MU students, faculty take 'It's On Us' pledge to combat sexual assault

By Carolyn Heger

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COLUMBIA — MU students, faculty and administration vowed to combat sexual assault during the "It's On Us" campaign event Thursday.

People lined up at the MU Student Center to sign pledges and become part of the national campaign initiated by the Obama administration in September 2014.

The campaign aims to prevent sexual assault at universities and colleges, according to a fact sheet from the White House. The administration has partnered with about 70 corporations, athletic organizations and advocacy groups to support the campaign. Some partners include the NCAA, the Southeastern Conference and MTV.

MU is one of approximately 200 schools to join the campaign, said Katie Harbinson, the MU "It's On Us" campaign coordinator.

"The idea for a campaign against sexual assault started with the 'Enough Is Enough' campaign," said Payton Head, the president of the Missouri Students Association. "This campaign was already in the works when I came into office. But I soon learned about the 'It’s On Us' campaign, which was supported by other student body presidents across the country."

"Enough Is Enough" is an MU program for sexual assault awareness, similar to "It's On Us."

Head said that he likes "It’s On Us" because it’s a national initiative. He also said it would challenge all members of the MU community — not just students — to put an end to sexual violence on campus.

Harbinson said that the MSA executive cabinet started to consider joining "It’s On Us" in December.
"This is really a student-driven campaign," said Cathy Scroggs, MU vice chancellor for student affairs. "I think this goes hand in hand with all the things we are doing administratively with Title IX, like making students more aware of what their rights are and where they can get support."

Title IX is the federal law that prevents sexual discrimination and sexual harassment in schools. MU appointed Ellen Eardley as its Title IX administrator and assistant vice provost on Feb. 25 to ensure that the university complies with Title IX policies, according to previous Missourian reporting.

MSA will host an "It's On Us" conference for student body presidents from other Missouri schools April 18. Harbinson said that MSA will invite representatives from 10 or 11 universities and colleges across the state, including other University of Missouri System schools.

Sen. Claire McCaskill also will attend the event, where she will present recent legislation to combat sexual assault on college campuses. Harbinson said McCaskill’s speech will be open for all MU students to attend.

Jessica Heneisen, an MU junior who signed a pledge, said that sexual violence is a topic that is both prevalent and important to her.

"I think that people do not realize how big of an issue this is," Heneisen said. "This is close to my heart because the women in my family who have been sexually assaulted are strong survivors."

Chad Phillips, an MU senior, said that he signed the pledge because he believes in the importance of educating students about sexual violence.

"I think that the first step to fighting sexual assault is awareness of this problem," Phillips said. "We need to educate students about this issue, especially because many students do not see it on a daily basis."

Supervising editor is Joe Guszkowski.
Raising a generation of materialists

It may be a material world, as Madonna says, but that doesn't mean parents want their kids to grow up to become materialistic.

Unfortunately, loving parents may unwittingly be creating generations of materialists through the time-honored technique of bribing kids for anything from getting an A in math to doing their chores.

Yet using material possessions to express love and support can ultimately lead to those children growing into materialistic adults, whose self-worth is tied to the accumulation of goods, according to recent research published in the Journal of Consumer Research.

The study surveyed more than 700 adults for insight into the long-term impact of rewarding kids with material items. It found that those who had received more material rewards and punishments were more likely than others to rely on possessions to define and express who they are.

While that might seem like the American way, given our country's emphasis on luxury cars and big houses as a way to show status and success, materialism has been linked to several negative characteristics that lead to unhappiness, such as financial problems and compulsive shopping.

"If children grow up associating success with material goods, over time, they will focus too much on the end material good to define success and lose sight of the less tangible signs of success such as personal happiness with achieving goals," Lan Nguyen Chaplin, a co-author of the paper and associate professor of marketing at the University of Illinois at Chicago, wrote to CBS MoneyWatch in an email.

Americans are definitely spending a lot on their kids. Parents are slated to spend more than $245,000 to raise a child born in 2013, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's up from about $199,000 in 1980, adjusted for inflation. The biggest areas where parents are spending more are in child care and education, and what the USDA calls "miscellaneous" expenses, which includes entertainment devices such as computers and TVs, as well as books and personal care items.

However, it's not guilty or time-strapped parents who are throwing material goods at their children, the study found.

Loving parents, or those who are warm and supportive, tend to rely on material rewards for their kids, creating a greater chance that those kids will grow up to suffer from materialism, the study found. But conversely, unwittingly generous parents aren't the only problem: Kids threatened with having their possessions taken away are also more likely to be materialistic as adults.
Aside from negative implications for personal finances and self-fulfillment, is there really anything intrinsically bad about materialism? After all, American capitalism is based on the idea of unflagging consumer demand for stuff. While materialistic adults may be helping prop up sales at American stores, they're not necessarily healthy for the environment, the authors noted.

"At the environmental level, materialism is associated with a lower concern for the environment," according to the study, which is co-authored by University of Missouri professor Marsha Richins. "The higher consumption levels of materialistic consumers contribute to greenhouse gas production and climate change, depletion of natural resources, and environmental pollution."

While that's troubling, parents may be left scratching their heads about how to reward good behavior. Chaplin says providing material gifts "in moderation is fine." She added: "It's important for parents to give their children the gift of their time and attention. You can't substitute material goods for your time or attention."

The study also raises some red flags about rewarding kids with intangible experiences, which have been linked to feelings of happiness. While that might seem like a healthy alternative, the paper noted that other research has found the acquisition of experiences (such as a trip to Disneyland) can be just as materialistic as buying toys. The authors said more studies should be undertaken to find out if experiential rewards are less likely to create materialistic adults.

In the meantime, parents may want to rethink how they tell their kids they've done a good job. Instead of buying a toy, they could spend extra play time with their child.

"There are so many ways to define oneself ... we're not just what we have," Chaplin noted. "We're more than that. But if parents always reward/punish kids using material things, then their self-worth, over time, is centered around material goods."
Eating Invasive Fish Can Help Environment, Economy


WU commits cash to satisfy student demands

NO MU MENTION

Washington University leaders have committed as much as $400,000 per year, and possibly millions more in future years, to meet demands made by student activists who’ve criticized the school for being out of touch with the larger problems of race and inequality in the St. Louis area.

But those concessions haven’t silenced critics, including a group of about 20 who rallied in opposition Thursday.

In an eight-page document delivered to students recently, university leadership acknowledged publicly for the second time in weeks that WU has a race problem on campus. They cited incidents of racial slurs being said out loud on campus, posted on social media and also the disproportionate questioning of black students by university police.

“We wish to state at the outset that it is the administration that bears responsibility for the fact that these incidents continue to occur,” the document says. “When we say ‘we have a lot of work to do,’ we mean that the administration has a lot of work to do.”

The document is the university’s official response to 16 demands presented to them by student activists calling themselves Washington University Students in Solidarity.

Among the demands the university agreed to are to give students a say in how the university invests money, creation of a course on diversity, more university-sponsored community service projects and a promise to pay for a third party to audit university police practices.
While many of the demands carry costs, one of the more expensive demands is a commitment to spend $100,000 a year over five years to fund the “For the Sake of All” research centered on poverty and health disparities.

“Part of our responsibilities as one of America’s great universities, is helping to address the persistent problems we have in this country,” said Holden Thorp, WU’s provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs.

A number of students involved in negotiations with administrators, however, came away unimpressed with the university’s response.

David Dwight, 21, a senior biomedical engineering major, said the university is content to “set up meetings and committees” rather than make real changes. “What we’re going to do is keep the pressure up,” he said.

Part of the concern is that although university leadership says they say they share the goal of increasing minority enrollment, they would not commit to increasing the percentage of black and Latino students to 10 percent each, up from 6.6 percent and 5 percent respectively (A U.S. Supreme Court decision prohibits them from setting specific targets).

The university also did not agree to a demand to create a three-credit course on “the social, political, economic and historical landscape of St. Louis,” and requiring all students to take the class.

University leaders said creating the class would undermine the role of faculty in setting the curriculum.

Jacqui Germain, 24, a senior African-American studies major, said the university is trying to avoid long-term structural changes in favor of quick fixes. “We’ve seen before that when the university wants to do something, they get it done,” she said.

Another area of disagreement involves students’ demand to have a voice in how the university develops property it owns, including land in Forest Park Southeast. Students demanded that at least 50 percent of any new development is dedicated to affordable housing.

In an initial meeting with students, the university leaders said they would consider the demand. Several days later, BJC HealthCare and the Washington University School of Medicine announced plans to build a 12- to 14-floor office building in the area, with preliminary plans calling for up to 20 percent of nearby land to be designated for affordable housing.

“They are putting the success of the medical center before the needs of the local community,” said Josh Potash, 21, a senior majoring in political science major.

Thorp, WU’s provost, said he’s not surprised by students’ criticisms.
“These are folks who are going to be here for a short time. They want to see what they are pushing for happen while they are here. In some cases that’s possible, in some cases it’s not possible,” Thorp said.

Missouri Scholars Academy financial burden might fall on families

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, March 5, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Missouri’s gifted students can still attend the Missouri Scholars Academy this summer, as long as their families can handle the financial hit after funding was vetoed and withheld by the governor.

Academy Director Steve Keller said putting more money on the backs of students and their families is not the best answer, but for now it’s the only option.

The academy is for 330 incoming high school juniors who have been nominated by someone at their school to participate and then accepted by a committee based on their grade point average, IQ score and essay answers. The students gather at the University of Missouri for one month each summer to attend classes and engage with different speakers or activities.

The program costs about $450,000, with fluctuations based on cost for renting a residence hall and increased costs for on-campus dining.

Since 2009, the state consistently paid about $150,000, the University of Missouri picked up another $150,000 and the final third of the money came from students and their parents, averaging about $500 per student.

The program shares a budget line at the state level with the Missouri Fine Arts Academy. Both programs were hit when Gov. Jay Nixxon vetoed $550,000 of the $750,000 the General Assembly appropriated for the two academies. Nixon withheld the remaining $200,000.

Keller said he has no idea whether that money will be released. If Nixon continues to withhold the funds, Missouri Scholars Academy leaders plan to charge students and their families $1,000.
The state fully funded the academy until 2009, which is when MU stepped up to help, Keller said. With 53 of the 330 scholars from 2012 enrolled as freshmen in MU’s honors college, the campus has noticed the indirect benefit of supporting the program, he said.

“The quality of the academy is going to be undiminished,” Keller said. Through similar budget issues in the past, organizers have maintained the same level of programing and continued to enroll the same number of students, with a higher price tag.

The problem now is access for students whose families can’t foot the $1,000 bill.

Some school counselors said “in good conscious they couldn’t nominate certain scholars because they know” those families can’t “handle the fee,” Keller said. “These are students who aren’t eligible for free or reduced lunches.”

Students eligible for reduced-price lunches pay $350 for the academy, and those who qualify for free lunches attend for free.

“The sense of community and the sense of being able to interact with kids from really different backgrounds is a really huge, non-academic part of the academy,” Keller said. “Any lessening of that is something we want to avoid.”

Keller said if the restricted $150,000 is released sometime before the end of the fiscal year in June, parents will be reimbursed $500.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said the restriction was “another blow to gifted students.” Because of statewide changes through elementary and secondary education, gifted programs have been eliminated, so Missouri Scholars Academy is one of few opportunities still around for these students, Schaefer said.

“The governor didn’t even include the scholars academy or the Missouri Fine Arts Academy in his budget for” fiscal year 2016, Schaefer said. “It’s my intention to add them back because they’re very valuable programs.”

Nixon has cited the legislature’s irresponsible spending and passage of tax-cut legislation over his veto as reasons for his budget withholdings. Without freezing those funds, the budget would become unbalanced, Nixon’s office maintains.

The draft of the budget bill in the House includes $100,000 for the two programs.

Keller said the shared responsibility model between the state, the university and students and their families makes sense to him.

“I think you can absolutely make the argument for asking parents to pay one-third of the cost,” he said. “I don’t think that’s unreasonable. But I am not confident that the state will continue fully funding the program.”
Pro-choice students brag about vandalizing pro-life chalking on campus

These students must feel really safe at the University of Missouri. Or maybe they’re just really dumb.

Pro-choice activists actually documented their vandalism of pro-life messages just hours after they were scrawled by Mizzou Students for Life members for National Pro-Life Chalk Day, the pro-life group wrote at the national SFL website.

The chalk statements included “A baby @ 9 weeks in the womb can suck their thumb!” and “Pregnant and scared? you have options,” with a phone number.

Though none of the statements had the group’s name on them, “one Twitter user said she was planning to write a letter to Mizzou’s Organization Resource Group about us concerning the messages,” the Mizzou group said.

The group included before and after pictures of their chalkings. I recognize some of the slogans from Feminists for Life, which is starting its own project to share early feminist writings on abortion (news flash: they were strongly pro-life) with “women’s historians teaching at campuses across the country.”

Good to know that certain student activists don’t trust their own faculties of persuasion to win over students.

Editorial: Missouri's sad dog in new Obamacare case won't hunt

It will be recalled that on Aug. 3, 2010, the 23 percent of Missouri voters who showed up for the primary election overwhelming approved Proposition C. It was intended to block the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act, the part that requires everyone to have health insurance.
On Wednesday, after the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in King v. Burwell, a challenge to what amounts to a typo in a different part of the ACA, one of the 55 amicus ("friend of the court") briefs awaiting them in their chambers argues that Proposition C meant Missourians hate far more about Obamacare than the individual mandate.

The brief was filed by the Missouri Liberty Project and the Missouri Forward Foundation, conservative political groups founded by Joshua Hawley and Erin Morrow Hawley, husband and wife. Both are associate professors of law at the University of Missouri-Columbia. No doubt they will have bright and lucrative futures in Missouri GOP politics.

Their argument in King v. Burwell, however, is strained. The King case turns on whether the IRS can give tax subsidies to people who buy health insurance from the federal health exchange, or if subsidies are limited to citizens of the 14 states that set up their own insurance marketplaces.

The overall language of the ACA, as well as the legislative intent established during long debate in Congress, made it clear that everyone would be eligible. But lawyers for the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian group that scoured the act in December 2010, looking for ways to attack it, found a seven-word phrase they thought was a deal-breaker.

One section of the law describes eligible taxpayers as those enrolled in health care plans acquired “through an Exchange established by a State.”

In their brief, Profs. Hawley suggest that in 2010, Missouri voters were keenly aware of these implications. They’re giving far more credit to Missouri voters than they deserve. Indeed, Prop C was passed four months before the eagle-eyed lawyers for the Competitive Enterprise Institute found their alleged fatal flaw.

The kindest interpretation of the Hawleys’ motives, as well those of the libertarian scholars behind King v. Burwell, is that they are driven by passion for a smaller, less intrusive government. Philosophically, this is fine. But in the real world, as it applies to the necessities of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, it comes off as social Darwinism. It comes off as selfish.

Should the court decide King v. Burwell for the plaintiffs, it will be an epic disaster. First for the 8 million Americans — more than 223,000 of them in Missouri — who bought subsidized health care through the federal exchange. Their costs will increase an by an average of 250 percent, and most will drop out.

After that the entire Affordable Care Act will enter a “death spiral,” because insurance works only if the insurance has enough people in it. The slowdown in rising health care costs will end. All Americans will pay more, except those who can’t pay at all. Many more of them will die premature deaths.
In theory, the court doesn’t consider real-world outcomes when it interprets the law. In practice, it does. It should.

It should consider the law as a whole, as some of its more conservative members have argued in previous decisions.

It should consider whether the four plaintiffs in whose name the case was brought can demonstrate any injury because of the ACA. They haven’t. There is legitimate question about whether they have standing to bring this case.

This conservative court’s rulings have tilted to the interests of corporate America, which is thriving in the age of Obamacare. HCA, the largest health care company in the country, filed a brief in support of the law.

One thing the court shouldn’t worry about is the feelings of the 669,947 Missourians (out of 4.1 million registered voters) who voted for Proposition C in 2010. That vote was not about a seven-word phrase. It was about the first three syllables in “Obamacare.”