princeton Review, a college-preparation company that ranks universities and programs.

Mr. Song has denied any inappropriate involvement in the journal article or in the submission of flawed data to Princeton Review. An independent audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, however, confirmed many details of the newspaper’s investigation. Princeton Review has withdrawn its 2014 ranking of the Bloch School.

Mr. Song stepped down as head of the program, the Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, last year. His resignation from the university was announced on Friday, after fellow faculty members at the Bloch School renounced all awards and recognitions received by the program during the decade Mr. Song led it.

2nd professor quits amid ranking scandal at Missouri college

February 20, 2015 5:43 pm • By JIM SUHR

NO MU MENTION

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A second professor has resigned from the University of Missouri-Kansas City after an audit found that its business school knowingly submitted false data when applying for rankings and awards from national organizations.

The 15,000-student university said Friday that John Norton's exodus as associate director of its Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation will take effect March 15.

Norton's former supervisor, Michael Song, stepped down as the institute's director early last year but continued to teach at the school before resigning last week.

Norton told auditors he felt pressured by Song to do improper things related to the ratings but didn't speak up because he feared for his job and believed in Song's vision for the institute.
"I am as passionate as ever about teaching entrepreneurship and innovation to our excellent Bloch School (of management) students, but I have reached the conclusion that my role in events of recent weeks may distract from that mission," Norton was quoted as saying in a statement Friday by the university.

"It's critical to students and the community that this excellent program be able to move forward and continue fostering the growth of entrepreneurship education," he added.

Earlier this month, the Princeton Review announced it was pulling the school's 2011 through 2014 top 25 rankings for graduate and undergraduate entrepreneurship programs.

The university was stripped of its rankings after Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon requested an audit of the school's data because of a Kansas City Star article that called the Henry W. Bloch School of Management's pursuit of higher rankings for its Regnier Institute into question. The 35-page audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers found the business school knowingly submitted false data when applying for rankings and awards from national organizations.

According to the audit, released last month, Norton characterized the information submitted to the Princeton Review as a "misrepresentation," and that data the university was providing to the Princeton Review was "inconsistent."

The school of management's dean, David Donnelly, said in the statement Friday he accepted Norton's resignation, thanked him for his contributions to the university and believed Norton's departure was in the school's best interest.

"John has always worked hard on behalf of our students and was dedicated to their success and to the success of our program," Donnelly said.

This Startup’s Video Tech Counts Cars to Eliminate Traffic Hell

It was one of his many tasks as an intern at a traffic engineering company—tallying the cars that drove through the intersection and reporting the data back to his bosses, who would use the intel to shorten a red light here, extend a red light there. Three years later, he says, they would do it all over again.
For a young engineer eager to exercise his technical chops, this approach seemed archaic. “We’re taking a combination of data that’s collected once every three years for a day and is accurate if you’re lucky, and we’re deploying it on 30-year-old infrastructure,” he says. “We’re not taking advantage of the progress we’ve seen in other industries.”

So, in 2005, while earning his master’s degree in systems design engineering, McBride and two colleagues began exploring how computer vision technology could count cars for him. That research led them to found Miovision, an Ontario company that is helping 500 municipalities and engineering firms in 50 countries use video technology to eliminate traffic snarls. The company raised $30 million this month to expand that reach.

Miovision is, in many ways, answering a call from cities worldwide that are seeking ways of unclogging congested roadways without building more of them. Technology like Miovision is developing could help make travel less painful while addressing broader societal problems like pollution and driver fatalities. But while the size of the market is vast, so is the competition from entrenched players and other startups looking to bring novel technologies to market.

“Miovision is one little slice in a sea of detection systems,” says Carlos Sun, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Missouri.

Smart Cities

That’s one reason Miovision plans to use this cash infusion to expand its technology beyond car counting and turn it into a traffic management system for so-called “smart cities.” Until now, Miovision has helped cities collect data on what’s happening at a given intersection, by installing its video systems at that intersection and analyzing the data afterward.

But simply providing the data, McBride realized, could make Miovision just another commodity product. After all, there are other video detection systems out there, as well as lower tech options, like magnetic loops embedded in the road that record passing traffic. Now, McBride wants to help cities find practical ways to use that data as well.

The company is slowly rolling out new hardware that will connect switchboards at each intersection to the cloud so street lights can communicate with each other and respond to traffic data from the video feed in real time. In other words, where once traffic data was updated every year or so by a college kid at the side of the road, now, it’ll be updated every instant.

Change in the Paradigm

At a large scale, this type of connectivity means the system could detect an emergency vehicle or a bus coming down the road and give it a green light. “We’re finding the same foundation we’re using to solve traffic can be applied to other problems,” McBride says. “It’s really a change in the paradigm.”

Meanwhile, as the once futuristic notion of self-driving cars speeds ever closer to the present day through companies like Google, Audi and Apple, Miovision’s technology may even have a role
in helping autonomous vehicles navigate cities. “That presents a real leadership opportunity for a company like Miovision to own the intersection in a much bigger way,” says Mike Stork, chair of the Accelerator Centre, the incubator at University of Waterloo.

Miovision plans on opening its API to other developers with novel ideas for how to use this technology. That’s a major departure from the closed systems and monopolies that have traditionally dominated the public infrastructure space. But McBride says, “We believe the more collaboration there can be, the more innovation there will be, and ultimately we’ll be better off for it.”

“So some incumbents aren’t going to like it,” he adds, “but we think the drivers will.”

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Questions surround economists who assess Missouri legislation

BY JASON HANCOCK
02/21/2015 3:30 PM

JEFFERSON CITY - When Missouri lawmakers evaluate legislation, they rely on a nonpartisan staff to tell them how much money any particular bill could cost state government.

In many cases, those legislative researchers rely on the expertise of economics professors at the University of Missouri’s Economic & Policy Analysis Research Center, or EPARC.

On bills altering the state’s income tax code — including the high-profile tax cut battles that have raged over the last few years in Missouri — EPARC helps determine the legislation’s price tag.

But the center’s role in that process is beginning to raise eyebrows.
Many of the economists working for EPARC, including its director, have financial ties to organizations with strong ideological leanings — most notably a group founded by conservative megadonor Rex Sinquefield.

That has led some who have historically opposed Sinquefield’s tax-slashing political agenda to wonder whether the information that ends up in the hands of legislators is as objective as it’s advertised.

“The fiscal note is designed to help legislators see the potential impact of their actions,” said Otto Fajen, a lobbyist for the Missouri National Education Association who previously worked for 11 years in the nonpartisan research division of the Missouri Senate.

“If EPARC is going to be a part of that, legislators should be confident that the information is unbiased. When you have a whole web of connections to stakeholders on these issues within EPARC, it’s not so clear you can have the comfort level.”

Joseph Haslag, the center’s director and a professor of economics at MU’s Columbia campus, dismissed suggestions that his organization’s work could be biased.

EPARC relies on a model built solely to calculate how changes in tax law would affect how much Missourians would pay the state. Personal judgment or subjectivity, he said, has no role in the process.

“This is a mechanical exercise that EPARC does,” Haslag said. “I don’t know how any of my judgment could show up in these things at all. There’s never been a personal component to any of these analyses.”

Critics counter that the group’s projections rely on the assumptions that analysts make — in both building the model and interpreting legislation in question.

“Can we have trust and confidence in the analysts’ judgment regarding the data they use and the assumptions they make knowing that outside groups have paid them to work on the same issues they develop fiscal impact estimates for?” asked Brian Schmidt, former
executive director of the Missouri Legislature’s Joint Committee on Tax Policy, who now runs his own policy research firm.

EPARC was founded in 1972 by Ed Robb, a former MU economics professor and Republican state representative from Columbia. It uses tax data from the Internal Revenue Service and the Missouri Department of Revenue to create a wide range of data and publications available to the public and state budget planners.

If it is asked to provide data for a fiscal note, Haslag said, the income tax changes envisioned in the proposed legislation are fed into a program that calculates what taxpayers who filed last year would have paid if the new law had been in place.

“It’s the model that generates the fiscal note for the state. There’s nothing that I’m doing,” said Haslag, who has been involved with EPARC for around 10 years. “The model gets updated every year, but it’s the same structure.”

But there is no consensus in the economics profession about what the right model is to make such estimates, said Gerald Epstein, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

“Building one of these models is not an objective process,” Epstein said. “If you build the model differently, it’ll produce a different set of results.”

Even EPARC’s critics concede calculating the fiscal impact of legislation is not an exact science. But they quibble with not just the model the organization uses but also the data EPARC chooses to feed into it.

Take for instance the tax cut legislation from two years ago that lawmakers passed but was vetoed by Gov. Jay Nixon. The Missouri Department of Revenue and EPARC provided differing interpretations of a newly defined term, “business income.” As a result, the Department of Revenue estimated the tax cut was more expensive than EPARC.

Ultimately, legislative researchers went with EPARC’s numbers. The director of legislative research did not respond to a request for comment.
For critics, the fear is that outside influence could creep into legislative analysis, robbing lawmakers of the unbiased information they need to fairly judge a policy change.

Much of those concerns center on ties to Sinquefield.

He is by far the largest political donor in Missouri, doling out $37 million in campaign contributions to candidates and committees since 2005. Those deep pockets help fund the push for his pet causes — eliminating the Missouri income tax and reworking the state’s education system.

In addition to his work with EPARC and MU, Haslag has regularly received a salary from the Show-Me Institute, a free-market think tank founded and funded by Sinquefield.

The Show-Me Institute paid Haslag annual salaries of $120,000, $119,500 and $90,000 from 2008 to 2010 and $60,000 in consulting fees in 2012. He also received $30,000 in 2005 from the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation. Other EPARC researchers also have ties to the Show-Me Institute.

EPARC has provided analysis for fiscal notes on numerous tax bills in recent years that were supported by Sinquefield and his constellation of affiliated organizations.

In 2012, Haslag also contracted to do research for the Missouri Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, which was opposing a higher tax on tobacco products, and Missourians for Equal Credit Opportunity, a political action committee opposing stricter regulations on payday lenders.

Another EPARC research fellow has received $88,500 in grants from the Koch Foundation since 2009. A pair of EPARC staffers have received six-figure grants from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, a nonprofit founded by a former Enron executive that has drawn controversy in recent years over its funding of research into public pensions.
There’s no information about EPARC in the fiscal notes provided to legislators and the public. To read biographies of EPARC staff and see any affiliations they have or grants they may have received, one must navigate to each economist’s personal MU website.

“These are economists whose reports have kind of an official status,” Epstein said. “There needs to be a lot more disclosure right up front about whom all is involved and what their associations are so people know the context in which these estimates are being made.”

Potential financial conflicts of interest are the “most messy issue in research ethics,” said Kenneth Pimple, who teaches and writes about research ethics at Indiana University’s Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions.

Chemists receive grants from pharmaceutical companies. Agriculture researchers get funding from agribusinesses corporations. Economists often get research grants from organizations that share the economists’ ideological viewpoint.

“It all turns on bias, but most often we can identify apparent conflicts of interest, but we can only guess or surmise as to whether anyone actually is biased, let alone biased by the money,” Pimple said.

Researchers must seek funding from a wide range of groups, especially in recent years with decreasing support from the universities themselves, said Iowa State University economics professor David Swenson.

If EPARC “has reasonable methods for determining the fiscal consequences of proposed legislation that are reviewable and understandable and has a good track record of doing so,” he said, “then I would lean towards having confidence in the technicians that produce that information.”

Haslag said he would never try to hide any affiliations he has with organizations outside the university. And he would never alter his findings to fit the preferences of the entity providing funding for his research.

Funding, he said, does not color his conclusions.
“None of these places pay me enough to throw my professional reputation away,” he said. “I take pride in being an economics professor at the University of Missouri. Why would I sell my professional integrity for a job?”

MU professor urges moratorium on death penalty

By Alan Burdziak

Friday, February 20, 2015 at 2:00 pm

After playing a demonstrative video of a crime being committed followed by a lineup of six suspects, Paul Litton stood in front of about 25 people Thursday night and asked audience members who they thought was guilty.

Varying amounts of people raised their hands when he asked, one-by-one, about each person.

“Guess how many are right?” asked Litton, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Law. “None of you. All except for a few people here, you convicted an innocent guy.”

Litton was making a point about wrongful convictions during a talk at Missouri United Methodist Church, 204 S. Ninth St., about the death penalty in Missouri. He co-chaired an American Bar Association task force created to study the death penalty in the state. The task force found a few strengths in Missouri’s capital punishment system, including assigning public defenders to represent inmates on death row and how juries are given instructions, but there also were many faults, he said.

Litton said issues with death penalty cases in Missouri include police investigative procedures, misconduct on the part of prosecutors, excessive aggravating factors, laws on post-conviction DNA testing and how people with mental illnesses and disabilities are treated.

The most pressing problem, Litton said, is investigative procedures that put innocent people on death row. “These are relevant to the entire criminal justice system, not just the small percentage of cases that are capital,” he said.
At the event, sponsored by the anti-capital punishment group Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, Litton said there should be a moratorium on its use. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf on Feb. 13 put capital punishment on hiatus in that state, becoming the latest of several states that have done so, including California, Colorado and Washington.

State Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, introduced Litton. Webber, who has sponsored bills to end capital punishment in Missouri, said he and Jeff Stack of the Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation have been working on issues related to the death penalty for 15 years.

“There’s a lot of different reasons for being against the death penalty, but the strongest ones is this: Every single person I’ve met in my entire life believes the government makes mistakes,” Webber said.

There are 17 aggravating factors that can qualify a person charged with first-degree murder for the death penalty in Missouri. Most of them are arbitrary and are present in nearly every homicide case, Litton said, including whether it is done during the commission of another felony or done to avoid detection.

“The aggravating factors are not doing their job here” and the number needs to be reduced, he said.

Post-conviction DNA testing in Missouri only allows for biological evidence gathered during the investigation into the defendant. “That means newly discovered evidence can’t be tested,” Litton said.

Statutory changes to police procedures, including how photo lineups are administered, longer preservation of DNA evidence and mandating that custodial interviews are recorded in their entirety, died in committee in 2014. Litton hopes bills addressing the changes separately can be passed in the future.

“This is not soft on crime reform,” Litton said. “This is pro-prosecution and pro-police and pro-defense. It is getting it right.”
How Did Long-Necked Dinosaurs Drink Without Getting Dizzy?

By Liz Langley, for National Geographic

PUBLISHED February 21, 2015

Many of us have gotten dizzy when we stand up too fast—and we don't even have to go that far. Imagine if you had to lower and raise your head several stories every time you wanted a drink of water.

Our Weird Animal Question of the Week comes to us from Clayton Louis Ferrara, who asked via Facebook: "How did large, long-necked sauropod dinosaurs, such as Brachiosaurus, drink water without [losing] consciousness when bending over?"

There's no particular evidence to show how Brachiosaurus and other giant dinos drank, but "obviously they could," Casey Holliday, of the University of Missouri's Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences, said by email.

Like giraffes and long-necked birds, sauropods probably had a series of valves and shunts in their necks that helped regulate the blood going to and from the head, he said.

Another way of looking at Brachiosaurus’s drinking problem, as it were, is convergent evolution—or the theory that unrelated species evolve similar adaptations when faced with similar challenges, Matthew Bonnan, a biologist at Richard Stockton College, in New Jersey, said via email.

For instance, our tallest mammal living today, the giraffe, reaches a height of up to 19 feet (6 meters) and could provide clues about how a tall extinct creature kept its head while bending to drink.

The Big-Hearted Giraffe

"For a giraffe, gravity is a huge problem," since the animal has to have high enough blood pressure to keep the vital fluid flowing through a brain so far from its body, he said.

Luckily, the giraffe has several mechanisms to regulate that pressure.

One is its huge, 25-pound (11-kilogram) heart, which "can pump blood at high pressures to the head," Bonnan said.

Soft tissues around the legs called fascia also "act like pressure stockings to keep blood from pooling in their extremities," and "specialized valves in their carotid arteries, which bring blood to the brain, prevent blood from sliding backward."
Another trick up the giraffe's sleeve is the rete mirabile, "a network of blood vessels at the base of the brain that controls blood pressure," he said.

The rete mirabile slows blood flow to and from the brain when the giraffe bends to drink and comes back up. It's possible, he added, that sauropods had similar adaptations.

High-Life Adaptations

There's no physical evidence of rete mirabile in sauropods, but the structure is found in many vertebrates, including birds—the precursor to dinosaurs, noted Ashley Morhardt, a paleobiologist at Ohio University, in Athens, Ohio.

"Whether or not it was associated with the brain and/or functioned like the rete mirabile of a giraffe is not known to paleontologists—at least not yet," Morhardt said.

Another important factor: Giraffes might have an awkward time drinking, but they don't have to do it that often. They drink every few days and get most of their water from their herbivorous diet.

"Maybe sauropods were able to gather enough water from all the plants they ate all day, too," suggested the University of Missouri's Holliday.

A sensible plan for animals living the high life.

Is your honey good with money? Better find out before tying the knot

February 22, 2015 7:00 am  •  By Jim Gallagher

Now that the mushy Valentine’s Day stuff is behind us, let’s consider the cold-hearted, bottom-line question in choosing a mate:

Is your honey good with money?

Better find out before tying the knot. Arguments about money are by far the top predictor of divorce, according to a 2013 Kansas State University study of 4,500 couples. That’s true even for people who have enough money but argue about it anyway.

Love erases common sense. St. Louis financial planners tell of tightwads who marry spendthrifts, free spirits who marry bean-counting control freaks, wives who find out about hubby’s big credit card debt after the honeymoon.
“People fall in love and everything else goes out the window,” says Suzanne Gellman, consumer economics specialist at University of Missouri Extension. “Romantic love ends within two years of marriage — then it’s everything else out there.” Including the yelling.

So, it’s good to probe a little around money before you fall for someone. This takes some subtlety on a date.

Observe your amorous quarry, says Rob Weagley, who chairs the financial planning program at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Do they have money to pay for things?

If your date dresses to the nines and you dress from a secondhand shop, there may be a mismatch here. Does your date order the steak while you go for the spaghetti?

Some signals can be confusing. A big tipper might be a spendthrift, or a generous soul who remembers what it’s like to be a waiter, Weagley notes.

Financial planner Michele Clark, of Clark Hourly Financial Planning in Chesterfield, suggests dropping a few questions into the conversation. Ask, “Hey, what do you think about a free date this weekend — maybe visit the zoo or stay home with a movie. I’m saving up for a couch.”

If your target says, “Ah, that’s no fun!,” then maybe your date is the kind who thinks of money as a means to a good time. If you think of money as security — and like to save it — there could be a problem.

Gently dig around about how they handle money. “I use mint.com to track my expenses. What do you use?” (Warning: “That’s not something to ask on the second date. That’s the best way to scare him away,” Clark says.)

Some preliminary research at the Federal Reserve indicates that newlyweds with low credit scores, or with big differences in scores, are more likely to separate.

So, you might say, “Gee! I’ve found this website that gives a free credit score. I tried it. Here’s mine. Want to see what yours is?” (CreditKarma.com will give a free score, along with a credit report, although the site will try to sell you other stuff around it.) When the question is popped, or about to be, it’s time to get naked financially. How much do you earn and how much do you owe? It’s a good idea to exchange credit reports. (You can get a free report from all three reporting agencies once a year at annualcreditreport.com, or by calling 1-877-322-8228.)

One may have big debt, while the other is debt-free. Once in marriage, the debt weighs on both of them. “Look at it as family debt,” says financial planner Lesley Kilculin of Fiduciary Advisors in Town and Country.

If there are problems, talk about them. If there are black marks on the credit report, how did they get there?

Wild spending on a credit card is more worrisome than a big bill for a broken leg that put you out of work for a month. Student debt can be a good thing if it got you an income big enough to pay it off.

“Couples who come into marriage and haven’t talked about it — that’s where there are problems,” says Clark.

Talk about how you see money. Is it a means to a vacation in Cancun? Or a route to security? A little of both?

“The free spirit is fun, and always about a good time. That’s attractive. They may be attracted to a person who is steady, a rock,” Gellman says. “That’s not going to end well.”

Gellman recommends that couples take a quiz to decide how they see money, and then share the results. You can find two online at: bit.ly/1AU0XIs and bit.ly/17jMlvj. Put together a budget before marrying, says
Kilcullin, deciding how much you’ll save and spend.

“The saver will worry that they’re not saving enough, and the spender won’t want to look at the budget,” she says.

Gellman and her husband keep three accounts, his, hers and ours, each with a set amount. “When he spends on something I think is ridiculous, I don’t see it,” she says.

Women are better at rational mate-picking. We men tend to let love and lust overwhelm judgment. Women look more for faithfulness and earning capacity.

So, when the love-struck swain falls on bended knee, pops the question and presents the ring, an intelligent young lady should gaze at the big shiny rock and reply, “And just how much did you pay for this?”

Bad answer: “Money was no object, darling. You’re worth the moon and stars to me.”

Good answer: “Not much. I picked it up cheap in a pawnshop.”

Keep dating the first guy — he’ll pay the checks at dinner and give fancy presents. Marry the second.

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The College Fix

Check a professor’s syllabus on this site before signing up – unless a court stops you

by Courtney Such - Furman University on February 23, 2015

FIX FEATURE

Less shallow than RateMyProfessors.com – but not necessarily legal everywhere

A University of Buffalo student wants to take on RateMyProfessors.com and other websites that help students identify which classes they want to take, by giving them a more in-depth look at the course material.

The problem: Copyright law might hamper his efforts.

Bryan Krajewski created SyllabusRate.com in December 2013 because of his own indecisiveness in college.

“I was a student who never knew which class or professor I should take,” Krajewski said in an email to The College Fix.
“Just because one student likes a professor doesn’t mean another student will as well,” said the junior business major. “So every semester I found myself adding and dropping classes the first week of school based on the syllabus that I received on the first day of classes.”

The site works by enabling users – students, professors or anyone else – to upload syllabi. Users must identify their school when creating an account.

Although the site covers colleges in the United States and Canada, it has several gaps. It’s advertising for paid reps through its Twitter feed, which has 105,000 followers.

Students can search for their university’s name to rate a professor, comment on courses and upload a syllabus.

SyllabusRate.com has thousands of viewers each day “and continues to grow,” Krajewski said, though its popular Twitter feed doesn’t have much content that actually concerns SyllabusRate – many posts are either funny pictures or plugs for the site’s advertisers.

To post a syllabus, users must upload a Word or PDF document, name the section, professor and time of year the class was offered, and rate the class.

Krajewski doesn’t think much of his better-known competition.

“There’s a lot of ambiguity in sites like Rate My Professor[s], as well as immaturity and slander to professors as people,” he told The Fix. His site, by contrast, helps students “decide whether the class is a good fit for them or not.”

Krajewski told The Auburn Citizen last year that his site’s ratings system is specifically designed to rate “the class and syllabus instead of rating the professor as a person.”

RateMyProfessors.com reviews have come under fire just this month. George Mason University student Avery Powell wrote in USA Today College that students tend to view female professors more negatively than males, based on a recent analysis of 14 million RateMyProfessors reviews.

**Copyrighted or not?**

Technically, users are supposed to get permission from their professors before uploading syllabi to SyllabusRate – “as a formality,” as Krajewski put it.

“You further agree that Content you submit to the Service will not contain third party copyrighted material … unless you have permission from the rightful owner of the material or you are otherwise legally entitled to post the material and to grant SyllabusRate all of the license rights granted herein,” the Terms of Service state.

Krajewski said he’s not happy about that language, because the idea that syllabi can be copyrighted is “a large quantity of bologna.”
Most professors “use templates to create their class syllabus and simply input their information into it, [so that] does not appear like something very creative and in no way should it be deemed intellectual property,” he said.

But “we still have to abide by the law, and technically, we have to” include that language in the terms, Krajewski added.

SyllabusRate does have the ability to block uploads “if a professor or university requested for us to do so” ahead of time, Krajewski said, but in the site’s year-plus history, no “disgruntled professors or colleges” have requested takedowns.

**A mixed bag for court rulings**

As SyllabusRate.com grows in popularity, it faces Krajewski’s bologna scenario – will court rulings on syllabi and copyright slowly strangle its business?

So far, only one state – Missouri – has definitively concluded that syllabi are protected by copyright, in response to efforts to obtain them under state public-records laws.

Controversy arose in the past few years when the National Council on Teacher Quality began conducting research on the quality of professors across the nation.

**When the University of Missouri denied the council’s public-records request for syllabi in June 2012, the school claimed they weren’t covered by the state’s sunshine law and that turning over syllabi would violate its professors’ intellectual property rights.**

The council lost its lawsuit in two courts, which affirmed syllabi were protected by federal copyright law, and the Missouri Supreme Court denied the council’s appeal.

“Our position is very clear that that’s not actually how copyright works,” Arthur McKee, managing director for the council, told *The Fix* in a phone interview.

McKee said that only when the council told the state it was “eager to analyze and evaluate the training of teachers” that “suddenly this argument was made, that syllabi are intellectual property and therefore can’t be disclosed by use of open-record laws.”

Various organizations rallied behind the council’s efforts to obtain syllabi because “the argument of the University of Missouri could be used by any government agency” to withhold public information and “prevent the press from serving as a necessary watchdog on government operations,” he added.

John Fougere, chief communications officer for the University of Missouri System, did not respond to a *Fix* request for comment on the case.
Fougere earlier told the Columbia Daily Tribune that the school has “consistently maintained that respecting the rights of the faculty members who created the syllabi was extremely important.”

Minnesota reached the opposite conclusion in 2013, with a district court and appeals court affirming that the council intended a “fair use” of the University of Minnesota syllabi, so it couldn’t be withheld under federal copyright law.

And in a more ambiguous situation, the University of Wisconsin gave up its fight to protect syllabi from public disclosure.

It settled the council’s lawsuit in December 2012, agreeing to pay $10,000 in attorney’s fees, damages and costs, while providing syllabi for “core undergraduate education” courses taught in 2012, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported.

As a result of that settlement, no Wisconsin court has ruled on whether syllabi are protected by copyright law in every circumstance.