The University of Missouri’s decision on Wednesday to fire Melissa A. Click, an assistant professor of communication, followed an investigation of an incident in November, when Ms. Click confronted a student journalist during a protest on the flagship campus, in Columbia.

The investigation, which was commissioned by the university’s Board of Curators and carried out by the law firm Bryan Cave, uncovered details about the incident that were not necessarily apparent in a video of the confrontation that went viral online and sparked national outrage.

The final report on the investigation sheds light on what happened before and after the confrontation, as well as the motivations and reactions of Ms. Click and her colleagues.

Here are some of the more interesting details from the report:

Ms. Click said her first interaction with Concerned Student 1950 was "life-changing."

Ms. Click described feeling an immediate and visceral connection to the activist movement Concerned Student 1950, even before she knew the group by name. Her first serious encounter with the movement, named for the year the university admitted its first black student, occurred at the homecoming parade in October, when student protesters surrounded the car of Timothy M. Wolfe, then the university system’s president. "Frustrated" by the crowd’s negative reaction to the demonstration, she asked to stand with the students. When police officers attempted to force the protesters away from the vehicle to a sidewalk, Ms. Click sparred with one officer. (Video of that confrontation recently surfaced.)
She told investigators that the experience was "an emotional and ‘life-changing’ event for her."

The day before her videotaped confrontation with a student journalist on the quad, Ms. Click was involved in a "heated conversation" with a professor at the protesters’ encampment.

According to the report, her emotions ran high that day, November 8, as she visited student activists, who by then were staging a hunger strike to push for Mr. Wolfe’s resignation. "A geology professor arrived and, in Professor Click’s opinion, began asking ‘provocative’ questions that frustrated her and led to a heated conversation." Some students intervened, "stating that the situation needed to be de-escalated."

At least, that’s how investigators portrayed the incident. In a response to the report, Ms. Click said she was not "the primary conversant." Instead, she said, she had just encountered a discussion between the geology professor, another professor, and several students, as it became intense.

Ms. Click said that the student journalist, Tim Tai, had "charged" at the protesters, and that she had started a chant in an attempt to defuse the situation.

One of the stranger parts of the investigator’s report is a passage in which Ms. Click interprets her behavior toward Tim Tai, the student who was taking photographs of the protest for ESPN. Mark Schierbecker, a junior, recorded a video of Mr. Tai arguing with protesters about his right to enter the encampment. From the report:

"Professor Click initially could not recall having any involvement in the incident in which student journalist Tim Tai was blocked from entering the area, although she readily recalled that a student beside her said, ‘I am a journalism student, and the journalism department would be disappointed to see the way he’s acting right now.’"
"When portions of a transcript of the incident were then read to her reflecting her involvement in yelling at Tim Tai, and encouraging students to chant ‘Hey, hey, ho, ho, reporters have to go’ at Tai, Professor Click then stated that Tai had ‘charged’ the perimeter and her chant was intended to defuse the situation and get Tai to back off as the other journalists had. Professor Click said she was yelling because there were a lot of people there and she wanted to manage the crowd."

Ms. Click resigned her courtesy appointment with the Missouri School of Journalism the next day. Several weeks later, the school gave Mr. Tai a First Amendment Defender" award.

Ms. Click said she thought Mr. Schierbecker might have had a gun.

Ms. Click told investigators that she feared that Mr. Schierbecker, the student who recorded her encounter with Tim Tai, might have had a gun.

"At first sight, Schierbecker was inside the perimeter and approaching Click, which she perceived as threatening," the report says. "He introduced himself as ‘media’ and asked to speak with her, but she found his introduction suspicious and did not believe he was media. She noted that Schierbecker had a small camera that appeared unprofessional to her. She advised us that she was concerned he might be armed with a gun, particularly as the Missouri Legislature had recently passed a law allowing concealed firearms on campus."

One problem: Missouri does not allow concealed weapons on its college campuses. When confronted with the full report, Ms. Click backed away from her comments:

"I never believed that Mark Schierbecker definitely had a gun, but I did acknowledge that he could have and that my fears about his intentions shaped my actions. Also, I knew that the Mo. Legislature had not passed legislation allowing concealed firearms
on campus. At the time of the interview, I mentioned that such a law was being debated."

It’s unclear exactly which piece of legislation Ms. Click was referring to. Roughly a month after the incident, a Missouri senator introduced a bill to allow concealed guns on campuses. In September 2014 the state enacted legislation allowing specially trained employees with concealed-carry permits to bring firearms onto campuses.

**Mr. Schierbecker was not a journalism student or working for a news outlet.**

Mr. Schierbecker identified himself as a member of the media when he encountered Ms. Click at the November protest; indeed, that identification seemed to be the pretext for her effort to get him thrown out of the protesters’ encampment. In the aftermath of the incident Mr. Schierbecker was frequently identified as a student journalist by media outlets, including *The Chronicle*.

But the report paints Mr. Schierbecker, a junior at the university, as barely affiliated with any news organization. He told investigators he had initially planned on posting his videos of the protest to Wikipedia.

Mr. Schierbecker told investigators that he had once been a staff photographer at *The Maneater*, an independent student news outlet. He said he had submitted articles, but none had been published. After receiving many inquiries about its affiliation with the author of the video, the students running *The Maneater* wrote to Mr. Schierbecker telling him that he did not, in fact, work there.

Mr. Schierbecker apparently did not seem like a journalist to Ms. Click. In interviews with investigators, the professor said that when Mr. Schierbecker asserted he was a member of the media, she did not believe him, creating mistrust that charged the rest of the confrontation.
There was some confusion about what Ms. Click meant when she asked for "muscle."

The professor’s call for "some muscle" to help her remove Mr. Schierbecker from the protesters’ encampment was considered her gravest sin. But what was she calling for, precisely?

Some people seemed to think there might actually be a person, nicknamed "Muscle" (or possibly "The Muscle"), whom Ms. Click was requesting specifically. After Ms. Click explained her actions in a meeting with the journalism faculty, Esther Thorson, an associate dean at the university’ journalism school, came away with the impression that she was referring to a specific member of the protest group, a large, strong man whom the other students called "The Muscle." Another journalism professor came away from the meeting thinking Ms. Click meant "a particular gentleman who was a lot bigger than her," though he did not remember anything about a nickname.

When investigators asked one student if there was a protester whom other protesters called "Muscle," she said no. Another student responded to the same question with "an involuntary and genuinely hearty laugh."

In her written response to the board, Ms. Click said she did not believe anyone was nicknamed "The Muscle," and questioned why the details of that sub-inquiry were included in the report. However, she did tell investigators that it had been "protocol," based on her observations, to defuse heated situations by summoning large men.

Earlier that day, Ms. Click had been on the other end of a physical altercation with a photographer.

A student told investigators that on the same day she confronted Mr. Tai and Mr. Schierbecker, Ms. Click had been physically contacted by a journalist. When asked
about that incident, Ms. Click told investigators that she had gotten between a cameraman and a student who did not want to talk to the media, and that the reporter had then "grabbed her arm and ‘growled’ at her." Investigators wrote that "she was not hurt, did not consider it a ‘big deal,’ and did not call law enforcement at the time."

**Ms. Click and her department chair didn’t see eye to eye — before and after the incident.**

Mitchell S. McKinney, chair of Mizzou’s communication department, told investigators that the professor had "a tendency to be dramatic."

"Professor McKinney’s initial reaction to Professor Click’s actions depicted in the videotape was not one of great surprise," the report says, "and he remarked that none of the faculty he spoke with were surprised either. Professor Click frequently gets upset, and she can be loud and aggressive in stating her opinions to faculty and students. When this occurs, she can be heard throughout the building."

The chair stood up for Ms. Click’s research, which has been much maligned by state lawmakers for dealing with pop-culture phenomena like Lady Gaga and the book *50 Shades of Grey*. And he said that Mr. Schierbecker "seems to have an agenda." But he didn’t offer a defense of Ms. Click’s actions in the video or of her professional comportment in general. The morning after Ms. Click’s encounter with Mr. Schierbecker, he drafted a statement decrying "intimidation" of student journalists; he later told investigators that "this statement was perceived by Ms. Click and her allies as throwing her under the bus."

Mr. McKinney is not one of her allies, as Ms. Click admitted in her response to the report. "The communication department includes an entire four-floor building with many classrooms, offices, and meeting areas," she wrote. "Given this, the chair’s
suggestion that I can be heard through the communication department seems hyperbolic."

As for the depiction of her as "dramatic": That, she wrote, stems from the fact that she and Mr. McKinney have "a long history of disagreement about department affairs."

We know that Ms. Click and Mr. McKinney disagreed on one matter, and Ms. Click turned out to be right. The afternoon of her confrontation with Mr. Schierbecker, the report says, Ms. Click called Mr. McKinney to warn him "that there was a videotape of her and that it might go ‘viral.'" Mr. McKinney hadn’t yet seen the footage. "Let’s not blow this up," he told her. Quoth the report: "He was certain the issue would pass."

**After Ms. Click resigned her journalism-school appointment, her husband asked Mr. Tai to speak out for her.**

Although Ms. Click’s campus home was in the communication department, she held a courtesy appointment at the School of Journalism. That appointment earned the school unwanted attention: An early wave of reporting on Mr. Schierbecker’s video identified Ms. Click as a journalism professor, and "a substantial amount of email and telephone calls from the media and alumni" poured in.

So the morning after the incident, the school’s standing executive-committee meeting turned into a discussion of Ms. Click’s now-problematic appointment. The committee called the professor in that day, and Ms. Click told Tim P. Vos, an associate professor, that she did not want the courtesy title if it would cause problems for the school. Later the group asked her to resign the appointment, and she did so.

But according to the investigators’ report, that decision did not seem to sit well with her husband, Richard J. Callahan Jr., chair of the religious-studies department. Mr.
Callahan was also present when tension erupted between student activists and journalists on the quad. There he approached Mr. Tai, who had "had a class with Professor Callahan in 2013," the report says.

One day after Mr. Tai accepted a telephoned apology from Ms. Click — and two days after the professor resigned her courtesy appointment — he received a call from Mr. Callahan. According to the report:

"Professor Callahan … told Tai that the university had come down too hard on his wife, Professor Click. Professor Callahan asked Tai if he would do something to reduce the severity of the response by the School of Journalism to Click’s actions, but Tai said he did not know what he could say or do that would make a difference or alleviate the criticism of Click."

**Ms. Click apologized, but she never accepted the university’s interpretation of her actions.**

Would above-and-beyond displays of contrition have saved Ms. Click’s career at the University of Missouri? Perhaps not. The professor apologized personally to Mr. Tai and Mr. Schierbecker, and said in a statement that "I regret the language and strategies I used, and sincerely apologize to the MU campus community, and journalists at large, for my behavior." But none of that mollified the many state lawmakers who repeatedly demanded her resignation.

Still, one section in the investigators’ report makes an issue of Ms. Click’s level of contrition. In December, she received a letter of reprimand from Garnett S. Stokes, Missouri’s provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs, calling her behavior "completely unacceptable." Ms. Click wrote back to Ms. Stokes, telling her she was "truly sorry."
But in a February interview with the investigators, she rebutted points Ms. Stokes made in the letter. It’s one of the most striking passages in the report:

"When asked whether she agreed that her November 9 ‘behavior was completely unacceptable for a Mizzou faculty member,’ she replied ‘no,’ that was too harsh a statement. … When asked whether she agreed that she ‘had failed to exercise appropriate restraint’ on November 9, she replied ‘no,’ that the situation was very stressful, and that she acted out of concern for the students. She said that she had been told by others following November 9 that they would have acted in the same fashion had they been in her position. When asked whether she agreed that she had ‘failed to show respect for the opinion of others’ on November 9, she replied ‘no,’ that she had instead encountered an individual who was not respecting others. She identified the individual she was referring to as Mark Schierbecker. Finally, we asked her whether she agreed that she had ‘made a serious mistake’ on November 9, and she replied ‘no,’ she would not use the word ‘serious.’"

After investigators delivered their report, the Missouri board invited Ms. Click to write a response addressing its findings. You can read that response here.

The Washington Post

Mizzou professor who pushed reporter away from protesters is fired

Melissa Click, a professor who gained national notoriety during the protests at the University of Missouri, has been fired.

Click made headlines when a video of her pushing a reporter away from protesters went viral; she could be heard calling for “muscle” to toss out reporters trying to cover the news.
The protests at the flagship state university over race and other bias issues had paralyzed the campus and forced the resignation of the system president and chancellor. When a student journalist said he had a First Amendment right to be there and take photos, Click said, “I can’t hear you!” and started chanting, according to a transcript released by the university system, “Hey hey! Ho ho! Reporters have got to go!”

Click apologized, and many professors defended her and the principle of academic freedom, but the earlier image of her became a symbol for others of attempts to muzzle freedom of speech and of a public university system in chaos.

The board of curators voted Wednesday night to terminate Click, an assistant professor in the communications department.

The vote was 4 to 2, with curators David Steelman, Donald Cupps, Phil Snowden and Maurice Graham voting in favor of termination.

Pam Henrickson, chair of the board, said in a written statement Thursday that the board had reviewed the results of an investigation into Click’s conduct which included a review of documents, video, and interviews with more than 20 witnesses. Click was interviewed twice, both times with lawyers, and wrote a response to the investigation Feb. 19.

The investigation was launched Jan. 27, when the board suspended Click.

“The board went to significant lengths to ensure fairness and due process for Dr. Click,” Henrickson wrote.

After reviewing the report and other evidence and discussing it, they voted in executive session to fire her.

“The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member,” Henrickson wrote.

“The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.

“The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views.

“However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.”

Click has the right to appeal the curators’ decision. She did not immediately responded to a request for information Thursday. In a letter to the board earlier this month, she defended her
actions at a protest at the Homecoming parade, and in the aftermath of the university system president’s resignation, describing an angry response to the protest on social media, “including threats to shoot MU’s black students. I firmly believe that the report’s failure to characterize the environment of the Carnahan Quadrangle as a challenging and volatile environment excludes critical details for understanding the actions that took place on that day. A fuller account can help the report’s audience to understand my fears and motivations.”

Outrage over Click had become a real liability for the university system. Earlier this week, Missouri state Rep. Tom Flanigan, chairman of the House Budget Committee, announced that the committee supported a cut of more than $8 million in state aid to the system in next year’s budget.

That included a more than $400,000 cut, an amount equivalent to the salaried positions of Click, a chair in her department, and the dean of arts and science.

“The decision to further reduce appropriations for the system was not made lightly and recent events have proved to Missourians that existing performance measures are not the only indicators of a university’s performance,” he wrote in a statement.

The committee “does not make the reductions only about Dr. Melissa Click and her actions,” Flanigan wrote, describing concerns about red tape and other issues including “the inability to terminate employees who participate in conduct unbecoming the University of Missouri and our state.”

Click also faced criticism, once she was under scrutiny, for her scholarship focusing on topics in popular culture such as Lady Gaga and “Fifty Shades of Grey.”

One lawmaker was delighted that she had been fired. “That’s great news, it should’ve happened months ago,” said Missouri Rep. Caleb Jones.

Andrew Hoberek, an English professor at Mizzou, was upset.

“This was an egregious violation of due process, clearly taken under political pressure,” he said in an email in response to a question about Click’s firing. “The Chancellor, in a Faculty Council meeting that just took place, attempted to assure faculty that it was an event that would not happen again, but offered no concrete basis for saying so, or guidelines on what does or does not constitute fireable behavior.

“In my opinion, taking this action has a chilling effect on faculty behavior at every level, and only opens up the university to further political demands,” he added.

Steelman, a curator, wrote in The Post last month, “Most of the world recognized Professor Click’s actions as a clear and dangerous abuse of authority.

“The governor delivered a forceful statement of the public’s justifiable anger, and an overwhelming number of legislators have called for her termination.
“Finally, admissions to the University of Missouri are down, and while not all reasons are known, it seems reasonable to assume that there are parents and prospective students who have watched Professor Click’s actions, imagined themselves or their children exposed to her abuse, and applied elsewhere.”

The interim chancellor, Hank Foley, said in a statement, “The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical—but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university.

“Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university. I can assure you—as Board Chairwoman Henrickson noted—that there has been fairness in this process and investigation.

“Finally, I personally would like to reiterate my commitment to ensuring a university community where we ALL feel valued and heard.”

The university system released material collected, including Click apparently urging reporters to cover the protest earlier, a statement signed by many faculty members expressing strong support for her and for her First Amendment right to protest after the controversy erupted, police reports, a written apology from Click in response to a letter from the provost, and an interview in which she says she saw student protesters in November and was moved to lock arms with them, and that when she sees that video, she feels embarrassed, “and very sorry for my behavior in that moment.”

She told an interviewer from KBIA that the protesters had been talking to reporters all day, and wanted time to think and prepare for a press conference. She said she still believes in that, but in retrospect would have handled it in a more peaceful way. She also noted that the student who videotaped their encounter was not a journalism student and not on assignment that day, and said her goal was to protect the protesters who were “under threat” and their right to peaceful assembly.

She told KBIA she had become a symbol. “I think it’s easier to to express anger at a woman who got flustered and made a mistake than to really engage with the deep racial issues raised by the students.”

The board, in its letter to Click on Thursday, acknowledged her letter defending her actions and describing the situation as challenging and volatile, but wrote that they have reason to believe she committed an assault when she pushed a student away from the protesters. Regardless of whether it was a crime, they wrote, her conduct was “wrongful, unjustified, and not consistent with the expectations for a University faculty member.”
University of Missouri Fires Professor Melissa Click After Scuffle With Reporter

A mass media professor who was caught on video trying to block a student journalist from filming activists last fall has been fired, the University of Missouri announced Thursday.

Melissa Click made national headlines when a video of her attempting to kick out a campus reporter during protests at the University of Missouri went viral. In the video, Click can be heard yelling "I need some muscle over here!" as she tries to boot the journalist.

"The board believes that Dr. Click's conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," Pam Henrickson, chair of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, said in a statement.

Watch University of Missouri Protesters Clash with Media 1:36

Interfering with members of the media and students exercising their rights, Henrickson added, "demands serious action."

The protest, organized by a group called Concerned Student 1950, came after a series of racist incidents on campus. The student reporter, Mark Schierbecker, told Click he had a right to cover the event — but Click covered his camera with her hand and told him, "I get that argument, but you need to go."

Click was branded a traitor to her profession by some and in January, she was charged with assaulting Schierbecker. She apologized, and cut a deal with prosecutors last month that kept her out of jail.

The university's decision to fire her came after extensive interviews with more than 20 witnesses and Click herself, who was interviewed twice with a lawyer by her side, Henrickson said.

University of Missouri-Columbia Interim Chancellor Hank Foley called the termination process "not typical."
"But these have been extraordinary times in our university's history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university," he said in a statement.

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"But these have been extraordinary times in our university's history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university," he said in a statement.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri on Thursday fired an assistant professor who had been suspended after run-ins with student journalists during protests.
last year, including a videotaped confrontation where she called for "some muscle" to remove a videographer from the Columbia campus.

Melissa Click's actions were "not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," Pam Henrickson, chairwoman of the university system's governing board of curators, said during a conference call with other top administrators. Henrickson said Click's conduct demanded "serious action."

More than 100 state lawmakers had called for the dismissal of the 45-year-old assistant communications professor, who last October also was recorded telling police to get their hands off students during a protest, then hugging the students and cursing at an officer who grabbed her.

Click, who was suspended last month, has said she regretted her actions. A message left Thursday with her St. Louis attorney wasn't returned, and her home telephone has been disconnected.

But in a document released Thursday by curators, Click insisted her actions were to try to keep black protesters "safe from retaliation." She said the widely circulated video clips of her at protests didn't reflect the "tense" atmosphere.

"While some would judge me by a short portion of videotape, I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events," she wrote, adding that those moments "deserve to be understood in a wider frame of reference."

Henrickson said lawmakers' outrage had no bearing on the curators' 4-2 vote to dismiss Click during a closed meeting Wednesday night. Henrickson, who along with fellow curator John Phillips cast a dissenting vote, declined to discuss her rationale, saying that she supports the board's action.

She said Click would receive no parting severance package. Click has until March 4 to appeal the decision.

According to documents released Thursday by the curators, Click was represented by an attorney both times she was questioned by university-hired investigators.

A video clip that went viral showed Click calling for "some muscle" to remove a student videographer during protests on Nov. 9 that were spurred by what activists said was administrators' indifference to racial issues on campus. The Columbia chancellor and system president resigned after the protests escalated, with one student's hunger strike and an announcement by members of the football team that they would refuse to play.

Click later was charged with misdemeanor assault. A Columbia prosecutor ultimately agreed to drop the case if Click completed community service, but the case prompted curators to order an investigation of her by its general counsel.
More recently, police body camera footage was released from the October homecoming parade that shows Click's confrontation with police after demonstrators blocked the vehicle of Tim Wolfe, at the time the university system's president.

The video shows Click telling police to "get your hands off the children" and cursing at an officer who grabbed her shoulder. As Columbia police pushed protesters onto the sidewalk, Click hugged students and spoke with them before stepping between an officer and a student.

Hank Foley, the Columbia campus' interim chancellor, said Thursday that Click's firing was "in the best interest" of the school and a cautionary lesson about behavior that can easily be caught on cellphone video. Earlier this month, he said the homecoming parade footage showed a pattern of misconduct.

Associate law professor Ben Trachtenberg, who heads the campus' Faculty Council, said Click's firing was "a very unfortunate and self-inflicted wound on the university," largely because curators decided Click's fate rather than allowing the school use its normal, on-campus procedures for reacting to faculty misconduct.

Univ. of Missouri Professor Melissa Click Fired After Racially Charged Protests


A University of Missouri assistant professor who was charged with assault for allegedly interfering with journalists and students during the height of racially fueled turmoil on its campus last year has been fired, the school said today in a prepared statement.

The school’s board of curators began an investigation of communications professor Melissa Click last month that included reviewing video from the incident and speaking to more than 20 witnesses. Click was suspended with pay on the same day, Jan. 27.

Click tried to "interfere" with police "who were carrying out their duties" at an October homecoming parade on the Columbia, Missouri, campus and "interfered" with members of the media and students "who were exercising their rights in a public space" during a protest in November, according to the statement.

The university said Click also called for physical intimidation against a student.
"The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," it said in a statement.

The University of Missouri said it "respects" Click's rights to express her views but added she "was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student."

Click will have an opportunity to appeal her termination, the school said.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said in a statement that the process the school board used to decide on Click's termination is "not typical" but he believes it is in the "best interest" of the university.

"...these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history," Foley said.

Click was caught on video calling for "some muscle" to remove a student journalist from a protest site on Nov. 9 after knocking his camera out of his hand. She pleaded not guilty to the assault charge and reached a deal with prosecutors to avoid prosecution in exchange for community service and staying out of trouble for a year.

Click did not immediately respond to ABC News' request for comment.

University of Missouri fires professor Melissa Click

The University of Missouri announced on Thursday the firing of Melissa Click, the assistant professor who faced nationwide backlash after a tense confrontation with a student during protests on campus last fall.

Click, who taught in the Department of Communication, attracted attention after she was caught on video calling for "muscle" to help her eject a student journalist from a protest site on Nov. 9 as the university was embroiled in protests over the administration's handling of a series of racially-charged incidents.

She faced further scrutiny after the Columbia, Mo. Police Department earlier this month released video from a separate protest on campus in which Click was involved. In the
police video, Click can be seen cursing at a cop who is trying to clear a roadway on campus after Click and a group of student demonstrators locked arms to block a road during the university's homecoming parade.

The University of Missouri System Board of Curators said it voted 4-2 for the firing of Click. The board oversees the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia, where Click taught, and three other campuses in the state.

"The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," said Pam Henrickson, president of University of Missouri system Board of Curators. "The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action."

The troubles for Click, who declined to comment on Thursday, started after she was filmed having physical contact and berating a student journalist who was trying to conduct interviews at a campsite set up on campus by student protesters with the group Concerned Student 1950.

A video of the confrontation, which was taken by the student journalist Mark Schierbecker, begins with a group of protesters yelling and pushing another student journalist, Tim Tai, who was trying to photograph the campsite. At the end of the video, Schierbecker approaches Click, who calls for "some muscle" to remove him from the protest area. She then appears to grab at Schierbecker's camera.

Schierbecker applauded the Board of Curators decision but said he was disappointed that the university's faculty had not taken action against Click.

"I am embarrassed that the Board of Curators had to act because the faculty would not," Schierbecker said in a statement. "Click has not been totally forthcoming and has repeatedly denied that her actions represent a pattern."

Henrickson said Click has the right to appeal her firing, but has been removed from her post and is no longer being paid by the university. She said Click was offered no severance package.

The board provided Click with the findings of their investigation, and she had the opportunity to respond to their findings. But the university's faculty council said that the Board of Curators violated established protocol at the university that allows faculty members accused of misconduct a hearing before they are dismissed.

"When controversy arises, it is important to follow existing rules so that all involved are treated fairly," the faculty council said in a statement. "By creating a new process as it went along, the Board denied Professor Click the fair procedures that she, like all faculty, had been promised."
Hank Foley, the interim chancellor at the university, had initially resisted pressure from more than 100 state GOP lawmakers who began calling for the firing of Click in January. After the Columbia, Mo. city prosecutor announced a misdemeanor assault charge against Click last month for the incident involving the student journalist, Foley said that he thought that Click should be allowed to go through the tenure process at the university. (Days later, Click agreed to a deal with the prosecutor's office where the charge will be dismissed if she completes community service.)

But after video from her October encounter with police emerged, Foley strongly rebuked Click.

"The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical — but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university," Foley said on Thursday. "Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university."

Henrickson said that pressure from the state legislature to fire Click did not factor in the board's decision. The board placed Click on paid suspension on January 27 and announced it was launching an investigation of her actions. The decision to suspend the professor and launch an investigation came two days after the city prosecutor announced the misdemeanor charge against Click. The board's investigation was completed on Feb. 12.

"Of course, we were aware of the General Assembly's opinion, but the board did not take that into account in making the decision," Herickson said. "We strictly viewed the investigative report and looked at Dr. Click's behavior."

Click has apologized for her actions, which came at a tense moment on campus. On the day of her confrontation with the student journalist, the university system's president and the Columbia campus's chancellor announced their resignations after facing weeks from student protesters and their allies.

Journalists and onlookers descended on the campsite that the protesters established on the university's quad following the announcement of the resignations. Click and other backers of the protesters attempted to keep journalists away from the camp site.

In her written response to the curator's investigation, Click said that the Board's findings did "not accurately characterize the precarious environment of the Homecoming Parade." She also quoted students at the quad who described the press as "agitiated" and Schierbecker as "disrespectful."

"I firmly believe that the report’s failure to characterize the environment of the Carnahan Quadrangle as a challenging and volatile environment excludes critical details for understanding the actions that took place on that day," Click wrote.
Missouri professor Melissa Click fired after protest scuffles caught on video

The University of Missouri Board of Curators on Thursday fired a communications professor who was captured on video scrapping with a police officer and a student journalist during campus protests last year.

The board voted 4-2 in favor of firing Assistant Professor of Communication Melissa Click, who had been suspended with pay from the school since Jan. 27.

Click has the right to appeal the termination.

“The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views,” said Chairwoman Pam Henrickson, who voted against Click’s termination, in a statement viewed by The Columbia Tribune. “However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.”

Click entered the public eye in November when video surfaced of her arguing with a student journalist covering campus protests regarding perceived racial issues. In that video, Click appears to grab the journalist’s camera and then requests “muscle” to help get the journalist to leave the area. A second video, taken during an Oct. 10 Homecoming Parade, surfaced earlier this month after The Columbia Missourian obtained police body camera footage of the event. In that tape, Click forces herself between a police officer and campus activists who had been blocking the parade route, telling the officers to “get your hands off the children.”

She was charged with misdemeanor assault resulting from the November skirmish, but prosecutors said they would drop the charge in a year if Click completed community service.

University of Missouri Interim Chancellor Hank Foley praised the board’s decision.

"The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical — but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university,” Foley wrote in a statement obtained by The Missourian. “Her
actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university. I can assure you — as Board Chairwoman Henrickson noted — that there has been fairness in this process and investigation.”

But not everyone was pleased.

In interviews with The Missourian, Faculty Council Chair and law professor Ben Trachtenberg called the decision to fire Click “terrible” and Faculty Council member Angela Speck said it was “ridiculous that she should be fired without due process.”

Click attempted to justify her actions during an interview with FOX 2 earlier this month, however, she admitted she had “made mistakes.”

“But my intention was to, like other faculty and staff, to support a student group that was expressing that they had been excluded from MU, the MU community,” she said.

Click was not able to be reached for comment Thursday by numerous publications.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

U. of Missouri’s Board Fires Melissa Click

Melissa A. Click, the assistant professor of communication whose actions during a student protest last fall sparked national outrage, was fired by the University of Missouri’s Board of Curators on Wednesday night, system leaders announced on Thursday.

"The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views," read a statement announcing the decision. "However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement, or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student."

Ms. Click has in recent months become a lightning rod in state politics, with lawmakers doggedly demanding her resignation and colleagues jumping to her defense, alleging that she had not been afforded due process.

Henry C. (Hank) Foley, the Columbia campus’s interim chancellor, said in a call with reporters on Thursday that the process the board had used to fire Ms. Click was "not typical, but these are extraordinary times in our university’s history."

A spokeswoman for Status Labs, a public-relations firm working with Ms. Click, said on Thursday that the professor had no comment on the decision.
Ms. Click was caught on camera in November calling for "some muscle" to help remove a student journalist from a campus protest he was covering. The professor had been helping to enforce a boundary around an encampment, on the main quad, where students had gathered with members of the faculty and staff to protest racism at the university. Her actions made her an instant villain to people worried that free speech on campuses was being curtailed to create "safe spaces."

Ms. Click apologized for her actions, but was eventually charged with assault. She pleaded not guilty and agreed to do community service to avoid prosecution. But Republican legislators in Missouri made it clear that they wanted her fired.

In January, 117 state lawmakers signed a letter calling for her termination. Ms. Click’s university colleagues countered with a letter of support for the embattled professor signed by more than 100 faculty members.

The standoff continued in February. A top state lawmaker this week threatened $7.7 million in budget cuts for the University of Missouri system, including a $400,000 cut for the flagship campus: the equivalent of the combined salaries of Ms. Click, her department chair, and her dean. (The student who had filmed Ms. Click at the protest asked legislators to stop using the video as a pretext for cuts.)

The news of Ms. Click’s firing may be a step toward repairing the university’s strained relationship with the General Assembly, said State Rep. David Wood, a Republican and chairman of the Joint Committee on Education, in an interview with The Chronicle.

"I support their move," said Representative Wood, who oversaw a recent committee hearing at which several legislators asked university officials about the terms of Ms. Click’s contract and what actions they were taking to respond to her actions as caught on video.

Mr. Wood said he didn’t think legislators were necessarily intent on having Ms. Click fired, but they wanted to know if the university was taking steps to make sure a similar occurrence didn’t take place in the future. "Her actions were not justifiable in any way," said Mr. Wood.

"Professors have a right to protest and to speak in public, but they’re going to be held to a higher standard when they’re representing the university," he said.

In the call with reporters, the chair of the board, Pamela Q. Henrickson, said that board members were "aware" of lawmakers’ statements about Ms. Click but that they "did not take that into account."

The board’s decision to fire Ms. Click occurred about a month after it suspended her and enlisted Bryan Cave, a law firm, to investigate the November incident. Ms. Henrickson told reporters that
investigators had reviewed hundreds of documents and had interviewed more than 20 people — including Ms. Click, twice.

‘A Terrible Decision’

Faculty leaders at the university were upset by the board’s decision to take Ms. Click’s fate into its own hands. In a letter last month, the Faculty Council on the flagship campus asked the board to back off and let the university judge Ms. Click’s actions according to a procedure, spelled out in its bylaws, that was designed to "protect the rights of accused faculty while also protecting the university’s interest in identifying and responding to faculty irresponsibility."

Faculty leaders on the university system’s other campuses this week endorsed that position. The American Association of University Professors has also weighed in, expressing concern that Ms. Click was being denied due process.

Henry F. (Hank) Reichman, a professor emeritus of history at California State University-East Bay and chairman of the AAUP’s Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, said in a post on the association’s Academe blog that the board’s decision "makes a sham of shared governance and due process." He said Ms. Click had "clearly been made a scapegoat, and the actions of the board and interim chancellor are shameful."

But no one on the campus filed a complaint against the professor, Ms. Henrickson said, a step that would have triggered the university’s own procedures. "No one took the opportunity to avail themselves of that process," she said, so the board began its own.

In a written statement on Thursday, the chair of the Columbia campus’s Faculty Council, Ben Trachtenberg, said the board had "made a terrible decision."

"Regardless of one’s opinion of Professor Click’s behavior or fitness for duty," he continued, "she was entitled by our rules — rules that the Board of Curators has approved — to a fair process. She didn’t get it."

Missouri Board Votes to Fire Melissa Click

February 25, 2016

**In a controversial and unusual move announced Thursday, the University of Missouri Board of Curators voted in closed session this week to fire Melissa Click.**
The assistant professor of communication at the university system’s flagship campus at Columbia was suspended with pay in January due to her behavior during student protests this fall -- including asking for “muscle” to remove a student journalist from a protest in a public area. While Click’s actions proved divisive even among faculty members, her colleagues were quick to criticize the board Thursday for circumventing normal, faculty-driven channels of review. The board, meanwhile, said it was forced to act after criminal charges were brought against Click by a local prosecutor.

"The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," said Pam Henrickson, chair of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, at a press briefing Thursday afternoon. "The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.”

Henrickson said that the board respects Click’s right to express her views and support students expressing their own views. But Click is not “entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student,” she said.

The board voted 4-2 to dismiss Click. Henrickson said she voted against the decision, but did not say why when asked. She said the board had been hoping that a faculty member would file a complaint against Click to be reviewed by an elected body of faculty members, according to university policy. But when no faculty members filed such a complaint, she said, the board moved forward on its own.

The catalyst? Click was charged with third-degree assault in January for her actions during the protests, Henrickson said. (Click entered a plea to avoid jail time.) But many onlookers say the university was facing pressure from the state legislators, who have threatened to withhold state funds in relation to the Click case.

Henrickson denied that external factors affected the board’s vote. She said curators based their decision on a lengthy, outside investigation into Click’s behavior, centering on two events during the intense protests over on-campus race relations this fall. Both were captured on video. In the first video to make headlines, Click appeared to grab at a student journalist’s camera, and said, “Who wants to help me get this reporter out of here? I need some muscle over here, help me get him out.”

The board also said she’d invoked her faculty status, telling the student reporter after he asserted his right to be on university property, “That’s a really good one, I’m a communication faculty and I really get that argument, but you need to go, you need to go.” According to the board, Click asked other students to exclude the journalist, saying, “You guys need to make room for this guy to come through, he shouldn’t be here. And don’t let him back in.”
A second video, which surfaced earlier this month, shows Click yelling, “Get your fucking hands off me” to a police officer clearing a street during a protest in October. The board said she’d attempted to “physically block” the officers preparing for the homecoming parade.

A letter sent to Click Thursday notifying her of her termination says that the board considered whether she had violated various university policies, including that Mizzou “will not tolerate actions by any individual or group that would seek to restrict the appropriate freedoms of any other individual or group.” Another policy says that faculty members “should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others and make every effort to indicate that they do not speak for the institution,” and demonstrate “respect for the student as an individual.” Employees also risk termination when they “bring discredit upon the institution.”

Hank Foley, interim chancellor at Columbia, said that while the process for dismissing Click is “not typical,” he was in “complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university.” Her actions “directly violate the core values of our university.” He added that Click’s dismissal has nothing to do with her scholarly record, but “does have something to do with teaching,” in that her actions bear on her ability to do so. Faculty members need to mindful of their actions, given that “social media is everywhere,” he said.

After Click was charged with assault, Foley said she should be able to complete her upcoming tenure review. But he changed his tone after the October video circulated, calling her conduct and behavior “appalling.”

Foley said he could personally assure that Click’s investigation was “fair.” She was interviewed twice, with legal representation, and was able to suggest relevant witnesses, according to information from the university.

Click has until early next month to appeal the decision directly to the board. Neither she nor her lawyer, Mary Anne Sedey, immediately responded to a request for comment. Status Labs, a public relations firm with which Click has been working, said she had no immediate comment.

No Due Process?

“Fair” didn’t cut it for Ben Trachtenberg, an associate professor of law at Mizzou and chair of its Faculty Council, who said the board “made a terrible decision.”

“Regardless of one’s opinion of Professor Click’s behavior or fitness for duty, she was entitled by our rules -- rules that the Board of Curators has approved -- to a fair process,” he said via email. “She didn’t get it. Instead, she got one that the board made up as it went along.”

Trachtenberg challenged Henrickson’s assertion that the board acted as it did because it waited in vain for a professor to file a complaint against Click to be investigated by a faculty body. Board members may file such complaints, he said -- and faculty members informed them of that right.
“If members of the board believe that a formal investigation of Professor Click’s conduct is appropriate, the faculty respectfully suggest that the board bring a charge against her under [university policy], allowing the university’s existing process to go forward under the supervision of the interim chancellor,” Nancy D. Stancel, chair of the University of Missouri System’s Intercampus Faculty Council, said in a letter to curators the day before their vote to fire Click. Stancel, a faculty law librarian, works at the Kansas City campus.

“Suspending Professor Click and conducting its own investigation to determine whether additional discipline is appropriate, without using the existing procedures that the board has approved, undermines confidence in the current leadership of the university,” the intercampus council chair added.

The American Association of University Professors also has appealed to the university on Click’s behalf. Joerg Tiede, a senior program officer with the association’s Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure and Governance, criticized the board for interfering in what should be a faculty-driven process. Under widely followed AAUP guidelines, even tenure-track professors should have the right to appeal dismissal before an elected faculty body prior to the scheduled end of their appointments, he said. Any other kind of hearing -- such that which has been offered to Click, before the board directly -- fails to meet that standard.

“Summary dismissal without a hearing before a duly elected faculty body is inimical to the principles of academic freedom and academic due process,” he said.

Click’s termination is effective immediately. Board members said they hadn’t heard from Click since she was notified.

Mark Schierbecker, the student journalist who recorded Click, said in a statement that he was “embarrassed that the Board of Curators had to act because the faculty would not,” USA Today reported. “Click has not been totally forthcoming and has repeatedly denied that her actions represent a pattern,” he added.

Concerned Student 1950, the student group Click was supporting during the protests, did not immediately respond to a request for comment through social media.

Foley, the interim chancellor, said the university was working in the aftermath of the fall to make the campus one that is inclusive for everyone, regardless of “color or creed.”

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**
‘She Doesn’t Deserve It’: Student Activists and Faculty Members Object to Click’s Firing

By Katherine Mangan

The University of Missouri’s decision to fire Melissa A. Click triggered strong objections from her faculty colleagues as well as students who had protested racism on the Columbia campus last fall, when she was caught on video in angry confrontations with a student journalist and a police officer.

Some called the decision overdue and said Ms. Click’s actions had sullied the university’s reputation. Others, including the student group Ms. Click was defending when the viral video was shot, accused the university’s Board of Curators of overstepping its authority and making her a scapegoat.

Members of Concerned Student 1950 accused the board of caving in to pressure from state lawmakers who had threatened to slash the flagship campus’s budget by the exact sum of the salaries of Ms. Click, an assistant professor of communication, the chair of her department, and the dean of the College of Arts and Science. The board, which voted 4 to 2 to fire Ms. Click, has denied it was influenced by that threat.

"We are all really hurt that this had to happen to Melissa," said DeShaunya Ware, a senior who was one of the original members of Concerned Student 1950. "She doesn’t deserve it."

The message the firing sends, she said, is that "if you’re an ally helping protect black students while they are protesting structural and institutional racism on campus, this is what happens to you."
Ms. Ware believes that Ms. Click became a scapegoat for legislators who were angry over black students’ demands and the national attention they were attracting as the activists made progress on some fronts.

The university made national headlines in November, when both the president and, by some accounts, the chancellor, were forced to step down in the wake of protests by Concerned Student 1950, other student activists, and the football team.

The video of Ms. Click calling for "some muscle" to remove a student journalist from a protest site was taken during the chaotic aftermath of those resignations.

Ms. Ware said the furor over Ms. Click had distracted attention from the problems of racial injustice that students and administrators have been working to overcome.

The student activists, who reissued their list of demands on Twitter on Wednesday, will continue to push the university to respond to each of them, Ms. Ware said.

Meanwhile, members of the Faculty Council who met with the university’s interim chancellor, Henry C. (Hank) Foley, after the board vote released a statement late Thursday saying that the firing "violates the norms of faculty governance" and that the board had denied Ms. Click her right to a fair hearing.

A professor emeritus of journalism studies at Mizzou said he understands the due-process argument, but he still believes she deserved to be fired.

"Melissa Click attempted to defend the civil rights of one group of students while violating the civil rights of another," Brian S. Brooks wrote in an email to The Chronicle. "Then she compounded the problem by trying to incite a riot."

Instead of trying to calm the situation, she made it worse, he wrote. "She was caught twice on video acting in a despicable manner."
But to Ms. Click’s supporters, the board’s actions and the personal attacks against her are unfair. Debbie S. Dougherty, a professor of organizational communication, said the backlash had been "excruciating" for both Ms. Click and the department.

"We don’t all agree on what the outcome should be, but what we do think is that she’s been dehumanized in a way that’s shocking," Ms. Dougherty said.

"I’m trying to help her process some of the emails she’s gotten from random people, and they’re vile," Ms. Dougherty added. "Regardless of how you feel about her behavior, there’s no excuse for this kind of public crucifixion."

Angela Speck, a professor of astrophysics and longtime colleague of Ms. Click’s, said she was particularly disturbed by the university system’s published statement saying in part that "Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement, or to encourage potential physical intimidation" against a student.

"I’m sorry, but that’s terrifying," said Ms. Speck, who serves on the Faculty Council. "The board does not have the right to tell us we cannot confront the police. In a situation where police are pushing, it’s not unreasonable to have words. This isn’t a police state."

She added that Ms. Click had apologized for actions that the student journalist might have interpreted as intimidation.

"In the context of what was happening in that moment," Ms. Speck said, "it was more about protecting than intimidating students."
University of Missouri Fires Melissa Click, Who Tried to Block Journalist at Protest

A University of Missouri professor whose shout of “I need some muscle over here,” to remove a student journalist from a demonstration sparked an international debate over the limits of protest and a free press, has been fired, the university announced Thursday.

Melissa Click, an assistant professor of communications, was captured on video on Nov. 9 trying, with dozens of others allied with the protesters, to prevent photographers from approaching the protesters’ encampment on the flagship campus in Columbia. When a young man making a video recording identified himself as a journalist, she told him to leave, grabbed at his camera and called out, “Hey, who wants to help me get this reporter out of here? I need some muscle over here.”

Later, it emerged that she had been involved in a confrontation with the police in October, along with students who were trying to block a homecoming parade.

The university’s governing body, the Board of Curators, began an investigation, and suspended her last month. The board voted Wednesday night to dismiss her — a decision it said she could appeal.

“The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member,” Pam Henrickson, the board chairwoman, said in a statement released Thursday. “The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.”

Dr. Click had no immediate response, according to Status Labs, a public-relations firm that has been working for her. But in an interview last week, she offered something of an explanation for her conduct on the video, saying it represented just one moment in her career.

“When I watch it, I am embarrassed and sorry,” she said. “I see someone dealing with a high-stress situation who gets flustered. I see a moment where I feel like I’m not representing my best self, and I see somebody who’s trying to do her best to help marginalized students.”

After the November clash, she quickly apologized for her conduct toward photographers. And the group organizing the protests, ConcernedStudent1950, released a statement endorsing the
right of the news media to enter the site. But prosecutors brought a misdemeanor assault charge against her, which will be dropped as part of a deal, if she completes community service and probation.

The episode diverted attention from the subject of the protests, racism experienced by black students, which they said the university had not taken seriously and had done nothing to combat. A series of racist incidents, including death threats against protesters that resulted in arrests, increased tension on a campus already roiled by unrelated conflicts, including a dispute over graduate teaching assistants’ health care and their attempt to unionize, and the university’s decision, under pressure from conservative lawmakers, to sever ties to Planned Parenthood.

The students and university employees protesting racism considered themselves part of the growing Black Lives Matter movement, and many of them had taken part in demonstrations in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis, after a white police officer there killed an unarmed black man. The campus conflict came to a head when the university football team threatened to boycott a game unless the president of the university system, Timothy M. Wolfe, resigned.

Mr. Wolfe did step down, along with R. Bowen Loftin, the chancellor of the Columbia campus.

Protesters had set up camp and at times, their supporters formed a cordon around the site, blocking and pushing those who tried to get in, insisting that even on a public quad, the protesters had a right to privacy and to be left alone, and that journalists and others had no right to enter.

Because of the video, Dr. Click became the public face of the upheaval, to the dismay of some of the protesters. She was publicly scolded by journalists who said she had failed to grasp the basics of the First Amendment — at a university famed for its journalism school, no less — and held up by conservatives as a symbol of intolerance in academia.

Melissa Click, Missouri professor filmed asking for 'muscle,' is fired
Melissa Click, the University of Missouri professor who was filmed trying to intimidate journalists during a campus protest, has been fired.

At an executive session Wednesday, the school's Board of Curators voted 4-2 to terminate Click's employment. Click has the right to appeal the decision.

"The board believes that Dr. Click's conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," board spokeswoman Pam Henrickson said in a statement on Thursday.

Courtney Fitzpatrick, a spokesperson for Click, said, "She is not taking interviews and has no comment at this time."

Last fall, as the Mizzou campus was gripped with protests over charges of racism at the school, Click, an assistant professor of communications, was recorded aggressively confronting a video journalist.

"Hey, who wants to help me get this reporter out of here?" Click could be heard saying on the video. "I need some muscle over here."

The footage quickly went viral, and Click faced an onslaught of criticism. Following the outcry, Click resigned from her courtesy appointment at the Missouri's journalism school. Last month, Click was charged with third-degree assault by the city prosecutor in Columbia, Missouri. The charge is punishable by a fine of up to $300 and up to 15 days in jail.

Mark Schierbecker, the University of Missouri student who captured the incident, originally filed the complaint against Click, but he had suggested an extralegal resolution.

In December, Schierbecker told CNNMoney that he would have been willing to "just drop the whole thing" if Click discussed the kerfuffle with him on a local radio station.

Forbes

University Of Missouri Fires Professor Melissa Click Over 'Dangerous Conduct'

The University of Missouri has fired Melissa Click, the communications professor who used strong-arm tactics on a student journalist who was armed with a video recorder and then watched her career disintegrate when the video from the encounter went viral last November.

The Board of Curators cited her “dangerous conduct” in calling for “some muscle” to move Mark Schierbecker, the student with the camera, out of the public area on campus where the
protesters had gathered. Click, who is white, had argued that she was helping to protect the African-American students who had been protesting what they saw as an administration indifferent to racial incidents on campus.

The board, in a 4-2 vote, dismissed Click and sent her a letter on Thursday saying that her “conduct was wrongful, unjustified and not consistent with the expectations for a University faculty member.”

Click, who did not have tenure, is allowed to appeal the decision, but there doesn’t seem to be a lot of room for her to maneuver. She had been suspended with pay in January after the local prosecutor brought assault charges against her for grabbing for the camera Schierbecker was holding. At that point the board brought in a St. Louis law firm to conduct an investigation. The university posted the full report to its website.

The university moved ahead with the investigation even after the city prosecutor deferred prosecution when Click agreed to do 20 hours of community service and obey all laws for one year. And just two weeks ago yet another video emerged. This time is was Click cursing a police officer who tried to get her to move out of the street at a protest during the homecoming parade in October.

In her written response to the report she asserts that the investigation did not adequately capture the mood on campus last fall. “Racial tension was palpable,” she writes.

“It was a fast-paced, challenging scene,” she writes about the parade in her response. “I was worried about the safety of the students in the middle of that angry crowd, and I was concerned that the one officer’s actions were too aggressive with the students.”

In a scene out of an incredibly solemn version of the homecoming parade in “Animal House,” about a dozen black students affiliated with the group Concerned Student 1950 (that was the year the first black students were admitted to the main campus in Columbia) halted the red convertible carrying Tim Wolfe, then the MU system’s president, and his wife. The protesters linked arms, blocked the intersection and shouted stories of campus racism into a bullhorn for an amazingly long 10 minutes before police arrived. Some parade cars managed to make a detour through a Domino’s Pizza parking lot, but not Wolfe’s convertible.

Click, who had been watching the parade with her family a block away, went to see what was up and wound up linking arms with the students shortly before the police arrived. Body cameras on the police capture her yelling at one officer to “get your f***ing hands off me.”

As tensions escalated over the following month, a student went on a hunger strike and the football team said they would not play unless the administration stepped down. Wolfe resigned on Nov. 9 along with the chancellor. It was the resulting celebration on the public lawn of the public college that Schierbecker and many other journalists had gone to cover.

Republicans in the state legislature had pushed for Click’s dismissal saying she was guilty of “assaulting and suppressing the First Amendment rights of student journalists.” More than 100 of her fellow professors, on the other hand, had signed a petition saying the university was obligated to defend her constitutional right to “protest.”
In the days before the homecoming parade video and the board of curators’ report were released, Click had engaged a public relations firm to help her polish her image. On Feb. 10, Dr. Click, who specializes in pop culture, gave an interview to NPR radio affiliate KBIA, and taught perhaps her most important lesson: “I think all people can probably identify with making a mistake in their life, and you can only hope that when you make that mistake you are not being recorded.”

University of Missouri fires professor who called for 'muscle' to remove students at protest

How did a story about black students protesting their university’s response to racist incidents turn into a story about the fate of a white professor?

Last fall, Melissa Click, a communications professor at the University of Missouri, captured national attention during racial protests on campus.

As black students gathered on a public quad in Columbia, Mo., she was captured on video calling for “muscle” to remove student journalists from the area and swatting a student's camera.

The video sparked debate among activists, conservatives and journalists over what was acceptable behavior for an academic and whether she should be punished. In the media, questions about her future had overtaken the demands of the protesters.

This week, university leaders decided they'd heard enough. The Board of Curators announced Thursday that it had voted 4-2 to fire Click for her behavior.

Many black activists were sympathetic to the white professor who had tried to shield them from what they saw as over-aggressive reporters. But journalists and many alumni of the university’s journalism program criticized her for what they saw as interference with the reporters’ 1st Amendment rights.

Republican Missouri lawmakers urged the university to fire Click, which faculty saw as meddling with the university's academic freedom and self-governance.
In firing Click, the board deemed her actions “dangerous” and said they had posed “a serious public policy question” as to whether it would allow faculty “to invoke intimidation or violence against a student.”

“The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views,” Pam Henrickson, chair of the board, said in a statement Thursday. “However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.”

Through a spokeswoman, Click declined to comment.

For years, black students had complained about racism at the predominantly white Columbia, Mo., campus, saying that they sometimes felt unsafe and that the N-word was often hurled at them. They said the university was unresponsive to their needs.

The activists made the university system president, Tim Wolfe, a prime target.

At a protest during a parade, they stopped Wolfe's car. Click, who had worked in the communications department since 2003, was with them.

In body-camera images obtained by the Columbia Missourian and made public this month, Click can be seen putting herself between police officers and the protesters.

“Get out of the road or get arrested!” an officer says in the video while putting a hand on Click's shoulder.

“Get your ... hands off me!” Click says, using an expletive.

In November, a graduate student, Jonathan Butler, went on a hunger strike demanding Wolfe's removal. The university's beloved football team, backed by its coach, Gary Pinkel, went on strike to support Butler.

When Wolfe resigned Nov. 9, black students gathered on the quad where they had originally set up a small tent city. They celebrated as national, local and student journalists alike tried to capture the moment.

But the story took an unexpected turn.

In a video that went viral, students and staffers who circled the tent site confront student photographer Tim Tai, who eloquently argued that he had a right to cover a protest in a public place.

Click grabs the camera of another student, Mark Schierbecker, and tells him, “You need to get out,” then shouts to other protesters: “Who wants to help me get this reporter out of here? I need some muscle over here!”
After Schierbecker posted the video online, Click said she started receiving angry calls and emails.

“I hope you're gang-raped by some of the very animals with whom you're so enamored,” one person wrote, according to emails obtained through an open-records request and published by the Chronicle of Higher Education.

“You have proven that you do not believe in basic constitutional values, especially the one that is so critical to an amazing network of Mizzou graduates,” wrote an unnamed emailer identified by the Chronicle as a news editor at CNN.

Nearly 120 state Republicans signed a Dec. 18 letter denouncing Click's “illegal” actions and said she “inflame[d] an already caustic situation that was clearly out of line.”

They also took a crack at her professional work on pop culture, writing: “Our constituents have expressed outrage at the fact she is using taxpayer dollars to conduct research on '50 Shades of Grey,' 'Lady Gaga' and 'Twilight.'”

This week, a state Republican lawmaker introduced a budget that would have eliminated Click's salary.

But student activists have backed Click. “Click is NOT the issue,” the activist group Concerned Student 1950 tweeted.

Click was charged with misdemeanor assault for the “muscle” incident, though prosecutors have agreed to drop the case if Click does community service and stays out of trouble for a year.

“Well some would judge me by a short portion of videotape, I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events,” Click said in a Feb. 19 letter to the university.

She added: “Those of us present felt that someone needed to help maintain order and keep the students — who had by all accounts just succeeded in their contentious goal of pressuring MU’s president to resign — safe from retaliation.”

Missouri professor caught on camera cursing at journalists, police fired
COLUMBIA, Mo., Feb. 26 (UPI) -- The University of Missouri has fired Melissa Click, an assistant professor seen on videos trying to intimidate a student journalist and cursing at a police officer.

In a 4-2 vote, the school's Board of Curators on Thursday terminated Click, who has the right to an appeal.

"The board believes that Dr. Click's conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," board spokeswoman Pam Henrickson said in a statement.

"The board respects Dr. Click's right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views," Henrickson said, "However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student."

Click spokesperson Courtney Fitzpatrick said, "She is not taking interviews and has no comment at this time."

While the University of Missouri boiled over with protests over charges of racism, Click's behavior quickly came to overshadow the issue as she was filmed trying to intimidate a student journalist.

"Hey, who wants to help me get this reporter out of here?" Click shouts on the video. "I need some muscle over here."

Click was charged with third-degree assault over the incident.

A second video, shot about a month before the "muscle" video, shows Click on a Columbia police body camera video as part of a protest during a homecoming parade where she yells and curses at a police officer who is asking the protesters to move to the sidewalk.

Click told FOX 2 earlier this month, she had "made mistakes."

"But my intention was to, like other faculty and staff, to support a student group that was expressing that they had been excluded from MU, the MU community," she said.
Melissa Click Said She Thought Student Who Filmed Her Might Have Had a Gun

Melissa A. Click told investigators working for the University of Missouri’s board that she feared a student whom she tried to remove from a campus protest last fall might have had a gun.

Ms. Click, the assistant professor of communication who was fired on Wednesday by the system’s Board of Curators, drew the ire of free-speech advocates in November when she was caught on video asking for “some muscle” to remove Mark Schierbecker from the site of a student protest over racism at the Columbia flagship.

According to documents published on Thursday, Ms. Click told investigators who were hired by the system to look into the incident more about her encounter with Mr. Schierbecker:

At first sight, Schierbecker was inside the perimeter and approaching Click, which she perceived as threatening. He introduced himself as “media” and asked to speak with her, but she found his introduction suspicious and did not believe he was media. She noted that Schierbecker had a small camera that appeared unprofessional to her. She advised us that she was concerned that he might be armed with a gun, particularly as the Missouri Legislature had recently passed a law allowing concealed firearms on campus.

One problem: Missouri does not allow concealed weapons on its college campuses. When confronted with the full report, Ms. Click backed away from her comments:

Page 12: I never believed that Mark Schierbecker definitely had a gun, but I did acknowledge that he could have and that my fears about his intentions shaped my actions. Also, I knew that the MO Legislature had not passed legislation allowing concealed firearms on campus. At the time of the interview, I mentioned that such a law was being debated.
It’s unclear exactly which piece of legislation Ms. Click was referring to. Roughly a month after the incident, a Missouri senator introduced a bill to allow concealed guns on campuses. In September 2014 the state enacted legislation allowing specially trained employees with concealed-carry permits to carry firearms.

**MISSOURIAN**

Chuck Henson, Mike Middleton suggest Concerned Student 1950 end demands

ALLISON COLBURN AND LIV PAGGIARINO, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **In a strongly worded letter, the MU interim vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity and equity told members of Concerned Student 1950 on Thursday to set aside their demands and work collaboratively.**

Interim Vice Chancellor Chuck Henson was responding to a revised list of demands the students made during campus protests last fall. The revised list, unveiled Wednesday on Twitter, included more details about fulfilling the group's call for more diverse faculty, more student resources and targeted funding.

Henson's response took issue with what appeared from the group's online presentation to be an uncompromising, somewhat unrealistic approach.

"If you sincerely want better relationships, the time for demands, threats and arbitrary deadlines is over — you don’t need them," he wrote in the letter.
Dear Concerned Students:

In June 1965 Martin Luther King gave the commencement address at Oberlin College. He said: "... all life is interrelated, and we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny.... For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be – this is the interrelated structure of reality."

This recognition of oneness remains valid. Within it lies the call to engage in a relationship: an encounter between people who listen to each other's voices, best done face-to-face. In relationships there is no place for demands because there is no need for demands.

As you should know by now, President Middleton, Chancellor Foley, Provost Stokes, and I (to name just a few) have been meeting with hundreds of students. We are engaging in relationships in ways you may not have experienced. For my part, I have been seeking you out. I have invited you to come see me. However, as yet we haven’t met.

Had you accepted my invitation to meet face-to-face, you would already know the answers to most of the issues raised in your recent communication. As many other concerned students already know, much of what can be done to transform our culture is already underway. We have begun the work of generations by educating our fellow citizens in Columbia, our senior leaders, faculty, staff and new students on inclusion, diversity, implicit bias and the history of the African-American experience in Missouri. We are improving our ways of hiring faculty and staff by, among other things, requiring diverse candidate pools of people qualified to teach and work at a tier 1 research institution and instituting mandatory hiring committee education. We are already working almost all of the issues raised in your communication. These are the things that university administration can do for the benefit of everyone in our on- and off-campus community.

You would also know that there are things, like hiring faculty or staff, or admitting students based on protected characteristics to meet a numerical target, will not and cannot be done. It is against state and federal law. It also is a bad model for a sustainable community. The administration is not responsible for curriculum requiring specific courses. That is the sole responsibility of the faculty – and the faculty is working on this issue.
You also would know, had we met, that I created a permanent part of the Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity called The Working Group. The point of The Working Group is transparency, access and input – your input into how we transform our culture and improve our relationship. This is where student leaders, faculty staff and administrators meet to learn what the Division is doing and why it is being done. This is where I hear your input, criticism and ideas. This how your solutions may get incorporated.

Much work has been done, is being done and will be done to make our community better for everyone who is a part of it. We are working on relationships that value all voices. We are engaging face to face, realizing that what we are achieving will be sustainable over generations. And who doesn’t want better relationships?

If you sincerely want better relationships, the time for demands, threats and arbitrary deadlines is over -- you don’t need them. I hope you’ll join me with other concerned students in The Working Group to get down to the work of building.

Sincerely,

Chuck Henson
Interim Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

Henson also made these points:

- In relationships, there is no place for demands because there is no need for demands.

- He has invited group members to meet him, but thus far, they haven’t met.

- Had they accepted his invitation to meet face-to-face, they would already know the answers to most of the issues raised in their recent communication.

- He and others are already working on almost all of the issues raised in the communication.

- There are things, such as hiring faculty or staff or admitting students based on protected characteristics to meet a numerical target, that will not and cannot be done. Some are against state and federal law.
They would also know that a group within his division is already looking for input to address their concerns.

UM System Interim President Mike Middleton echoed Henson's language in an emailed response to the revised demands. "The time for demands has passed," he said.

He encouraged students to be "part of the solution" by engaging with The Working Group, a series of weekly meetings with student leaders sponsored by the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative. The purpose is to share with students what the administration is doing to achieve inclusion.

Concerned Student 1950 maintains that six of the eight demands released in October have not been met. The other two demands, which called for Tim Wolfe's resignation and for a handwritten apology by the former UM System president, have been resolved by virtue of Wolfe's resignation.

Members expressed frustration that after nearly four months, the university "fails to display legitimate urgency" to make sure the demands are met entirely.

The group tweeted: "Be clear, these demands are not to be seen as 'request,' but obligatory to addressing and dismantling institutional racism on our campus."

“We will remain committed to ensuring our demands are met by any means necessary,” the statement said.

Both administrators took issue with the claim that no progress had been made.

"We have already begun the very important work of making our campuses mores diverse, equitable and inclusive," Middleton said in his email.

In one of the expanded demands, Concerned Student 1950 stated it wants a statue of Lloyd Gaines placed on Mel Carnahan Quadrangle. The civil rights activist and law student disappeared in 1939 shortly after winning a Supreme Court case that led MU to admit its first class of black law students.
Among the other demands are a racial awareness workshop requirement, expansion of the Gaines Oldham Black Culture Center and a panel to interview and hire candidates for the Office of Minority Students staff.

MU police confident they can increase ranks to 50 in next three years

By Alan Burdziak

Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Officials at the University of Missouri Police Department are confident they can hire nine more officers — increasing the department to 50 sworn officers — within three years and reach the goal interim Chancellor Hank Foley outlined in his State of the University address last month.

Since Foley spoke of the plans on Jan. 27, the department has added three officers. The department’s latest hire, Eric Moss, is set to begin work Monday. Department officials also plan to double the number of dispatchers from the department’s current six. MUPD also has two employees who work in records and serve as backup dispatchers when necessary.

The university expects it to cost about $1.5 million over the three-year term to bring its total number of officers to 50, MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said in an email. Police Chief Doug Schwandt said Wednesday that the department has wanted to expand for several years to increase its presence on campus and at other MU facilities and buildings in Columbia.

“Sometimes we get challenged by the force we have to provide service to all of our jurisdiction,” Schwandt said. “We do that now, but we hope to do a lot more of that” and to “have a lot of presence … on our core campus.”

Schwandt and Maj. Brian Weimer said MUPD has one of the smaller percentages of officers per thousand people on campuses of Southeastern Conference schools. Weimer said the plan to add more officers had nothing to do with protests and unrest on campus in the fall that led to the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

“For years, the campus has made safety a priority,” Weimer said Thursday.
The starting salary for an MU police officer is $38,500, Banken said. New officers at the Columbia Police Department make between $36,820 and $40,520, according to an online job posting.

The new officers will start out working patrol, but positions could shift as time passes, Weimer said.

“As more officers are added, we do reports and analysis and look at crime trends and stuff, so that’s not to say things won’t be adjusted,” he said.

Schwandt said he hopes the officers, in addition to providing a more visible presence on campus, will be able to do more proactive work such as crime prevention education.

Moss was hired as part of the last application process in 2015, Weimer said. By the end of next week, he hopes to post an advertisement seeking applicants for some of the remaining nine positions. Weimer said the department will be able to grow to 50 cops in three years but that it will be a difficult task.

“Will it be a challenge? Yes,” Weimer said. “We like to think we have a good department, good equipment, and we think we can continue to entice people in.”

Editorial: Academic freedom loses in legislative attack on Melissa Click

The University of Missouri Board of Curators succumbed to legislative bullying and failed to stand up for academic freedom when they fired assistant communications professor Melissa Click on Thursday.

The action also may invite scrutiny from powerful national and local educational organizations dedicated to advancing academic concerns, such as the American Association of University Professors and the University of Missouri Faculty Council.

Click had been under heavy fire since fall, when she was caught on video yelling for “muscle” to bar a student reporter from a campus area where protesters were encamped. Rarely has an academic faced such heavy scrutiny and humiliation. And, yes, this newspaper was among her critics.
Some scrutinized her academic research on such topics as Lady Gaga, “Twilight” and “50 Shades of Grey.” Another video surfaced showing her swearing at a police officer during a student protest, prompting another round of criticism.

**Her actions** during the protests were indefensible. She apologized, was required to perform community service and resigned from a courtesy appointment in the journalism school. She was charged with third-degree assault and suspended from the university.

But some legislators weren’t satisfied. For them, Click was a useful tool to attack the UM System Board of Curators and to justify severe cuts to the system’s budget.

The latest salvo before her firing came Tuesday, when House Budget Leader Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, proposed eliminating Click’s salary as part of a plan to cut $8 million from the university’s budget next year.

**The university** has well-established procedures for administrators wanting to terminate any faculty member, and those rules should have applied in Click’s case. A major reason universities have tenure is to protect academic freedom.

Click deserved the same due process as any other faculty member. She should have been allowed to tell her side of the story and to receive a fair hearing by qualified peers within the university setting. Our defense is not of Click but of the time-honored, deliberative process of tenure review, which is designed to be adversarial and rigorous. It’s no cakewalk, even for highly qualified candidates.

Politicians stepped way over the line with this meddling. Universities and academic research should not be subject to the whims of a legislative body and partisan maneuvering. This time, the meddlers are Republicans. The next time it could be Democrats.

**For many** young people, college is an opportunity to explore the world around them. It offers the chance to try on different ideas, see what fits and discard what doesn’t. A university brings together a wealth of perspectives and viewpoints that ideally serve as a path toward enrichment and enlightenment for young thinkers.

Legislative politics should have no part in that experience. The university and board of curators should have protected their turf and demanded that lawmakers kindly butt out. Instead, they caved.
Board of Curators fires Mizzou assistant professor Melissa Click

By Koran Addo

The University of Missouri Board of Curators has fired embattled instructor Melissa Click.

The board made its decision in a 4-2 vote Wednesday night in Kansas City. Board member John R. Phillips and board chairwoman Pamela Henrickson voted no.

On Thursday — when the vote was disclosed — Henrickson said a university investigation showed Click’s actions were not compatible with university policies.

Click was famously caught on camera in November calling for “muscle” while blocking student journalists from covering a campus demonstration.

A second video surfaced this month showing Click cursing at a police officer during the University of Missouri-Columbia’s homecoming parade in October.

Both incidents came last fall during a turbulent time on Mizzou’s campus, where students were protesting a series of racist incidents on campus.

Students were especially angered over what they perceived as indifference by the university’s top leadership.

Click’s actions were widely interpreted by some as an example of political correctness and liberalism gone too far.

As such, Click’s continued presence on Mizzou’s payroll proved particularly upsetting for some in the Missouri Legislature who pounded university leaders to get rid of the assistant professor of communications.

In January, more than 100 Republican lawmakers sent a letter to Mizzou calling on administrators to fire her.

Later, lawmakers hinted that Mizzou’s state funding could be cut should Click remain employed by the university.
As recently as last week, members of the Legislature’s Joint Education Committee spent the better part of two hours grilling university leaders on Click and what it would take to have her fired.

On Thursday, Henrickson, the board chairwoman, said pressure from the Legislature did not factor into the curators’ decision.

Instead, Henrickson said Click’s termination is solely the result of the university investigation that found Click’s behavior worthy of being fired.

“The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views,” Henrickson said. “However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.”

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley has called Click’s behavior “appalling” and said that he was angry and disappointed at her “pattern of misconduct.” During a conference call on Thursday, Foley said he agrees with the board’s decision to fire Click.

“It was in the best interest of the university,” he said.

Mizzou leaders recently announced that between seven and 10 donors have rescinded about $2 million in pledges to the university, in part, because of Click’s continued employment.

While Click’s firing could prove to be a boon to the university’s fundraising, university leaders said they did not know how the Legislature would respond to Thursday’s announcement.

“The Legislature will do what they will do,” Henrickson said.

House Minority Leader Jake Hummel on Thursday released a statement saying the Legislature’s involvement in Click’s employment status was inappropriate.

“Now that the board has acted, House Democrats are hopeful the misguided attempts to punish the university and its students will lose traction, and the legislative focus can shift to helping Mizzou reestablish its reputation as one of our nation’s finest public universities.”

State Rep. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, the Senate’s budget leader, has been a frequent critic of the university’s handling of Click. He called her firing “a step in the right direction.”

Schaefer said his gripe isn’t specifically with Click, but rather with the university’s leadership after the Click videos surfaced.
“What I’ve been pushing for is some show of responsibility from the university’s leadership,” Schaefer said. “The video clearly shows a member of the faculty committing assault on a student. That’s prompted calls from parents asking, what’s going on over there? Who’s in charge?”

Schaefer also pushed back on the idea that the Legislature has used the threat of withholding money in order to influence university decisions.

Over the past six years, legislators have continually voted for steady funding increases to the university, Schaefer said.

“There’s a difference between a supporter and an enabler,” he said. “Legislators have shown support, but we’re not going to be supportive of an administration that gets close to half a billion from the state every year and does not appear to be in control.”

Click first received a copy of the investigation’s findings, including documents, videos and witness statements on Feb. 12. She submitted a written response a week later.

In it, she argued the report failed to offer the complete context of events captured on the video clips.

“While some would judge me by a short portion of videotape, I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events,” she wrote. “Those videotaped moments (for which I have formally and publicly apologized) deserve to be understood in a wider frame of reference, among all of the momentous events of the fall semester.”

Wednesday’s action was the culmination of an unusual process for the board. Typically it only instigates such action against faculty after a formal complaint has been filed from a party within the university.

That did not happen in this case — a deviation from protocol that was criticized by members of the Faculty Council, which especially objected to the university hiring a law firm to interview witnesses and prepare a report.

“Whatever you think of Melissa Click, she’s entitled to a process that’s fair,” said Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg. “Any member of the board could have initiated a complaint against her at any time.”

Click has the right to appeal the board’s decision.
Missouri fires professor Melissa Click, who called for ‘muscle’ to remove reporter

She had interfered with reporters at protest, confronted police

Curators’ vote was 4-2

Faculty Council, some students say she wasn’t given due process

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
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AND GREG HACK
ghack@kcstar.com

Melissa Click, a University of Missouri assistant communications professor who called for “some muscle” to remove a student reporter from a protest on the Columbia campus, has been fired, the university announced Thursday.

The university system’s board of curators suspended Click in late January and hired a law firm to investigate her conduct. The board voted 4-2 Wednesday evening in a closed session to dismiss her, said Pam Henrickson, the board’s chairwoman.

“The board went to significant lengths to ensure fairness and due process for Dr. Click,” Henrickson said in a teleconference Thursday afternoon with University of Missouri System interim president Mike Middleton and interim MU chancellor Hank Foley.

“The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member.”

Henrickson voted against the firing, along with curator John Phillips.
Curators Donald Cupps, Maurice Graham, Phil Snowden and David Steelman voted in favor. Three seats on the nine-member board are vacant.

Henrickson declined to say why she voted against the firing but said she now supports the governing board’s vote. Middleton and Foley also said they supported the board decision.

Click can appeal to the board. But, Henrickson said, “we have not heard anything from Professor Click” about an appeal.

The investigation was spurred by videos of Click blocking a student journalist on the MU quadrangle during protests in November and cursing at a Columbia police officer working at the October homecoming parade. A Columbia city prosecutor charged Click with assault over the incident on the quad.

Click could not be reached for comment Thursday. But the board’s investigation of Click’s actions included comments from her that were released Thursday.

“While some would judge me by a short portion of video tape,” Click said, “I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events.”

She added that “those video-taped moments (for which I have formally and publicly apologized) deserve to be understood in a wider frame of reference, among all of the momentous events of the fall semester.”

Click called the parade scene “tense” and “tricky.” She said African-American students who blocked then-president Tim Wolfe’s car were being shouted down by the crowd, which wanted them to move. She said some African-American students were sobbing.

“I had no training or experience with public events such as this but felt that someone should step in to support and protect these MU students,” Click said.

A statement from Henrickson said the firing was not based on Click’s support for the predominantly African-American student protesters. But she noted that Click had interfered with the rights of “members of the media” and other students at the protest site and had cursed a police officer trying to move protesters at the homecoming parade.

The Bryan Cave law firm conducted the investigation. Henrickson said it included a review of relevant documents, materials and video recordings. She said more
than 20 witnesses were interviewed. Click was interviewed twice during the investigation and both times was represented by counsel.

Mark Schierbecker, the student journalist whose camera Click is accused of pushing during the November protests, said in a statement Thursday that he is happy with the outcome but “disappointed” no faculty member had filed a misconduct complaint against Click.

Another university employee, Janna Basler, shown in Schierbecker’s video blocking a student journalist, was put on administrative leave from her job with the MU Office of Greek Life, but she has since returned to work.

“I want this experience to represent something positive for the students of Mizzou,” said Schierbecker, who had tried to document the race-related protests at MU last November. “I have put together a dedicated group of students who want issues around the First Amendment at Mizzou to continue to occupy a place in the national conversation.”

Other students’ sentiments about the firing were mixed, said Connor Lewis, a fourth-year doctoral candidate and co-chairman of the Coalition of Graduate Workers.

“I know a lot of graduate students who didn’t agree with her behavior and a lot who felt she was just standing up for students,” said Lewis. But, he said, “many of us are teaching or want to become faculty, and it is troubling for us to see someone denied due process under the collective rules and regulations simply because they became a political controversy.”

Jasmine Serrano, a junior journalism major from Grain Valley, said she didn’t feel Click had “responded appropriately in her capacity as an instructor here on campus, especially as one who studies media extensively. I felt like maybe she should have known better.”

But Serrano also didn’t believe due process was served to Click. “I don’t feel that whole thing went through the proper channels,” she said.

Some faculty members on the Columbia campus were not happy with the curator’s vote.

“The board has made a terrible decision,” said Ben Trachtenberg, chairman of the MU Faculty Council. “Regardless of one’s opinion of Professor Click’s behavior or
fitness for duty, she was entitled by our rules — rules that the board of curators has approved — to a fair process. She didn’t get it. Instead, she got one that the board made up as it went along.”

A statement from the full Faculty Council pointed out that under the university’s Collected Rules and Regulations, faculty members “accused of misconduct are entitled to a fair hearing before they may be dismissed.”

Foley said in the teleconference that “the process the curators used to terminate Dr. Click’s employment is not typical, but these are extraordinary times in our university’s history.”

Middleton said the board “did an exhaustive investigation. Click’s behavior was inappropriate and unacceptable, and I fully support the board’s decision.”

According to university rules, a complaint of misconduct would have needed to have been filed against Click by a member of the university community — a student, faculty administrator or curator — to launch a university investigation. That never happened.

Henrickson said curators were waiting for a faculty member to make a complaint, but once the Columbia city prosecutor charged Click with assault, the board felt compelled to begin an investigation.

Columbia prosecutor Steve Richey agreed to let Click off with community service as long as she stayed out of trouble for a year.

Missouri lawmakers have threatened to reduce the university’s funding as much as $8 million, including eliminating Click’s salary next year and also targeting the salary of the chairman in the communications department, where Click worked.

But Henrickson said the board’s decision to investigate Click’s actions was not influenced by pressure from lawmakers who have been calling for Click to be fired since November.

Rep. Caleb Jones, a Columbia Republican, said Click should have been fired “months ago.”

But House Minority Leader Jake Hummel, a St. Louis Democrat, said, “Click’s continued employment at Mizzou was always a decision best left to the University of Missouri board of curators, not members of the General Assembly.”
He added, “Now that the board has acted, House Democrats are hopeful the misguided attempts to punish the university and its students will lose traction and the legislative focus can shift to helping Mizzou re-establish its reputation as one of our nation’s finest public universities.”

The university has been in the national spotlight since November when Concerned Student 1950 — a predominantly black student group — launched a protest for racial diversity and inclusion on the Columbia campus that led to a student hunger strike. Also, the football team, in support of protesters, refused to play until the system president stepped down.

President Tim Wolfe and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin later resigned.

Foley on Thursday said that “Concerned Student 1950 raised a lot of really important questions for us last fall.” He said he would like to continue to consider what needs to be done “to make our campus much more inclusive as we go forward. We are working hard to make this campus much more inclusive for all Missourians regardless of color, creed or background.”

Foley grilled by faculty for University of Missouri curators' decision to fire Melissa Click

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 8:32 pm

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley defended the University of Missouri Board of Curators’ decision to fire Melissa Click for 40 minutes Thursday under harsh questioning from the MU Faculty Council.

When it was over, the council issued a statement condemning the board’s action, accusing the board of violating due process and the standard procedures that should govern grievances against faculty.
“By flouting the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University, the Board of Curators has caused needless injury to the University of Missouri,” the council resolution said.

Foley said afterward he would not defend the action if he thought it was wrong. During the meeting, Flore Zephir, a professor of romance languages, asked Foley if he thought the vote to fire Click undermines his authority as chancellor.

“I do not,” Foley said. “I think they did the right thing.”

Click was fired on a 4-2 vote of the curators Wednesday evening during a closed meeting in Kansas City. Click, an assistant professor of communication, was recorded trying to remove a student videographer from the Concerned Student 1950 protest site Nov. 9 and calling for muscle to help when he refused. After the board suspended Click pending an investigation of the Nov. 9 incident, a second video was made public, showing her stepping between protesters and police during the Oct. 10 Homecoming parade and shouting at an officer to “get your f---ing hands off me.”

“I think the behavior she displayed, jumping between the students and the police officers after the police officers had already cleared the streets, putting herself between them, using language I thought was unnecessary, I found that appalling,” Foley said.

The harshest criticism during Thursday’s meeting came from faculty council members and others in the audience who supported the protesters’ goals. Click has become an outlet for resentment, said Traci Wilson-Kleekamp, who works in the Athletic Department’s Total Person program.

When 32 black members of the Tiger football team announced a boycott of athletic activities in support of a hunger strike by graduate student Jonathan Butler, it drew national media attention and quickly resulted in the resignation of UM System President Tim Wolfe.

“This is proxy racism. It is bullshit,” Wilson-Kleekamp said. “We need to start talking about the fact that we didn’t do right by our students and that we are going to take it out on a professor, a white woman, who said that I am going to protect this space for these black students who haven’t been heard. That is unacceptable.”

Foley had sought to allow the decision about Click to be part of the consideration of granting her tenure. The curators announced an investigation two days after Click was charged Jan. 25 with third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, in municipal court.

Previous faculty council statements questioned whether the curators should intervene and cited the university rules that lay out a process for investigating faculty misconduct. The board jumped in because no one had initiated that process with a complaint, Foley said.

“My sense is the board felt that they had to act because nothing had happened on campus,” he said.
The resolution passed Thursday said the university failed to provide Click the protections she expected from the rules.

“When controversy arises, it is important to follow existing rules so that all involved are treated fairly,” the resolution said. “By creating a new process as it went along, the Board denied Professor Click the fair procedures that she, like all faculty, had been promised.”

From the day the video of Click interfering with reporters surfaced, she has been a focus of criticism. Some of it came from journalists and First Amendment advocates, but it has been kept alive by Republican lawmakers who have clamored for her dismissal.

“I think it was a horrible mistake,” said Jeff Rouder, a professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences. “I think you all thought it would go away. It didn’t and when it didn’t you just cut us loose, you threw the faculty under the bus.”

MISSOURIAN

Foley addresses concerns about Melissa Click at MU Faculty Council meeting
REBECCA SMITH, RACHEL PHILLIPS, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The atmosphere was tense at a packed MU Faculty Council meeting Thursday as the discussion about due process and First Amendment rights sparked by the actions of Melissa Click and the UM Board of Curators continued.

MU Faculty Council chair Ben Trachtenberg began the meeting by denouncing the curators’ 4-2 decision at Wednesday’s executive session to fire Click, who called for "some muscle" as she tried to remove a student journalist from a November campus protest. The decision followed a nearly month-long investigation of Click's behavior while she was suspended with pay.

Click had drawn another round of condemnation after the Missourian published an article Feb. 13 including previously unreleased Columbia police footage from the Oct. 10 Homecoming parade showing her shouting an expletive at an officer. MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley called her behavior "appalling."
"I wish to state that board made a terrible decision," Trachtenberg said. He said the curators ignored due process, Click's First Amendment rights and undermined Foley's authority.

Foley addressed numerous council and audience questions and concerns for 40 minutes afterward and said he believes the curators made the correct decision. He said he did not feel undermined by the curators' action.

He did acknowledge that, in retrospect, he would have communicated more with Trachtenberg in the past few months and realized how Click's actions were handled was a bigger deal than he thought.

Other faculty members spoke in defense of Click. Traci Wilson-Kleekamp, who works in the Missouri athletics department's Total Person program, called Click's firing "proxy racism."

Faculty members also expressed concern about their ability to exercise their First Amendment rights. Angela Speck, an astrophysics professor, asked who determines what she is and is not allowed to say.

"Who gets to make the decision as to which words are good and which words are bad?" Speck said. "I speak a different version of English from you, and I can say all sorts of words that would be really quite horrible. Who gets to make that judgment?"

Foley condemned Click's use of an expletive but said it wasn't necessarily Click's words that led to her firing.

Her behavior and poor judgement during the protests were the key factors in the curators' decision, he said.

Foley also cautioned faculty members to be careful of what they say in public.

“People have cameras. People record things. People put them on websites. They go viral," he said. "Judgments are made, and we have to be careful."
The faculty council released a statement Thursday echoing Trachtenberg's remarks opposing the decision.

"When controversy arises, it is important to follow existing rules so that all involved are treated fairly," the statement read. "By creating a new process as it went along, the Board denied Professor Click the fair procedures that she, like all faculty, had been promised. ... By flouting the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University, the Board of Curators has caused needless injury to the University of Missouri."

The council also discussed the reinstatement of Patrice "Patrick" Delafontaine as dean of the School of Medicine and recognized Department of Black Studies chair Stephanie Shonekan for her appointment to the UM System presidential search committee.

MU Faculty Council discusses Click's firing

Watch story: http://www.abc17news.com/news/MU-Faculty-Council-discusses-Click-s-firing/38204696

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Hours after the University of Missouri Board of Curators fires Melissa Click, the MU Faculty Council met at Memorial Union on campus.

Thursday’s meeting was dominated by the topic of Click’s termination.

ABC 17 NEWS has been on the story since Dr. Click's first known encounter with the media during the November protests that were seen in a video that received national attention.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley maintained a cool tone as he was peppered by terse questions and comments from faculty members, most of whom disagree with the Board of Curators decision to fire Dr. Click.
Some people in attendance seemed audibly stunned that Chancellor Foley agrees with the decision to fire Dr. Click.

Faculty members raised issues ranging from violation of Constitutional rights to what they call legislative bullying, referencing some members of Missouri lawmaker’s threats to withhold money from the UM System over the Click issue.

Dr. Ben Trachtenberg is the chairman of the MU Faculty Council. He says he understands the council’s anger.

Trachtenberg says, “The issue is not whether you approve of Melissa Click’s conduct. You can be very much against Melissa Click’s conduct and think she ought to have had a fair hearing.” He says the faculty has a huge diversity of opinion on what they thought of Click’s behavior. Trachtenberg says, “Some people were very, very angry with her and thought she deserved to be fired. Some people think she did a great thing and protected students that were at great risk. That’s not the question today. The question is, did she get her fair process. And, in my mind, the answer is no.

Click has defended herself since the very beginning, even employing a reputation management firm to deal with her personnel, legal and media battles. That firm told us Thursday night that Dr. Click is not doing any interviews and has no comment on her termination.

During Thursday’s meeting, some faculty members called the Curators’ decision to terminate Click precipitous and say it’s another black-eye for the university.

According to the letter to Dr. Click from the Board of Curators, Click has until March 4th to submit her response to the 7-page dismissal letter.

Based on that response, the Board says it has the right to reverse its decision to terminate Click.

Melissa Click calls investigation by University of Missouri curators unfair

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 3:07 pm
Fired Assistant Professor Melissa Click, in her statement to explain her actions during campus protests, challenged the fairness and accuracy of the investigative report used by the University of Missouri Board of Curators to fire her.

In a five-page statement dated Feb. 19, released along with the investigative report and a statement from Board of Curators Chair Pam Henrickson, Click said she should not be judged based on video recordings of her actions at a Homecoming parade protest and at the Concerned Student 1950 protest site on Carnahan Quadrangle.

“While some would judge me by a short portion of videotape, I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events,” Click wrote. “Those videotaped moments (for which I have formally and publicly apologized) deserve to be understood in a wider frame of reference, among all of the momentous events of the fall semester.”

The board said Thursday that it had voted to fire Click during a closed meeting Wednesday night in Kansas City. Henrickson, interim UM President Mike Middleton and interim Columbia campus Chancellor Hank Foley held a news conference call at 2 p.m. to explain and defend the decision.

Henrickson said the action had nothing to do with months of pressure from legislators and others since Click was recorded calling for “some muscle” to remove a student videographer from the Carnahan Quadrangle protest site on Nov. 9. She also said the action was not intended to soothe legislative anger and help the university maintain its funding in the face of proposed cuts.

“The legislature will do what they will do,” she said.

The battle over Click has consumed the attention of the university, the legislature and higher education groups and observers since the video of her actions Nov. 9 went viral. The American Association of University Professors has condemned the curators' decision to investigate her.

Foley defended that decision and said it should not impact recruiting.

Ben Trachtenberg, chairman of the MU Faculty Council, denounced the decision.

“The Board has made a terrible decision,” Trachtenberg wrote in an email to the Tribune. “Regardless of one’s opinion of Professor Click’s behavior or fitness for duty, she was entitled by our rules — rules that the Board of Curators has approved — to a fair process. She did not receive it.”

Click wrote that a tense situation at the parade was not fairly characterized in the report.

“The scene I encountered included older, mostly male, white adults from the crowd using their hands and bodies to move the protesters so the parade could pass by them,” she wrote. “I heard angry and threatening language, including swear words directed at the students. Tension was palpable and members of the crowd, who lined the sides of the streets and outnumbered the students, were angry.”
Henrickson was one of two curators who voted against firing Click. She declined to give her reasons.

“My opinion doesn’t matter,” she said. “The board voted to terminate her and I supported their decision.”

The political reaction was swift. Catherine Hanaway, a Republican candidate for governor, praised the decision.

"I commend the University of Missouri Board of Curators for its decision to terminate Professor Click, a move I called for over a month ago," Hanaway said. "Click's attempt to intimidate a student journalist with a threat of violence was outrageous, and her brand of radicalism should have no place at any of our public universities."

House Minority Leader Jacob Hummel, D-St. Louis, said he hopes lawmakers will now relent on their attempts to cut UM funding.

“Now that the board has acted, House Democrats are hopeful the misguided attempts to punish the university and its students will lose traction, and the legislative focus can shift to helping Mizzou re-establish its reputation as one of our nation’s finest public universities,” he said.

Report shows differing narratives of Click confrontation

By Garrett Bergquist

COLUMBIA, Mo. — When the UM System Board of Curators on Thursday announced its decision to fire Professor Melissa Click, it released an independent report on her actions as well as a written response from Click.

The curators asked the St. Louis law firm Bryan Cave LLP to review Click's actions during the October 2015 Homecoming parade and the protests on the Carnahan Quadrangle a month later. The 24-page report was compiled from interviews with Click, several members of the group
Concerned Student 1950, and students Tim Tai and Mark Schierbecker. It was Schierbecker who shot the video of protesters confronting Tai.

Click told investigators she first met the members of Concerned Student 1950 at the October 10 Homecoming parade, when 11 black students blocked then-UM System President Tim Wolfe's car. She said she became frustrated by what she perceived as a lack of sympathy toward the protesters by the crowd and walked over to join the protesters. Speaking to investigators on Feb. 2, Click said taking part in that protest was a "life changing" event.

During the day of Nov. 8, the day before Wolfe's resignation, Click told investigators some students were becoming uncomfortable with the heavy media presence and posted some "no media" signs in the area. She said she thinks then-Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was in the area but she never raised the media issue with him or other administrators.

On Nov. 9, Schierbecker recorded video of protesters including Click and Janna Basler confronting Tim Tai. The report alleges Click confronted Tai directly and said, "Students, can you tell him how much you want him to go?" When students started chanting that Tai needed to go, Click allegedly yelled "I can't hear you!"

Click told investigators Tai "charged" the perimeter the students had formed, and she thought Tai's behavior was inappropriate. Tai told investigators he never pushed into the circle and he never saw any other journalist try to do so. The report says several faculty and students said the media acted aggressively and disrespectfully toward the protesters that day.

In a written response to the report, delivered on Feb. 19, Click wrote that Bryan Cave LLP's report left out a number of points that she felt put her actions in context. She noted a number of alleged racist incidents that happened on the MU campus that fall, including cases of heckling using racial slurs and the threats Hunter Park is accused of posting on the social media app Yik Yak. She said several members of Concerned Student 1950 described the media as being "very aggressive" and disrespectful.

"I firmly believe that the report's failure to characterize the environment of the Carnahan Quadrangle as a challenging and volatile environment excludes crucial details for understanding the actions that took place on that day," she wrote.

University of Missouri curators vote to fire Melissa Click
By Rudi Keller

Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 1:50 pm

Assistant Professor Melissa Click, captured on video calling for “some muscle” to remove reporters from a campus protest site, was fired Wednesday by the University of Missouri Board of Curators, Chairwoman Pam Henrickson said in a prepared statement.

The board voted 4-2 in favor of termination during a closed session in Kansas City, with Henrickson and curator John Phillips opposing the move, UM System spokesman John Fougere wrote in an email Thursday. Curators David Steelman, Donald Cupps, Maurice Graham and Phil Snowden voted in favor of firing Click.

Click did not respond to a message seeking comment Thursday. The board earlier voted to suspend Click with pay on Jan. 27.

“The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views,” Henrickson said in the prepared statement. “However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.”

The statement from Henrickson cited Click’s behavior at the Homecoming parade, when she cursed at a police officer who was moving protesters out of the street, and on Nov. 9 at Concerned Student 1950’s protest site on the Carnahan Quadrangle. Her actions at the protest site, Henrickson said, “when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.”

The investigators hired by the curators reviewed videos, documents and conducted more than 20 interviews, Henrickson said.

“She has the right to appeal her termination,” Henrickson said. “The board went to significant lengths to ensure fairness and due process.”

Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley released a statement Thursday admitting the process the curators used to fire Click was "not typical."

"These have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university," Foley said. "Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university."

Foley said the process and investigation that led to Click's termination had been fair.

Click’s employment has become a political liability for the university. The House Budget Committee will consider a spending bill next week that cuts $402,000 from the Columbia
campus budget — the amount of Click’s salary as well as that of her department chair and the dean of the College of Arts and Science — and $7.6 million from the UM System’s administrative budget.

State Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, wrote to members of the Downtown Community Improvement District board that Click is a symbol that is hurting the university.

“Everybody that I talked to said it would be a step in the right direction and would show some leadership,” Basye said Thursday. “I firmly believe she should have been terminated after the first video.”

Click “is a flashpoint that allows us to potentially begin to move away from a backward-looking dialogue to a more forward-facing dialogue,” state Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said Thursday before the announcement. “I think it would help” if she were fired, he said.

The curators’ earlier decision to suspend Click has been criticized by the MU Faculty Council and the American Association of University Professors.

MISSOURIAN

UM curators fire Melissa Click after months of controversy

WILLIAM SCHMITT, Updated 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **Melissa Click has been fired after the UM System Board of Curators voted 4-2 to terminate her employment.**

Curators David Steelman, Maurice Graham, Phillip Snowden and Donald Cupps voted during an executive session Wednesday night to fire Click. Chairwoman Pamela Henrickson and John Phillips voted against firing Click, and Henrickson released this statement Thursday afternoon:

"The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member," Henrickson noted in the statement. She said Click’s behavior demanded "serious action."

Henrickson said Click "has the right to ask the board for reconsideration."
"It would be her process, and she could submit anything she would like to convince the board to change its mind," Henrickson said.

**Cause to investigate**

Since November, Click, an MU assistant professor of communication, has become a crucible for debates about academic due process, First Amendment rights and protests against racism at MU.

She drew the ire of more than 100 state lawmakers and others who thought her actions disgraced MU. As a result of a Nov. 9 confrontation with MU student and independent journalist Mark Schierbecker near the Concerned Student 1950 camp on the Mel Carnahan Quadrangle, Click was charged with third-degree assault.

The Board of Curators suspended her from teaching on Jan. 27 pending an investigation conducted by the St. Louis law firm Bryan Cave. Investigators reviewed paperwork and video, and more than 20 people, including Click, were interviewed as part of their investigation.

The report made it clear that the law firm's job was to collect facts and testimony; it was not asked to offer opinions or make recommendations.

Click was given the report Feb. 12 and said in her response one week later that her actions needed to be understood within the campus climate at the time.

She wrote that the report "omits a number of crucial descriptions and events that give context to my actions" at the parade and on the quadrangle. She said she believed the board needed "a fuller picture of the environment in which I found myself."

**Pressures of process**

The decision to fire Click comes after the curators faced pressure from inside and outside the state to make a decision.
In early January, 118 Republican legislators wrote letters to the curators asking for Click's termination, and the House Budget Committee pushed a proposal to slash the UM System budget.

Meanwhile, incensed MU faculty insisted that the board must follow due process. They cited the process outlined in UM Collected Rules and Regulations as the appropriate venue for adjudicating charges of faculty misconduct.

In a conference call following the firing's announcement, Henrickson said Click's termination was meant to prevent her conduct from going unaddressed.

She said the demands by the legislators had not factored into the decision, and the curators did not consider filing a faculty irresponsibility charge under the Collected Rules and Regulations.

"We were hoping that a member of the faculty would file such a charge," Henrickson said.

A state legislator filed a complaint last week, but because he was not affiliated with the university, he didn't have standing to do so.

Among the other curators, neither Steelman nor Cupps could be reached for comment. Graham and Snowden declined to comment beyond referring to Henrickson's statement.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley, who called Click's actions at the Oct. 10 Homecoming parade "appalling" after the Missourian published an article Feb. 13 including body camera footage of the event, issued a statement Thursday supporting the curators' decision.

"The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical — but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university," Foley said.
In the conference call, UM System Interim President Mike Middleton said he agreed with the decision. Middleton characterized Bryan Cave's investigation as "exhaustive," and he said Click's "behavior was inappropriate and unacceptable."

**Swift reactions**

MU Faculty Council Chair and Law School professor Ben Trachtenberg said he thought the decision to fire Click was "terrible."

"The board had every opportunity to use our existing processes and chose not to," Trachtenberg said. "Regardless of what one thinks about Melissa Click or her behavior, she was entitled to a fair process, not one created on the fly, containing at least one judge (Steelman) who had written in the Washington Post how the case should come out."

Angela Speck, a Faculty Council member and professor of astrophysics, said, "I think it's ridiculous that she should be fired without due process."

At the MU Faculty Council meeting Thursday after Click was fired, Foley stood by the Board of Curators' decision. He said did not feel that his authority had been undermined by the decision.

After the meeting, the Faculty Council released a statement noting that Click was never afforded a fair hearing and that the curators could have filed a faculty irresponsibility complaint against Click instead of hiring a law firm to investigate.

"By flouting the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University, the Board of Curators has caused needless injury to the University of Missouri," the council wrote in its statement.

Mitchell McKinney, who chairs the Department of Communication, declined to comment Thursday afternoon.

Lacy Rushin, of the Austin, Texas, firm Status Labs that has been helping Click rehabilitate her image, said Thursday afternoon that Click would have no comment at this time.
"We are not Melissa's legal counsel, but we will continue to help as needed," Rushin said in an email.

Schierbecker said he "felt like the investigation was thorough enough and brought enough information to the table that the Board of Curators probably made a confident decision."

"Click obviously has some issues to work through," Schierbecker said. "What happens between me and her wasn't all that happened that day. What you saw on the video was pretty much what other people saw in their interactions with her that day, and I would speculate that that had something to do with what happened."

The Bryan Cave report includes comments from a Feb. 2 interview with Click about her call for "some muscle." She told an investigator she thought "it was common practice in the camp that when something got heated, large men would come in to defuse the situation." She characterized this as "protocol" for dealing with confrontations.

**First Amendment issues**

Tim Tai, a Missourian photographer who was photographing the Nov. 9 protests for ESPN while Click was present, said Thursday he was "hopeful we're finally done talking about Click and can start focusing outrage on why black students are harassed and why they feel isolated on campus and underrepresented in faculty demographics."

One common claim against Click was that she had infringed upon Tai and Schierbecker's freedoms of speech, press and assembly. First Amendment issues galvanized those who saw Click's actions as an assault on one of the country's fundamental rights.

Brian Brooks, the former associate dean in the Missouri School of Journalism, filed a Title IX report against Click after the Nov. 9 incident.

In a letter to the editor published in the Missourian on Feb. 19, Brooks said her actions were "outrageous" and "hurt the cause of the very students she sought to support."
Brooks said Thursday he thought it was about time that Click was fired.

"Her actions in both circumstances were deplorable," Brooks said.

On Feb. 18, members of the MU chapter of Young Americans for Liberty collected signatures calling for Click's firing. The group organized to promote free speech, the right to assembly and other First Amendment rights.

Thomas Bradbury, the president of the MU chapter, said that while the decision to fire Click wouldn't "completely remedy the current negative perception associated with the University of Missouri," it was "a step on the correct path."

The curators, Bradbury said, "are showing that students' (First Amendment) rights are more important than a professor attempting to make a political statement."

**Univ. of Missouri fires instructor after student run-ins**

Associated Press  
2:32 PM, Feb 25, 2016  

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri fired an assistant professor on Thursday who had been suspended after run-ins with student journalists during protests last year, including a videotaped confrontation where she called for "some muscle" to remove a videographer from the Columbia campus.
Top university administrators announced Melissa Click's dismissal during a conference call. More than 100 state lawmakers had called for the dismissal of the 45-year-old assistant communications professor.

A video clip that went viral showed Click calling for "some muscle" to remove a student videographer during protests on Nov. 9 that were spurred by what activists said was administrators' indifference to racial issues on campus. Click was later charged with misdemeanor assault, but a Columbia prosecutor ultimately agreed to drop the case if Click completed community service.

More recently, police body camera footage from the October homecoming parade shows Click telling police to get their hands off students and cursing at an officer who grabbed her. Demonstrators had blocked then-University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe's vehicle, and the video shows Click telling police to "get your hands off the children" and cursing at an officer who grabbed her shoulder.

As Columbia police pushed protesters onto the sidewalk, Click hugged students and spoke with them before stepping between Missouri graduate student Jonathan Butler, who later went on a hunger strike, and an officer.

Click, who was suspended last month, has said she regretted her actions.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said earlier this month that the homecoming parade footage showed a "pattern of misconduct."

"Her conduct and behavior are appalling, and I am not only disappointed, I am angry, that a member of our faculty acted this way," he said.

The full statement provided by the University of Missouri Interim Chancellor Hank Foley is listed below.
The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical—but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university. Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university. I can assure you—as Board Chairwoman Henrickson noted—that there has been fairness in this process and investigation.

Finally, I personally would like to reiterate my commitment to ensuring a university community where we ALL feel valued and heard. Work is already underway—with much more to come. In the meantime, I, too, look forward to meaningful conversations ahead.

Melissa Click fired by University of Missouri Board of Curators


COLUMBIA, MO (KTVI) - The University of Missouri Board of Curators has fired Assistant Professor of Communication Melissa Click. She drew national attention in November when she called for "muscle" to remove a student journalist from the scene of a student protest on racism. The video went viral.

The announcement came during a Thursday afternoon conference call. Board chair Pam Henrickson said they received the results of an investigation. The board voted to terminate based on the findings. The vote was four to two in favor of firing her.
When asked if there is a severance package Henrickson responded, "It is a straight-up dismissal."

According to a public relations firm working for Click, she does not have any comment today. She is entitled to request reconsideration of her dismissal by the curators.

The Board says that there was no pressure from Missouri state legislators to fire the professor. The investigation was started after charges were pressed against the professor. She is charged with a misdemeanor assault in connection with a run-in with student journalists during campus protests in November 2015.

This is a statement University of Missouri Board of Curators chair Pam Henrickson:

Investigators reviewed relevant documents, materials and video recordings, as well as interviewed more than 20 witnesses. Dr. Click was interviewed twice and was represented by counsel on both occasions. When Dr. Click identified witnesses that she thought were relevant, the investigators interviewed - or attempted to interview - each of those witnesses and included their information in the report.

On February 12, Dr. Click was provided a complete copy of the report of the investigation, which included all documents, videos and witness statements gathered during the investigation and was offered the opportunity to submit a written response. Her response was received on February 19, after which the board received the report from investigators, including Dr. Click’s response.

After reviewing the report and Dr. Click’s response, and, after extensive discussion, the board voted last night in executive session to terminate the employment of Dr. Click.
She has the right to appeal her termination. The board went to significant lengths to ensure fairness and due process for Dr. Click.

The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member. The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.

Infamous 'we need some muscle' professor, Melissa Click, fired from University of Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The University of Missouri Board of Curators has fired assistant professor Melissa Click.

Click is the embattled professor who faced nationwide backlash after being caught on camera harassing a student journalist during protests on the university campus in November.

In the video, Click was seen yelling at a student journalist and calling on people around her to bring in "some muscle" to help remove the reporters.
Earlier in January, University of Missouri faculty members voiced their support of Click in a letter.

The faculty made public a letter of support that had been sent in December to university leadership after more than 100 Republican Missouri lawmakers and 18 members of the Senate Majority Caucus called for Melissa Click's firing.

In a signed letter, the lawmakers wrote "As a professional representing our University, Click failed to meet the obligations she has to her supervisors, fellow professors, University students, and the taxpayers of Missouri. As an academic professional, her first goal should have been to promote a safe and stable learning environment for all students, and to represent the University to the public in a way that strengthens the image of our flagship state institution of higher education. Instead, Professor Click's comments served to inflame an already caustic situation that was clearly out of line."

Lawmakers urged the Board, Interim President Mike Middleton and Interim Chancellor Hank Foley to take immediate actions to address Click's actions, and send a strong message that the leadership "can and will act quickly and decisively to root out bad behavior."

The whole situation continued to escalate after a member of the UM Board of Curators called for Click to be fired.

Curator David Steelman of Rolla described Melissa Click as "an embarrassment."

But speaking before a meeting, Steelman noted that he's not chairman of the board and isn't able to put her continued employment on a future agenda.

The City of Columbia filed a third-degree assault charge against Click on Monday, to which she pleaded not guilty.

The city decided to forgo prosecuting her after reaching a deal.

Click was suspended in late January, pending further investigation.

The Board authorized an investigation to determine whether it additional discipline for Click was appropriate.

Two weeks after being suspended, a new video surfaced, showing Click in a confrontation with Columbia Police during the Mizzou Homecoming Parade.

Interim University of Missouri Chancellor Hank Foley released a statement on Sunday, February 14th saying:

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.

A statement issued Thursday afternoon says that last week, the Board of Curators received the report, and reviewed the relevant documents, materials, and video recordings, along with hearing testimony from more than 20 witnesses.

Dr. Click was interviewed twice, and was represented by counsel on both occasions.

Click was provided a complete copy of the report on February 12, and was offered the opportunity to submit a written response.

After reviewing the report and Click's response, the board voted 4-2 Wednesday night in favor of terminating Click during a closed session in Kansas City.

Their statement reads as follows:

The board believes that Dr. Click's conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member. The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click's behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.

The board respects Dr. Click's right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views. However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.

The release issued on Thursday says Click has the right to appeal her termination.

UM Board of Curators announces Melissa Click's termination
COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri Board of Curators announced they terminated Melissa Click at a conference call with media Thursday afternoon.

After the announcement, the University of Missouri released the following statement below:

**Pam Henrickson, chair of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, released the following statement today:**

Last week, the Board of Curators received the investigative report detailing the relevant facts surrounding recent conduct by MU assistant professor, Dr. Melissa Click. On January 27, the board authorized an investigation so it could determine whether additional discipline for Dr. Click was appropriate.

Investigators reviewed relevant documents, materials and video recordings, as well as interviewed more than 20 witnesses. Dr. Click was interviewed twice and was represented by counsel on both occasions. When Dr. Click identified witnesses that she thought were relevant, the investigators interviewed - or attempted to interview - each of those witnesses and included their information in the report.

On February 12, Dr. Click was provided a complete copy of the report of the investigation, which included all documents, videos and witness statements gathered during the investigation and was offered the opportunity to submit a written response. Her response was received on February 19, after which the board received the report from investigators, including Dr. Click’s response.

After reviewing the report and Dr. Click’s response, and, after extensive discussion, the board voted last night in executive session to terminate the employment of Dr. Click. She has the right to appeal her termination. The board went to significant lengths to ensure fairness and due process for Dr. Click.

The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member. The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action.

The board respects Dr. Click’s right to express her views and does not base this decision on her support for students engaged in protest or their views. However, Dr. Click was not entitled to interfere with the rights of others, to confront members of law enforcement or to encourage potential physical intimidation against a student.
Together as a university community, we must move forward from the events of the fall. The board will continue to engage in productive and meaningful conversations with student and campus leaders to facilitate communication, transparency and to address issues brought to the forefront.

**Statement from University of Missouri-Columbia Interim Chancellor Hank Foley:**

The process the Board of Curators used to reach a determination about Dr. Click’s employment at the university is not typical—but these have been extraordinary times in our university’s history, and I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university. Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university. I can assure you—as Board Chairwoman Henrickson noted—that there has been fairness in this process and investigation.

Finally, I personally would like to reiterate my commitment to ensuring a university community where we ALL feel valued and heard. Work is already underway—with much more to come. In the meantime, I, too, look forward to meaningful conversations ahead.

**Reaction from the Missouri Press Association**

KOMU 8 News sat down with the Missouri Press Association Executive Director Doug Crews following Click’s resignation. He said his first reaction was that he was not surprised by her dismissal and that it was going to happen.

"I think as an individual that what occurred was so damaging to this university in so many ways, I think this is probably the best outcome for the university and for the Columbia community."

Crews also said he hopes the board of curators followed the process to formally dismiss Click. He said he hopes the university can move forward in a positive way. Crews said he thinks her dismissal will also help with the Missouri legislature. The Missouri Press Association is 100 percent supportive of First Amendment rights of student journalists.
COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri Board of Curators released its 24-page investigative report on assistant communications professor Melissa Click Thursday afternoon after announcing her termination.

The curator's investigation conducted by Bryan Cave, LLP started on Jan. 27 just two days after the city prosecutor filed assault charges against the professor. Click was featured in a video that went viral confronting a student journalist during the campus protest last fall.

The investigation included more than 50 pieces of evidence including the viral videos and statements from Click and other MU faculty members. The law firm also interviewed 21 people including two with Click and members of Concerned Student 19-50.

On Feb. 12 Click received a copy of the completed reported and responded to curators with a 5-page letter a week letter.

In that letter, Click said she shouldn't be judged by her actions in the videos and the board needed a fuller picture of the context of the environment.

The report cites Click leading a chant against student journalist Tim Tai and encouraging student protests to join her by shouting "I can't hear you!"

Later in the same video Click is met by student journalist Mark Shierbecker. In Click’s first interview with investigators she states she didn't believe Shierbecker was a member of the media and believed he may have been armed with a gun.

Click also said her call for "muscle" against Shierbecker was something she thought was "protocol" in the camp area for large men to diffuse a heated situation.

Only one person investigators interviewed said they actually saw the confrontations with Click and the student journalists. Members of Concerned Student 1950 who were interviewed said she was just trying to protect them.

The Board of Curators said Click's actions violated several university policies including defending the right of free speech and respecting students.

MU communication professor Melissa Click fired
COLUMBIA, Mo. - **ABC 17 News has confirmed a University of Missouri Communication professor has been fired from her position.**

MU officials told ABC 17 Thursday afternoon that Dr. Melissa Click is no longer employed at the university.

Click has received backlash after appearing in more than one video clashing with law enforcement and journalists last fall.

University of Missouri Curators released a statement Friday saying the board launched an investigation into whether more discipline was needed for Dr. Click.

Investigators interviewed witnesses as well as Click, and the Board of Curators voted Wednesday night to terminate Click.

Curators said, "Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member. The circumstances surrounding Dr. Click’s behavior, both at a protest in October when she tried to interfere with police officers who were carrying out their duties, and at a rally in November, when she interfered with members of the media and students who were exercising their rights in a public space and called for intimidation against one of our students, we believe demands serious action."

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said, "I am in complete agreement with the board that the termination of Dr. Click is in the best interest of our university. Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university. I can assure you—as Board Chairwoman Henrickson noted—that there has been fairness in this process and investigation."

Click responded to the investigation, saying she thinks the report leaves out crucial information that "gave context to her actions."

Click cited events that "escalated racial tension" on campus as her reasoning to support students' efforts to call attention to those issues.

The professor highlighted several events that transpired and increased unrest on campus starting early last fall, including posts on social media.

Click describes in detail what she witnessed on the day of the MU Homecoming football game, where she was captured on police body camera video yelling at police.

She said she feels the report doesn't fully characterize the environment that day.

"At the end of the video, you can see the students embracing and hear them sobbing. This is the tense and tricky environment I stepped into. I had no training or experience with public events such as this, but felt that someone should step in to support and protect these MU students," she said.
Click claimed she had little to do with the Concerned Student 1950 group between the parade and November 9, but got involved again after the football team supported Johnathan Butler's hunger strike.

"I remained concerned that the students were vulnerable to an attack from angry students or community members," said Click.

Click describes the environment on the Carnahan Quad on November 9 as tense, and says no police were present at the large protest.

"I firmly believe that the report’s failure to characterize the environment of the Carnahan Quadrangle as a challenging and volatile environment excludes critical details for understanding the actions that took place on that day."

University of Missouri System Fires Assistant Professor Melissa Click

Listen to story: http://kbia.org/post/university-missouri-system-fires-assistant-professor-melissa-click

In a media briefing held over phone early Thursday afternoon, University of Missouri Interim Chancellor Hank Foley, University of Missouri System Interim President Mike Middleton and University of Missouri Board of Curators Chair Pam Henrickson announced that Assistant Professor of Communication Melissa Click has been terminated after a vote from the University of Missouri system’s board of curators.

Click was thrust into the national spotlight during protests at the university last November, when a student videographer filmed her calling for “some muscle” to remove press and observers from the scene of a protest following the resignation of former University of Missouri System President Timothy Wolfe. She later became the target of criticism within the Missouri state legislature, including attempts to significantly reduce the university system's funding in response to her continued employment.
Melissa Click fired by Board of Curators

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley: “Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university.”

Melissa Click was fired after the UM System Board of Curators voted 4-2 in a closed meeting on Wednesday.

Board of Curators Chairwoman Pamela Henrickson said Click, an assistant communications professor, was dismissed with no pay or severance. She also said that Click has the right to appeal the decision and ask the board for reconsideration.

“The board believes that Dr. Click’s conduct was not compatible with university policies and did not meet expectations for a university faculty member,” Henrickson said in a conference call with press Thursday afternoon.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said he agrees with the board that Click’s termination is in the best interest of the university.

“Her actions in October and November are those that directly violate the core values of our university,” Foley said.

Interim UM System President Mike Middleton also said he agreed with the board’s decision.

“Dr. Click’s behavior was inappropriate and unacceptable,” Middleton said.

The board suspended Click on Jan. 27 pending an investigation for her conduct, which included calling for “muscle” to handle a student journalist on Carnahan Quad at the campsite of Concerned Student 1950. Another video of Click taken from the body camera of an MU Police Department officer at the Homecoming parade Oct. 10 later surfaced showing Click shouting an expletive at an officer.

The investigative report on Click was made available to the Board of Curators Feb. 20. Henrickson said in a statement that Click was interviewed twice with legal representation. Click received the report Feb. 12 and submitted a written response to the board on Feb. 19, Henrickson said.

“There was a lot of sorrow and regret and fear,” Click said in an interview with The Maneater earlier this month. “A lot of disappointment with myself, knowing that my behavior in that video isn’t a good representation of me and certainly didn’t represent who I had been that day and who
I have been in my 12 years at MU. I was disappointed in myself that the good I had done that day and the good intentions I had brought with me to campus that day weren’t represented in that moment.”

Curator John Phillips and Henrickson were the only two board members who voted against terminating Click, but Henrickson said in the call that she supports the board’s decision.

Henrickson said the board did not take state legislators’ opinions into account when making the decision. She also said that they have not heard from legislators following the executive session.

“A professor at the university is a role model to young people, and I would say the same thing if it was a police officer doing that,” said Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Columbia, at a Feb. 5 town hall meeting. “She was across the line, and she shouldn’t be in that position.”

Concerned Student 1950 protested at the Board of Curators meeting Feb. 4, where they listed reasons they stood with Click. The group has not yet released a statement.

Foley said that Click’s termination is not related to Concerned Student 1950, and he will still be speaking at the Faculty Council meeting later Thursday afternoon.

“We attend a university where caring for and protecting the students results in you being fired,” the Legion of Black Collegians tweeted Thursday.

Courtney Fitzpatrick, Click's spokeswoman, said Click had no comment and is not taking interviews at this time.

MISSOURIAN

Legislators applaud firing of Melissa Click

ELLEN CAGLE, 11 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — After more than a month of criticizing university leadership, Missouri lawmakers commended the UM System Board of Curators on Thursday for its decision to terminate Melissa Click, who called for "some muscle" to remove a student journalist from recording campus protests last year.

Curators voted 4-2 to dismiss Click, an assistant professor of communication, in an executive session Wednesday night.
The Board of Curators suspended her with pay Jan. 27 and launched an investigation into her behavior conducted by the St. Louis law firm Bryan Cave. Investigators reviewed paperwork and videos, plus interviews with more than 20 people, including Click.

Click ignited controversy in November when she tried to block MU student Mark Schierbecker from filming protests on MU’s Mel Carnahan Quadrangle. Controversy resurfaced in early February when the Missourian released police video footage of Click at MU’s Homecoming parade. In the video, she shouts an expletive at a police officer.

House Speaker Pro Tem Denny Hoskins, R-Warrensburg, praised the curators’ decision on Thursday.

"It has been a long process, but MU made the correct decision in firing Melissa Click," he said. "Everyone knows if he or she acted the way Melissa Click did toward their fellow employees and customers, they would have been fired immediately. Her behavior was unbecoming of a university professor at Missouri’s flagship university, and she should be held to a higher standard," he said.

Since the legislative session began in January, lawmakers have assailed MU for its response to Click’s actions.

In early January, 99 Republican representatives and 18 senators signed letters urging the curators to fire Click. Boone County Republican Reps. Caleb Jones, Chuck Basye and Caleb Rowden and Sen. Kurt Schaefer signed the letters.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley and Interim UM System President Mike Middleton handled the situation well under the circumstances, but the curators made the right decision, Rowden said in an interview Thursday.

"Her actions were in direct conflict with everything the university stands for," he said. "This (firing) tells lawmakers they’re serious about moving on."
In the past two weeks, lawmakers have taken steps to restrict the UM System budget.

On Tuesday, the House Select Committee on Budget proposed a substitution to House Bill 2003 that would cut funding to the UM System budget by $8 million, with approximately $400,000 specifically targeting MU.

The $400,000 cut would encompass the equivalent of Click’s salary, in addition to the salaries of a chair in the Communication Department and Michael O’Brien, the dean of the College of Arts and Science. Click’s salary was $57,798.

The cuts were proposed in part because of “the inability to terminate employees who participate in conduct unbecoming the University of Missouri and our state,” Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, said in news release Tuesday. Flanigan is the chair of the Budget Committee.

On Thursday, Rowden, who is also a member of the Budget Committee, said he anticipates cuts will be minimized before the final budget is passed. Click’s dismissal is only one factor in the decision to cut the university system’s budget, he said.

“This is one more thing to check off the list,” Rowden said of Click's firing.

On Feb. 10, the House Committee for Higher Education Appropriations voted to exclude MU from a 2 percent funding increase for all state funded universities. The measure amended Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed budget, which offered a 6 percent increase in state money for public universities.

Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, who heads the Appropriations Committee for Higher Education, said at the Feb. 10 meeting the proposed cut is a consequence of recent campus events.

"It would be one thing if it just made state news, but this is national," she said. "It has made our university a laughingstock, and I'm trying to make people understand that we are not going to be a laughingstock."
In an email Thursday, she said she supported Click's termination.

"I’m pleased that the Board of Curators showed strong leadership with realizing that Ms. Click was causing great harm and embarrassment to the University," she said. "I’m confident that she was given a fair review."

Middleton, Foley and UM System Board of Curators Chair Pamela Henrickson pleaded for time to address problems at MU, including Click's employment, before the Joint Committee on Education on Feb. 17.

During the two-hour session, members of the committee expressed their disgust with Click’s actions and questioned whether leaders were taking enough action to address her behavior.

Foley said Click was entitled to a due process hearing, which can be a lengthy process. He told legislators that a complaint had to be filed against Click, reviewed by a faculty committee and presented to the chancellor.

During the hearing, Sen. Paul Wieland, R-Imperial, delivered a formal complaint to Foley to jumpstart the process. The complaint referenced the Nov. 9 protest and Click’s use of profanity at the MU Homecoming parade Oct. 10.

UM System spokesman John Fougere said on Feb. 19 the complaint had to come from within the university system to be valid.

Wieland praised the curators in a statement Thursday.

"I was pleased the university set aside the politics surrounding this situation and sided with common sense and the school’s administrative rules, which professor Click clearly violated," Wieland said.

Columbia Democrat Rep. Kip Kendrick said he respected the board's authority to fire Click in a statement Thursday, but he opposed the legislature's involvement in university affairs.
"The events of recent weeks have also highlighted the dangers of the General Assembly attempting to micro-manage our public colleges and universities," he said. "The legislative role is to set overall policy and allocate financial resources, not to dictate the operational decisions of individual institutions."

Missouri lawmakers react to Click's termination


JEFFERSON CITY - **With former MU Assistant Professor Melissa Click's termination Thursday, state lawmakers reacted to the decision.**

Rep. Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia) said he was in support of the board's decision in a statement to KOMU 8 News and said:

"The UM Board made the right decision today. Any time a professor behaves in a way that is so contradictory to the mission of our University, there must be consequences. As advocates fighting for the University of Missouri’s future success, our challenge and goal moving forward must be to work together to fully regain the trust and support of the general public. The firing of Mrs. Click was an important first step in that process.

With this episode behind us, I look forward to leading a conversation in the Missouri Legislature in the days and weeks to come about how we can restore the harmful budget cuts aimed at the University of Missouri. The time is now to stand with the tens of thousands of students on all four campuses who have had no role in the events of the last few months. Their education and their future success is my main priority moving forward."

Republicans had signed a letter to the UM System in January to put pressure on the Board of Curators to release Click from her job. The issue has proven to be a partisan debate in recent weeks.
Rep. Jake Hummel (D-St. Louis) also released a statement shortly after Thursday's announcement. Hummel did not take a position on whether he agreed with Click's released but said it should not have been up to legislators at the Capitol.

"Dr. Melissa Click's continued employment at Mizzou was always a decision best left to the University of Missouri Board of Curators, not members of the General Assembly. Now that the board has acted, House Democrats are hopeful the misguided attempts to punish the university and its students will lose traction, and the legislative focus can shift to helping Mizzou re-establish its reputation as one of our nation's finest public universities."

KOMU 8 News also reached out to Rep. Caleb Jones (R-Columbia) and Rep. Stephen Webber (D-Columbia) for their responses but have yet to hear back.

Lawmakers speak out about Click's firing and UM funding cuts

COLUMBIA, Mo - Several Missouri state legislators have been calling for Asst. Professor Melissa Click to be fired since a video showing her intimidating a student journalist by calling for "muscle" went viral and gained national attention. Four months later, the UM Board of Curators announced Click no longer has a job.

"Any time you have a professor that behaves in a way that's so contradictory to the very mission of the university, I mean, those actions have to have consequences," said Rep. Caleb Rowden, a Republican from Columbia.

On Tuesday, the House budget committee voted to cut more than $8 million from the UM budget to show its disapproval of how UM has handled Click. In the cuts, the committee specifically mentioned not funding Click's salary.

Rowden is on the budget committee. He said the announcement of Click's firing could help sway lawmakers to reverse the decision to cut UM funds.

"A desire for some of us to reverse those and something that we're working toward that end this certainly doesn't hurt that reality. I think it speaks to the fact that the university's serious about turning this thing around and they understand that there are issues," said Rowden.
Rep. Jake Hummel, the House minority leader, put out a statement about Click's firing. He said "Now that the board has acted, House Democrats are hopeful the misguided attempts to punish the university and its students will lose traction."

Rep. Chuck Basye, a Republican from Rocheport, also spoke out against funding cuts to UM but has always called for Click to be fired.

"This is a big step in the right direction, like I said, hopefully this will smooth things out and we can get to moving in a good way instead of focusing on all this negativity," said Basye.

Both representative Basye and Rowden said they're going to do what they can to get the funding cuts reversed.

The full Missouri Senate and House will take up the funding cut issue later. The Missouri constitution mandates legislators approve a final budget in early May.

MU students react to firing of Melissa Click

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri campus stayed peaceful Thursday after the UM System Board of Curators announced its decision to fire former professor Melissa Click.

ABC 17 News talked to students across campus to get their reaction to the announcement. Most students said they agreed with the board's decision.

"There are several of us who were concerned with the actions our administration was taking and the way Melissa Click was, frankly, being protected," Victoria Stroup, MU sophomore and writer for campusreform.org, said.

Not everyone on the MU campus was in support of Click's termination. Thursday afternoon, the Mizzou Legion of Black Collegians tweeted, "Words cannot express our appreciation for all that Melissa Click risked to protect the students fighting to make the University better."

But freshman student Matthew Gibbs did not agree.

"My opinion is that she deserved to be fired after the video surfaced, Gibbs said. "When a journalist is trying to take picture of a historic event, they should be allowed to. And a communications teacher should know that."
Stroup said she thought the board's decision was a start to the change needed on campus.

"I think this is a step in the right direction," Stroup said. "As long as Melissa Click was employed here, our degrees were being devalued."

"I think it's just kind of better to move on," MU graduate student Ashley Szatala said. "She can go maybe rebuild her career and brand somewhere else where she won't have such backlash."

ABC 17 News also reached out to Concerned Student 1950 to get their reaction to Click's termination, but the group has not responded.

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Student journalist responds to Melissa Click's termination


COLUMBIA, Mo. - ABC 17 News talked to the student journalist who was confronted by former professor Melissa Click in last fall’s viral video after Click was terminated Thursday.

**Mark Schierbecker** told ABC 17 News he thought the UM System Board of Curators did the right thing in firing Click, but said he thought there was still a lot of progress to be made on the university's end.

"The university has a long way to go toward restoring its reputation," Schierbecker said. "For awhile now, I've seen the university take a hostile stance on the First Amendment."

Earlier this month, new body camera video surfaced online of Click in confrontation with MUPD officers during the protests last November.

Schierbecker posted the video online days after Click first appeared on camera defending her actions for the first time since the protests. The student journalist told ABC 17 he posted the video because Click said it was an isolated incident, something he did not agree with.

Schierbecker said he was not rooting for Click to be fired, but said something had to be done before lawmakers took away funding from the university.
"What the university needs right now is to really win back the trust of the lawmakers who are making the funding happen for the university," Schierbecker said. "And I don't think it's just a funding issue. I think they ultimately did what's right."

The student journalist said he wanted to bring attention to the larger systematic issue of free speech being attacked on campuses across the country. He said he thought the next thing for MU to do was to educate people on the First Amendment.