Mizzou admits its campus crime alerts were too slow following fatal shooting

April 17, 2015

By Koran Addo

The University of Missouri-Columbia acknowledged on Thursday that it botched its emergency response protocols Wednesday as law enforcement looked for an armed suspect near campus.

A number of students said they didn’t get an emergency text message from the university for up to an hour after police had cornered the man and killed him in a campus parking garage. Another student said the notification was about 20 minutes late.

“The bottom line is that we should have been faster,” Mizzou spokesman Christian Basi said.

Mizzou’s students, faculty and staff automatically have their emails assigned to a campus-wide alert system; however, all parties are encouraged to opt in to also get notifications by text message. The texts generally point people toward the MUAlert.Missouri.edu website, where the university posts information during emergency situations.

Mizzou spokesman Christian Basi said the university failed to send a text about 9:40 p.m. when the university first received a statement from Columbia police with the suspect’s description and potential location.

“A preliminary review of the MU response revealed that staff members attempting to confirm the exact location of the suspect is likely what caused the delay,” a university statement said. “We apologize to our community.”

Basi added that the university also failed to update the MU Alert website until 11 p.m. — after the suspect had been shot and killed.

Mizzou Student Body President Payton Head said he didn’t get a text until 11:41 p.m.

“This is disappointing,” Head said. “This put our personal safety in jeopardy.”

It’s unclear if the university’s delayed warning is a violation of the so-called Clery Act — a federal law that requires schools to issue “timely reports to the campus community on crimes considered to be a threat to other students and employees.”
But the decision to send out an alert ultimately comes down to school personnel and their understanding of the situation.

“It’s strictly a judgment call,” said Art Kirkland, director of UCLA’s Office of Emergency Management. “You’ll hear all sorts of rumors. The hardest thing is verification.”

He added that once an emergency has been verified, it’s up to a university’s emergency personnel to use discretion in deciding how much of a threat a situation poses to the campus.

For instance, in 2013, when John Zawahri went on a shooting spree in Santa Monica, Calif. — about eight miles from the University of California, Los Angeles — university officials monitored the situation but did not alert the campus.

“Had we had any indication the shooter was moving toward campus, we would’ve sent out an alert,” Kirkland said.

The issue, he said, is balancing student safety and the scope of the threat.

“You don’t want students to get too many alerts,” he said. “You want them to understand it’s a big deal every time they get one.”

Investigators looking into the incident at Mizzou believe the man police killed was a violent sex offender who hours earlier hid inside a woman’s car at a supermarket and tried to force her at gunpoint to drive away.

Authorities say the man fled after the woman struggled with him and managed to escape. The incident sparked a manhunt that led to Mizzou’s campus.

A campus police officer eventually cornered the man on the second floor of the parking garage, where shots were fired.

It’s unknown which of the officers fired the fatal shot or whether the suspect fired a gun in his possession. The campus police officer — who was wearing a body camera — was taken to University Hospital for treatment of a wounded finger.

The Missouri Highway Patrol, which has taken over the investigation, declined to confirm the suspect’s identity prior to completion of an autopsy being performed Thursday.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*
MU: Alert should have been sent about manhunt

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 4:15 pm

The University of Missouri said in a statement Thursday afternoon that its personnel "failed to follow established protocols and procedures" in alerting the campus to a nearby manhunt.

University of Missouri Police Department and Columbia Police Department officers later encountered a man believed to be the target of the manhunt at the Hitt Street parking garage on the university campus. The encounter ended with the man's shooting death.

Columbia police Deputy Chief Jill Schlude said early Thursday she contacted MU police Capt. Brian Weimer at about 7:21 p.m. Wednesday after a suspect in an earlier attempted armed robbery and kidnapping attempt, Mark W. Adair, was spotted at Rose Music Hall, 1013 Park Ave., and on Ninth Street. Schlude said the department sent out a description and photo of Adair so authorities could be on the lookout. The Columbia Police Department sent out a news release about the kidnapping attempt at 9:40 p.m. Weimer said Thursday that his department did not have information about Adair's alleged armed robbery and kidnapping attempt until the release came out.

An alert was not sent to the MU campus community until almost 11:30 p.m., when police sent word via the MU Alert online system that officers had fatally shot a man at the parking garage.

"A preliminary review of the MU response revealed that staff members attempting to confirm the exact location of the suspect is likely what caused the delay," the university said in the statement release Thursday afternoon.

"In addition, an initial text alert to students, staff and faculty should have been released when the University first received a statement from the Columbia Police Department containing the suspect’s description and potential location," the statement said.

When asked about whether an alert should have gone out when Adair was spotted at about 7:20 p.m., MU spokesman Christian Basi said he did not know the specific timelines.
"I know that when we were reviewing it, that’s what we were looking at,” he said, referring to the time after Columbia police issued their news release.

Adair is believed to have tried kidnapping a woman at gunpoint in the parking lot of Moser's Discount Foods on North Keene Street at about 5:30 p.m. Wednesday. Police said Adair, a convicted sex offender released from prison on parole last week, hid inside a woman's car and tried to make her drive away from the store while he pointed a gun at her. A scuffle ensued, and Adair fled, starting the manhunt that ended with the shooting at the parking garage. Police said Thursday morning they're confident Adair is the man who was killed, but they were waiting on confirmation of the dead man's identity.

In response to the failure to alert the campus Wednesday, Basi said officials are reviewing policies and procedures with anyone who works with MU Alert or other emergency notification systems on campus. He said they’re also “reviewing exactly what happened last night to make sure we do not have a similar situation … occurring in the future."

Every situation — whether it is a storm or criminal activity — is evaluated separately when an alert is sent out, Basi said. Wednesday night's situation was complicated, as he said there were reports that Adair was moving quickly between locations.

“It was a very fluid and rapidly changing situation,” Basi said.

MU says it failed to alert students to danger on time


COLUMBIA -- The University of Missouri is apologizing to the community for not activating its alert system in a timely manner after it was determined that a dangerous person was near campus Wednesday evening.
The MU Alert system provides warnings of dangerous situations to students and staff by sending emails, text messages, and pager messages to those who sign up for the service.

The MU News Bureau and the University of Missouri Police Department issued identical statements on the late alert, saying the University "Failed to follow established protocols and procedures in alerting the MU community." The statements said an effort to more precisely pinpoint the suspect's location was the likely cause of the delay.

The statement also says an initial text alert should have been sent out as soon as the Columbia Police Department issued the suspect's description and potential location.

The statement goes on to say that the safety and security of students, staff, and faculty is "our absolute top priority," and the lapse in procedures will be corrected.

No one from the MU Chancellor's office, the MU Police Department, or the MU News Bureau would talk to KRCG reporters on the record.

MU Police: University failed to issue timely campus alert on armed suspect


COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri Police issued a statement Thursday afternoon regarding the school's handling of alerting the MU community of an armed suspect near campus.

A man who Columbia Police believed to have held a woman at gunpoint Wednesday evening was killed when he and an officer exchanged gunfire on the 2nd floor of the Hitt St. parking garage just before 11:00 p.m.

In a statement, MU Police said, "The University of Missouri failed to follow established protocols and procedures in alerting the MU community in a timely manner."
Students were not aware of the dangerous suspect until after hours after the crime spree that started at Mosers on Keene St.

There are multiple student housing complexes all around downtown. The concern from many students is that the suspect, Mark Adair, was walking around armed and dangerous, but students didn't know until after Adair had been shot and killed.

Police said Mark Adair attacked a woman in the Mosers parking lot near the 63/70 connector, which led to an almost 5 hour manhunt through downtown Columbia.

"I've never actually never heard gunshots before, so there were about two that went off and I looked at my roommate, and I was like 'what is that?' She said 'those are gunshots,'" said Samantha Holmes, a MU student.

Holmes said she and her roommate were hearing the end of the chase right outside their window at the Lofts apartments on 9th across from the parking garage a little before 11:00 p.m.

MU students weren't notified about any of this until close to an hour after it was all over.

The MU Alert system sent out one email at 11:40 p.m., then a second one at 11:45.

The latter one states, "the suspect was located and engaged police, who shot and killed him."

"What if I wanted a midnight snack last night, what if I went out there, wanted Steak and Shake late at night or McDonalds and I was in the middle of that. So, I'm just thankful that I'm not," said Cameron Smith, another MU student.

After the shooting, CPD said it notified MU Police shortly before 7:30 p.m. that Adair was on foot in the downtown area.

At around 10:00 p.m., officers said Adair tried grabbing another woman at her car at gunpoint, but she got away near Rose Music Hall, formerly known as Mojo's.

But nothing went out to students, no text message or email warning students of an armed and dangerous man close to campus until it was all over.

"Me and my friends didn't even know what was going on, and they knew from us texting them. So I think MU campus does need to step up their game a little bit," said Smith.

MUPD said the MUAlert system was not activated when it should have been.

MUPD went on to say an initial text alert to students and staff should have been released when MU first got a statement from CPD with the suspect's description and possible location.

An officer with MUPD received minor injuries during the exchange.
The Missouri State Highway Patrol is handling the investigation of the shooting.

MU admits it failed to follow protocol in response to shooting


COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri released a statement Thursday afternoon that said it failed to follow protocols in alerting the MU community about the shooting incident Wednesday night.

Last night, the University of Missouri said during a search for an armed robbery suspect, the suspect engaged police and was shot and killed in the Hitt Street Parking Garage on the MU campus. MUPD said one MUPD officer sustained non-life-threatening injuries and has been released from the hospital.

In the release, the University stated:

"Last night, as law enforcement searched for an armed suspect near campus, the University of Missouri failed to follow established protocols and procedures in alerting the MU community in a timely manner.

Specifically, the MUAlert system was not activated when it should have been, and we apologize to our community. A preliminary review of the MU response revealed that staff members attempting to confirm the exact location of the suspect is likely what caused the delay.

In addition, an initial text alert to students, staff and faculty should have been released when the University first received a statement from the Columbia Police Department containing the suspect's description and potential location.

The safety and security of our students, staff and faculty is our absolute top priority at the University of Missouri, and the lapse in procedures will be corrected."
MU students kept in dark as deadly campus shooting unfolds

COLUMBIA, Mo - A deadly shooting at the University of Missouri has students in an uproar as they claim to have been kept in the dark while those tense moments unfolded. Many students say they did not get the proper alerts.

The shooting happened Wednesday night, at a university parking garage. Police say a man was shot and killed in a shootout with officers. Students say they got a text message and email alert about the shooting, but only after it was over.

"I was staying at my friend's apartment who lives by Hitt Street Garage and I didn't know what was going on until the whole thing was over with. MU alerts should have posted something and told us that this event was going on, so we knew that campus wasn't safe, before they told us it was safe, and this guy was on the loose."

Officials at the University say they are looking into the matter and are aware of concern over email and text message alerts.
MU admits it failed to follow protocol in response to shooting

KCTV-KC (CBS) – Kansas City, Mo.
Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=0ff2d0a2-e654-4a4a-b5ac-262317f49d9b

WDAF-KC (Fox) – Kansas City, Mo.
Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=765d4b07-a8a6-44e5-883a-f08163e1027e

KSHB-KC (NBC) – Kansas City, Mo.
Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=10ca7f69-2ee0-4930-b79e-fd4e44085e1a

KMBC-KC (ABC) – Kansas City, Mo.
Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=ba926593-bb75-45c5-88c7-5754c8499cda
Police: Man fatally shot inside college's parking garage


MU students respond to university's apology about delayed alerts

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28448&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - Many students complained about the MU Alert system after a shooting at Hitt Street Garage Wednesday night, which prompted the university to release an apology Thursday afternoon.

Columbia Police released information about a manhunt in the downtown area at 9:41 p.m. Wednesday night. MU Alert sent out a Tweet at 11:28 p.m. after the shooting ended.

MU students said the system should have alerted them sooner.

Freshman Kayla Myers said she was on campus last night and could have been near the garage where the shooting happened.

"I think that Mizzou should have said something as soon as they knew something was occurring," Myers said. "I didn't get any of that until I was back at my dorm."
Another MU student, Shannon Byrne, was downtown last night as the situation developed. She said she found out about the manhunt from other people downtown.

"We found out from the people at Harpo's, but MU Alert didn't send anything." Byrne said. "We didn't know there was a manhunt investigation going on."

In a news release, MU stated officials were trying to confirm information, which caused delays.

It said in part "A preliminary review of the MU response revealed that staff members attempting to confirm the exact location of the suspect is likely what caused the delay."

"I definitely do think they should have been more alert and on top of things," MU student Avery Gardener said. "With being in a university, there's so many students that could have been put at risk."

MU student Jessi LaDay said she didn't hear about the event until after it was over.

"We heard nothing from MU until after it happened," Laday said. "I was on Twitter and everyone was complaining about it."

The news release said MU will look to correct the issues in future incidents.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU alerts about Wednesday night shooting fall short of protocols

Thursday, April 16, 2015 | 4:46 p.m. CDT; updated 10:42 p.m. CDT, Thursday, April 16, 2015
BY ALYSSA GARCIA

COLUMBIA — MU is reviewing the process of how it alerts students about active threats near campus after officers from the Columbia Police Department and the MU Police Department shot and killed a man Wednesday night in a university parking garage, MU spokesman Christian Basi said Thursday.

MU failed to follow established protocols and procedures in alerting the MU community in a timely manner, according to a statement from MU police. A preliminary review revealed the delay was likely caused by staff members waiting to confirm the exact location of the suspect.

An initial text alert to MU students, staff and faculty should have been released when the university first received a statement from Columbia police containing the suspect's description and potential location, according to the statement.
The MU community was not notified about the suspect by MU Alert until about 11:40 p.m., after Mark W. Adair, 51, was shot and killed on the second floor of the garage.

MU police released a notification about 10 minutes after the MU Alert, clarifying that campus was safe after an armed robbery suspect had been shot and killed.

Eric Evans, MU emergency management coordinator, said they were in the process of drafting an alert when the situation was resolved and campus was deemed safe.

MU students are automatically enrolled for MU Alerts through their university email, Evans said. However, students must opt to receive text message alerts to their cell phones. Alerts are also posted online and sent via Twitter, Facebook and desktop alert software on campus computers and computers connected to Mizzou wireless.

The MU Alert system is a manual system, with the exception of tornado warnings, which are on an automatic system, Evans said. The alerts can be sent out from anywhere by emergency management officials, Evans said.

Evans declined to say who specifically was responsible for sending the alert Wednesday night.

The biggest problem is a lot of students do not choose to receive MU Alerts via text message, Evans said.

Many students expressed their disappointment and anger on social media at the delay in notification.

**The Maneater**

**MUPD, MU officials apologize for failed MUAlert notification**

MU Police Department and MU released a joint statement Thursday explaining why there was a failure to notify students about the presence of an armed registered sex offender near campus.

The statement reads:

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Last night, as law enforcement searched for an armed suspect near campus, the University of Missouri failed to follow established protocols and procedures in alerting the MU community in a timely manner. Specifically, the MUAlert system was not activated when it should have been, and we apologize to our community. A preliminary review of the MU response revealed that staff members attempting to confirm the exact location of the suspect is likely what caused the delay.

In addition, an initial text alert to students, staff and faculty should have been released when the University first received a statement from the Columbia Police Department containing the suspect's description and potential location.

The safety and security of our students, staff and faculty is our absolute top priority at the University of Missouri and the lapse in procedures will be corrected.

“(We) went back and reviewed the various discussions that took place and what happened and what decisions were made and why and when they were made,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said on the phone. “The issue that we had last night was that the suspect’s location was consistently changing and doing so rapidly.”

Basi said MU officials will be reviewing procedures and the protocols with the people involved with the incident last night.

Columbia Police Department officers were searching for Mark Adair, a registered sex offender with a warrant out for his arrest after absconding parole. Around 5:35 p.m. Wednesday, officers responded to a call of an attempted armed robbery at Mosers Foods and were searching for the car they believed Adair was in.

Later in the night, CPD received a call that Adair had been seen near Rose Music Hall, formerly MoJo’s, and they believed he was on foot.

An MU Police Department officer first confronted Adair at around 11 p.m. in Hitt Street Parking Garage. The officer, who has not been named, was taken to University Hospital on Wednesday night with non fatal injuries, MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said.

Adair was shot and killed during the incident. Weimer said a tip of the officer's finger was hurt in the exchange. The officer was released from the hospital Thursday morning.

A CPD officer arrived on the scene shortly after. Weimer did not specify which officer shot and killed Adair.

The MU Alert was sent to students around 12:30 a.m.

Deputy Chief of Police Jill Schlunde said Wednesday night that CPD is fairly certain the deceased is Adair, but they will run fingerprint scans later to double check.
"We are 95 percent sure the deceased is Adair based on physical characteristics," she said Wednesday night.

Missouri State Highway Patrol has taken over the investigation of the incident could not be reached for comment at this time.

In a news briefing Wednesday night, Weimer said the MUALert was ready to be sent out to students once Adair stepped foot on campus, but he was confronted by police before that time. Adair was already dead when the MUALert account tweeted:

@MUALert During a search for an armed robbery Columbia Police asked MUPD for asst. Suspect engaged police, was shot & killed: http://mualert.missouri.edu

Many students showed frustration with the timing of the alert on Twitter. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin replied:

@bowtieger We are aware of concerns about timing of last night's MUALert. We are investigating process for issuing alerts and will report the results.

Editorial: Student awareness and safety should be priority for MUPD

Police shot and killed an armed robbery suspect in Hitt Street Parking Garage on Wednesday night.

Columbia Police initially responded to an armed robbery call from Mosers Foods, where they learned that suspect Mark Adair had threatened a woman from within her car with a gun. The woman was able to escape and contact help while Adair escaped on foot. He was later seen near Rose Music Hall around 7:30 p.m. Later that evening, around 11 p.m., police and Adair confronted one another in Hitt Street Parking Garage, resulting in the suspect’s death.

**MU Alert sent out messages via email, tweet and text after the incident had already occurred, around 12:30 a.m.**

This is not in any way, shape or form acceptable. MU Alert is seen constantly testing its system on Twitter, and yet when it was time to use the clearly functional network, officials delayed alerting students at an appropriate time. Students should have been notified of the situation as
soon as police officers were aware of an armed suspect near campus and especially when the suspect was in the downtown area, long before the confrontation took place.

During a manhunt last May, MUPD and University officials were able to effectively send notifications over MU Alert to students, telling them sequentially where the suspect was over the course of several hours. If MU officials were able to use MU Alert effectively then, nothing should have prevented them from implementing similar strategies in this case.

MUPD and university officials have issued a formal apology for their lack of notification last night. However, there is a way to ensure situations like this do not occur in the future — MU Alert should expand its radius. Students live, work, eat and walk around downtown constantly. These students were unaware and unsafe because the suspect had not yet set foot on campus. We should not be limiting our alert system to just campus, because students exist outside of our university’s borders.

In order to accomplish these goals, MUPD and university officials need to work more closely with the Columbia Police Department in order to solve these problems. These organizations should be working out the logistics of expanding the MU Alert notification radius. MUPD and the university should even consider giving CPD the ability to send out alerts over MU Alert so that students can know when there is potential danger in their area.

We hope to never see this kind of mistake happen again. It’s better for students to be scared but safe than for students to be oblivious and in danger.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Highway Patrol takes over investigation of fatal shooting in Hitt Street Garage

Thursday, April 16, 2015 | 10:07 a.m. CDT; updated 8:30 p.m. CDT, Thursday, April 16, 2015

BY CAROLYN HEGER, ETHAN COLBERT

UPDATE: This story has been updated to include a statement from the Missouri Department of Corrections.

COLUMBIA — The Missouri State Highway Patrol has taken over the investigation of last night’s shooting on the second floor of Hitt Street Garage at MU, highway patrol Sgt. Kevin Hunter said Thursday.

The Columbia Police Department and the MU Police Department said early Thursday that a man matching the physical description and appearance of Mark W. Adair, 51, was shot and killed on the second floor of the parking garage, located
at the corner of Hitt and Elm streets. Hunter said the patrol is awaiting fingerprint identification before confirming the identity of the man killed.

Adair was a registered sex offender in Missouri for raping and kidnapping a 9-year-old girl in 1988, according to the Missouri State Highway Patrol sex offender registry.

Missouri Department of Corrections spokesman David Owen said Adair was released on parole in 2005 but was incarcerated in 2008 for a parole violation. He was released in November 2013 but was incarcerated in April 2014 for another parole violation. Adair was released on parole on Friday but was declared an absconder and a warrant was issued for his arrest Tuesday.

Jill Schlude, deputy chief of Columbia police, and MU police Capt. Brian Weimer gave a news conference near a west-side entrance of the garage with the following information:

At the Hitt Street Garage, an MU police officer found Adair in the northwest corner of the second floor. The officer approached Adair, and shots were fired after an "altercation between the two where the officer cornered him." A Columbia police officer arrived, and more shots were fired.

The man believed to be Adair was killed, but it was uncertain which officer fired the fatal shot or whether Adair fired a gun he had. The investigation by the Highway Patrol will determine the number of shots fired and who killed Adair.

The MU officer had an injury to the tip of his finger and was taken to University Hospital for treatment. He was released on Thursday, Weimer confirmed.

Both officers are now on paid administrative leave while the Highway Patrol conducts an investigation.

The MU officer was wearing a body camera, and footage will be released as part of the investigation. Schlude did not say whether the Columbia police officer was wearing a body camera.

Schlude said she would not speculate about why Adair was approaching campus or what he was doing in the garage. She said the police received multiple tips that Adair was in the area and that he was last seen at Rose Music Hall, formerly Mojo's, 1013 Park Ave. At the hall, police discovered a stolen vehicle that Adair is believed to have taken earlier in the evening.
Samantha Kethe, night manager of Rose Music Hall on Wednesday, confirmed that around 10 p.m., Columbia police officers looked through the venue for about 30 minutes in search of a suspect, but they didn't find anyone.

The investigation by the Highway Patrol will take several days, Schlude said. "It will be slow," she said. "Please be patient. Do not expect it quickly. It will be thorough, and it will be complete."

Columbia police had earlier issued a warning about a suspect who was armed and dangerous. They named Adair as their primary suspect. The man hid in a woman's car at Moser's Supermarket (formerly Patricia's IGA), 900 N. Keene St., and held her at gunpoint at 5:30 p.m. "His activities earlier today led us to believe that he was violent," Schlude said. The woman who was attacked in her car earlier sustained minor injuries and was treated at the scene.

The state Division of Probation and Parole had recently issued a warrant for Adair's arrest for absconding his parole, according to a news release about the Moser's incident from Columbia police.

According to Columbia Tribune articles from 1988 and 1989, Adair was charged with assaulting two young girls in August and September of 1988. One charge was dropped, but Adair was convicted of the other, involving the 9-year-old, in 1989. Police said Adair went into the girl's room at the Crossways Inn, kidnapped her, and took her to his motel room nearby to attempt to rape her, according to Tribune reporting.

While on trial, Adair was already serving a three-year sentence at the Missouri State Penitentiary for a 1985 burglary conviction, according to the Tribune. Adair was sentenced to 30 more years in prison on April 24, 1989 — 20 years for attempting to commit forcible rape and 10 years for kidnapping, first-degree burglary and marijuana possession.

Schlude said she was not sure how long he had been in Boone County.

**Witnesses describe chaotic scene**

MU student Christopher Fulton was sitting on his couch with a roommate at 10:55 p.m. Wednesday when he heard a quick succession of gunshots. That was followed by more gunshots, and he then heard women scream.

Fulton lives next to the Hitt Street Garage in the Beverly apartment building. He walked outside and asked if it was safe. Police told him no.
More than a dozen police cars swarmed to the scene.

Residents living around the garage flocked to the crime scene and watched from behind yellow crime tape as officers rushed up to the second floor of the garage.

MU student Derek Dallas, who lives in the Lofts at 308 Ninth, said he could see the cops moving in the garage from his fifth-floor apartment.

Wei Du, an MU graduate student who lives at Manor House apartments, said he did not see the shooting, but he had thought he heard three shots fired.

"It was very loud and sounded like gunshots," Du said. "Then, I just walked to my window and saw that a police car came in 20 to 30 seconds."

Siddharth Vodnala, an MU graduate student, said he did not see the shots being fired. "I tried talking to the cops, but they wouldn't tell me anything," Vodnala said.

MU senior Ellen Sherman was at International Tap House, across the street from the garage, with MU junior Jaime Kedrowski at the time of the shooting.

"We did not see the shooting, but we saw a dead guy on the ground," Sherman said.

Kedrowski's car was parked in the garage when the shooting happened. Sherman said she and Kedrowski left the bar to try to get the car out before police put up the yellow tape. But police stopped them and told them to park their car elsewhere in the garage and to leave immediately. Later, police said cars parked in the garage were inaccessible until about 5 a.m.

Riley Johnson, an MU freshman, said he was walking back to his home on Paquin Street when the shooting happened.

"I had been at the (MU) Student Center, and I was walking with my earphones in, so I didn't hear the shots," Johnson said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

National organizations send letter to MU chancellor about anti-Semitic messages

Thursday, April 16, 2015 | 7:38 p.m. CDT
COLUMBIA — In a letter to MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, 16 national organizations on Thursday afternoon expressed that they feel "very concerned about the safety and well-being of Jewish students at the University of Missouri" after anti-Semitic messages were found in the stairwell of Mark Twain Residence Hall last week.

Loftin responded to the national organizations with a letter at 5:04 p.m. Thursday, saying the MU Police Department is investigating the incident and that he takes this issue seriously. In the letter, he additionally outlined the programs in place at MU to promote diversity and tolerance. Loftin regrets the incident and his delay in response.

"I regret that my need to delay a statement to facilitate the police investigation called into question my commitment to our Jewish students, who have my full and wholehearted support at all times," Loftin said in the letter.

On April 9, a swastika, Illuminati symbol and the word "heil" were discovered in the residence hall and were cleaned off the afternoon of April 10. Afterward, a swastika and the words "You have been warned" were written in the stairwell that same day.

Loftin issued a statement April 14 that the graffiti was "deplorable and unworthy of this institution and its values."

The national organizations' letter to him expressed concerns that, while his statement was beneficial, it was made late and more still needs to be done to protect Jewish students.

"We are concerned that several days had gone by before you spoke out publicly on the matter, causing some Jewish students to feel marginalized and ignored," the letter said.

Several MU students stated in the letter that they no longer feel safe on campus due to the hate messages.

"When incidents like this happen, it's scary," MU junior Thalia Sass, president of the Jewish Student Organization, said in the letter. "This person (responsible for the graffiti) doesn't know me but they hate me just because of the single aspect that I'm Jewish."
In the letter, the organizations also urged Loftin to:

- Swiftly, forcefully and publicly acknowledge that swastika graffiti is an act of anti-Semitism and will not be tolerated on campus
- Publicly commit to educating university staff, including campus police, in identifying anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic hate crimes
- Formally adopt the U.S. State Department's definition of anti-Semitism to fully and accurately identify all future acts of hate toward people who are Jewish
- Allocate resources and publicly commit to educating students about anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish discrimination

Mark Twain Graffiti Response Upset Students


COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Man jumps from MU parking garage

Thursday, April 16, 2015 | 7:30 p.m. CDT; updated 9:40 p.m. CDT, Thursday, April 16, 2015

BY RACHEL TRUJILLO

COLUMBIA — A 25-year-old man was transported to University Hospital after he jumped off the Tiger Avenue Parking Structure at around 5:15 p.m. Thursday, MU Police Capt. Brain Weimer said.
Weimer said he could not identify the man at this time, but said the man was not an MU student. The man was alive when transported to the hospital, but his current condition is unknown.

There is no indication of foul play, Weimer said.

Bill would force public colleges, universities to post course information

Action spurred by syllabi case.

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, April 16, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Several months after the Missouri Supreme Court declined to hear a case involving a national education group’s efforts to acquire course syllabi from the University of Missouri System, a state senator wants to force public higher education institutions to publish course documents online.

Senate Bill 465, sponsored by Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, was introduced in the Senate in February. The idea, he said, stemmed from reading reports about the UM System court case with the National Council on Teacher Quality.

“To me, it’s an issue that I think, in the long run, benefits our universities,” Schmitt said. “I know there is some resistance from faculty about the intellectual property and ownership of the material, but I think we’re entering a phase where students are more aware of the options they have.”

Schmitt said students expect to be able to compare classes in their prospective majors at different institutions, including the classwork expectations.

“This is about having as much of that information available and being transparent for students who are trying to make the best decision,” Schmitt said. “That’s the driving force behind filing the bill.”
The Senate education committee heard testimony last week. A University of Missouri System representative was among those to testify against the bill.

Schmitt said he understands faculty members’ concerns about intellectual property. An appellate court panel in August upheld a circuit court ruling that syllabi are subject to intellectual property protection and thus could not be distributed without the author’s permission. The court ruled the syllabi are still open records, though, that can be viewed in person.

“I think that in this day and age, we have to adapt to the times,” Schmitt said, adding that he thinks this will make Missouri institutions more competitive. “I would like to try and work with the universities on getting to a better place on this bill.”

UM System spokesman John Fougere said the university will not comment on pending legislation outside of testimony in the General Assembly.

“Throughout the entire process of NCTQ requesting the course syllabi of our faculty, we have consistently maintained that respecting the rights of the faculty members who created the syllabi was extremely important,” Fougere said in a statement in December, when the Missouri Supreme Court decided against taking the case. “We are pleased that every court to review the matter has concluded that we acted lawfully.”

National Council on Teacher Quality President Kate Walsh said her organization never approached Schmitt about the bill, but “we are thrilled that it’s being done.”

“This is a step toward public transparency that most states are already adhering to,” Walsh said. “That puts Missouri squarely in the camp that says the public has the right to know what is being taught at these institutions.”

Most bills heard by committees this late in the legislative session don’t tend to move forward. Schmitt said if his bill doesn’t make it to the Senate floor, he plans to bring it back next year.
Study: More people engaged in end-of-life planning

April 17, 2015

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Research at the University of Missouri indicates that more people are talking in advance about end-of-life wishes with their aged loved ones.

A study by lead author Nidhi Khosla and colleagues Angela Curl and Karla Washington will be published in the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

The MU researchers looked at trends in advance care planning from 2002 to 2010, using data from the Health and Retirement Study.

Advance care planning involves discussion of end-of-life care preferences, which researchers say is important because many people facing death are unable to make their own decisions.

Khosla says advance planning can reduce stress for caregivers and relatives facing difficult treatment decisions.

Researchers discover transitional stem cells

COLUMBIA, Mo., April 16 (UPI) -- While studying pre-eclampsia, a disease that affects pregnant women, researchers at the University of Missouri happened upon a new type of human embryonic stem cell.

They say the previously unknown type of transitional stem cell will help advance research on pre-eclampsia and other little-understood reproductive disorders.

"These new cells, which we are calling bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) -primed stem cells, are much more robust and easily manipulated than standard embryonic stem cells," lead researcher R. Michael Roberts, a professor of biochemistry at Missouri, said in a press release. "BMP-primed cells represent a transitional stage of development between embryonic stem cells and their ultimate developmental fate, whether that is placenta cells, or skin cells or brain cells."

Roberts and his colleagues discovered the new stem cells while attempting to grow placenta cells in order to better understand the causes of pre-eclampsia -- a disease that causes mother and child
to experience dangerously high blood pressure and urine overloaded with protein. The disease can lead to a number of complications and if not treated properly can require an emergency Caesarean sections early in pregnancy.

While trying to coax embryonic stem cells into the pluripotent state, whereby they are more easily transformed into different types, researchers discovered a transitional state.

"Previously, the common thought was that embryonic stem cells transitioned straight from stem cells to their end products," Roberts said. "These new stem cells made us realize that embryonic stem cells exist in a number of different transitional states, which likely resemble those encountered in the early stages of embryos."

The researchers found the newly identified BMP-primed cells to be easier to work with in the lab setting, as they were easier to grow and more uniform in behavior -- each cell responding to manipulation in similar ways.

"This should open the door for future stem cell research that is much more efficient," Roberts added. "We now have new stem cells that are easier to manipulate since they are already at the key transitional precipice before changing into placenta cells, skin cells or any other kind of cell that makes up the human body."

The research was published in the science journal PNAS.

BPA Exposure Disrupts Turtle Reproduction

Exposure to bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used in various plastic consumer products, is disrupting turtle reproduction in terms of their sexual differentiation, according to a new study.

When people throw out food storage products and resins that line plastic food and beverage containers, for instance, which are made with BPA, often these products end up in aquatic environments such as rivers and streams where turtles reside. Now, researchers from the University of Missouri, Westminster College, the US Geological Survey (USGS) and the Saint Louis Zoo have determined that BPA - which mimics estrogen - can alter a turtle's reproductive system.
This suggests that the chemical could cause harmful effects on environmental, as well as human health.

"Normally, the painted turtle's sex is determined by the temperature of the environment during their development in the egg - cooler temperatures yield more male turtles, while warmer temperatures mean females are more likely to develop," Dawn Holliday, one of the researchers, said in a statement. "However, when turtle eggs are exposed to environmental estrogens, their sex is no longer determined by the temperature, but rather by the chemical to which they're exposed."

To better determine how this chemical pollution is affecting wildlife, the research team applied a liquid form of BPA on hundreds of painted turtle eggs - mimicking BPA levels found in samples from waterways. The eggs were then exposed to cooler temperatures similar to those needed to produce male turtles. Afterward, the scientists examined the turtles' sex organs to determine the effects of BPA on their development.

They found that the male turtles had in fact developed sex organs with features typically found in females.

"We already know the genetic marker where the temperature-dependent sex determination occurs, which provides us a good indication of where the endocrine disruption is taking place," explained Sharon Deem, a lead investigator on the study. "Our findings show that BPA essentially overrides the temperature in determining the sex of the turtle, creating turtles that are probably unable to reproduce."

Turtles are known as an "indicator species," meaning they are good indicators of the health of an entire ecosystem. So by understanding how BPA exposure is affecting turtles, scientists can gain insight into how it's also affecting other species, too, including humans.

The results were published in the journal *General and Comparative Endocrinology*. 