Legislator files bills prohibiting gender neutral housing, unisex public bathrooms

By Ashley Jost

Monday, March 23, 2015 at 2:00 pm

A southern Missouri state representative last week filed a bill that would prohibit the establishment of gender-neutral housing on state campuses as the University of Missouri moves to create its own gender-neutral option to open in the fall.

Rep. Jeff Pogue, R-Salem, said in a statement that he filed legislation prohibiting the creation of gender-neutral housing options by “any entity” that receives state money to protect “social norms.” Pogue also submitted a bill last week that would prohibit any state-funded bathroom from being unisex unless it is single-occupancy.

“I’m wanting to protect the social norms of our state, the same social norms that have operated in our state since the organization of Missouri in 1820,” Pogue said in an email. “These Missourian cultural rules, the status quo, are nearly 200 years old, and have operated well throughout our state.”

Pogue said in a statement that if the state “were to change a social norm of this magnitude,” the General Assembly or voters should make the decision, through a bill or a ballot measure. The result should apply statewide, he said.

The bills were filed about a month after MU’s plans to create a 16-bed, gender-neutral housing option in one wing of the first floor of College Avenue Hall became public.

The space is open to students of any gender, with the goal of creating a safe place for those students who are transgender or gender nonconforming, Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life at MU, said in February. Bathrooms will be unisex in a new residence hall set to open this fall — Gateway Hall on Virginia Avenue, Minor said last month.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university does not comment on pending legislation.

Pogue did not respond to email and voice messages seeking more comment.
Kyle Piccola, lobbyist for PROMO, called Pogue’s legislation “disheartening.” PROMO advocates for gay and transgender rights.

“They’re attacks on the transgender community,” Piccola said. “Everybody, including the transgender community, cares about privacy and safety, particularly in the bathroom.”

Piccola said bills filed this late in the session “don’t typically go anywhere,” but PROMO will be monitoring the bills and creating an advocacy plan if that changes.

Neither of the bills have been referred to a committee. Legislators are out this week for their annual spring break.

University of Idaho to get $1.3 million from Mizzou for 2017 football game

BY TOD PALMER
03/23/2015 1:54 PM

Missouri will pay the University of Idaho a lump sum of $1.3 million for its participation in a football game Oct. 21, 2017, at Memorial Stadium.

MU athletics on Friday announced the game, which rounds out the 2017 schedule.

The Vandals, whose game at Florida last season was rained out, were scheduled to play the Gators again in 2017, but that game has been pushed into a future season, according to the Spokesman-Review.

Idaho rejoined what is now the Football Bowl Subdivision in 1996 and joined the Sun Belt Conference as a football-only member in 2014.

The Vandals were banned from the postseason last year after failing to meet the NCAA’s Academic Progress Rate in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012, but that ban was lifted in early March.
Missouri's home nonconference opponents for 2017 are Missouri State, Purdue and Idaho, with a road game at Connecticut.

The Tigers’ 2015 schedule includes Southeast Missouri and Connecticut at home, a Nov. 14 game against BYU at Arrowhead Stadium and a road game at Arkansas State.

Missouri opens the 2016 season at West Virginia and hosts Eastern Michigan, but two nonconference opponents remained unfilled for that season.

The Tigers will pay Southeast Missouri and Missouri State a total of $1.21 million for games in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

MU saves thousands on storm water utility discount

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri saved more than $26,000 on its storm water utility bill because of a 40% discount the City of Columbia grants it, according to new numbers obtained by ABC 17 News.

The university receives a discount for maintaining its own system of pipes and street inlets, according to MU spokesman Christian Basi and Columbia Public Works engineer Erin Keys. In the university's fiscal year 2014, the city billed it $51,460. After the discount, MU paid just $30,876.

Subtracting its payment to the City of Columbia, Basi said the school spent $399,341 on maintenance costs related to storm water.
"There's a boundary that includes the University, and they maintain that storm water infrastructure within that boundary," Keys said of the work the school performs.

City leaders proposed a discount in early March to the Columbia Public School Board for its storm water utility, as well. City Manager Mike Matthes told the board it could qualify for providing public education on storm water issues. The district could get as much as a sixty percent discount.
"The idea was to propose to the school district that they would provide some specific and concrete education to their students, and the details would still have to be worked out," Keys said. "In exchange for that, their rate would get reduced."

The Clean Water Act requires cities with populations greater than 100,000 people provide services related to storm water and its effects, such as public education and outreach. The city, university and Boone County all own a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit, and have to develop a storm water management plan.

"As part of that permit, we are required to do education and outreach," Keys said. "To let the public know that anything that goes in the storm drain goes to the creeks. That's what damages our infrastructure, is the additional runoff from our development."

Columbia voters will decide on raising the storm water utility fee on April 7. Titled Proposition 2 on the ballot, the fee would rise each year through the next five years. Residential rates are based on the size of the property, and commercial properties currently pay four cents for every 100 square feet of impervious surface, with a minimum rate of four dollars a month. By raising the rates, Keys said the city will be able to perform several more storm water infrastructure fixes in town. Many of the corrugated metal pipes the city installed in the 1960s and 1970s are reaching the end of their lifespan, Keys said. As more fixes become necessary, the rate to pay for them has stalled. The rate, which only affords seven employees to physically perform the fixes, has not changed since its introduction in 1993.

Keys said she didn't know if homeowners could qualify for a similar discount for providing any of the six requirements from the Clean Water Act, because not many have asked.

CPS Budget Director Linda Quinley told ABC 17 News if the district went through with the discount, she estimates if voters approved the fee increase, it would cost CPS $66,321 through five years. However, the discount would reduce it to $39,793.

MUPD Chief Jack Watring retires

Watch story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=a830ea98-ce9b-4c0a-b01a-94d23eb0a486

COLUMBIA, MO -- After 44 years of service to the University of Missouri Police Department and 12 years as Police Chief, Jack Watring is retiring.
Hundreds of people gathered on the Mizzou campus to say goodbye and good luck to Watring during a Monday afternoon reception at police headquarters.

Watring started his 47-year career in law enforcement as a trooper with the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

He joined the University of Missouri Police Department in 1971 and was named police chief in 2003.

Watring plans to do some fishing and start on his wife’s honey-do list during his retirement.

Watring said, “It doesn’t seem like 44 years. It seems like yesterday when I was hired. It’s been a pretty good 44 years, I think.”

Watring helped build an accredited police department during the past several decades.

Major Doug Schwandt began serving as Interim Chief on March 1.

EDITORIAL: Lawmakers want to punish students by withholding funds
Tuesday, March 24, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

A group of Missouri legislators is continuing a determined effort to bar undocumented immigrant students from making Missouri a better place by limiting their access to higher education.

This is the second year in a row — and it probably won’t be the last — in which some Republican lawmakers have targeted students who graduate from high school in Missouri, but who aren’t here legally because they were brought here as small children, from being eligible for state aid or favorable tuition at state colleges or universities.

But that’s not all. These legislators want Missouri’s higher education institutions to charge these students the highest tuition rates possible, which would be as out-of-state
students, even though most of them grew up here. Schools that don’t charge the maximum tuition are being threatened with loss of state funds.

These young people have done nothing wrong, and yet some Missouri lawmakers want to punish them. The students’ biggest crime is that they were born elsewhere and brought here as youngsters. Many of them are living legally in Missouri as so-called DREAMers, students whose deportation is deferred because they meet specific criteria, such as having lived in the United States since before they were 16.

Their deferral is temporary and does not provide them with a path to lawful permanent resident status or citizenship. It does not grant them some back-door access to being fully accepted as U.S. citizens. Some are here under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Initiative, an executive order enacted by President Barack Obama after the DREAM act failed to pass Congress.

For Missouri Republicans, the Obama angle settles the issue.

The teens have been instructed from an early age to strive for the American dream, and a central theme in that is education. Discriminating against them just doesn’t make sense, economically or in any other way.

**Included in the legislative punishment effort are other immigrants who have a lawful presence, such as asylum seekers and refugees. For them, too, highest possible tuition and no state aid. The difference is expensive. Tuition at the University of Missouri for out-of-state students is $24,314, compared to $10,286 for in-state.**

The scholarship program the lawmakers don’t want non-documented students participating in is the A+ program. It provides students with scholarships equal to two free years at a participating community college or vocational school, as long as they graduate high school with at least a 2.5 GPA, have a 95 percent attendance rate and complete at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring.

Those are high standards requiring serious dedication from the student. That high-caliber effort should be recognized by a state whose lawmakers repeatedly have asserted that they want a talented pool of workers to help attract business development.
Business start-ups and those looking to relocate list an educated and talented work force among the top qualities they are seeking. Those lists don't mention immigrant status.

Requiring these highly motivated and top-performing students to pay even more than their counterparts just because they are foreign-born is a mistake. Academic and economic development studies have shown that a healthy immigrant community helps an area prosper.

At least 18 states around the country, including four bordering Missouri — Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma — recognize this. They offer in-state tuition benefits to undocumented students, and many also make scholarships and other forms of financial aid available. This is a smart investment in the economic futures of these states, as well as in the young people who will benefit from higher education.

The federal government guarantees all children regardless of their immigration status a K-12 education. The U.S. Supreme Court has weighed in, saying that denying such educational access would create a permanent underclass of citizens.

Missouri needs all the ambitious, striving, dream-believing young people it can get. Offering modest financial benefits to students who have earned them, regardless of their immigration status, would be the right thing to do morally and economically.

It’s been a boon to other states that have tried it. Missouri ought to be next. The bills seeking to limit educational access are SB 224, sponsored by Gary Romine, R-Farmington; HB 186, sponsored by Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob; and HB 3, sponsored by Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage.

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**MU Health Care recognized for excellence in stroke care**

COLUMBIA, Mo - **MU Health Care has been recognized by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services as having a "Level 1" stroke center for its excellence in stroke patient care.**

"Once the blood supply to one part of the brain is cut off -- the part of the brain tends to die very quickly," said Dr. Ashish Nanda, co-director for The Missouri Stroke Program.

A person suffering from a stroke has only a short time to make it to the emergency room. Once there, prudent health care decisions need to be made in minutes, which could be the difference between life or death for the patient. On Monday, The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services said MU Health Care is one of the best when confronted with those decisions.

"We are a comprehensive stroke center -- state of the art. Where we can provide the patient anything that is related to the stroke here that is required, including anywhere from admitting them to doing all of these complicated, complex procedures," said Dr. Nanda.

Strokes kill more than 130,000 Americans a year and is the leading cause of disabilities. MU Health Care has been classified as a "Level 1" stroke center, meaning it has some of the fastest and safest care for stroke patients. Last year, statistics show MU health Care was able to administer a clot-busting drug used to treat stroke patients to around 61 percent of of its patients within 45 minutes of coming to the hospital -- compared to the national average of 24 percent.

"There are only a handful of hospitals that are going to receive designated Level 1 stroke certification in the state of Missouri and we are proud to be one of them," said Dr. Nanda.

Officials said beyond diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients, MU Health Care also is being recognized for excellence in rehabilitation, education and research.

Boone County Hospital received the same "Level 1" classification for stroke care.

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**MU Health Care designated for high-level stroke care**

Monday, March 23, 2015 | 4:13 p.m. CDT

BY TIMOSHANAE WELLMAKER

COLUMBIA — MU Health Care has been designated one of the state's first Level 1 stroke centers, the highest rating a hospital can receive for its stroke program.
MU Health care joined nine other hospitals in Missouri designated as a "time-critical diagnosis stroke center." Boone Hospital Center shares the status.

According to a news release from MU Health Care, the stroke team treated approximately 61 percent of eligible stroke patients with a clot-busting drug within 45 minutes after they arrived compared to 24 percent in other hospitals across the country.

The process of being designated at any level stroke center is voluntary, Derek Thompson, a spokesman for MU Health Care, said. The hospital must contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to apply; the agency then conducts a review that includes auditing, observations and interviews.

MU Health Care is also certified by the Joint Commission as an advanced primary stroke center. MU’s stroke team includes experts in neurology, neurosurgery, physical therapy, cardiology and emergency services.

Two Columbia hospitals named complex stroke facilities

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28104&zone=2,5&categories=2,5

COLUMBIA - Two local hospitals, Boone Hospital Center and University of Missouri Hospital, were recognized as level I stroke centers by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Only ten level I stroke centers have been designation statewide.

In stroke situations, immediate response is key to survival. Level I stroke centers have expert care available to patients 24 hours a day. These centers are able to provide care for every stage of the stroke - from intake to rehabilitation at one facility.

Level II stroke centers are able to provide medication to stroke victims but are not able to perform procedures on the patient.
"We're able to do more complex procedures, so if someone has a clot in an artery which caused the stroke, in addition to receiving medication, which a level II hospital could do, we have the capabilities with interventionalists to go in through a catheter to then actually remove the blockage," said Dr. Allyn Sher, medical director of Boone Hospital Centers' stroke center.

University of Missouri Hospital has had a neuro-interventional care system in place for five years but is only now receiving the designation as a level I stroke center.

"There are only a few hospitals in the state of Missouri that are getting level I stroke center and it's great to have a stroke center right in central Missouri. That means we can provide timely care to all our patients and meet all their needs in case of emergencies," said Dr. Ashish Nanda, co-director of the Missouri Stroke Program at University of Missouri Hospital.

The stroke center designations are part of Missouri's Time Critical Diagnosis System, which focuses on quicker emergency response times and higher quality of care for emergency situations such as strokes.

Former coaches believe in Mizzou's new AD

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • On March 9, Missouri basketball coach Kim Anderson called an old friend. The next day, Mizzou would introduce Mack Rhoades as the school's new athletics director. Kelvin Sampson’s boss at the University of Houston was about to become Anderson’s new boss.

Anderson wanted a scouting report.

“He asked me, ‘Kelvin, what am I getting?’” Sampson said. “I said, ‘Kim, you’re getting someone that’s going to get in the bunker and go shoulder to shoulder with you.’

“That’s what every coach wants. I told him, ‘(Rhoades) has a vision for the program and he’ll work with you.’”

It’s been 17 years since someone other than Mike Alden ran Mizzou’s athletics department, so for Anderson and his colleagues, it’s natural to wonder what they’re getting in Rhoades, who will officially take office next month. When Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin introduced Rhoades, 49, as MU’s next AD two weeks ago, he focused on four qualities that led his search to Houston, two of which are vital to any AD job: working with coaches and raising money.

Rhoades’ track record as a fundraiser speaks for itself in the form of Houston’s year-old, $120 million football stadium and the $25 million, 53,000-square-foot basketball practice facility that’s under construction.

When it comes to hiring and firing coaches, Rhoades’ Houston legacy can’t be measured in dollars and bricks.
His six years were marked by turnover, including 16 head coaching hires for 10 teams. Rhoades insisted he won’t shake up Mizzou’s roster of coaches for the sake of change, but the last six years offer a road map to his philosophies — with a few dead ends along the way.

At Houston, Rhoades cut ties with a head coach he hired in three major sports: football, men’s basketball and women’s basketball. Of Houston’s 13 head coaches, only two came to UH before Rhoades: track and field’s Leroy Burrell and softball’s Kyla Holas.

The first high-profile coach to leave Houston under Rhoades was Tom Penders, who in 2010 coached the men’s basketball team to its first NCAA Tournament in 18 years. Penders had won more than 600 games at seven schools when he stepped down at age 64. He’s still bothered by the perception that Rhoades fired him or nudged him into retirement.

Rhoades approached Penders after the 2010 season — the Cougars won the Conference USA tournament and lost to Maryland in the first round of the NCAAs — and posed a simple question.

“He said, ‘Well, Tom, what do you want to do?’” Penders said. “I said, ‘I don’t know if this is possible, but what I’d love to do is retire and get paid.’”

Done deal. Rhoades agreed to pay Penders $500,000 for the final two years of his contract. Penders insisted he could have returned for the following season if he wanted.

In their one season working together, Penders said Rhoades followed through on multiple promises, got to know his family, his assistants and players and boosted staff morale by letting head coaches run department meetings.

Penders’ only regret?

“I wish our careers met somewhere (earlier),” he said, “because we really could have done special things together.”

Rhoades “treated me with respect, with dignity, and I appreciated it,” Penders added. “We would have never cut the nets down (in the Conference USA tournament) if he hadn’t come to Houston.”

Rhoades made a surprising hire to replace Penders, going with James Dickey, who had been out of coaching for two years. Dickey coached Texas Tech to 30 wins and the Sweet 16 in 1996, but the program went into sudden decline after the NCAA took away scholarships following an academic scandal. At Houston, Dickey made a big splash with a 2012 recruiting class that ranked No. 15 nationally by Rivals.com, but the Cougars never finished better than .500 in conference play in four seasons.

Dickey stepped down last March, citing “private family matters.” Nine months later, Rhoades fired his handpicked choice to coach Houston’s football team, Tony Levine, who won 20 games in three seasons. In December, Rhoades hired Ohio State offensive coordinator Tom Herman to replace Levine, his last big hire before coming to Mizzou.

Hunter Yurachek, Rhoades’ second-in-command at Houston, said the Dickey and Levine departures “tore (Rhoades) up inside.”

“It really hurt him,” Yurachek said. “But he knew in the end it was the right decision for the department he oversees, the student-athletes he’s responsible for, the university that he’s working for.”

A year ago, Rhoades made his boldest hire. Recruiting violations at Oklahoma and Indiana led to Sampson’s five-year NCAA show-cause penalty, which essentially barred him from coaching in college from 2008 to
2013. Last spring, Sampson took a few calls from schools looking for a head coach — he was in his third year as an assistant with the NBA’s Houston Rockets — but didn’t listen seriously until Rhoades called.

Rhoades and Yurachek carefully vetted Sampson, Yurachek said, and talked to multiple people at the NCAA, Oklahoma, Indiana, the Big 12 and the Big Ten.

“I wanted him to do his due diligence,” Sampson said. “I was deciding whether I wanted to do this, too. It’s not like I didn’t have other options. But I wanted Mack to know what he was getting. I didn’t want there to be any secrets. I didn’t want to there to be anything he was going to find out later. ... The more I got to know (Rhoades), I knew this was going to be great partnership.”

The NCAA punished Sampson for making impermissible calls to recruits while at Oklahoma and Indiana but has since eliminated most of the rules Sampson broke. The rule changes factored into Houston’s decision to consider Sampson, Yurachek said.

“It wasn’t like he was paying student-athletes,” Yurachek said. “He was making phone calls. Let’s be honest: Does that really give you that much of an advantage? But Coach Sampson was the first to say, ‘Hey, it was a rule. I broke the rule and paid the penalty, regardless if you think it’s a stupid rule or not.’”

A year later, Sampson believes his loss is Anderson’s gain. He believes Anderson will build Missouri back into a winning program after inheriting a depleted roster, much like Sampson took over at Houston. The Cougars were 13-19 this season — four games better than Anderson’s Tigers.

“I don’t care if you put Red Auerbach and John Wooden (at Mizzou), they were going to lose this year,” Sampson said.

More than anything, Sampson believes in Anderson’s new boss.

“Missouri’s lucky,” Sampson said. “They’re getting a great, great AD.”

MU faculty finds man roaming the halls

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28102&zone=2,5&categories=2,5

COLUMBIA - Early Monday morning University of Missouri School of Journalism faculty found a man walking around the journalism building.
He was asking questions about where the students have gone and said he was there to try to collect money from them.

The staff member who witnessed it said he was carrying a tin can to collect change and assumed he was homeless.

MUPD was contacted this afternoon after the incident occurred, and school staff notified journalism faculty and staff to lock doors to protect equipment and belongings.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Keeping tabs on the bird flu: MU lab mines genetics after outbreak in turkeys
Tuesday, March 24, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY CHRISTOPHER AIKEN

COLUMBIA – MU veterinary scientists are working overtime to monitor bird flu outbreaks that infected two Missouri turkey farms earlier this month.

Two H5N2 avian influenza outbreaks were confirmed on March 8 by the Missouri Department of Agriculture at separate commercial turkey facilities in Moniteau and Jasper counties. The H5N2 virus presents only a slight risk to humans but is highly contagious in birds, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

State and federal agriculture officials established quarantine zones around the two facilities in an effort to keep the virus from spreading. Meanwhile, remaining turkeys at the two outbreak sites were killed, said Sarah Alsager, spokeswoman for the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

The state will continue surveillance of all quarantined farms facilities for a minimum of 30 days, Alsager said. There are about 40 commercial facilities in the Moniteau quarantine zone and officials are still looking for backyard farms in both outbreak areas.
The Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at MU is one of two state laboratories monitoring the quarantined animals, Daniel Shaw, poultry diagnostician at MU, said. The lab is testing the samples it receives for viral genetic material. Genetic testing is the go-to method during outbreaks, Shaw said, because it's quick and can be performed as soon as the outbreak is detected.

In contrast, traditional blood tests monitor for the presence of viral antibodies, which don't show up until about 14 days after infection. During an outbreak, that's too many, Shaw said.

The lab performs blood tests more commonly for routine surveillance as a part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network – a national program that monitors diseases such as exotic Newcastle, scrapie, and foot and mouth disease.

With no viral outbreak, Shaw said that he and his colleagues usually expect no more than five or six genetic samples in a given day.

The current H5N2 outbreak has them turning out as many as 100 every day – sometimes more.

Both outbreaks were first identified by scientists at the Springfield Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory – the other lab monitoring the outbreak. Specimens were sent to both labs as turkeys started to get sick and die. The MU lab tested its initial swabs for bacteria as requested by the farm owner, Shaw said, which rendered them unusable for the viral test. Eventually, with deaths mounting, the proper test was done in Springfield.

The H5N2 virus was discovered in a chicken and duck flock in Leavenworth County, Kansas, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture report released on March 13; neither Missouri lab has come up with a positive specimen outside of the first two facilities.

There are still numerous samples arriving daily, Shaw said. The testing involves a good deal of automation, which limits the number of personnel that are needed, "but there has been a decent amount of overtime."
Race is a touchy subject, and whenever it is addressed in relation to racism, people get defensive. Not necessarily because anyone is racist, but because no one wants to be called a racist.

That defensiveness raises the climate of the conversation and turns what could have been a productive dialogue into a debate, and further, into an argument. As a black man, I have been a participant in many racially “hot” discussions, but this one will be “cool.”

All you need do is to listen. Better yet, read it to the end.

Racism is an issue on the University of Missouri campus. As a reader you may disagree with that statement, but the words are true all the same. What I want to discuss is why some don’t see it as a problem.

Often we blind ourselves to the issues of the world that don’t affect us, possibly because we don’t care, but more than likely because we don’t have a reason to.

I looked at myself and realized that at one point in time, I wasn’t well versed in many issues women face. Not because I did not care, but because I didn’t think I had a reason to.

Then my niece started growing into a little woman before my eyes. I sat down and started talking with my sister about the difficulties she faces in corporate America on a daily basis because of her anatomy.
Then I asked my mother about struggles she has overcome, ones she shouldn’t have had to in the first place, all because of her sex.

I liken that to the plight of the majority in the discussion of racism. The majority does not experience racism, simply because all policy — social and political — is designated with them in mind.

That’s the idea behind the social concept of voting. We want to accommodate the majority, and as a result, the needs and desires of the minority come second.

Racially marginalized groups are the minority in this country. That is not opinion, but cold hard fact. It goes by the numbers.

So when we discuss racism and prejudice, both physical and systematic-institutional, we must address the fact that it was never spawned to combat the majority.

It was spawned by the majority against the minority. It is part of the double-edged sword society wields that has the power to both praise and punish those who are different from the norm.

Racism isn’t always calling someone out by their name. It isn’t just expecting a person to act a certain way, do certain things, or be a certain type of person because of their race.

It is in everything from what you think when you see someone different from you to how you interact with people. It is in my classrooms. It was in my dorms. It happened at my jobs.

It is part of my life and stays on my mind from sunup to sundown. Not because I can’t let go of the past, but because I must take care not to in order to protect myself.

That isn’t solely a physical thing, though it can be. It isn’t just a mental thing, though it has been. It is a collective thing.

That is why I can make these statements on behalf of all marginalized groups. We are the collective.

I have been on the wrong side of racism more times than I can count on the MU campus. Every side is the wrong side of racism, because the oppressed and the oppressors both suffer the consequences, whether they see it or not.
However, I express that I have been the oppressed. My friends have been the oppressed. I see people that I don't even know, and we can relate to each other with something as simple as a glance, because we share a collective oppression.

I write this letter to the oppressors and pray that it is well-received. My hope is not that you change your ways overnight or that you become a different person.

My goal is not to change the fabric of who you are with this writing. Though I hope these things happen eventually and of your own accord.

My goal is simply that you listen.

_Corie Wilkins is a student at the MU School of Journalism._

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Clyde Ruffin hopes to bring commitment to social justice to City Council

_Tuesday, March 24, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY LAURA WELFRINGER_

COLUMBIA — Every Sunday morning, wearing a dark suit and black-rimmed glasses, the Rev. Clyde Ruffin enters the nave of the Second Missionary Baptist Church to visit with his congregation before services.

Once the call to worship and announcements have been made, it's Ruffin's turn to spread the word. Parishioners stand to welcome their pastor as he takes his place behind the lectern.

"Good morning. It's good to see you," Ruffin began on a recent Sunday. "God bless you. It's good to be in the house of the Lord."

As he delivered his sermon, Ruffin's deep voice grew louder and more passionate.

"I know I've been changed," he repeated like a chorus.
"Amen. All right, all right," the congregation of about 50 answered, clapping their hands in rhythm.

"Jesus is the only one who is able to take the old you and to turn it into a brand new you," Ruffin continued, his speech accelerating and his hands animated. He dabbed his forehead with a handkerchief.

Ruffin's voice has resonated from the pulpit for years, and it will resonate from the dais of the Columbia City Council if he emerges the victor in a nine-way race for the council's First Ward seat that will be filled on April 7.

The Second Missionary Baptist Church was founded 149 years ago by emancipated slaves and free people of color. Ruffin has served the church for over 11 years and said he enjoys the chance to "intersect with people of all parts of the city." He's proud that people often choose the church for public forums and demonstrations. The church, he said, is committed to social justice.

"This is a statement of our church: We exist to serve our community."

**In addition to his work as a pastor, Ruffin has been a theater professor at MU since 1982 and was chair of the Theatre Department from 1990-95 and 2007-13. From 1996 to 2003, he was artistic director for the Columbia Values Diversity Celebration, and in 2012 he won the President’s Award for Community Engagement.**

Felecia Qualls, a member of Ruffin's church, said the reverend is a respected member of the community. "He is honest, he has integrity," she said.

Fontella Henry, who regularly attends Ruffin's services, agreed. "He is a noble man, he is a family man. Wherever he can he offers his aid."

Ruffin and his wife of 38 years, Sheila Ruffin, have four children and five grandchildren. "I enjoy spending time with my family," he said. "When all generations get together, this is (a) good time for me."

He's also a handyman. A yellow gold-leaf cross he made with small Ethiopian Coptic icons hangs on the wall in his office at Second Missionary, along with his painting of Simon de Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross.
"I do different kinds of visual arts," Ruffin said. He also likes to repair antiques, travel around the world and spend time outside hiking and gardening.

Ruffin came to Columbia as a consultant in 1980 when black students in the Theatre Department complained of discrimination. A faculty member at Washington University at the time, he commuted to Columbia every week for two years to meet with students. He established the Black Theatre Workshop, later renamed the World Theatre Workshop, then became a full-time MU professor.

"Coming from St. Louis, I found that Columbia was a safe place to live with a family," he said. "It was a nice transition for us."

Ruffin has directed more than 100 theatrical productions and received many awards, including the Purple Chalk Award for Undergraduate Teaching, the Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, the MU Faculty Alumni Award, and the Chancellor's Award for Research and Creativity.

"The Theatre Department has focused on the idea of using theater for social change," he said. "It has been a wonderful journey."

Now, though, he's ready to retire and start a new chapter as a council member.

"I do see it as an opportunity to continue the work that I've done for 32 years as a teacher, artist and activist in the areas of social justice, equality, racial, cultural and economic disparity, but in a slightly different way," he said. "It will take me into the area where decisions are made so that I can continue this vision on a larger scale."

Ruffin said he appreciates that the city fosters an environment of open dialogue. But "there have been some issues, and I think we can do better," he said.

Ruffin and members of his campaign committee have been going door to door to distribute signs around the First Ward. He likes the diversity of the ward, which includes much of the MU and Columbia College campuses, downtown and eclectic neighborhoods.

He said he prefers old-fashioned face-to-face over social media. He does use his Facebook page to raise money and to communicate with his volunteers.
"So grateful for all the volunteers from Second Baptist who came out today to support my candidacy by going door to door throughout the First Ward. You are the best!" he posted Saturday along with a picture of himself and some volunteers.

They all wore blue shirts with white lettering: "Ruffin: Reaching up, reaching out. Ward 1," they read.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Children learn art skills at TRYPS spring break program
Monday, March 23, 2015 | 7:39 p.m. CDT; updated 8:24 p.m. CDT, Monday, March 23, 2015
BY SHELBY BASELER

COLUMBIA — "Everything is awesome!" shout children from TRYPS's spring break program.

TRYPS Children's Theatre Institute at Stephens College is hosting a spring break program this week for students in kindergarten through seventh grade. The program's theme is based around "The Lego Movie," which contains the song "Everything Is Awesome" by Tegan and Sara.

The children rotate through several classes during the day, including dancing, singing, acting and making crafts. Monday, they began to learn the lyrics and choreography to "Everything Is Awesome," as well as "We're All in This Together," from the movie "High School Musical."

Dakotah Cooper, an MU sociology student, works as the dance teacher at TRYPS. As second-graders move away from their assigned spots on the floor, he claps to get their attention to teach them another part of the choreography.

Cooper is familiar with the way TRYPS functions.

"I've been in TRYPS since I was 10," Cooper said. "I loved it so much. I still do shows for them."
TRYPS is working toward putting on several shows in the next two months, including "Disney's Mulan Jr." and "Junie B. Jones: The Musical."

Mixing things up in higher education
By Angie Besendorfer and David Starrett

NO MU MENTION
With total outstanding student loan debt in the U.S. at a record high $1.3 trillion, the need to make a college education more affordable weighs heavily on all in higher education. Coupled with the demand for more graduates in the world’s fastest-growing industries, it’s clear we must push beyond the status quo and mix things up to affordably educate more Missourians.

WGU Missouri and Southeast Missouri State University are two very different universities collaborating on creative ways to serve those whose needs can’t be met with traditional education models.

Founded in 2013 to expand access to higher education for Missourians, WGU Missouri may seem relatively new, but its parent Western Governors University debuted in 1997 and has 53,000 students nationwide. WGU Missouri has already grown to 1,400 students accessing more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the high-demand fields of business, K-12 teacher education, information technology and health professions.

It is the only accredited, nonprofit online university endorsed by the state of Missouri, and its industry-leading, competency-based education model, which leverages existing on-the-job experience, is helping students earn their degree faster and graduate with far less debt or none at all.

Southeast Missouri State, another early adopter of online education, offered its first online classes in 1999 and its first degrees online in 2003/2004. It was a strategic move aimed at meeting the needs of a student body drawn from 26 counties that increasingly included older individuals who were unable to participate in the traditional college setting due to work or family responsibilities. Southeast began offering online courses that could be taken by students at their convenience instead of requiring them to log in at a set time.

The university focused on extensive faculty development to ensure quality online programming, keeping classes small and encouraging interaction and engagement through webinar courses and blended classes where online students occasionally meet in person. Today, the steadily growing Southeast offers dozens of degrees and certificates online, and close to 20 percent of student credit hours are generated online.

Southeast Missouri State and WGU Missouri are pursuing a shared goal of affordably creating more college graduates. Last fall, Southeast participated in a workshop where WGU’s leadership provided a detailed overview of its acclaimed CBE model and now is exploring how it may help Southeast students earn their degree faster. Forgoing a competitive advantage, WGU is committed to helping other institutions adopt its model to serve the growing population of nontraditional students.

Southeast also is part of a pilot initiative to create open educational resources, which provide customized, highly relevant materials from well-known experts for free in place of textbooks, further reducing costs.
These may be small steps, but they could be vital for students who otherwise would be unable to complete their degree. Looking ahead, we will continue exploring other avenues to make a college degree even more accessible and affordable, and we look forward to collaborating with other institutions of higher learning along the way. Working together, we can deliver the higher education that truly is the stepping stone to brighter futures for Missourians and their families.

Angie Besendorfer is chancellor of WGU Missouri. David Starrett is dean of academic information services at Southeast Missouri State University.

Alexander’s Higher Ed Act Agenda

March 24, 2015

By
Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

WASHINGTON -- The leading Republican in the Senate who is working on a rewrite of the Higher Education Act is weighing new ways to hold colleges accountable for their students’ success and is considering a federal database to keep track of student outcomes.

Senator Lamar Alexander on Monday released three policy papers outlining ideas on making colleges share in the financial risk of the federal loans they provide students, overhauling accreditation and changing how the federal government collects data from colleges.

The documents offer the most expansive look yet at Alexander’s priorities for rewriting the Higher Education Act, which he has said he wants the Senate to vote on by the end of 2015. Alexander has spent much of the last year promoting his efforts to simplify the federal student aid form known as the FAFSA and to reduce regulations on colleges and universities.

The outline does not stake out many clear policy positions, and instead reviews a range of proposals that are up for debate. For instance, it says that a student-unit record database, opposed by many Congressional Republicans, is up for consideration. But it also lays out an alternative plan that would maintain the federal ban on such a system while pushing for limited graduate earnings data through a partnership between the
Department of Education and Social Security Administration.

**New Accountability Ideas**

One issue that emerges clearly in the set of proposals is holding colleges more accountable for their students’ success, including their levels of debt and ability to repay it.

The outline backs the concept of risk sharing or “skin in the game” proposals for colleges when it comes to federal student loans. Under those proposals, an institution may be forced to repay some amount of their former students’ defaulted debt or otherwise be held responsible for a share of the federal loans they give out.

In addition, the paper floats the idea of making colleges annually pay into an insurance fund based on risk factors such as the rate at which their students withdraw or drop out.

Such risk-sharing proposals would “ensure that colleges and universities have a clear financial stake in their students’ success, debt and ability to repay their taxpayer-subsidized student loans,” the document says.

Some of Alexander’s most liberal colleagues in the Senate have called for a similar approach. His policy paper references a proposal in 2013 by Democratic Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Jack Reed of Rhode Island and Richard Durbin of Illinois that would require colleges to pay penalties, on a sliding scale, based on their default rates.

Notably, though, while the Senate Democrats’ proposal would exclude community colleges and historically black colleges from risk sharing, Alexander’s paper emphasizes that such policies ought to apply to “all colleges and universities.” That’s a common refrain of for-profit colleges, which argue that they are unfairly singled out for scrutiny and federal regulation in a way their nonprofit counterparts are not.

In spite of those differences, though, Alexander's papers suggest that there is emerging, bipartisan consensus that cohort default rates -- the federal government’s main accountability tool right now -- are too blunt and ineffective.

Alexander’s paper says that colleges are “afforded a generous appeals process that results in minimal consequences,” citing a Congressional Research Service report that found the Department of Education had actually terminated federal funding for only 11 institutions since 1999 because of high default rates.

It references allegations, often made by consumer advocates, that default rates are easily gamed by colleges, which push struggling borrowers into loan deferments to avoid getting penalized for defaults.

The policy documents also take aim at the Obama administration’s announcement last year that it had tweaked the default rates for some colleges, allowing those institutions to have lower rates and avoid penalties. That decision, Alexander's paper asserts, raised “serious concerns about the efficacy of cohort default rates. Federal law should limit the department’s ability to engage in such “nontransparent practices,” it added.
Two prominent Democratic lawmakers raised similar concerns in a letter to Education Secretary Arne Duncan last year.

Despite some bipartisan overtures, though, Alexander’s outline also criticizes some accountability measures that the Obama administration, Congressional Democrats and consumer advocates like -- and want to see strengthened in many cases. It takes aim, for instance, at the gainful employment regulations targeting for-profit colleges and the 90/10 rule that limits the amount of federal money that can flow to those institutions.

**Overhaul of Accreditation**
The policy white papers also float a number of drastic possible changes to higher education accreditation, with a general focus on reducing federal regulation of accreditation while making it easier for nontraditional and innovative models of education to gain approval.

Among the possibilities: decoupling accreditation from eligibility for federal student aid, allowing tiered levels of accreditation (as opposed to the current binary system) and permitting accrediting agencies to focus on “institutions that truly need the most assistance” while expediting the review of institution with good track records. The outline also references a proposal by Senator Mike Lee of Utah, a Republican, that is aimed at creating a new pathway to federal funding for education offerings provided by noncollege entities like businesses, trade associations or unions. Alexander’s paper concedes that questions remain about how to police the quality of these nontraditional models. Such quality control, it says, could potentially come from state regulators (as in Lee’s proposal), existing accrediting agencies or a new accreditor.

**An Agenda for Reauthorization**
Many of the ideas in Alexander’s policy papers echo proposals outlined last fall by Andrew Kelly and Kevin James of the American Enterprise Institute.

Kelly, who directs higher education research at A.E.I., said Monday that Alexander’s proposals, taken together, represent an important “proactive and coherent conservative agenda” for reforming higher education.

He called the proposals a “credible counterpoint and counter message” to efforts by Democrats, led by the Obama administration, to promote accountability through “top-down” regulatory efforts like gainful employment and the college ratings system. “This is not just a no to those things,” he said. “It’s an alternative approach that I think is in keeping with conservative, market-based principles of accountability.”

Senate Democrats, meanwhile, are hoping the Higher Education Act includes provisions that look to rein in rising tuition and provide direct relief for Americans with existing student loan debt.

A group of lawmakers, led by Warren, the Massachusetts Democrat, earlier this month reintroduced legislation that would allow existing federal student loan borrowers to lower their monthly payments by refinancing their debt.
Senator Patty Murray of Washington, the top Democrat on the Senate education committee, said in a statement Monday that she appreciated Alexander “highlighting” the issues in his outline.

“I am looking forward to continuing the conversation on ways to update the Higher Education Act to make college more affordable, reduce the crushing burden of student debt and give more Americans the chance to further their education, training and skills,” she said.

Alexander is seeking public feedback on his policy papers. Comments are due by April 24.

March 24, 2015

2 Proposals for Accreditation, 2 Shared Goals: Limits and Flexibility

By Eric Kellerman

NO MU MENTION

Should the role of accreditors be limited? Two separate debates on the future of accreditation took shape Monday, and each raised the possibility.

Another common thread ran through both discussions: the need for more flexibility and transparency in a process that is required for colleges to receive federal student-aid dollars.

In a conference call, members of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity discussed their latest set of proposals to overhaul the accreditation process and the way the committee assesses the accreditors. "There is a need for a more differentiated process that allows for different levels of accreditation, for more transparency and openness in the accreditation and the recognition process, and a greater emphasis on student achievement and student outcomes," says the draft document from the advisory committee, which makes recommendations to the education secretary on whether accrediting agencies should be approved. When the draft is complete, the advisory group will forward it to Congress to be considered during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.
Shortly after the committee finished its phone conference, the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions released a somewhat similar set of proposals in a white paper written by committee staff members. The paper was one of three by the Senate committee staff, each meant to elicit feedback from people in higher education before the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, said Sen. Lamar Alexander in a news release. The Tennessee Republican is the committee's chairman.

Although the language in each document varies, several of the suggested actions are the same, including breaking down the geographic boundaries of the six regional accrediting agencies, allowing an expedited review for institutions that meet certain standards, and stripping away the long list of accreditation requirements that do not directly relate to educational quality but that are mandated by federal law and regulation.

"Freeing accreditation's responsibilities from the federal government's burdensome, misguided, and duplicative regulations may restore the true focus and capacity of accreditation back to quality and quality improvement of institutions," said the white paper from the Senate committee.

Both papers also call for more gradations in accreditation status and the establishment of new, nontraditional accreditation agencies.

Such changes, if approved in legislation, would provide for competition among accreditors and create a more-streamlined and less-expensive approach to quality assurance, according to the Senate committee's report.

But the Senate committee's paper takes a big step further than the advisory committee: It raises the possibility that accreditors would no longer act as "gatekeepers" for federal student aid. That idea is strongly opposed by many accrediting agencies.

"Accreditation's gatekeeping role has given accreditors' authority and leverage to be overly prescriptive, intrusive, and sometimes usurp institutional autonomy," says the Senate committee's report.

That's far from a new idea. In fact, two members of the advisory committee made a similar appeal in 2012 as an alternative to earlier recommendations from the group on reforming the accreditation system.
That recommendation was rejected by a majority, but "delinking" accreditation from federal student aid is gaining currency, says Arthur J. Rothkopf, one of the advisory committee members who supported that measure.

"On balance, I still like the delinking idea," Mr. Rothkopf said. "A couple other people" on the advisory committee, he added, "would probably support it now too."

March 24, 2015

In 3 Reports, Senate Republicans Hint at Higher-Ed Agenda

By Kelly Field

Senator Republican Republicans, gearing up for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, gave strong hints about their priorities in a trio of white papers released Monday.

The papers, which examine accreditation, consumer information, and risk-sharing, are meant as conversation-starters and stop short of endorsing any particular policy proposals. Still, they show that lawmakers are considering significant changes in the ways colleges are evaluated and held accountable for student outcomes.

The paper on accreditation, for example, raises the possibility of decoupling accreditation and federal student aid.

The paper on consumer information, meanwhile, opens the door to the creation of a federal "unit record" database for tracking students — something Sen. Lamar Alexander, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, has strongly opposed in the past. Among the "concepts up for debate," says the paper, are the creation of a federal unit-record system with "limited student level measures" of labor-market outcomes and "strict privacy protections."

The paper offers two options for such a system: limiting it to student-aid recipients — who are already in federal databases — or creating an exception to federal privacy law
that would "allow some new student-level data to be collected for all students," including those who don’t receive federal aid.

The risk-sharing paper explores ways Congress might give colleges more "skin in the game" when it comes to student borrowing. Among them: requiring colleges to remit a portion of defaulted dollars to the Department of Education, and imposing new sanctions on colleges with high rates of borrowers who default.

An aide to Mr. Alexander stressed that the proposals contained in the papers represent "a menu of options," adding that "the Senator is not advocating for one avenue or another."

March 24, 2015

Police Find No Evidence to Support Alleged Gang Rape at UVa
By Katherine Mangan

NO MU MENTION

After announcing on Monday that there was no evidence a gang rape described in Rolling Stone magazine had actually occurred at a University of Virginia fraternity, a local police chief urged colleges to involve the police as quickly as possible when someone complains of a sexual assault.

While the case involving a student the magazine identified as "Jackie" has been suspended for lack of evidence, "that doesn’t mean that something terrible did not happen" to her that night in September 2012, Timothy J. Longo, chief of police in Charlottesville, Va., said during a news conference.

"We are just not able to gather sufficient facts to conclude what that something may have been."

The accuser in the case declined to cooperate with the police, even after the magazine article, in November, described a brutal assault by seven men in an upstairs room at
Phi Kappa Psi, Chief Longo said.

The article has since been widely discredited, and the magazine apologized after it said it had found "discrepancies" in the student’s account. Chief Longo said that the accuser has the right to decline to answer questions in an investigation, but he said that makes it difficult to track down what, if anything, actually happened that night.

"Having police involvement early in these investigations is extremely important," he said.

"With every second of every minute of every hour of every day, we lose evidence," he said — physical and forensic clues that are key to cracking cases.

The police chief stressed the importance of having campus officials clearly explain to alleged victims what their options are, including the choice to go to law-enforcement agencies, and the importance of doing it quickly.

They should make clear, he said, that even if the accuser gives the police the OK to investigate, she doesn’t have to bring charges.

He said repeatedly during the news conference that the case, though suspended, would remain open in case someone comes forward with more information.

"We’re not able to conclude to any substantive degree that an incident consistent with the facts contained in that article occurred at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity house or any other fraternity house for that matter," he said, but the case "is not closed by any stretch of the imagination."

Closing the case, he said, "would be a disservice to ‘Jackie’ and to the university" which she, in the Rolling Stone article, had accused of failing to act on her complaints.

In a statement released Monday, the university’s president, Teresa A. Sullivan, said the investigation "confirms what federal privacy law prohibited the university from sharing last fall: that the university provided support and care to a student in need, including assistance in reporting potential criminal conduct to law enforcement."

**Campuses and Reporting**

The reporting the police chief called for on Monday is consistent with legislation approved by both chambers of the Virginia legislature and awaiting the governor’s
signature. The final bill is much less stringent than an earlier version of the legislation, which included a mandatory-reporting provision that would have required faculty members and administrators to notify the police within 24 hours if a student reported being assaulted.

The bill was amended after campus officials and victims’ rights groups complained that it could have a chilling effect on rape victims’ willingness to speak out. The revised legislation, which Gov. Terry McAuliffe has until Sunday to sign, sets up a reporting chain that would ensure that complaints of sexual violence are promptly reported to a campus’s Title IX coordinator, then on to a campus review committee set up to investigate sexual-violence complaints. The committee, which has to meet within 72 hours of receiving the complaint, would review the matter and decide whether police should be notified.

Supporters of the legislation have said they want to be sure that allegations of sexual assault aren’t swept under the rug by colleges trying to protect their reputations.

The bill requires that colleges "ensure that a victim of an alleged act of sexual violence is informed of the available law-enforcement options for investigation and prosecution; the importance of collection and preservation of evidence; the available options for a protective order; the available campus options for investigation and adjudication under the institution’s policies," and the victim’s right to decide whether or not to participate in an investigation.

No one from the governor’s office was immediately available to comment on whether he is likely to sign the bill.

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism is conducting a review of the Rolling Stone article at the request of the magazine, which reportedly plans to publish it in the next few weeks. Chief Longo said there was no evidence that the fraternity had a party the night the alleged rape occurred, and he said that at this point, there were no plans to charge "Jackie" with false reporting.