New provost hopes to incentivize MU faculty success

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, March 1, 2015 at 12:00 am

_Garnett Stokes was the top faculty choice for the University of Missouri’s new provost, and now that she is here, they are excited about what is to come._

Craig Roberts, chairman of MU’s Faculty Council, said Stokes is similar to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in that she is forthright and transparent, which bodes well with faculty.

Stokes came to MU earlier this month from Florida State University, where she was the provost and, for much of 2014, the interim president.

“She’s not afraid of change, and faculty are counting on that,” Roberts said. “Can she make the changes and hard decisions that need to happen about programs or whatnot? I think she can. That’s the faculty’s response to her right now.”

Stokes addressed a slew of questions from media during her first availability Wednesday. Along with a string of Title IX questions, Stokes discussed joining a campus in a high-level administrative position at the same time that other academic administrators who meet certain criteria are being offered a voluntary buyout.

“I’m not afraid of change,” Stokes said. “These are opportunities for the campus and for these individuals to plan for where they’re headed. Even those who might choose to take advantage of the voluntary separation plan aren’t going to be lost for us in terms of their access.”

Roberts said turnover can benefit some administrators, noting it was a draw for Chancellor Loftin when he arrived because it gave him the chance to build his administration with people like Stokes.

As FSU provost, Stokes created an incentive program to increase base salaries of faculty members who received awards recognized by the Association of American Universities — a prestigious organization that includes MU in its membership. It was a program MU faculty supported when Stokes discussed it during her visit to campus in November.
“I haven’t had a chance to look at the budget or what we currently have in place that provides those incentives, but there is no way I won’t spend some time figuring out if there’s a place for a program like this at Mizzou,” Stokes said Wednesday.

The program, she said, created clear guidelines for what FSU faculty could do to increase their base salaries. That clarity proved to be valuable, she said.

“A program like that is not only a good idea, I would say it’s long overdue,” Roberts said. “It’s refreshing to hear ‘I’m going to place a value on your hard work.’ ”

Since arriving on campus, Stokes has been touring colleges and programs to learn exactly what MU has to offer. She hopes to complete her introductions by the end of the semester.

“There’s not a lot of ‘I’m going to do this,’ with her, which is great,” Roberts said. “She’s spending all of her waking hours trying to feel out the landscape, which is a smart move. I get the sense that when the time comes to make a big decision, she will be ready with accurate information.”

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

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**MU faculty committee releases School of Medicine report**

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, February 28, 2015 at 12:00 am

A fact-finding committee deployed by University of Missouri Faculty Council leadership to look into concerns raised by faculty from the MU School of Medicine has concluded its research.

The committee, comprised of four faculty members from other MU colleges, presented its findings to Faculty Council Thursday afternoon and forwarded the report to medical school and university administrators.

Business Professor Art Jago led the committee, which also included professors Cheryl Heesch from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Satish Nair from the College of Engineering and Carlos Wexler from the College of Arts and Sciences.

The 55-page report included a slew of findings, many of which identified management issues.
“The committee found multiple instances where clinical department/division leadership was perceived as lacking research competence and being autocratic, intimidating, and, in some cases, vindictive/retributory,” the report states. “Indeed, a senior administrator admitted to this committee that there were problems with some chairs but that ‘they are now gone.’ However, we found that the problem persists in some departments.”

Some issues, particularly retaliatory behavior by leadership, also surfaced in a records request showing the annual ethics and compliance hotline report, which the Tribune reported on last month.

The committee’s report examines where MU ranks among institutions with medical schools that receive funding from the National Institute of Health as well as how the school compares to other institutions in the Southeastern Conference and the Association of American Universities.

According to the report, MU ranks No. 91 of 138 medical schools receiving NIH funding and in the bottom half of SEC schools. Only four AAU public institutions rank lower in funding than MU. Research expenditures, publishing and awards — which are all faculty-driven — are key measures in AAU rankings.

“The statistics don’t lie,” MU Faculty Council Chairman Craig Roberts said. “What we wanted to do is find out if there’s a problem for our faculty, who are supposed to be working to raise AAU metrics, who can’t because of organizational roadblocks.”

Roberts commended the work done by Jago and the team and said they were determined to not allow this to be “a sounding board for disgruntled faculty,” but rather to create a comprehensive, accurate review of the college.

The report concludes with a list of 18 recommendations for administrators on how to boost shared governance in decision-making and how to increase research productivity, among other issues.

The college’s leadership is analyzing the report, MU Health Care spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said.

“The issues discussed in the report are issues that the new medical school dean, Dr. Patrick Delafontaine, is aware of and addressing in his listening tour,” Jenkins said.

Delafontaine started on campus in December 2014.

“In fact, we’re well down the road to addressing many of the committee findings and recommendations,” Jenkins said. “That said, Dean Delafontaine is looking to review the report more in depth to see if more steps need to be taken. We take the report very seriously and appreciate the committee’s work on this.”

Roberts said some questioned commissioning the committee shortly before the arrival of a new, permanent dean, but he said he thought it was the perfect time.
“The answer is in the question: We were doing this because the new dean was coming,” Roberts said. “This provides him with a good, strong foundation. The new dean is talented and respected, and I think this gives him more information.”

Final MU journalism dean candidate pitches 'Missouri Conversation'

By Ashley Jost

Friday, February 27, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Thor Wasbotten wants to create what he calls the “Missouri Conversation.” That is, if he is selected to lead the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

Wasbotten is the fourth and final candidate invited to MU for a series of interviews and an open forum with faculty, staff and students to make his pitch to be the next journalism school dean.

The so-called Missouri Conversation is Wasbotten’s idea of bringing together all members of the journalism school community for discussions about news issues. It’s similar to something he has done as director of the Kent State University School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Wasbotten described his idea as a “rapid-response mechanism,” taking a current issue and unpacking it. Among the topics discussed in open forums at Kent State was terrorism — an issue that college-age students have lived with most of their lives because the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks occurred when today’s college students were very young.

“We need to not only focus on teaching but stop, listen and have conversations,” Wasbotten said. “We need to help our students, our communities and ourselves understand how these issues affect us.”

Professors become better educators when they can hear what students are thinking about major news topics on a regular basis, he said.

Unlike the other three candidates, Wasbotten does not have a doctorate, which he addressed during his forum.
“I do not have a Ph.D.,” he said. “But that doesn’t mean I don’t respect the process and respect the program.”

Wasbotten highlighted his experience as the assistant dean for student media and online operations at Pennsylvania State University and his work at Kent State as proof he is qualified to be the MU journalism dean, despite not having a doctorate degree. Having specialized associate deans is critical, he stressed.

Wasbotten said he wants to be at a place that is ready to challenge itself through research, academics and awards, like he has now at Kent State, “but there’s only one Missouri School of Journalism. ... I want to be here because of what it is, what it has stood for.”

The new dean will replace Dean Mills, who announced his retirement last year but has agreed to stay on until his replacement is named.

Gary Myers, MU law school dean and chairman of the journalism school dean search committee, said after the first forum earlier this month that there is no deadline for choosing the next dean.

MU earns NCAA research grant to study black male athlete experience

A stroll through the hallways at the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex proved to be inspiration for Ty-Ron Douglas.

Douglas, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, noticed that all the faces staring back at him from the plaques commemorating Missouri’s Academic All-Americans of the past had one thing in common.

None of them were black males.

“I began to reflect on, ‘What is the experience of the black male athlete at Mizzou? Why hadn’t we produced a single black male academic All-American?’ ” Douglas said. “We bring young men in and expect them to perform on the field, but there are some missing pieces I don’t think we understand as far as who they are.”
That seed of an idea turned into a research proposal that Douglas developed with input from associate athletic director for athletic performance Pat Ivey and associate athletic director for student-athlete development Kim Lambert.

That proposal, focusing on the experience of black male student-athletes at Missouri and what the department can do to better help them attain their goals, was one of six chosen from a pool of 94 applicants by the NCAA Innovations in Research and Practice grant program on Feb. 17, a program used to fund research “aimed at benefitting college athletes’ psychosocial well-being and mental health.”

Missouri’s team earned the highest level of grant money available: $25,000. The other five winning proposals will split $75,000.

Douglas said he wants to conduct in-depth interviews with between 30 and 60 current black male Missouri athletes, as well as observing interpersonal relationships between members of the Tigers’ sports teams during their daily routine on campus and on road trips.

The study begins in March, a preliminary review of the findings is due in July and the team gets to present its results at the NCAA convention in San Antonio in January.

Lambert said she hopes the findings can help Missouri’s athletic department determine how well it is meeting the needs of its black male student-athletes. The goal is for the study’s recommendations to have resonance on a national level, as well.

“I don’t think the findings are going to be specific to only Mizzou,” Lambert said. “I think this is something other institutions will be able to take a look at and take the recommendations from our study and apply them on their campuses.”

It’s an issue that speaks directly to Ivey.

He played defensive line for the Tigers’ football team from 1993-95, when there were between 700 and 900 black undergraduate students on Missouri’s campus.

“For some, just being here at the university is a culture shock,” Ivey said. “We figured that, ‘Wow, at least 100 of those were in the athletic department.’”

Missouri’s black student population has risen dramatically in the past 20 years to nearly 2,300 undergraduates last fall, a fact Ivey said has helped with black athletes’ college experiences.

Still, Ivey said the transition can be difficult for black males who come from backgrounds that lack the structure of a college environment. He sees it every day in his capacity as the football team’s strength and conditioning coach and chairman of the school’s “Men for Men” program, which seeks to provide positive role models for male athletes.

“For me, I was given a lot of the intangibles to be successful from both of my parents, who are still together. Some of the problems and issues happen when people don’t come from such a
stable, robust background as myself,” Ivey said. “Through my lens, I was able to adapt. Not as quickly as I wanted to — I made some mistakes — but I was able to adapt. I see so many young black men that don’t have that structure or that background struggle with reality. What he’s seen for 18, 19 years, how you deal with certain situations, if you don’t have a support structure in place where he is currently, he resorts to what he knows. What he knows — inner-city wherever — works, because you have to survive.

“It’s different in Columbia, Missouri, or wherever college town, USA.”

Ivey met Douglas through Lambert and Rick McGuire, the former Tigers track and field coach who heads the school’s positive coaching program. Ivey invited Douglas, a former soccer, cricket and track athlete in his native Bermuda, to take part in the “Men for Men” program. He was walking through the MATC with Douglas when the professor noticed the discrepancy on the Academic All-American wall.

“It makes you wonder,” Ivey said. “It makes you think why, in the history of the University of Missouri, there hasn’t been one who is someone like you.”

Douglas, Ivey and Lambert started discussing the project proposal in the fall. Douglas, whose research focuses primarily on black male identity and how it is affected by social constructs of leadership and education, will head up the study while Ivey and Lambert serve as liaisons to the athletic department.

Lambert said she can use Douglas’ findings to make any necessary changes to departmental procedures in the realm of student-athlete development. Ivey’s involvement can open the information pathway between an academic such as Douglas and the school’s black male athletes.

“Having the relationships he does with our student-athletes now is going to make us even more credible,” Lambert said. “He has so much respect from our student-athletes that, if he believes in something, they are going to believe in something. Having his stamp on this is going to be really, really important. He’s incredibly valuable to this process, and he’s also really passionate.”

It’s a subject that hits close to home for Douglas as well. He said he has family in St. Louis and watched with rapt attention during the unrest in Ferguson that followed the grand jury’s November decision not to convict the police officer who shot and killed 18-year-old Michael Brown.

A father of two sons, Douglas feels as if it’s crucial to understand how young black males perceive their place in society.

“I have a sneaky suspicion there’s a lot that is there as far as the experiences that these gentlemen are having and then struggling at times to navigate that on campus, especially when they put a helmet or a jersey on,” Douglas said. “Sometimes that’s the only time we really recognize our black males. As a man of color on campus, I realize that sometimes you can feel invisible. My
vision, my hope is Mizzou can be the first and best as it relates to producing healthy, strong, balanced men.

“We highlight the individual stat when it’s a successful stat, but also highlight the individual when something doesn’t go the way we had hoped. We wonder why this young man has supposedly given up his opportunity. We need to ask some different questions about institutions, opportunity, identity. The best place to ask this, the best people to ask those things from are our black males themselves. We need to listen to their voices, hear their experiences and humble ourselves and learn from them and make the programmatic adjustments necessary so that we can grow and benefit as a community and as a university.”

UM President Wolfe takes month-long vacation

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, February 28, 2015 at 12:00 am

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe is taking some time off: one month, to be exact.

UM System spokesman John Fougere said Wolfe combined his accrued vacation time and annual leave for his 20-working-day vacation

Not much changes while the president is out. He is still in charge, and he is still communicating with his leadership team, Fougere said.

“He is spending time with his family during his time away,” Fougere said. Wolfe’s vacation started Feb. 16 and ends March 14; the time was approved by the Board of Curators.

Former curator David Bradley said “there was a lot of talk” about Wolfe taking an extended period of time off, but he does not think taxpayers “should have any worry about it.”

“There was quite a bit of discussion, and we decided that with the workload he has with the 24/7, 365-day job he has, he’s entitled to have a fairly lengthy time off to reflect and get his battery
recharged,” Bradley said. “I think we’re getting our money’s worth with him. He’s making the university system more efficient.”

Wolfe has been the UM System president since February 2012. He served as president of Novell Americas until April 2011 when the company was bought out. His salary is $459,000 per year.

‘Funding is the key’: Alumni and administrators advocate for MU at state capitol

When Dudley McCarter was working on his juris doctor at the MU School of Law from 1972 to 1975, the nation was beginning to crawl out of a costly war in Vietnam. As thousands of veterans returned home, many of them decided to return to school.

MU was no exception to what McCarter called a sharp uptick in college enrollment. He remembers the classrooms in Tate Hall at the time as “tight quarters,” and coursework as “rigorous and challenging.” He said that though the school did not intentionally try to weed students out of its program, the dean of the school once told students, “Some of you may not make it through the semester — because we have more of you here than we have room for.”

McCarter is now a principal attorney at the St. Louis-based law firm Behr, McCarter & Potter and the volunteer president of the Mizzou Alumni Association. He and hundreds of other alumni rallied for more state support for higher education during the 41st Legislative Day on Wednesday in Jefferson City.

McCarter is a father to three daughters, including Kat McCarter, who graduated from MU in 2011 with a degree in finance and real estate. He said tuition and fees at MU were much more attractive for prospective students 40 years ago than when his daughter attended the university. He is concerned that while tuition and enrollment at MU have climbed for decades, state support for universities has not kept up. This jeopardizes the balance, he said, between affordability and quality of education at MU.

“We have been in the bottom five states for per capita funding for higher education for the last 15 years,” McCarter said. “Enrollment has gone up almost three times as much as our funding. We are educating more students at the UM System with less and less funding each year. But our cost of educating (students) has continued to go up and we’ve had to cut the fat, the muscle and now we are cutting into bone just to provide education.”
Between 1994 and 2014, MU’s tuition climbed from $158.76 to $274 per credit hour in 2013 dollars, according to a report compiled by MU junior Gunnar Johanson and MU’s Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Jim Spain.

The increasing cost of higher education is also reflected in national data: The average published tuition cost for in-state students at public four-year institutions skyrocketed about 225 percent between the 1984-85 and 2014-15 school years, according to a College Board report.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said in a phone interview MU has actually managed to keep its rate of tuition increase below that of the rest of the nation, and he hopes to keep costs where they are now or at a lower rate. However, he said, greater state support is necessary for universities to maintain both affordability and quality of education.

“If we have less state support and we cannot raise tuition, then what has to suffer? The quality of education,” Loftin said. “I believe we have kept the quality of education very high at MU, but there are limits to how far we can go without state support.”

**Rallying cry**

Loftin said between 400 and 500 alumni, faculty and staff of the UM System Wednesday and advocated for three legislative goals: A five percent increase in the system’s performance-based funding from last year; additional funds to complete major renovations and repairs on campus; and a continued support for the “50-50” fund match program.

Grants from the state are an essential source of relief for campus structures like Lafferre Hall, Loftin said. Lafferre Hall received $38.5 million in state money in October 2014, after a report concluded that 91 percent of the building requires repairs or updates.

Other MU buildings like McKee Gymnasium, Waters and Mumford halls are still in need of a rescue.

“We are hopeful that more funding will come down the pipe to repair high-priority buildings,” Loftin said. “They are good buildings that are structurally sound, but they need to be made better for students using them day in and day out for classes and laboratories.”

The 50-50 program, which was created with the passage of Missouri Senate Bill 655 in 2012, set aside money the state can use to match private donations raised by Missouri universities for new construction projects.

Loftin said MU has raised about $22 million in private money, but the matching state funds were withheld by Gov. Jay Nixon until 2014.

“We’re trying to urge (legislators) to continue funding this process and work with the governor to find ways to get this done in the future,” he said. “Our donors really want to leverage their funds, and they are concerned they haven’t seen the state upholding its bargain by matching funding.”
Educators and former students made their way up and down halls of the capitol building throughout the day, stopping legislators and staffers to discuss their hopes for Missouri colleges and universities.

The debate over higher education funding is a complex issue, McCarter said, especially because of increased tax cuts in Missouri. McCarter said these cuts led to a decrease in the state’s revenue stream, shifting legislators’ focus from discretionary budget items like universities to things like state pension and salaries.

Despite some arguments that tax cuts could stimulate Missouri businesses, McCarter said he believes slashing sources of funding for education could do more harm than good.

“(Funding) is the key to attracting top students, top faculty members and more businesses to Missouri,” he said. “The business people I have talked to have told me they need to look outside the state of Missouri to get good employees who are knowledgeable have good backgrounds, mostly in the STEM area. Funding is the key; everything else falls into place when you have adequate funding.”

Full house

Loftin said around midday, everyone gathered in the capitol rotunda for a speech from university officials such as Hank Foley, UM System vice president and senior vice chancellor at MU.

UM System President Tim Wolfe said on Twitter he could not attend the rally due to commitments elsewhere. He was unavailable for comment.

An award ceremony took place, honoring “distinguished alumni,” such as Ron Wood, a graduate of the MU College of Engineering.

“It’s nice to have people who don’t have to be there — our alums who love Mizzou — talk from their heart about how important this university is to them,” Loftin said.

MU alum Lesa McCartney, currently vice president of performance improvement at Preferred Family Healthcare and chairwoman of Mizzou Legislative Network Committee, said the rally helped amplify voices supporting higher education.

“Our interest is to continue to grow the number of advocates and representatives for the University of Missouri,” she said. “The rotunda was full, and it was a nice representation of all the schools in the UM System … but we’d like to see more.”

Loftin said he was pleased by the turnout of the rally and is optimistic about the impact of the advocates. While greater state investment in higher education remains challenged by various interests and departments competing for a piece of the state budget, Loftin said universities remain an essential determinant of Missouri’s economic and intellectual future.
“We remind (legislators) all the time the university is the heartbeat of the state,” he said. “Our graduates fill jobs in the state, our faculty and researchers discover new knowledge every day and we serve over 2 million Missourians, which is about one-third of the (state) population, in a very direct way … Unless our education remains strong and have high quality, we won’t be able to fulfill the workforce demands or the academic vitality of the state.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Two arrested in connection with downtown vandalism

Friday, February 27, 2015 | 9:20 p.m. CST
BY JOE GUSZKOWSKI

COLUMBIA — Two people were arrested Friday in connection with a string of recent vandalism incidents downtown, according to a news release from the Columbia Police Department.

Police arrested Nicholas Aaron Clayborn, 25, and Henry Crockett Crossland, 19, both of Columbia, early Friday morning.

According to the release:

On Wednesday, officers found new graffiti behind businesses in the 900 block of East Broadway, and discovered more Thursday around Seventh, Eighth and Locust streets. Some of the vandalized property included MU campus buildings.

At around 1 a.m. Friday, MU Police Department officers detained Clayborn near Seventh and Elm streets and notified Columbia police, who later arrested him on suspicion of misdemeanor property damage. He was released on a summons.

Officers made contact with Crossland at around 1:36 a.m. near the intersection of Eighth and Elm streets. Crossland admitted to multiple sites of vandalism around Seventh and Eighth streets, according to the release, and police arrested him on suspicion of misdemeanor property damage. Bond was set at $500.
Officers believe there may be other people responsible for some of the graffiti.

Police ask anyone with information to contact the Columbia Police Department or call 573-875-8477 to remain anonymous.

Researchers at the University of Missouri have found that Facebook use can lead to symptoms of depression if the social networking site triggers feelings of envy among its users. **Margaret Duffy, a professor and chair of strategic communication at the MU School of Journalism, says that how Facebook users use the site makes a difference in how they respond to it.**

**Watch the video:**
http://www.usatoday.com/videos/news/nation/2015/03/01/24225609/

**The Denver Post**

Study links 'Facebook envy' with depression in college students

With all the essays, exams and extracurricular activities, college can be a challenging environment for students adjusting to new people, a new place and newfound freedoms.

And social networking sites like Facebook might be making it worse.

For years, studies have shown that college students are particularly prone to depression, and recent reports show those numbers are rising.
While some of this may be attributed to better diagnostic techniques and more attention being paid to student well-being, a study by University of Missouri researchers published in Computers in Human Behavior suggests that certain Facebook uses may contribute to higher levels of depression.

"Facebook can be a fun and healthy activity if users take advantage of the site to stay connected with family and old friends and to share interesting and important aspects of their lives," said researcher Margaret Duffy, a professor and chair of strategic communication at the MU School of Journalism.

"However, if Facebook is used to see how well an acquaintance is doing financially or how happy an old friend is in his relationship — things that cause envy among users — use of the site can lead to feelings of depression," she said.

The study, co-authored by Duffy, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Patrick Ferrucci, focused on "Facebook envy," a concept coined in 2013 that describes how people feel when they consume information about other people online.

"People see things making other people happy, and it creates feelings of envy," explained Lori Vann, a professional counselor specializing in teens and young adults.

The researchers found no direct relationship between Facebook use and depression. However, heavy Facebook users were more likely to experience feelings of envy, and envy proved to be a significant predictor of depression.

Vann suggested that a constant stream of positive Facebook posts — new jobs, engagements, vacations — leads to an inaccurate representation of other people's lives, fueling feelings of envy.

"People are much more likely to post about the positive aspect of their lives," Vann said. "People really need to take what they see posted online with a big grain of salt, because you don't know what the reality is."

The study surveyed more than 700 college students about how much time they spend on Facebook and which functions they use most. Students were then asked to answer questions about how they view themselves relative to their Facebook friends.

"It is not the social medium itself that is to blame for depression but the feelings that it might trigger, particularly Facebook envy," the study says. "Our findings point to the important factor of how communication platforms and individual dispositions intersect."
Schools fight against bullying with lessons of kindness, compassion

BY JOE ROBERTSON
02/27/2015 7:17 PM

Paul Fennewald knows he’s not the first person parents turn to when fear and frustration mount over bullying in school.

Likely the parents fretted with teachers, called on a principal, the superintendent, maybe even board members before they came across his telephone line at the Missouri Center for Educational Safety.

But he gets calls.

“They’re at their wit’s end,” he said. “They don’t know what to do.”

He knows what many parents know, and what startled residents and angry lawmakers are learning in the wake of the news that 12-year-old Blake Kitchen was assaulted in his Liberty Middle School lunchroom and hospitalized.

“It’s a big problem,” Fennewald said. “And there’s no simple solution.”

Should there be laws compelling school systems to have anti-bullying policies and programs?

Both Missouri and Kansas have laws.

The school boards associations in both states provide recommended policies regarding bullying and hazing, regularly reworked to adjust to new trends like cyberbullying. All area districts and public charter schools surveyed by The Star have policies, including Liberty.
Should there be school and community anti-bullying campaigns?

Most every student in area schools and their parents have probably absorbed some combination of assemblies, workshops, brochures, banners and other anti-bullying strategies listed by districts in the survey.

Teachers, staff and bus drivers are trained to build relationships and awareness.

Children are taught to be empowered, to seek help, to give aid and not be bystanders.

And the research that schools compile in surveys such as through the Communities That Care or the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) networks show their efforts are helping students feel safer.

But most every student and parent will assure you that many children still behave like bullies, and many are still bullied and scared.

“It happens daily, and a lot of it is subtle,” said Tim Lewis, a professor of special education at the University of Missouri who is one of the originators of the PBIS safe-school strategies. “Catching it at the early stages is difficult. It’s pervasive, and it vexes and challenges.”

Time was that schools were inclined to assume students know the right behavior and focus their bullying prevention on punishing the bully, Lewis said.

But the programs schools are using today do not assume students know the right actions to take, he said. They teach what respect looks like. They teach kindness and compassion.

Schools train their staffs to watch for children struggling, either as potential perpetrators or victims, and build an environment of support where children are more comfortable sharing their concerns.

Some districts, including Kansas City, Raytown, Independence, North Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Belton and Excelsior Springs, are using PBIS as part of their efforts.
Park Hill, Blue Springs and Lone Jack are among those using the Olweus bullying prevention program created by Norwegian psychology professor Dan Olweus.

Olathe, Center and Kearney are taking on Rachel’s Challenge, inspired by the writings of one of the first victims in the Columbine shootings in 1999.

Surveys suggest that intense efforts will improve school climates and reduce some telltale signs like office referrals, parent calls and absenteeism, but schools can’t easily quantify the violence they prevent.

They know when they fail.

Liberty has anti-bullying efforts at work as well. Staff are trained to build relationships so children feel connected to adults they can go to when they are troubled, Superintendent Jeremy Tucker said.

The district, like several in the Northland, has a Text-a-Tip service through law enforcement’s Crime Stoppers to make anonymous reports. Schools have anonymous hotlines.

A sixth-grade program with the Liberty Police Department aims to help new middle school students make safe choices.

But now Blake, a sixth-grader, is recovering at home after suffering severe head injuries that put him in Children’s Mercy Hospital.

The district is cooperating with police and aiding in the investigation of the eighth-grade student accused of the assault, Tucker said.

“Our concern is with the well-being and recovery of Blake ... and making sure he transitions well back into the classroom,” Tucker said.

Bullying is a community issue and the struggles in the schools resonate into homes, educators throughout the area said.
Olathe took its program discussions into community groups to look at comprehensive efforts, Assistant Superintendent Erin Dugan said.

“We want more students reporting,” she said. “We want to be transparent in the community and communicate more with parents.”

Kansas school districts are frequently calling on legal staff at the Kansas Association of School Boards to help guide their anti-bullying campaigns, association attorney Angela Stallbaumer said.

The rural Midway School District in Cass County last fall invited parents to visit with a panel of professionals including juvenile officers, a social worker, mental health counselor and others in building a community safety net.

“This is a topic where we never think we’ve got it covered,” Midway Superintendent Gordon Myers said.

Tucker described such wider, holistic support as one of the priorities determined by its school board this year.

“The well-being of our learners,” he said, depends a lot on how well communities “support the emotional, psychological and mental health needs of them and their families.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Symposium highlights issues of race, policing in Ferguson

Friday, February 27, 2015 | 10:07 p.m. CST; updated 9:19 a.m. CST, Sunday, March 1, 2015

BY BROOKE VAUGHAN

COLUMBIA — The day began with a moment of silence.

The bustle and chatter around MU’s Hulston Hall ceased for 20 seconds in remembrance of Michael Brown, the black teenager killed by a white police officer in August in Ferguson, Missouri.
On Friday, around six months after Brown's death and the unrest that ensued, a panel of experts on law and the justice system gathered to discuss the racial inequalities and law enforcement policies that they said led up to the tragedy, and how events like it could be avoided in the future.

During a panel that focused on the deeper issues behind Brown's death, speakers pointed to housing discrimination, unemployment, mass incarceration and lack of access to education as causes for racial disparities in Missouri and the U.S.

Chuck Henson, MU Trial Practice Professor of Law, said that despite the common belief that we're living in a "post-racial era," racial disparities are still apparent throughout the country.

St. Louis is ranked the 6th or 7th most racially segregated city in the the U.S., said Rigel Oliveri, MU associate dean for faculty research and development and associate professor of law. Oliveri said said that housing policies are to blame for the city’s segregation, and advocated for changes to those policies.

A second panel focused on issues of policing and race.

UMSL Professor of Criminal Justice Richard Rosenfeld questioned law enforcement's use of force in confrontational situations, including in Ferguson.

He said that police officer Darren Wilson could have taken an approach other than opening fire.

Rosenfeld encouraged residents to find out if the Columbia Police Department is training its officers in the tactical retreat method in dangerous situations.

He also advocated for a national uniform police data system that would keep track of the number of people and the number of officers present at a crime scene.

Panelists also discussed what they said was excessive militarization used to control the protests that followed a grand jury's decision not to indict Wilson in November.

Redditt Hudson, regional field organizer for the NAACP, called for more accountability for "officers who abuse our rights and our bodies."
"The issue is whether (police officers) adhere to training and what happens when (they) don't," he said.

About 200 people, including lawyers, law enforcement officers, students and members of the public, attended the daylong event, at times filling the auditorium at MU's School of Law. Audience members were invited to participate during Q&A sessions following each panel.

S. David Mitchell, associate professor of law at MU, delivered the day's closing remarks.

This is the end of the symposium, he said, but it is not the end of the discussion.

True/False outside in and inside out

By Aarik Danielsen

Sunday, March 1, 2015 at 12:00 am

Any documentary filmmaker worth his or her salt has practiced the art of being an insider and an outsider all at once.

That is, they know what it takes to get close enough to see and know a subject — but maintain just enough distance, whether physical or emotional, to really know that subject, noticing things they can’t possibly know about themselves. And, in an age when uncovering emotional truth is just as important as recording events, the best filmmakers know when to leave those distinctions at the door.

This mixture of presence and perception is part of what has made Robert Greene a rising, respected figure in the nonfiction world. Greene has brought three films to the True/False Film Fest – most recently, “Actress” last year. He also is a sought-after editor in both fiction (“Listen Up Philip”) and nonfiction (True/False 2014 selection “Approaching the Elephant”).

It is also part of what makes him uniquely qualified to comment on this year’s fest, which begins Thursday. If any one person could embody the spirit of True/False, it would probably be Greene. Creatively adventurous, personally authentic, he has become an unequivocal cheerleader for the fest, but his enthusiasm is not localized. He is a heartfelt advocate for all good people making good art in a line of work he sees as paramount. Yet, Greene is just enough outside the
True/False bubble to offer a different type of revelation about the fest’s lineup and prospects to further the form.

This year’s fest will be Greene’s first as a Columbia resident. He was recently hired as filmmaker-in-chief for the University of Missouri’s nascent Murray Center for Documentary Journalism. In a conversation last month, Greene confessed he wasn’t sure how changing his ZIP code would or wouldn’t change his festival experience.

“I assume that it will not feel as much like Mardi Gras as it probably felt before because I still have to get up the next morning and take my children to school,” he said. “But it might be even more like Mardi Gras because it’s in my town.”

Greene gained a special point of view this year, watching how the festival came together as he spent time with programmers David Wilson, Paul Sturtz and Chris Boeckmann at the Sundance Film Festival. It wasn’t quite a front-row seat to the action, more like a fifth-row seat on the aisle.

While he had no direct or formal part to play in their curatorial conversations — his was more of an ambient awareness — Greene came away impressed with how the trio handled the inherent pressures of programming the top documentary festival in the nation. He saw just enough to know he wouldn’t want the job, just enough to appreciate the beauty and the burden of speaking for what he called a fruitful era of documentary.

“This year looks and sounds like every other year — to me, that’s a huge compliment,” Greene said. “No matter what the overall landscape looks like, in terms of documentary, you can trust that True/False will have found the big movies and the little movies that everyone should be seeing.”

Greene’s outpost on the documentary front means he has seen more of this year’s True/False films than most. Several have already struck a chord.

“(T)error is a big deal for a number of reasons,” he said, including its rare ability to be durable journalism and a stellar movie. The film, which explores counterterrorism efforts in the United States, allows “narrative and moral ambiguity to remain on screen,” yet exhibits a clear reality: that directors Lyric Cabral and David Sutcliffe have done their homework, Greene said.

“Heaven Knows What,” the Safdie brothers’ portrait of youth and addiction in New York City, is “as purely fictional as anything True/False has ever played,” yet possessed of an “energy that connotes a nonfiction feeling,” Greene said — much of that energy coming from extras who have lived the movie’s through line. The last 15 minutes of “The Chinese Mayor” “is super simple, in some ways,” he noted, “and just totally breathtaking nonfiction cinema that could only be in the realm of nonfiction cinema.”

But, like any other festgoer, Greene has mentally dog-eared his program with films he has not seen. Greene has watched clips of or heard the buzz around “Spartacus & Cassandra,” “Those Who Feel the Fire Burning,” “Of Men and War,” “Bitter Lake,” “Jeff, Embrace Your Past” and
“Something Better to Come,” among others. He is excited to see, on the big screen, what all the fuss has been about.

Greene sees this year’s lineup as staying with the times and ahead of the curve, not bogged down in discussions or distinctions about hybrid moviemaking that have been turned over and examined from a number of angles.

“What would be destructive would be if True/False only concerned itself with these same kinds of questions over and over again,” he said.

Ultimately, True/False is as much about people as it is art — people in movies, people who make movies, people who watch movies and ponder the world as it is and might be. Greene identified several filmmakers whose charisma and command of the craft should resonate with audiences at panels and post-film Q-and-A.

The Ross brothers (“Western”) “aren’t new names, but they should be household names,” he said; Cabral and Sutcliffe are filmmakers who “will be seen in a certain light” as “(T)error” reaches audiences. “Field Niggas” director Khalik Allah, who has achieved a depth of field in photography and visual art, will fascinate — as will his film, Greene predicted.

Greene said there is “no better spokesperson for the state of the art of documentary” than Joshua Oppenheimer, who will travel to True/False with this year’s True Life Fund film, “The Look of Silence.” A next-level thinker and artist, Oppenheimer can discuss form and “real-world consequences” in a way that respects and challenges audiences and makes a case for the greatness of the medium, Greene said.

Festgoers can see what Greene has seen — or, as is the beauty of the fest, something altogether different — when True/False takes place this week.

For Asian-Americans, a changing landscape on college admissions

By Frank Shyong Los Angeles Times | Posted: Friday, February 27, 2015 7:02 pm

NO MU MENTION

LOS ANGELES • In a windowless classroom at a tutoring center Arcadia, Calif., parents crammed into child-sized
desks search through their pockets and purses for pens as Ann Lee launches a PowerPoint presentation.

Her primer on college admissions begins with the basics: application deadlines, the relative virtues of the SAT versus the ACT and how many Advanced Placement tests to take.

Then she eases into a potentially incendiary topic — one that many counselors have learned they cannot avoid. “Let’s talk about Asians,” she says.

Lee’s next slide shows three columns of numbers from a Princeton University study that tried to measure how race and ethnicity affect admissions by using SAT scores as a benchmark. It uses the term “bonus” to describe how many extra SAT points an applicant’s race confers. She points to the first column.

African-Americans received a “bonus” of 230 points, Lee says.

She points to the second column.

“Hispanics received a bonus of 185 points.”

The last column draws gasps.

Asian-Americans, Lee says, are penalized by 50 points — in other words, they had to do that much better to win admission.

“Do Asians need higher test scores? Is it harder for Asians to get into college? The answer is yes,” Lee says. “Zenme keyi,” one mother hisses in Chinese. How can this be possible?

College admission season ignites deep anxieties for Asian-American families, who spend more than any other demographic on education. At elite universities across the U.S., students of Asian descent form a larger share of the student body than they do of the population as a whole. And increasingly they have turned against affirmative action policies that could alter those ratios, and accuse admissions committees of discriminating against Asian applicants.

That perspective has pitted them against advocates for diversity: More college berths for Asian-American students means fewer for black and Latino students, who are statistically underrepresented at top universities.

But in the San Gabriel Valley’s hypercompetitive ethnic Asian communities, arguments for diversity can fall on deaf ears. For immigrant parents raised in Asia’s all-or-nothing test cultures, a good education is not just a measure of success — it’s a matter of survival. They see academic achievement as a moral virtue, and families organize their lives around their child’s education, moving to the best school districts and paying for tutoring and tennis lessons. An acceptance letter from a prestigious college is often the only acceptable return on an investment that stretches over decades.

Lee is the co-founder of HS2 Academy, a college prep business that assumes that racial bias is a fact of college admissions and counsels students accordingly. At 10 centers across the state, the academy’s counselors teach Asian-American applicants countermeasures. The goal, Lee says, is to help prospective college students avoid coming off like another “cookie-cutter Asian.”

“Everyone is in orchestra and plays piano,” Lee says. “Everyone plays tennis. Everyone wants to be a doctor, and writes about immigrating to America. You can’t get in with these cliché applications.”
NUMBERS GAME
Like many students at Arcadia High School, Yue Liang plans to apply to University of California campuses and major in engineering — or if her mother wins that argument, premed. She excels at math, takes multiple AP courses and volunteers, as does nearly everyone she knows.

Being an Asian-American applicant, the junior says, is “a disadvantage.” The problem, she says, is in the numbers. Asian families flock to the San Gabriel Valley’s school districts because they have some of the highest Academic Performance Index scores in the state. But with hundreds of top-performing students at each high school, focusing on a small set of elite institutions, it’s easy to get lost in the crowd.

Of the school’s 4,000 students, nearly 3,000 are of Asian descent, and like Liang are willing to do whatever it takes to gain entrance to a prestigious university. They will study until they can’t remember how to have fun and stuff their schedule with extracurriculars. But there’s an important part of their college application that they can’t improve as easily as an SAT score: their ethnicity.

In the San Gabriel Valley, where aspirationally named tutoring centers such as Little Harvard and Ivy League cluster within walking distance of high schools, many of them priced more cheaply than a baby sitter, it didn’t take long for some centers to respond to students’ and parents’ fears of being edged out of a top school because of some intangible missing quality.

Helping Asian-American students, many of whom lead similar lives, requires the embrace of some stereotypes, says Crystal Zell, HS2’s assistant director of counseling. They are good at math and bad at writing and aspire to be doctors, engineers or bankers, according to the cliches. She works with her students to identify what’s unique about them — and most of the time, that’s not their career ambitions or their ethnicity.

“Everyone comes in wanting the same thing,” Zell said. “But that’s because they don’t know about anything else.”
If a student wants to be an engineer, she makes sure to show them other options. She sends affluent students to volunteer in poor neighborhoods. Branch out from tennis, or chess club, or tae kwon do, she tells them. Learn a language other than Chinese. Avoid writing your essay about your parents’ journey to America.

Instead of just handing students a violin or a piano and saying pick one, Zell says, HS2 offers them a buffet of interests and hobbies, encouraging students to pick something that excites them.

Lawrence Leonn, 16, is grateful for the help. He doesn’t think ethnicity should matter, but he believes it will.
“I don’t want to be racist or anything,” Lawrence said. “Everyone works hard and struggles. But there’s this feeling that it’s going to be harder for us.”
Complaints about racial bias in college admissions have persisted since the 1920s, when a Harvard University president tried to cap the number of Jewish students. In November, a group called Students for Fair Admissions filed a suit against Harvard University for admissions policies that allegedly discriminate against Asian-Americans. The group cited the 2004 Princeton study and other sources that offer statistics about Asian-Americans’ test performance.

At the University of Texas at Austin, an affirmative action policy that allows admissions committees to consider the race of prospective applicants has been argued all the way to the Supreme Court (the policies were upheld by a lower court, but that court’s decision was voided by the Supreme Court. Another court upheld the policies, and another appeal is pending).
Those who defend “holistic” admissions policies insist that considering a broader range of variables ensures that all applicants are judged fairly. And the Princeton study Lee refers to has been widely criticized by academics who argue that it relies too heavily on grades and test scores to draw conclusions about racial bias and that the data the study uses are too old to be relevant.

Still, anxiety over racial admissions rates is peaking as cash-crunch public universities increasingly favor high-paying, out-of-state and foreign students at the expense of local applicants of every ethnicity. A 2014 bill that would have asked voters to consider restoring race as a factor in admissions to public California colleges and universities sparked multiple public protests and scathing editorials in Chinese newspapers. The bill, Senate Constitutional Amendment 5, was shelved last year.

Lee says that she usually tries to at least mention arguments in favor of diversity at her free college seminars. She mentions how the black student population at UCLA has declined precipitously and how student bodies at elite universities probably shouldn’t be 100 percent Asian. When she looks to see their response, she sees mostly slowly shaking heads.

“It’s really hard for me to explain diversity to parents whose only goal is getting their son into Harvard,” Lee says. That same ethic causes parents and students to agonize over which box, if any, to check on the race/nationality section of the application. One parent asked Zell if it would help to legally change their last name to something more Western-sounding.

Last year, a rumor that Harvard University wouldn’t be accepting any more Asian students from San Marino High School spread like a trending hashtag.

Mollie Beckler, a counselor at San Marino High School, says that Harvard never imposed such a rule. School counselors are constantly trying to dispel myths like these, she says, if only in hopes of slightly lowering the huge stress students shoulder because of their intense focus on elite schools.

“The feeling of failure they get from trying to reach such high standards,” she said, “is very concerning to us in the counseling world.”

Only a few of the San Gabriel Valley’s tutoring centers confront the ethnic admissions issue head-on. Jamie Aviles, a counselor at the ACI Institute, doesn’t teach ways to overcome perceived racial bias, she says. But she and many other counselors do agree on at least one thing.

As Aviles puts it: “It sucks to be a kid in the San Gabriel Valley.”