MU hires leader for Title IX office

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri has hired a permanent leader for its Title IX office.

Ellen Eardley, one of four finalists to visit campus for a series of interviews and an open forum in December, will start as MU’s Title IX administrator and assistant vice provost on April 20.

In her new role, Eardley is responsible for ensuring MU complies with the Title IX federal sex discrimination law, working with the campus’ Title IX investigator and creating and disseminating educational materials and training.

Eardley comes to Columbia from Washington D.C., where she is a partner at Mehri & Skalet. She specializes in an array of civil rights issues, including race and gender discrimination cases, whistle-blower and wage and hour cases.

Eardley is also adjunct faculty at the American University College of Law. She is licensed to practice law in the state of Illinois and the District of Columbia and is a member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email that Eardley’s annual salary will be $150,000.

Eardley said she was motivated to apply by several aspects of the job, including the opportunity to further define both the position and the Title IX office.

“I was very pleased to see the University of Missouri taking a critical look at its own practices and trying to make efforts to become a leader on these issues that have become part of a national conversation,” she said, adding that MU and the UM System have already made “significant” progress.

Eardley understands the challenges she will face in increasing awareness of the office and policies among the campus community.

Eardley wants to give herself time to familiarize and work closely with Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and Provost Garnett Stokes before she starts making plans for programs. She hopes to convene a formal Title IX advisory board to work with her office, which she said would engage
“key” people like the chancellor, provost, student affairs administrators, city and campus police, athletics administrators, Greek Life, faculty and staff representatives.

Eardley worked with the National Women’s Law Center on a U.S. Supreme Court case related to Title IX. She also worked on investigations of educational institutions’ compliance with civil rights laws.

“We’re excited that Ellen will be joining us at MU and taking on this crucial responsibility,” Stokes said in the release. “Our very top priority is providing a safe and healthy learning and working environment for our students, faculty, staff and visitors. This means an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or sexual orientation, and includes sexual harassment or misconduct of any kind.”

When Eardley spoke to faculty, staff and students at an open forum in mid-December, she stressed the need for the Title IX office to be an open environment. She also said the campus community needs to be open to talking about issues related to sex discrimination.

“Are you all ready to talk about sex? I really think you have to be ready for me to come here and help you engage,” Eardley told more than a dozen students, staff and faculty at her forum in the MU Student Center. “We’re at a place in the national dialogue that’s a tipping point where we can begin to snowball that momentum of what’s going on on college campuses. This isn’t a new issue. Most of you know that, but we have an opportunity here to hopefully make real, lasting, systemic change.”

Eardley said she, her husband and their dog plan to move to Columbia as soon as she wraps up her caseload at her current firm.

MU announces new Title IX coordinator


COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri has announced a new Title IX coordinator, Ellen Eardley is a partner at a law firm in Washington D.C.

Her new title means she'll make sure Mizzou is complying with all Title IX laws, and she'll be monitoring the school's title IX policies.
Eardley will step into her new role in late April.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Ellen Eardley named MU Title IX administrator, assistant vice provost

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 | 6:04 p.m. CST

Ellen Eardley, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., has been named the new Title IX administrator at MU.

COLUMBIA — Ellen Eardley, a lawyer in Washington, D.C., has been appointed Title IX administrator and assistant vice provost at MU.

She will start the position on April 20 with a salary of $150,000, according to Christian Basi, associate director of the MU News Bureau.

Eardley is a partner at the Mehri & Skalet firm in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct faculty member at the American University Washington College of Law. She has been with the law firm for more than seven years.

She was one of four finalists selected by a search team late last year. The committee convened in October to fill the Title IX administrator position — the first of its kind at MU. She visited the campus in December for interviews.

The move followed investigations into Missouri athletics' failure to report the alleged sexual assault of one of its athletes, Sasha Menu Courey, and similar incidents.

Eardley, 37 and a native of southern Illinois, has a substantial legal history working with Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination at educational institutions, and other cases involving discrimination.

"I've been working on cases of discrimination, and particularly gender discrimination, since I graduated from law school in 2003," she said.

"I've always wanted to work on issues of gender and the law. It's the reason that I went to law school."
Eardley holds a degree in English and women's studies from Eastern Illinois University. After graduating from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Eardley joined the National Women's Law Center in Washington, D.C., a leading women's legal organization.

The center offers education and policy work, she said, as well as litigation on issues of anti-discrimination. It was founded more than 40 years ago "to expand, protect, and promote opportunity and advancement for women and girls at every stage of their lives."

It was there Eardley said she did much of her work on Title IX issues.

Now a partner at her private practice, her focus has been predominantly employment and housing discrimination. At American University, she teaches a course to law students about discrimination issues, including Title IX.

Eardley said she is aware of the work that has gone into Title IX initiatives at MU, and she acknowledged the work already put in by interim coordinator Linda Bennett.

"My first step is to build on the work that's already been done by Dr. Bennett, the chancellor, the provost, and I also want to spend to time listening to various constituencies on campus," Eardley said.

This includes learning about the needs on campus and how Title IX information is disseminated so that the new UM System collected rules and regulations are easily understood.

Eardley, however, did say it will take some time to get the lay of the land and develop strategic priorities.

She said she is already familiar with Columbia. She grew up outside St. Louis and has visited campus several times. Her mother worked at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"A number of folks that I know personally have attended Mizzou, and I've always had a lot of respect for the school overall," Eardley said.

Given her heritage, Eardley said she is excited to make the move from the East Coast back to the Midwest.
"When I got off the airplane (in December) in the tiny airport outside Columbia, I felt at home," she said. "I like to see the horizon, and I really enjoy living in a college town, so I'm excited about the move."

Eardley announced as new Title IX administrator

Eardley will take office April 20.

Provost Garnett Stokes announced Wednesday that Ellen Eardley will be the university’s new Title IX administrator and assistant vice provost.

Eardley is a partner at Mehri & Skalet, PLLC in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct faculty member at American University’s Washington College of Law. She will take office April 20 to replace Linda Bennett, MU’s interim Title IX coordinator.

“I am honored to join the University of Missouri’s leadership team,” Eardley said in a news release. “I look forward to working with students, faculty and staff to continue to implement Mizzou’s gender equity policies and to prevent discrimination, harassment and assault from occurring in the first place. I invite open and honest discussion on these issues of utmost importance.”

Stokes said she wants MU to work to be a model for Title IX compliance in higher education.

“We’re excited that Ellen will be joining us at MU and taking on this crucial responsibility,” Stokes said in the news release. “Our very top priority is providing a safe and healthy learning and working environment for our students, faculty, staff and visitors. This means an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or sexual orientation, and includes sexual harassment or misconduct of any kind.”

Eardley holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Eastern Illinois University and a master’s degree and Juris Doctor from the University of Cincinnati. She has worked at the National Women’s Law Center on a case related to Title IX. She has also trained community organizers on Title IX and published reports analyzing laws relating to sex discrimination in education.
JEFFERSON CITY — If you see legislators today, you should tell them how University of Missouri System universities have affected your life.

That’s what Hank Foley, MU’s senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies, said Wednesday to the crowd at a rally that was part of the UM System’s 41st Legislative Day at the Capitol.

About 400 people, including alumni and faculty from the system’s four universities and MU Extension staff, were registered for the day’s activities, which included the rally, meetings with legislators and a legislative panel.

During his speech at the rally, Foley outlined the system’s legislative priorities:

- **Keeping — and, if possible, enhancing — core operations funding levels.** The request includes $428.7 million in base appropriations and a 5 percent increase in performance-based funding. All of the system’s universities met performance goals, which included graduation rates and retention rates, according to a "Legislative Day 2015 Talking Points" document distributed to attendees.

- **Maintenance and repair projects.** There is a backlog of more than $1.4 billion in renovations and fixes to academic buildings on all four campuses. The system’s request includes $12.5 million for work on MU’s Stewart Hall.

- **50-50 matching funds for capital improvement projects.** The system is asking the state to match donations by providing $29.7 million for projects such as MU’s Applied Learning Center, an entrepreneurship center that would be managed through the Trulaske College of Business.

"We can’t educate students to the level they need to be educated in the 21st century without those funds," Foley said.
Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who was among the attendees, recognized students who intern in legislators' offices, as well as students who advocate for the UM System.

"They aren’t here speaking as administrators paid for this," he said. "They are here because they believe in higher education." Loftin also encouraged the crowd to approach legislators.

"Remember: You can vote. That’s a powerful thing to carry here with you ... Never forget the power you have," he said.

**Awards**

Also at the rally, five people received the Presidential Citation Award, which recognizes "demonstrated outstanding and continuing service to the University of Missouri and its campuses," according the system's website.

The Alumni Alliance, a group of representatives from Extension and the system's four campuses, sponsored Legislative Day. The Alliance selected an award recipient from each campus and from Extension.

Ron Wood got the award for service to MU. Among his positions are member of the College of Engineering Dean’s Advisory Council, Chancellor Society Fellow and lifetime member of the Mizzou Alumni Association.

The award for service to the University of Missouri-Kansas City went to Troy Schulte, city manager of Kansas City. Schulte, who couldn’t attend the rally, "consistently looks for ways to strengthen the university and its role in the fabric of the community," Jim Foil, Alumni Alliance chairman, said.

Susan Rothschild was Missouri University of Science and Technology's award recipient. She has served on S&T's Miner Alumni Association Board as a board of directors member and president, and she has been a member of the Alumni Alliance since 2007.

For the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the Alumni Alliance recognized Hubert Hoosman, who has served as president of the UMSL African American Alumni Chapter and the UMSL Alumni Association Governing Board, and as a member of the Alumni Alliance. Hoosman led an effort to create a memorial plaza in memory of former UMSL Chancellor Marguerite Ross Barnett.
Ronda Elfrink is the Bollinger County assessor, and she was the Alumni Alliance’s pick for service to MU Extension. She has supported MU Extension in southeast Missouri. She serves on the county extension council in Bollinger County, as secretary of the University of Missouri Extension State Council and is a past chairwoman of the Alumni Alliance.

Senator gives first approval of bill restricting appointment of UM System president

By RAY HOWZE

State Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said his bill restricting university appointments is meant to prevent potential conflicts of interest the public might see as unethical. The Senate gave first-round approval Wednesday to the bill, which bars the University of Missouri System’s Board of Curators from appointing the governor who named them to the board as president.

Some senators, however, think the bill goes too far. Sen. Jason Holsman, D-Kansas City, said he’s worried the bill could be going after a problem that doesn’t exist.

“These curators were confirmed by this chamber to do an honorable job and now we’re saying we don’t trust you to do that job so we’re going to put a provision in place that says you are bound not to select the person you might think do the best job?” Holsman said.

Others, such as Sen. Joseph Keaveny were worried it would keep out some qualified applicants.

“Is the pendulum swinging too far?” Keaveny, D-St. Louis, asked Schaefer.

But Schaefer defended his bill.

“We’re (the Senate) discussing a whole lot of things on bills in here that some of them are an ethical problem and some of them really aren’t, but they create the appearance of an ethical problem and I would say this falls flatly in that category,” Schaefer said.
Earlier this session, Schaefer criticized Gov. Jay Nixon for appointing too many lawyers to the board. The Senate confirmed three nominees earlier this month, all lawyers who earned their law degrees at the University of Missouri. A fourth and the only African American, St. Louis attorney Mary Nelson, was rejected by the Senate appointments committee.

“Eight lawyers out of nine total curators? At some point, there needs to be a broader professional diversity of professional backgrounds on there,” Schaefer said at the time.

Wednesday’s debate, though, focused mostly on whether the bill addresses an actual problem.

“Binding curators from choosing the best person for the job is not in the best interest of the state,” Holsman said.

Schaefer later pointed out it wouldn’t prevent a former governor from becoming UM system president; he or she couldn’t be president until a majority of the board members had been appointed by someone else.

No governor in the state’s history has been appointed UM system president.

Nixon has also not commented on his future plans after his term as governor.

The bill, Senate Bill 110, will have one more vote before it moves over to the House.

Deaton discusses global hunger issues

Ending world hunger and how students and university leaders can become more involved in the process were the main points in Chancellor Emeritus Brady Deaton’s message at a student-hosted event Monday evening at Memorial Union.

Deaton said he has been involved with Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH), an organization dedicated to uniting universities in fighting hunger and malnutrition, for a little over a year. He said motivating more students to become involved and mobilizing more universities worldwide are vital to the cause.

“One of the goals of the future is to find ways to tie together various types of universities … to achieve a more in-depth sort of program,” Deaton said.
These programs involve public dialogue and education about the issue of hunger and malnutrition worldwide, which will help change people’s mindset toward the current global need, he said.

Many students are already contributing to the cause on campus and elsewhere, said sophomore Maria Kalaitzandonakes, president of the International Association of Students in Agriculture and related Sciences (IAAS), which hosted the event. Kalaitzandonakes said she represented MU at the Universities Fighting World Hunger conference in Canada on Feb. 20.

“There were representatives from all over the country and all around the world,” she said. “There were speakers from governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, aid groups, academia, all sorts of things. They all had these amazing ideas with all this passion and it was inspiring.”

Kalaitzandonakes said she believes most people do not truly understand hunger, and that her main goal is to help journalism students learn how to accurately report on the subject.

“We have the number one journalism school in the country right now … So we’re thinking we could host a small weekend (during which) we would have speakers of different issues about hunger, science and technology and have people talk to these young students,” she said.

Deaton said he will be working on MU’s campus to involve more undergraduate students in addressing these issues through their teaching, research and outreach efforts. Since retiring as chancellor in December 2013, Deaton has headed the Brady and Anne Deaton Institute for University Leadership and International Development.

The institute has focused on addressing food security and the socioeconomic needs of developing countries with the aim of eliminating extreme poverty, he said. The institute is currently working with IAAS to assist economic recovery in countries affected by ebola by supporting non-governmental organizations that operate on a small community scale.

Deaton said the institute and IAAS are also organizing a leadership summit to discuss international aid programs and the interdisciplinary approaches to development.

The institute’s future goals include developing new approaches to higher education leadership with MU’s international partners, placing an emphasis on handheld devices in developing countries and by helping these countries solve their own problems with MU’s help, Deaton said.

IAAS will hold a meeting April 13 to update campus on its progress since February, Deaton said.
Chemical in BPA-Free Products Linked to Irregular Heartbeats

Many consumers avoid products that contain bisphenol-A (BPA) because the estrogen-imitating chemical has been linked to an array of health effects in people and animals. But new research published Thursday suggests that an ingredient that has replaced BPA in many items may have a similar effect on the heart.

BPA-free labels have been popping up on many plastic bottles, cash register receipts, food packaging, and other products.

Although the label implies a sense of safety, "our research suggests that BPS and potentially other BPA substitutes aren't necessarily free of health problems," said Hong-Sheng Wang, a professor of pharmacology at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Exposure to BPS, or bisphenol-S, caused irregular heartbeats in female lab rats, according to the study by Wang and colleagues published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives. The findings were "remarkably similar—if not identical to—what we find in BPA," Wang said.

The scientists discovered that BPS changes how the rats' cells respond to estrogen, a result that has been suggested in previous studies. Specifically, BPS interferes with the way calcium is stored in heart muscle cells, causing leakage as well as extra absorption. That, in turn, alters heartbeats.

This is the same way that BPA affects rats' hearts, "raising the concern of potential cardiac toxicity of BPS," Wang said.

Little Known about Exposures

The scientists removed the rats' hearts and kept them alive and beating for some time by running a solution through them that contains oxygen, glucose, and other nutrients. Then they added BPS and monitored the effect on cells. This technique is commonly used to measure the impact of various chemicals on the heart.
Wang said the rats were exposed to doses that may be similar to the amounts that people encounter from water bottles, receipts, and other items. However, very little is known about human exposures; much more is known about BPA, which is found in the blood of virtually every person tested.

**Because BPS is so similar to BPA, it's not surprising that it may have similar health effects,** said Frederick vom Saal, a University of Missouri-Columbia biology professor who studies the chemicals but was not involved in the new study.

Previous research, he said, found that BPS stimulates human breast cancer cells at a slightly higher dose than BPA does. Also, in a recent study with zebrafish, BPS disrupted prenatal brain development.

"So the idea that BPS is safe as an alternative to BPA is clearly not true," vom Saal said.

Rats are commonly used to investigate the potential impact of chemicals on the human heart because people and rodents share similar cardiovascular physiology.

The changes were only found in female rats; male rats showed no increase in irregular heartbeats after exposure to BPS.

Any potential human health impacts from using products containing BPS are unknown. No human studies have been conducted.

The American Chemistry Council, which represents chemical manufacturers, declined to comment on BPS because it represents companies that make BPA, not BPS. Appleton Coated, which uses BPS to manufacture receipts, also did not respond to requests for comment.

**Can BPS Be Avoided?**

Some hard plastic water bottles and other products labeled BPA free are also labeled BPS free, including popular Nalgene bottles. But in many cases it is difficult for consumers to determine if a product contains BPS.

Roughly half of the BPA-free thermal paper used for cash register receipts may contain BPS, according to a preliminary analysis. Some receipts contain both chemicals.

"I think it would be prudent to test BPS and other chemicals with a similar structure, instead of just assuming that they are safe," Wang said.
Last curtain call underway for two of Columbia's theater greats

By Bill Clark

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Each year for the past 33, Clyde Ruffin has directed a black theater production at the University of Missouri — first known as the Black Theatre Workshop and now, since 2000, titled the World Theatre Workshop, as it expanded its reach into more diverse issues.

In 1979, Mississippi native Jim Miller was working for a New York advertising agency when — in the middle of an ad for Pepto-Bismol, Jim said “Enough!” and took a job at MU as a costume designer. He and his wife, Marsha, a singer and dancer, already were in the MU Department of Theatre when Clyde and his wife, Sheila, arrived at Tigerland.

In the decades since their respective arrival, Ruffin and Miller have given Columbia theatergoers a steady diet of excellence. Jim’s relationship with musical theater, including costuming, staging, choreography and directing, has given us at least two memorable musicals each year on MU’s Rhynsburger Theatre stage.

Marsha remains a part of the Miller couple’s mystique, with show-stopping roles as Mother Superior in “Nunsense” and the mother in “Steel Magnolias,” while also serving as an adviser to theater majors. It is a partnership that began when they were newlyweds and touring for the USO, visiting troops in Southeast Asia with “The Music Man.”

Clyde has used his amazing talent to find black performers in the MU student body and on the streets of Columbia to staff his World Theatre workshops.

It seems that each year the pair took on more difficult productions and enjoyed greater success with each challenge.

When the curtain falls on the Sunday matinee performance of “The Whipping Man” at Rhynsburger Theatre, the era of Miller and Ruffin will be no more. Both will leave huge legacies in Missouri theater history.

“The Whipping Man,” a story of two former slaves and their severely wounded onetime master, set only days after the end of the Civil War, is an emotional journey that this columnist suggests
you attend — for two reasons: First, it is a powerful story, well-staged. Second, it is a chance to say thank you to Clyde Ruffin.

Unfortunately, if you missed “Road Show” last fall at Rhynsburger, you missed a chance to say goodbye to the Millers in the cathedral that housed their contribution to the arts in Columbia.

“The Whipping Man” can be seen at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and at 2 p.m. Sunday.

After the show closes, Ruffin will become even more involved in community matters than in recent years. He already serves as pastor for Second Missionary Baptist Church and president of the Boone Heritage Foundation, and is now a City Council candidate for the First Ward seat. He has been a leader in the formation of the Minority Men’s Network and in 2004 received the Columbia Values Diversity Award. in January, he directed the stunning production of the life of John William “Blind” Boone at the Columbia Values Diversity breakfast.

Jim Miller leaves us with some of the most challenging musical theater performances staged in Columbia. His “Parade” stands in Ol’ Clark’s mind as the best musical I’ve seen in any Central Missouri theater. No one else has taken it on. In recent years, he gave us a great “Cabaret” and tackled a pair of difficult productions with “Spring Awakening” and “Road Show” — all journeys into the serious side of the human condition — to go along with the lighthearted song-and-dance shows from Broadway and Hollywood.

Everything this pair of theatrical giants has put on stage, it seems, has bordered on perfection, even at their worst.

There is a chance we will catch up with Miller in another art form. He is an excellent painter, who recently exhibited portraits and scenes from his small hometown of Woodville, Miss.

Ol’ Clark speaks for our community when he writes “Thanks for the memories, Jim and Clyde, and continue your success in life after Rhynsburger.”

Tickets for “The Whipping Man” are available from the MU Theatre Box Office, 573-882-7529, or theatre.missouri.tix.com.

Race and the Columbia Police Department

February 25, 2015 BY Sarah Redohl

On Aug. 9, 2014, 18-year-old Mike Brown was fatally shot by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson, igniting the city into a weeklong riot. During the riot, police had suppressed agitated protesters through various crowd-control
tactics: tear gas, rubber bullets, beanbag rounds. Some protesters fired gunshots; several stores had been looted. Police donned heavy armor to protect themselves from bottles and rocks hurled toward them.

Nearly two weeks later and 116.7 miles westward, an estimated 400 mid-Missouri residents staged a protest at Boone County Courthouse. It was bright and hot outside. Uniformed Columbia Police Department officers passed out water from coolers, while plain-clothed officers blended in with the crowd as they chanted and cheered.

The protest was one of four to occur in Columbia in response to the event that ignited racial tension with law enforcement in St. Louis — the event that sparked a national debate about race, rights and law enforcement. Although not mired in crisis, Columbia would still host discussions and debates on the events in Ferguson and what it might mean for our own city.

“The death of Mike Brown and similar cases around the nation regarding police-related fatalities of black men have heightened the awareness of the issues of race that still persist in America,” says Hickman High School principal Eric Johnson. “Columbia is not excused from that conversation.”

“The first step in solving any issue is bringing it to the forefront,” Johnson adds. He addressed students the day after the decision not to indict Darren Wilson was announced. “Talking about race without making it seem like a taboo topic that can’t be addressed goes a long way. Ignoring it is far worse than addressing it.”

The ‘trust gap’

When the verdict not to indict Darren Wilson was read on Nov. 24, Missouri’s NAACP president, Mary Ratliff, upheld the plans she’d made days prior. The NAACP would not support “renegade protests,” as she called them. They would meet the following day at Second Baptist Church and prepare people to demonstrate without violence.

By this point, Ratliff, a resident of Columbia, had already spoken to Columbia Police Department Chief Ken Burton a number of times, starting with that protest in August. Although no one can know for certain why Columbia remained relatively calm, there are a lot of guesses.

“The reason there wasn’t rioting here is because we’ve been working for the past 16 months to find recommendations to violence and diving into all aspects of the relationship between the police and the community,” says Tyree Byndom, a member of the Mayor’s Task Force on Violence, which was established in August 2013.

Columbia was an early adopter of a police review board, establishing the nine-member board in 2009. In 2009, Burton established the public relations department to increase department visibility. Body cameras were introduced for the Downtown Unit in 2010, before they were a politically savvy item, and last July the department was the first in Missouri to implement them for all units.

Despite a department that appears to be keenly aware of the issues surrounding modern policing, the task force’s report still noticed that community/police trust issues were “a very clear theme.” The report reads, “The ‘trust gap’ between the African American community and police needs to be aggressively addressed by the police department and the community.” From there, the report outlines how this trust might be the most cost-effective way to solve and prevent crime in Columbia.

Mike Hayes, a retired CPD officer and member of the Mayor’s Task Force on violence, has high hopes for the report.

“I’m confident that [City Council] will do something with it,” he says. “I hope they don’t prove me wrong and just put it on a shelf somewhere. It was brought to my attention that they’d done this before under a different mayor, I think in the ’80s or ’90s...I hope it doesn’t become a reoccurring thing.”
According to Assistant Chief of Patrol John Gordon and Assistant Chief of Investigations Jeremiah Hunter with the CPD, in order for those task force recommendations to work, it’s important that they be prioritized to account for CPD’s current resources.

The CPD saw change as a result of what happened in Ferguson. Some was good; communications between the Police Department and black residents of Columbia improved through conscious outreach efforts, according to Gordon and Hunter. More residents made the extra effort to thank officers for their service.

On the other hand, Hunter and Gordon have seen a glut of anti-police graffiti downtown, “some that says, point-blank, to kill us.” Since Ferguson, Hunter and Gordon have also given officers more freedom to choose when to pair up for patrols.

“When you’ve been a cop for a while, you can kind of feel it when it might be a bad night,” Gordon says. “I think you’re always one step away from a situation becoming something like Ferguson.”

“One incident, one shooting,” Hunter adds. “One misconstrued action.”

‘We’re still little Dixie, but With a paint job’

In its early years, Columbia was the primary city of a swath of land along the Missouri River dominated by slave-holding families. This cluster of counties was known as Little Dixie. Today, race is divided most obviously by Broadway. One-third of the population in the area bound by Broadway, Stadium Boulevard, I-70 and College avenue is black. Throughout Columbia, only 11 percent of residents are African American, according to census data aggregated by city-data.com.

“Columbia was called Little Dixie for a reason,” says William “Gene” Robertson. “Some may deny it, but today, we’re still Little Dixie, but with a paint job. There are still all sorts of divisions and hierarchies.”

Robertson was the second black professor at the University of Missouri. He was hired just three years after the first, Arvarh Strickland. He taught urban planning and community and organizational development. To this day, Robertson writes about race for the Columbia Missourian.

“Police outcomes — the whole judicial system — just reflect the value system Columbia formerly had,” he says.

The outcomes Robertson mentions include the increased rate at which African Americans are stopped by police (2.29 to 0.91 for Caucasians). That number is higher in Columbia’s surrounding communities, between 2.46 in Centralia and 12.68 in Hallsville.

Gordon with the CPD says this has more to do with crime statistics than it does with race. “In the areas that ask for our services the most, part of the policing method is to stop cars and find out who’s coming in and out of the area,” he says. “Of our hard crime areas, the majority of them are low-income areas that contain African Americans.” Robertson attributes unbalanced racial outcomes to deep-rooted stereotypes: the ones that rarely surface in controlled situations.

“If you gave police officers a test, they’d express their feelings intellectually,” Robertson says. Despite his position as an 80-year-old professor emeritus at MU, Robertson says even he “gets ready to have a crisis experience” when he sees red and blue lights in his rear-view mirror.

“What the black community sees on the surface is a disproportionate number of arrests,” says Johnson at Hickman. “They feel the sting of microaggressions when eyes follow them around, and they feel the discomfort of ‘knowing’ other people prejudicially question their intentions.”

“Even I, the principal of a high school, am not excused from the microaggressions that plague the lives of black people,” he continues. “This is not just a law enforcement concern in Columbia. It is a concern of social inequity nationwide.”
Others, such as Devont’e Daniels, a young black man who lives in north Columbia, feel the need to record their interactions with police officers on cellphones. Black youth in Columbia have a mantra: “Free the town.” The mantra is directly related to African Americans’ experience with the judicial system, Byndom says.

“It’s going to take a lot of work to make African Americans less suspicious of the Police Department,” Ratliff says. Perhaps Byndom sums it up best.

“Because the relationship is so frayed, it’s more difficult to come to resolutions that are good for both sides,” he says.

**Community policing, a bigger price tag**

Around 15 years ago, the CPD began a community policing campaign. Community policing is the act of allocating police officers to particular areas so they become familiar with the local inhabitants.

According to Hayes, the idea of community policing was active in Columbia long before then.

“We even had community policing when I was a kid growing up in Columbia, only we didn’t call it that,” he says. When the formal community policing initiative began 15 years ago, Hayes says there were enough officers per capita to sustain those efforts.

“Now they’re just going from call to call,” he says. “They’re so busy.”

In 2000, there were 1.5 officers per 1,000 people. In 2014, there were 1.42 officers for every 1,000 residents, according to CPD Uniform Crime Reporting data. Since authorized strength per 1,000 has been recorded (2000), the highest it has been was 1.59 per 1,000 in 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006. The lowest it has been was 1.4 in 2013.

In 2003, the earliest year for which call volume was recorded in the UCR data, each officer answered around 482 calls for service, compared to almost 478 in 2014.

Then, two years ago the CPD assigned two officers to the Douglass Park area to practice only community policing. The results were so positive that despite criticism from time-strapped police officers, Burton decided to continue community policing in the Douglass Park area.

Ultimately, that was the goal when the CPD aimed for funding for 50.8 new cops in last November’s ballot initiative, which failed.

To effectively institute community policing throughout Columbia, Burton says his officers would need to set aside one-third of their time for “discretionary activities,” such as community policing.

“Right now they spend half their time responding to calls and the other half doing administrative work resulting from those calls,” he says. “Right now, we’re having to be reactive instead of proactive.”

“Our core responsibilities are to respond to calls for service and to investigate crime,” Gordon says.

The pair of officers in Douglass Park have 100 percent discretionary time — they don’t respond to calls. Officers Jameson Dowler and Andy Meyer, known as Starsky and Hutch in their beat, play baseball with kids in the park and are on a first-name basis with residents in the area. The residents even threw one of the officers a birthday party at the park.

The Downtown Unit is another example of community policing.

According to Ratliff, community support for the finances required for community policing is stuck in a chicken-or-the-egg dilemma.
“There are a lot of citizens who want [the CPD] to show us they’ll do things better, and then maybe we’ll support more police officers,” she says.

Gordon says the chief put it best.

“He said, ‘The citizens of Columbia will choose what type of law enforcement they want for this community,’” Gordon says. “If they want plan a, it’s going to cost this much, and so on.” Community policing just comes with a bigger price tag.

Johnson recalls experiencing community policing when he grew up in inner city Kansas City. He thinks resolving the issue will require at least three steps: approach the problem with honesty, participate in practices that restore relationships and community rather than punitive practices, and hire more minority police officers.

“Although it will not automatically improve relationships, I think having individuals who can speak to the experience of underserved minority groups who are overrepresented in the legal system can impact community perception to a certain extent,” he says.

Six percent of CPD’s officers are black, compared to 11.3 percent of Columbia’s population, according to the 2010 census. Burton says the department isn’t seeing many applications from African Americans. Ratliff attributes this to African Americans feeling as though police officers are more suspicious.

“And they don’t want to be a part of that,” she says.

To address this, the Police Department plans to recruit at historically black universities. and though there have been informal conversations about methods to develop an interest in local black youth to become police officers, no formal plans have been made.

Hayes says most officers in his day had previous inroads to the police force. They didn’t just “decide one day” they wanted to be a police officer. For him, his first inroad was being a part of a baseball team sponsored by the CPD.

“I would bet that the [school resource officers] and Starsky and Hutch have helped,” Burton says.

Up for review

The final trust-related recommendation from the task force calls for “greater public involvement and accountability.”

Columbia first established a police review board in 2009. In February, a St. Louis city committee approved a civilian police review board, though a final vote isn’t expected until August.

Steve Weinberg, a professor emeritus of the Missouri School of Journalism and widely published author of articles and books, many pertaining to the criminal justice system, was appointed to the first review board.

“A lot of people in Columbia, especially African Americans, did not trust the police in town,” he says. “The cases we got weren’t all from African Americans, but most of them were.”

The most memorable case for Weinberg was a use-of-force case, where six of the nine members of the review board disagreed with Burton’s decision that the use of force was not excessive.

Despite that majority, Burton did not change his mind even after the review board took its decision to the city manager. It was one of two cases Weinberg can recall during his tenure that made it to the city manager’s desk.

Following the decision, Weinberg attended a police union meeting in an attempt to explain the board’s decision.

“The attitude of the police officers I’d encountered while on the board was, ‘How dare you people on this police review board second-guess us,’” Weinberg says.
The most common complaint from police officers that Weinberg can recall was that the officers didn’t want to have to think about potential repercussions from the review board when they’re making time-sensitive decisions in the field. Another concern was that those on the board wouldn’t understand the inner workings of law enforcement.

“My concern with the review board was that we were going to be judged by someone with no training or that we might be considered guilty until proven innocent,” Hayes says.

Burton says he doesn’t think Columbia needs a police review board.

“In reality, I don’t think they’ve got a lot to do,” he says. “But if the citizens think we need it, then we need it.”

Burton says there were only a couple complaints last year.

Andrew Fisher, a graduate sociology student at MU, has studied the relationship between minority communities and the police. He also serves on the police review board in Columbia. He was appointed in 2012.

“Since I’ve been on the board, we haven’t had a flurry of complaints,” Fisher says. “There isn’t a stark notice of, ‘Oh, it’s a certain race or certain class complaining about police.”

“The reason the board is bored is because we’re taking care of our complaints internally,” Burton says. He credits this to a more proactive approach to discipline. The CPD’s policies have been reviewed and streamlined, though he still allows room for police discretion.

“Police officers like bright-line rules: always do this, never do that,” Burton says. “In reality, it’s not that easy.” He recounts an officer who pulled over an 80-year-old woman at 2 p.m. on a Tuesday. She’d forgotten to pay a $25 citation, and the officer handcuffed her and put her in the back of the squad car.

“That was policy, but that’s not what I wanted him to do in that situation,” Burton says. “He might have asked the woman to park and lock her car and taken her in the front seat of the squad car and directly to the judge. I want our officers to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason.”

“[The officer] was like, ‘Shots have been fired,’ and he was acting very secretive and scared,” he says. “How can you do your job when you’re so scared? You’re going to make mistakes,” mentioning his service in the Marine Corp.

“It’s not your job to make sure you get home,” he says. “It’s your job to protect and serve. If you’re fearful, you need to get a new job.”

**Chipping away at the ‘blue shield of silence’**

Chief Burton came to Columbia in 2009 from Arlington, Texas. Shortly after he took office, the CPD was involved in the Whitworth SWAT raid, in which officers ran a search warrant at a home and shot two dogs.

One of Burton’s policies is “when you’re wrong, admit it.” and so he did, addressing and implementing policy changes following that raid.

“I got some criticism for saying we shouldn’t have run that warrant the way we did,” Burton says. “Internally, they said, ‘We’ve always run them that way,’ and I said, ‘Well, we’re not running them that way anymore.’”
He faced another onslaught of public criticism from his officers in 2011, after he fired an officer for use of excessive force.

Ratliff with the NAACP can recall one very powerful moment in the case, when Burton pulled out a big box of complaints against that officer.

“Burton has done better than any other police chief I’ve worked with,” says Ratliff, who has been president of the Missouri NAACP since 1991. She thinks Burton is slowly chipping away at what she calls “the blue shield of silence.”

Robertson agrees. He thinks Burton has been “a possible ray of hope” to address these issues.

“There are a lot of things that the department can reassess to do things better,” Gordon says. “Don’t judge the Columbia Police Department on their past actions. Judge them on their current actions.”

A community divided

Columbia has always been somewhat divided into “resident” and “student” categories. According to MU 4 Mike Brown’s student leader, Naomi Daugherty, this divide has also resulted in an activism gap in response to Ferguson’s events.

“Part of it is that we were fighting for different things,” she says. “a lot of the MU 4 Mike Brown initiative was for policy change within the university. I also think part of it is Mizzou students not having the resources to reach out to the community. ... I can’t help you if I don’t know what your problem is.”

“There is, I think, a lack of conversation about race relations in Columbia,” Fisher says. “It’s just not there, for whatever reason, you know, so I think it’s lacking these kinds of dynamics.”

Robertson agrees. He’s been in Columbia long enough to identify trends. Although he says Columbia’s black residents used to have common avenues to discuss current issues facing the community — T & H Restaurant stands out in his mind — he says that’s no longer the case.

“People only really want to have these celebrations and parades, for MLK Day or whatever,” he says. But socioeconomic fractionalization, he says, has divided the black community in Columbia.

“I have a friend,” he says, “who called me after a black man shot someone. He asks me, ‘How does that make us look?’ and I told him, ‘It doesn’t make you look any different.’”

“It’s human instinct to clump a group of people into one category,” Hayes says. He’s not talking about African Americans, though. He’s talking about police officers. “I think there’s a stereotype now. But the police aren’t there to hurt you; they’re there to preserve safety.”

“There’s going to be a certain percentage that no matter what you say or do have a negative view,” Hayes continues. “Then you have the majority who don’t base their opinions on a single interaction. They don’t lump all police officers into one group.” although he’s talking about community stereotypes of police officers, it’s a statement that can be more widely applied.

‘It’s better than not fighting at all’

On the night the decision was made not to indict Darren Wilson, MU 4 Mike Brown marched on City Hall. Daugherty recalls members of the community streaming out to join them. The gathering featured impromptu chanting and speeches, including one made by a child Daugherty estimated to be about 4 years old. It was a crystallizing moment for her.

“That was the moment I was sure I would not see the true effects of this in my lifetime,” she says. “I think that’s when I realized that this is going to be a lifelong struggle, but it’s better than not fighting at all.”
Research shows low female participation in engineering, other STEM fields

The engineering industry is suffering from low female participation more than any other STEM — science, technology, mathematics and engineering — fields, according to recent research.

A study conducted by Gary Salton, a Michigan-based researcher and chief of research and development at Professional Communications, found that about 301,000 of 2.3 million engineers, about 12.9 percent, are female. Female engineers had about half the participation rates compared to women in other science-based fields. Salton concluded that the reason for this unequal ratio was the male engineering problem-solving style.

In 2014, about 17.4 percent of students enrolled in the MU College of Engineering were female. An anonymous $330,000 donation recently helped launch a new center, the Women in Engineering Center, to promote increased female participation in engineering.

Salton’s research asserts that female engineers tend to be more disciplined and process-oriented than male engineers, which results in conflict in problem-solving styles. Salton attributed the discouragement of female contribution in engineering to the low tolerance for a variation from male engineers’ problem solving style embedded in the intellectual process.

**Linda Godwin, professor of physics and astronomy at MU and a former NASA astronaut, expressed the importance of diversifying the engineering field.**

“To find your best people, you just want to have everybody,” she said. “You want to cast the net as broad as possible. If women aren’t there, we’re missing out on 50 percent of the potential innovation.”

Godwin compared the role of women in science to the process of finding the best way to travel to Mars. She said if women are discouraged or left out of the equation, one might leave out the person with the solution.

Salton said in order for men to truly see the value of women, it has to be reduced to dollars and cents, or the well-being of everyone involved.

“When males feel that females are contributing something that betters their life, that is when the female is going to be fully accepted and integrated,” he said.

Georgianna Victor, a junior and industrial engineering major, said that companies are trying to make a new push for diversity.
“I’ve talked to (other students) with Boeing, and they were able to talk about the way that their workforce is changing,” she said. “People who are hiring are looking for students who have more varied backgrounds.”

Victor explained that some government projects are seeing the value of diversity, going as far as to implement diversity requirements about who they hire, administering fines to those who do not follow them.

“Companies are trying to break this mold of an engineer that is a Caucasian male who is usually a bit older,” she said. “They’re trying to break that standard.”

However, Victor said that there is still much room for improvement, as some companies use loopholes to justify who they hire.

Salton said that the key to solving this issue is to train men to effectively value the female contribution. He said that companies are starting to implement this with formal team building sessions. He pointed out the importance of team building and that university curricula fail at teaching this effectively, and said it is not enough to simply assign groups to do a task.

“Unless you can show people the processes, how to take advantage of the contribution each one of those people can make, you just have a group,” Salton said. “You don’t have a team.”

Godwin reiterated the need for more women in not just engineering, but other STEM fields. While 2011 American Community Survey data analyzed by Salton showed engineering to have the lowest female proportion in STEM (13 percent), the fields of computer science (27 percent women), life and physical sciences (41 percent) and mathematics (47 percent) are imbalanced as well.

“I think the more that those of us in STEM fields can go back and communicate with young girls helps,” Godwin said. “We need to make sure that girls are aware of their options.”

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Missouri House budget panel wants more for K-12 education

By MARIE FRENCH

**NO MU MENTION**
JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri's public schools and community colleges would receive larger funding increases than recommended by Gov. Jay Nixon, under a budget plan presented Wednesday to a House committee.

However, it would scrap Nixon's recommendation to give a performance-based funding increase to public universities.

The House Budget Committee still could amend the fiscal 2016 spending plan, which also must pass through the full House and Senate before going to the governor's desk.

Nixon in January proposed a $50 million increase in basic aid distributed through the state's public school funding formula, on top of the more than $3.1 billion schools are getting this year. The House Budget Committee proposal would provide a $70 million increase.

Ronald Lankford, deputy commissioner for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, said the House committee's proposal would be enough to ensure that no school district loses money when the funding formula is calculated.

Under the governor's proposed increase, "we would've had a number of school districts ... that would've seen a loss," he said.

Even with the additional funding in the committee's plan, the state budget still would fall several hundred million dollars short of the amount needed to fully fund the school formula.

Education groups have expressed concerns that some school districts could have to make cuts if there is not enough of an increase to the state's basic aid because of a new law prohibiting the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education from prorating funding for certain districts when the state doesn't fully fund the school formula — meaning that other districts would bear more of the burden.

The House Budget Committee proposal has a smaller increase for higher education institutions than the $12 million recommended by Nixon. The governor wanted to distribute that increase primarily based on a performance formula to both community colleges and four-year universities.

Under the governor's proposal, community colleges would've gotten about $2 million more than last year while four-year institutions would've gotten about $10 million more. The House Budget Committee plan includes no additional performance-based funding but adds about $6 million in equity funding for community colleges. There would be no increases or cuts to four-year institutions.

Officials at four-year universities expressed confidence that increases would be added for the coming fiscal year later in the budget process.
"It's a marathon, not a sprint," Missouri State University President Clifton Smart said. "We're confident that there will be a significant increase for higher education by the time it gets to the governor's desk."

John Fougere, a spokesman for the University of Missouri System, said in an emailed statement that the system is working with lawmakers "to ensure we receive the funding and resources necessary to meet our mission as the state's only public land-grant higher education institution."

House votes to expand college accounts Obama wanted to scrap

By STEPHEN OHLEMACHER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted Wednesday to expand the benefits of popular college savings plans that President Barack Obama failed to scale back.

The bill would let students use money from college savings accounts to buy computers and other technology, something they cannot do now with tax-free distributions from the accounts.

"Computers are an absolutely essential part of higher education, and the law should be updated to reflect that," said Rep. Lynn Jenkins, R-Kansas, the bill's sponsor. "I believe this is a common-sense modernization measure."

The bill would add $51 million to the budget deficit over the next decade, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, which provides official estimates for Congress.

The House passed the bill by a 401-20. A bipartisan group of senators has introduced a similar bill.

While the measure highlights a political misstep by the president, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Wednesday the administration does not oppose the legislation.

Still, he added: "We believe there is more that we can do that would be a whole lot more effective and more fiscally responsible to ensure that we're opening up a college education to even more middle-class families."

About 12 million families take advantage of the 529 college savings plans, named after a section in federal tax law.
Contributions to the accounts are not tax-deductible. But once the money is invested, it can grow and eventually be withdrawn with no tax on the earnings as long as the money is spent on tuition, fees, books and supplies needed to attend postsecondary school.

The savings plans are sponsored by states and also can be used to prepay college tuition.

Ahead of Obama's State of the Union Address in January, he proposed eliminating the tax benefits of future contributions to the accounts as part of an education package that would simplify an often confusing array of tax breaks for college students.

Families could continue contributing to college savings accounts under Obama's proposal. But students would have had to pay taxes on the earnings once the money was withdrawn.

The White House said the college savings plans mostly benefit wealthier families. But Obama was forced to quickly withdraw the proposal after both Republicans and Democrats panned it.

"When it comes to education tax benefits, our highest priority should be to expand, improve and simplify tax benefits for the middle class," Earnest said. "The president's nearly $50 billion investment in the middle class, which builds on bipartisan legislation and is fully offset, would cut taxes for 8.5 million students and families and simplify taxes for every single student who relies on education tax credits to help pay for college."

"The proposal before Congress would not achieve these goals and instead focuses exclusively on education savings plans that are used by less than 3 percent of American families," Earnest added.

A recent Associated Press-GfK poll found that just 19 percent of people in the U.S. supported the president's proposal to scale back the benefits of the college accounts.

"We fundamentally disagree with the direction of the president's policy proposal, and instead we want to make 529 college savings plans more consumer-friendly and reflective of the realities faced by students today," Jenkins said.

The bill would make some technical changes to the accounts. For example, if a student uses money from an account to pay tuition that is later refunded for some reason, the bill would allow the student to deposit the money back into the account without paying a penalty.

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Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.