COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

New hospital in Columbia to replace mobile home parks

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 | 8:48 a.m. CDT BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, Missouri — **A $40 million, 10-bed hospital is planned on the site of two mobile home parks that will be closed in Columbia.**

A letter of intent filed with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services says the hospital will be built by Fulton Medical Center, a partnership between the University of Missouri Health Care and private health care company Nueterra.

The hospital will be built where the Sunset and Ed's mobile home parks currently stand. The mobile home parks owner, Whirlwind Properties, announced last week that it plans to close the parks by Oct. 1. Residents will be given free rent and utilities until then.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that the purchase price of the property was not disclosed.

PHOTO: Demolition of Jones Hall at MU underway

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 | 9:46 p.m. CDT BY LOREN ELLIOTT
COLUMBIA — An excavator worked Wednesday morning on the demolition of Jones Hall at MU.

The demolition of the residence hall in the southwest part of campus is part of the $71 million Dobbs Replacement Project. It includes the construction of two residence halls and a dining facility.

The UM System Board of Curators approved Phase I of the project in June 2013, and the first of the new halls is scheduled to open in August 2016. Jones was built in 1959.

MU faculty hear from Title IX experts

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 at 2:00 pm

University of Missouri faculty had a chance Tuesday to discuss with outside legal counsel questions and concerns regarding one of the most contentious subjects on college campuses.

Title IX policies had to be implemented quickly, and the policies include an opportunity for changes to be made during the next year with administrative approval. Faculty leadership saw open forums with outside legal experts as a chance to ask what more needs to be done and what could be done.

Faculty Council leaders invited Gina Maisto Smith and Leslie Gomez, former sex crime prosecutors and attorneys with Pepper Hamilton LLP in Philadelphia, to visit campus after they were identified as legal experts in the area of Title IX.

The two attorneys have worked together on many projects, and both have been cited in national articles about sexual assault on college campuses and the policies put in place to combat campus sexual assault. Pepper Hamilton LLP has advised clients that, like MU and the UM System, have grappled with implementing Title IX policies after public fallout from a case that was not handled properly.

The university hosted two open faculty forums Tuesday — one at 8:30 a.m. and another at 1:30 p.m. in the Reynolds Alumni Center. Administrators and lawyers from the UM System and MU were present for the discussion.
Gomez and Smith addressed academic freedom concerns about whether there could be an exception to faculty members acting as mandated reporters when they learn via an assignment in a creative writing, music or similar course that someone on campus has been involved in a Title IX violation.

Smith told audience members at the morning forum that faculty members have to walk a fine line between protecting students by reporting and trusting the central reporting process and leadership to protect students’ anonymity.

When asked about the quality of the UM System’s adopted Title IX policies, Gomez and Smith agreed that the policies were up to par. The duo did say practices during the investigation phase could be clarified.

The two attorneys said many schools are “front-loading” the Title IX adjudication process onto the investigator. As a result, the hearing panel-like structure — which the UM System has adopted — becomes more of a validation or voice of reason after the investigator has submitted a lengthy report and recommendation.

Faculty Council Chairman Craig Roberts said the forums created “one of the most well-spent days” in his years on the council because faculty members were able to hear directly from outside experts what they thought of the university’s policies.

The new Title IX governing rules allow for revisions by system administrators — with an agreement that faculty members have significant input. The next step is for MU’s Faculty Council to create a committee to specifically address clarifications and recommend those changes to the council, which will then bring those ideas to administrators.

Roberts said he expects to have the committee formed before the end of the semester.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Fraternities rolling out peer education program to combat sexual assault

Thursday, April 9, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY JILL DEUTSCH

COLUMBIA — "Strong," "brave" and "dominant" were among 30 words scribbled in black on the whiteboard.

They were all answers to the question: "What words do you think of when you think of masculinity?"
The 12 fraternity men sitting at the U-shaped table in an upstairs conference room of MU’s Memorial Union took turns adding words to the board.

One man said: "In the (fraternity) community, it’s who can drink the most, be with the most girls."

Travis Fox, a psychologist at the MU Counseling Center and the night's presenter on masculine gender roles, wrote "competition" on the board.

When the guys couldn’t think of more words, Fox drew a large black box around the descriptors on the board. Fox called this the "man-box," the limiting social role men feel they have to fit.

It was another Wednesday night for the new Interfraternity Council Peer Educators group.

Universities across the country are reacting to increased public scrutiny of the problem of sexual assault on campuses. MU has received its share of media attention for allegations that it mishandled the accusation that Derrick Washington sexually assaulted his ex-girlfriend in 2010, another allegation in 2014 that former Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey took her life after she was sexually assaulted in 2010 and an allegation in 2012 that former Missouri basketball star Michael Dixon Jr. sexually assaulted a woman.

Here, on Wednesday nights, a group of about 20 men are taking a proactive approach to educating their fraternity brothers about sexual assault. On March 18, the topic was gender roles. The group had already talked about alcohol and drugs as contributing factors, and there were six weeks of topics still on the agenda.

At the beginning of the fall semester, the small group will create a presentation to take to the 33 MU fraternities. It could be a step toward what Fox called, during his presentation, breaking a "culture of silence."

Unfair to fraternities?

Greek Life makes up 27.6 percent of MU’s campus. Although the Title IX Office couldn't offer specific numbers, Title IX investigator Salama Gallimore said the number of sexual
assault reports from fraternities does not appear to be disproportionate to the percentage of Greek students on campus.

Data about sexual misconduct are gathered based on the nature of the report, the location, date and time of the report and the names and affiliations of both the complainant and respondent, Gallimore said. An issue that can complicate the numbers is that students sometimes drink at fraternities earlier in the night and then go elsewhere.

Many in fraternities feel there is an unfair stereotype of the fraternity man as rapist.

"I think the scope is magnified to Greeks. However, sexual assault happens everywhere," junior Myles Artis, a member of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity and regular at the peer educators group, said. "... Sexual assaults are happening in (residence) halls, it’s happening on streets, it’s happening off-campus — it’s happening everywhere."

"The stereotype of fraternity guys is, 'Oh, you're in a fraternity, so you're a rapist,' so a lot of guys get defensive and don't want to deal with the issue," Nick Danter, the IFC vice president of programming and a member of Delta Tau Delta, said. "When they don't know how to respond, they get defensive and ignore the problem altogether."

Larry Schuster, manager of Pioneer Window Works in Columbia and an alumni adviser for Alpha Gamma Sigma, said that fraternities are "just a mirror image for society." Fraternities are also easily identifiable groups, and that can make them a target, he said.

Fraternities have been making headlines for issues relating to sexual misconduct. In mid-March, Kappa Delta Rho at Pennsylvania State University came under fire after photos from fraternity members allegedly showed drunk women passed out, according to the Associated Press. The university suspended the chapter and is conducting a larger review of the entire fraternity system.

In January, Brown University revoked a fraternity's charter after reports indicated that the fraternity members had laced punch with a date rape drug, according to the New York Times. Less than a week later, Duke University suspended a fraternity after a report of a sexual assault at a party, according to the Los Angeles Times.
Though the reactive measures are good, Kim Dude, the coordinator of the Wellness Resource Center, emphasized the need for bystander intervention and alcohol education.

Schuster said it's hard to deter young people, who think they are "10 feet tall and bullet-proof."

"After-the-fact is important, but it'd be so much better if there wasn't an incident to deal with," Schuster said.

**Peer education method**
Alex Dyer, last year's president of IFC, came up with the idea for the group in January 2014. A year later, the group met for the first time.

Risk management programs vary from fraternity to fraternity, Danter said, but most of the fraternities host presentations about sexual assault, among other topics.

The presentations get a mixed reaction. Danter said, "Some people sit in the back and fall asleep, sit and play on their phones, or sign in and leave."

When the group of men goes to educate fraternities next fall, they plan to take a different approach. Trace Murray, IFC’s vice president of risk management and a member of Alpha Tau Omega, said they might present to a larger group at first and then break the large group into smaller groups to re-create what they do in their weekly meetings.

"This (discussion) would probably never happen with a group of 300 men, but if you can get groups of 10 to 20, then you can have meaningful conversations," Danter said.

A conversation-based approach lessens the fear of asking stupid questions, he said.

"You are learning with the rest of your brothers," Danter said. "This is the time to ask questions and ask what the correct answer is."

Kim Scates, the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center education coordinator, has been helping the peer educators group.
"These issues — power-based personal violence, including relationship violence, rape, sexual assault, stalking — these affect everyone," Scates said. "Because we believe strongly in peer education, it just makes sense for Greek students to educate other Greek students."

It's been found effective. In a 1997 study published in "Sex Roles," John Foubert and Kenneth Marriott tested 71 fraternity men for their beliefs in rape myths. The men then went through a peer education workshop titled "How to Help a Sexual Assault Survivor."

The workshop was designed to build empathy by first describing the graphic rape of a man. Then, the educators discussed the connections between the male victim's experience and a female victim's experience. The goal of the program was for participants to see themselves in a helping role and, in turn, not be sexually coercive themselves.

When the men were tested after the workshop, 59 percent reported they "were less likely to do something sexual with a woman that she did not want to have happen," while 25 percent of the men did not answer the question, 13 percent reported no difference after the program and 3 percent reported an increased likelihood of being sexually coercive.

Two months after the test, the men's beliefs in rape myths rose again, but their belief "remained significantly lower than it had been prior to seeing the program," according to the study.

Foubert and Marriott concluded the peer education method showed promise.

"In the process, we may not only be training a new group of men to react in a more helpful fashion when they encounter sexual assault survivors, but we may also be decreasing the likelihood that those men will be perpetrators themselves," Foubert and Marriott wrote.

Dude said subjects such as bystander intervention are easier to discuss in a group of fraternity brothers.

"I tell them that if one of these incidents happens in your fraternity house, people are going to make stereotypes about your entire chapter," Dude said. "You should want to stand for something — stand for respecting women."

A lack of knowledge nationally
The peer education group is attempting to address a lack of knowledge and understanding about sexual assault among college-age men.

"I can tell that when talking to most college men, they probably don’t know what rape culture is or how serious of an issue sexual assault is, and that’s exactly what we’re trying to address," Murray said.

When Artis began college, he said he had an unrealistic idea of what rape was. It came from what he saw on television — violent situations between a stranger and a victim. In reality, 73 percent of rapes are committed by non-strangers, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network.

Gradually, Artis learned more about the realities of rape, as well as stalking, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other forms of relationship-based sexual violence.

College men across the country — not just those in fraternities — don’t know the true definition of rape. In a 2014 study conducted by Sarah Edwards and published in the journal "Violence and Gender," Edwards asked 73 college men, mainly juniors from the University of South Dakota, two different questions with the same meaning. First, they were asked if they had any intention to force a woman to have sexual intercourse and then they were asked if they had any intention to rape a woman. There was an 18.1 percent difference in those who answered yes to the first and the second question, indicating that those men did not understand that forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse is rape.

The study suggests there’s no "one-size-fits-all approach" to sexual assault prevention, Edwards wrote. Men who are motivated by negative, hostile feelings toward women are unlikely to benefit from large-group primary prevention efforts that are typical of college outreach efforts.

"However," Edwards wrote, "programming using a group and norm-based approach appears to be appropriate for men who endorse force but deny rape, as long as the programming can establish rapport and credibility with participants."

**A contributing environment**
The peer educators' program strives to educate men about one major contributor to sexual assault, which is prevalent on college campuses: alcohol.
At least one-half of sexual assault cases involve alcohol use by the perpetrator, the victim or both, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. At MU, fraternities are supposed to report any chapter-sponsored events with alcohol, according to IFC's Alcohol Event Policy. They are also supposed to ensure that event venues have liquor licenses and that the Office of Greek Life has a copy of the guest list. But house parties are not included in these reports.

Murray said fraternities are not allowed to have alcohol or parties in their houses, which IFC enforces with random audits of fraternities.

Though the audit system has decreased the size and scope of the parties, they still happen, Danter said.

Dude said the parties cause problems because they give underage students easy access to alcohol in a setting in which there are too few sober monitors. Dude recommends one sober monitor for every five people who are drinking.

"Inherently, people want to do the right thing and keep their friends safe," Dude said. "But when everybody is under the influence of alcohol, nobody is really able to protect each other."

Those at the highest risk are college freshmen in their first months on campus, Dude said.

Fox pointed out that in a fraternity of a hundred or so men, one man can take advantage of these circumstances and make parties unsafe.

"Any communal living environment with a lot of alcohol can be a place for people to go unnoticed who are going to commit sexual assault," Fox said.

Fox emphasized being vigilant about noticing the signs of who could be a perpetrator and take action when necessary.

"We create a very easy environment for these actions to happen, and that's not OK," Danter said.

Danter said that with this knowledge, IFC executive members are taking sexual assaults seriously and have been looking into new ways to make fraternities safer.
A new type of brotherhood
After Fox drew a large black box around the list of masculine words, he asked the men what fell outside the box — what's not masculine?

"Coward," "crying," "insecure about yourself," filled the rest of the board outside the man-box.

Fox went on to describe the impact of hypermasculinity on men:

- shorter life expectancies
- increased risk of substance abuse
- higher completed suicide rates
- higher incarceration rate
- greater likelihood of committing sexual assault

"This conditioning can cause some pretty nasty stuff," Fox said.

The men described how their brothers police feminine behavior, saying "You're so gay" or "Don't be a puss."

"We have to make sure we're fitting in the box," one man said.

Fox emphasized how knowing these masculine behaviors can affect the quality of relationships among brothers and the ability to stop sexual violence within a fraternity.

One man described it as being locked in the box.

"This box breeds violence in a way," Mike Pasternock, a member of Delta Sigma Phi, said during the meeting. "If you leave the box then you’re called feminine. As peer educators, this is our opportunity to take this (information) back to the places where we have influence and make it acceptable to leave that box and that it’s OK to be yourself."

Columbia LGBTQ member speaks out on non-discrimination order
COLUMBIA - For the first time, companies that have contracts with the federal government are now prohibited from firing or discriminating against employees based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, due to an executive order that went into effect Wednesday.

President Barack Obama signed the order in July 2014 banning workplace discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees of federal contractors and the federal government.

President Obama said the country has a long way to go but is on the right side of history.

"We've got an obligation to ensure that the country we love remains a place where no matter who you are, what you look like, or where you come from, or how you started out, or what your last name is, or who you love, no matter what you can make it in this country," President Obama said.

MU student and member of the LGBTQ community Delan Ellington said he feels the federal government is taking a step in the right direction.

"It's good that the federal government is doing this, but as a country we are still in that battle of whether LGBTQ rights should be held and protected so I think this is a good step in protecting everyone," Ellington said.

He said this new executive order means a lot to him because he no longer has to fear being fired.

"For me, since I want to be a professor and researcher working for a university that is public, they wouldn't be able to fire me," Ellington said.

Ellington said this will make people in the LGBTQ community feel safer.

"It definitely makes you feel more comfortable, safer to be who you really are instead of hiding and creating that double life like some people have to do," Ellington said.

The University of Missouri-Columbia said it isn't impacted by the order because the university already has a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

MU's nondiscrimination statement states:

"The University of Missouri does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, genetics information, disability, or status as a protected veteran. The University's nondiscrimination policy applies to all phases of its employment process, its admission and financial aid programs, and to all other aspects of its educational programs and activities."
The administration took the last six months to provide rules to contractors and to give companies time to put processes in place.

According to the Huffington Post, the change affects 24,000 companies employing roughly 28 million workers, or about one-fifth of the nation's workforce.

Currently, it is still legal in 29 states to harass someone at work or fire them for being LGBTQ.

Can an outside CEO boost business?

CEOs hired from outside a company tend to spend more money on research and development, while CEOs hired from within are likely to make large, strategic acquisitions, new research finds.

According to the six-decade study, while 78 percent of new CEOs are selected from within the organization, internally and externally chosen CEOs execute different financial strategies that could be best-suited for companies with different needs.

“If a company currently is either mired in mediocrity or performing poorly and it announces the hiring of an external CEO, it could be a signal that the board is serious about fixing problems,” says Stephen Ferris, professor and director of the Financial Research Institute at the University of Missouri Trulaske College of Business.

“Although we cannot foretell the outcome of hiring an external CEO, or any new CEO, it could give investors reason to think about investing a little more confidently in that company within the context of their portfolios.

“The hiring of an internal candidate, on the other hand, may indicate that a company is stable and likely to continue an already successful business approach.”

1 in 5 new CEOs is from outside

Ferris and colleagues studied succession patterns of the 2,524 CEO turnovers from all firms on the Standard & Poor’s 500 Index during the years 1951-2010.

Researchers analyzed business decisions of new CEOs and found that external hires spend more money on research and development, which Ferris says is indicative of commitment to innovation. The study also shows that while internal hires make fewer merger offers than their
external counterparts, the acquisitions they do make are much larger in size and more frequently purchased using stock rather than cash.

“If a firm is doing well, the internal process frequently will be sufficient to identify, nurture, and promote the people who ultimately will be able to lead the company and continue to generate value,” Ferris says.

“If not, companies start looking externally, and though it may create uncertainty, it takes a certain amount of honesty and humility to say that you don’t have anyone internally you feel can run the company.

“The move to select an external CEO often speaks to the strength of character and foresight of these firms—and of American capitalism in general, given that one out of every five new CEO positions goes to an external candidate.”

What does the company need?

Ferris says that because external and internal CEOs make different strategic and financial decisions and tend to be hired under different circumstances, both internal and external hires can be positive moves depending on companies’ needs.

“We found that internal CEOs have been the consistent choice for corporations over time, a trend that persisted even through major political and economic changes,” says Ferris. “However, we found that forced turnover drastically increased the likelihood of external selections, and that external CEOs tend to make different business decisions than do internal candidates.

“Change clearly is needed in those situations, so it makes sense to look outside the company for someone to rejuvenate the firm.”

The study will appear in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Accounting and Finance. Other researchers on the study included Narayanan Jayaraman from the Georgia Institute of Technology and Jongha Lim from California State University-Fullerton.

Why it’s harder to swallow after age 50

Nearly 40 percent of older Americans are living with a swallowing disorder known as dysphagia.
Although it is a major health problem associated with aging, it is unknown whether the condition is a natural part of healthy aging or if it is caused by an age-related disease that has yet to be diagnosed, such as Parkinson’s disease or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

**Following a recent study, researchers at the University of Missouri have established a model that identifies aging as a key factor in the development of dysphagia, which may lead to new therapeutic treatments.**

“As people age, and especially once they’re 50 and older, their ability to swallow quickly and safely deteriorates with each advancing decade,” says Teresa Lever, assistant professor of otolaryngology at the School of Medicine and lead author of the study.

“For years, we haven’t known why. Through our research with mice, we now know this disorder can occur naturally and independent of another disease.

“Our next step is to study this model to determine why age-related dysphagia, also called presbyphagia, occurs and identify ways to prevent it.”

**Pneumonia risk**

Individuals with presbyphagia generally experience slow, delayed, and uncoordinated swallowing that compromises airway function. This puts older individuals at risk for developing life-threatening malnutrition and aspiration pneumonia, which is caused when food or saliva is breathed into the lungs or airways.

These risks are increased when an individual has an existing health condition, such as a neurodegenerative disease, head and neck cancer, or a major surgery.

**Videofluoroscopy** has long been the gold standard for diagnosing swallowing disorders in humans. A video fluoroscopic swallow study is a radiologic examination of an individual’s swallowing function that uses a special X-ray device called a fluoroscope.

The patient is observed swallowing various foods and liquids mixed with a contrast agent that can be seen by fluoroscopy in order to evaluate his or her ability to swallow safely and effectively.

**Same symptoms in mice**

However, because a long-term study of the swallowing ability of an individual as he or she ages is unfeasible, Lever and her research team studied the swallowing function of healthy mice throughout their approximate two-year lifespan.

“We have a miniaturized fluoroscope and swallow test protocol that are unique to our lab that we can use to determine if a mouse has dysphagia,” Lever says. “By studying the swallowing function of healthy mice over their lifespan, we found they exhibit many of the same symptoms of dysphagia as healthy aging adults.”
15 signs and metrics

The researchers established 15 metrics that could be compared to human swallowing function. These metrics include functions such as swallow rate, pharyngeal transit time—the time it takes liquid to be swallowed through the pharynx, or throat, and into the esophagus, or food tube—and the number of ineffective swallows through the esophagus.

The researchers found that healthy aging mice develop symptoms of swallowing impairment that closely resemble the impairments seen in older adults: generally slowed swallowing function, impaired tongue function, larger size of the amount swallowed, and an increase in the time it takes liquid to travel through the throat to the stomach.

“We’re about to change the landscape of dysphagia intervention,” Lever says. “For years, we’ve only been able to treat the symptoms and have been unable to address the root causes of dysphagia.

“Though more research is needed, this knowledge sets the stage for us to study ways to prevent, delay or potentially reverse swallowing disorders using new therapies.”

The study was published online by the journal *Dysphagia*. Funding from the University of Missouri and the National Institutes of Health helped support the project.

Study shows people overconfident with technology

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28299&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - Technology is an important commodity these days. With the advent of smart phones, tablets, and faster computers, people seem to be relying upon it more and more.

A recent study from researchers at MU found people were actually becoming overconfident when it comes to technology.
"We had a suspicion that over time when people are exposed to technologies, and usually they are exposed to successful technologies, that they start to associate success or winning with technology," said Chris Roberts, one of the coauthors of the study.

The three researchers conducted three studies over the course of three years. Each study looked at a different aspect of technology and success.

The first looked at people's stock-picking decisions when the stocks included companies that specialized in a certain technology. The second looked at forecasts of business success. The other was a psychologically-oriented study that looked at people's unconscious belief of success and technology.

In all three studies, Roberts said they saw people going the way of new technology, regardless of whether they knew anything about it.

He said when it came down to making decisions, people would tend to choose unknown technology to help because they had seen it succeed in the past.

"I have a phone in my pocket, and it's pretty much like a communicator from Star Trek. I know that it works, and I know how to use it, but I have no idea how it works," he said. "Because of that I am more likely to think other things that I don't know are also going to lead to positive outcomes and successful outcomes."

Financial planner Adam Bethel said he thinks this could be dangerous. He said when it comes to picking stocks, people can't pick based on what's hot at the moment but should think more long term.

"You can't predict future performance of an investment based on what's happened in the past," he said. "There are certain asset classes that have had great track records over the last 30 years that I don't have much confidence in for the next ten years."

Roberts also agreed relying overconfidently on technology could present unforeseen consequences.

He said some governments might begin to believe if technology is involved in decisions about how to distribute resources, and it will always be successful, they might allocate scarce resources to technological solutions that might not work out.

"Similarly even individuals might believe that technology will be able to solve a lot of their problems," he said. "It might be one of those small things in the back of our heads that causes us to make a decision in a way that might not be the most appropriate decision."
Apple’s Lessons for Higher Ed Inequality

April 9, 2015
By
Ben Castleman Saul Schwartz and Sandy Baum

NO MU MENTION

The federal government has made significant investments over the last several decades toward reducing socioeconomic inequalities in college access and success: hundreds of billions of dollars in financial aid; a host of informational tools to provide students and families with better information about college quality and costs; prominent attention from the White House, including not one but two presidential summits in 2014 on expanding college opportunity for economically disadvantaged students.

Yet as we all know, gaps in college completion by family income have actually widened over time. How can this be?

Simply creating a financial aid system and college search tool kit isn’t enough. We have to make sure students and families know about these resources and can easily access them.

Think about Apple products for a minute. Why do we buy iPhones, iPads and MacBook Pros? First and foremost, they are durable, high-quality devices. We imagine some readers may be able to rattle off the technical specifications that make these devices superior to their competitors.

But there are four characteristics that really hooked us on Apple products: (1) They are easy and intuitive to use. It’s unlikely the iPhone would have gone viral if the average user needed to spend an hour reading through an instruction manual before getting started; (2) The devices have a sheer stylistic appeal -- sleek metallic casings, glossy touch screens; (3) Apple has been incredibly savvy in its marketing and advertisements -- Steve Jobs’s legendary launch events, crisp Apple television and print ads; (4) The social atmosphere of the Apple stores and skill of the Genius Bar technicians make getting help when problems arise an enjoyable experience.

Now think about the Pell Grant, or the College Navigator search tool, or federal loan entrance counseling. The maximum Pell Grant is worth over $5,000 a year, so one could argue that the product quality is in place. But the Pell Grant falls short on other dimensions that make Apple products so successful. The grant is not nearly as well marketed, so some students and families aren’t aware that it exists or that the money doesn’t need to be paid
And to access the money, students and families need to complete a cumbersome and confusing financial aid application. Imagine if, to get your iPhone, you had to first fill out a complicated rebate form, send it in and wait for a few months for the device to arrive.

College Navigator has literally hundreds of data points on every college and university in the country, but this is as much a problem as a benefit -- too much information overwhelms the average user. There are also design limitations -- the site is set up for people who know what to look for and how to interpret all the information they see. There’s little guidance for students about how to structure a college search, or which data points to prioritize over others. And College Navigator has an even bigger name-recognition problem than the Pell Grant. Our guess is that a small fraction of first-generation college students in the country has even heard of the tool.

We can learn a great deal from companies like Apple. We’ve also learned a lot from the burgeoning science of decision making over the last several years. In the face of complex decisions and complicated choices -- like deciding where to apply to college or navigating the financial aid process -- people have a common set of responses. One common behavior is to put off making any decision at all. Another common response is to use a simplifying strategy to make a decision, like choosing which college to attend based on where your friends have gone to school or a connection with a particularly charismatic tour guide. And in some cases, people don’t make any decision at all -- they just follow the path of least resistance. For middle-income students, this might mean enrolling in the nearby public university. For students whose parents did not go to college, it might be looking for a local job after high school graduation.

Research from fields like behavioral economics, psychology and neuroscience has helped us recognize what private sector companies like Apple have known and exploited for decades: just having a good product or policy isn’t enough. For policies to achieve their desired aims, we need to do what Apple does -- develop high-quality products, and then devote just as much attention to publicity, consumer engagement and customer service as we do to policy development.

What does this mean in practice?

**Nudging students about important tasks.** Especially in this day and age, adolescents often balance a multitude of academic, social, work and family commitments. These responsibilities, on top of the fact that adolescents frequently struggle with organization and long-term planning, mean that even students with clear intentions to start or stay in college may miss important deadlines. Simple strategies like sending students text message reminders to renew their federal financial aid can help students translate their intentions into concrete actions.

**Improving the design of publicity materials.** There’s a reason Apple print ads rely on striking visuals and minimal content: people tend to glaze over dense text. Yet much student-facing communication is incredibly text heavy. By simplifying the content of letters, emails and websites and incorporating behavioral cues for students to take action, we can more effectively help students take advantage of the opportunities and resources that are available to them.

**Simplifying enrollment processes.** Researchers and advocates have devoted considerable attention over the last decade to how complexities in the federal financial aid
application process can deter college-ready and financially eligible students from receiving aid. Reducing hassles associated with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) -- either by simplifying the form itself or by making it easier for students to get assistance -- can lead to substantial increases in the share of students who receive aid and enroll in college.

The student loan origination process is another important decision-making bottleneck where highly complex information may inhibit students from making informed choices about how much to borrow. Simplifying information about borrowing and increasing access to loan counseling can help students make more informed choices about borrowing levels that are a good fit for their personal circumstances.

**Changing default options.** Several important stages in the college-going process -- taking college entrance exams, choosing courses once in college -- require active steps on the student's part. Failure to take action can lead students to miss important opportunities, like getting into key prerequisite courses for their intended majors.

We can change the default option so that, for example, the curriculum is laid out for students unless they actively make different choices. Several states have shifted to mandatory college entrance exam testing to increase the number of students who take the S.A.T. or A.C.T. Several colleges have employed active course mapping that provides students with a scripted set of courses to take that will help them complete their intended majors in the least amount of time possible. Students can opt out of these course maps, but only by taking active steps to meet with an adviser to discuss alternative course options.

The greatest appeals of these approaches include their relative ease of implementation, low cost and scalability. A rapidly growing number of academic, public and private-sector ventures are applying behavioral insights to improve postsecondary access and success. Some of these initiatives have been rigorously evaluated through randomized controlled trials and have generated substantial improvements in students’ outcomes. We bring together insightful essays on many of these innovative approaches in our forthcoming volume, *Decision Making for Student Success*.

Behavioral solutions alone won't eliminate socioeconomic inequalities in postsecondary access and success. But for a relatively small investment in these strategies, we can meaningfully improve the efficacy of existing programs and policies and expand college opportunity for hardworking but economically disadvantaged students.

**BIO**

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