MU officials meeting to discuss Tuesday night bomb threat

By Caitlin Campbell and Ryan Gauthier

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 2:00 pm

University of Missouri officials are planning to meet Wednesday afternoon to discuss the circumstances surrounding an anonymous bomb threat that caused the university to evacuate the MU Student Center and Memorial Union for more than two hours Tuesday night.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the meeting would involve discussion of the incidents Tuesday as well as how the university handled the evacuation and alerts.

MU police escorted about 200 people from the student center shortly after 7:15 p.m. after a threat was made via an anonymous phone call to staff in the building, Basi said. Officials evacuated Memorial Union at about 7:50 p.m.

“The threat was called in directly to the student center,” Basi said. “That information was immediately given to the MUPD, who responded right away.”

The threat was made specifically to the “student union,” Basi said, which is why university officials also opted to evacuate Memorial Union as a precautionary measure. University officials did not evacuate any other campus buildings.

Basi said the university has received bomb threats in the past, but he could not remember any targeted at the MU Student Center.

A K-9 unit with the Missouri Capitol Police traveled from Jefferson City to help police search for the alleged bomb. Neither MUPD nor Columbia police has a bomb-sniffing dog, Basi said. The MUPD had a K-9 unit until about eight months ago, he said, when the handler left the department. Police found no bomb.

Police reopened the student center at about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday after searching for more than an hour. University officials cleared Memorial Union at about 9:44 p.m., but the building remained closed until normal hours Wednesday.
MU Alert did not send out a text or phone alert to students and staff about the bomb threat because it was “localized” and contained to the two student centers, Basi said. The MU Alert Twitter account posted about the MU Student Center evacuation at about 7:26 p.m. and about the Memorial Union evacuation at about 7:50 p.m. The university also sent email alerts to parents of students at about 8 p.m., and the MU Alert website provided details as the situation progressed.

MU junior Sarah Ruwe said an announcement went out over the student center’s intercom and then officers walked through the building and started gathering people and telling them to leave.

“They didn’t tell us what was going on,” Ruwe said.

Ruwe said the center usually hosts a large number of students who are working on homework during the evenings.

Officers in neon vests blocked entrances to both campus buildings at about 8 p.m., and police cars filled the area. Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers directed traffic away from the buildings, and only buses were able to drive on Rollins and Hitt streets near the student center.

A group of about 30 students and university employees sat on the grass across the street from the student center, waiting while police searched the building.

Jimmy Kraus, assistant manager of campus dining services at the student center, said the evacuation initially was confusing because nobody knew about the bomb threat.

“They didn’t tell anybody anything that was going on until they got us outside,” Kraus said.

“They were just trying to keep everyone calm.”

After police resolved the bomb threat, an MU Alert went out over text at around 10:11 p.m. notifying students of a Columbia Police Department investigation into a potential shots fired incident near Tenth and Walnut streets. The report was erroneous, and the alert system sent out an additional text at 10:30 p.m. saying the incident was resolved.

University officials review MU Alert System

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **Wednesday, University of Missouri officials are reviewing the MU Alert System after a bomb scare and a report of shots fired near campus.**

Tuesday night, University Police evacuated Memorial Union and the Student Center on campus after receiving a bomb threat. Alert beacons and computer desktop alerts went off in both buildings, but a campus-wide text alert was not sent out to students.

Then a few hours later, a mass MU Alert text was sent to all students about a report of shots fired near campus which was cleared quickly after Columbia Police confirmed no shots were actually fired.

Christian Basi with the MU News Bureau said officials met with MUPD Wednesday morning to discuss the alert system.

"We're currently reviewing what's happened over the last several days," Basi said. "We're going to go through all the information. We're going to see if we need to make any changes or any improvements, again maybe just any tweaks to the current procedures."

Wednesday, several students on campus said they found out about the bomb threat only after the scene had already been cleared.

"I wish I had gotten it, what had happened right when it happened," MU student Andrea Ares said. "It kind of made me upset because I want to know when things happen and stay current on what's going on at Mizzou on campus."

"I just think that they have a duty to protect their students," MU student Sara Schroeder said. "And that includes telling us if there's any kind of threat on campus."

Basi said MUPD set up a safety barrier that expanded as far as possible to make sure everyone was safe, while at the same time continuing to allow business to go about as usual at the university. He said a campus-wide alert was not sent out because only people in the two buildings were affected by the threat. But some students did not agree.

"They say it was isolated but I don't really think a bomb can necessarily be isolated and I think that we have a right to know so we can protect ourselves," Schroeder said. "I really think they screwed up by not sending out an alert."

Basi said officials chose to send a text out for the report of shots fired because the shooter could have been on the loose, possibly endangering more students.

"If they ever do get a text message from MU Alert, we want them to see it, we want them to pay attention to it, we want them to act immediately," Basi said. "And that's why those text messages, we have to be very judicious when we use them as opposed to using other forms of media such as Twitter and Facebook."
Basi said several entities at the university have access to sending out MU alerts varying on the type of threat including the MU News Bureau, MUPD and Campus Facilities.

"Safety and security are the number one priority at MU, and we continue to follow existing procedures, which we are reviewing to identify any improvements we might make in the future," Basi said.

MU Alert System Under Fire


COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATED: MU notifications differ in recent incidents on and near campus

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 | 1:32 p.m. CDT; updated 11:09 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 22, 2015
BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA — A series of MU Alert notifications about incidents on or near campus in the last week has created some confusion about the gravity of threats.

It has also sparked criticism of what some see as inconsistency in the approach to keeping people informed.

As an example, a bomb threat on Tuesday night did not trigger a mass MU Alert, while a shots-fired incident did. And in that incident, MU Alert tweeted that a shooting — not shots fired — had been reported at Tenth and Walnut streets.
Columbia Police Public Information Officer Latisha Stroer said she didn't know why MU had tweeted about a shooting when what had been reported was a "shots fired," an incident in which a gun is discharged. She said Columbia police were looking into the miscommunication.

Adding to the confusion, messages from the Alertus Desktop Alert System appeared on some computer screens on the first floor of Ellis Library stating a potential bomb threat and advising people to evacuate the building.

Eric Evans, emergency management coordinator with MU police said that these computers displayed the message mistakenly because some computers share an IP address with the MU Student Center. He said he was aware of the error at the time but that police didn't have the resources to address it immediately. He said MU's Division of Information Technology staff is looking into the problem.

Here's a brief, chronological summary of incidents and notification history over the past week:

**Wednesday, April 15:** Pursuit of an armed robbery suspect ended at Hitt Street Garage where police fatally shot a man, Mark W. Adair, 51, about 11 p.m.

- MU Alert sent no mass email notification while the search was in progress, but an email was sent after police had killed the suspect.

- MU Alert tweeted and posted a notice on their website at 11:26 p.m. stating that the search for the armed robbery suspect had ended with the police killing a man.

- MU police released a news release about 10 minutes after the MU Alert web posting, stating the suspect had been shot and killed and that campus was safe.

- MU Alert posted an update on its website at 9 a.m. Thursday with more information, including details about a police officer's non-life threatening injuries.

**Saturday, April 18:** A group of women reported that six men had groped and attempted to kiss two of them around 12:30 a.m. Saturday near Memorial Union. Another group of female students had been assaulted by a similar group about 11:30 p.m. Friday on Rollins Street.
• MU police sent a news release at 9 a.m. Saturday that was later updated with the information about the incident on Friday night.

• MU Alert did not issue a statement or send a mass email notification.

**Sunday, April 19:** Columbia police responded to an armed robbery at 2:26 a.m. in the area of Hitt and Locust streets near Paquin Tower.
  • MU Alert sent out a mass email notification at 3:08 a.m. that Columbia police were investigating an armed robbery near campus.
  
  • MU Alert activated an automated phone call warning about the same time on Sunday and also tweeted the incident.
  
  • MU Alert posted a statement to its website about 4 a.m. that included descriptions of the two suspects and advised people to "take precautions."

**Tuesday, April 21:** The MU Student Center and Memorial Union were evacuated starting at about 7 p.m. after the Student Center staff received a bomb threat that referenced a "student union."

  • A statement posted on the MU Alert website at 7:23 p.m. reported that the MU Student Center had received a bomb threat and was being evacuated.
  
  • MU Alert began sending tweets at 7:26 p.m. that the two buildings were being evacuated but no text alerts were being sent to students because the bomb threat was "isolated."
  
  • MU Alert sent no mass email notification.
  
  • Parents of MU students received email alerts that MU police were aware of a bomb threat. The emails stated that the Student Center and Memorial Union were both evacuated.
  
  • At 9:44 p.m., MU Alert posted an "all clear" message on Twitter and on its website.
**Tuesday, April 21:** Columbia police received a report of shots fired near Sixth and Walnut streets during the evening, then later revised the location to Tenth and Cherry streets.

- MU Alert issued a mass email notification at 10:10 p.m. and posted a statement online advising students, faculty and staff to take precautions as police investigated the report. An update at 10:30 p.m. stated that the situation had been stabilized and that people could resume normal activities.

- MU Alert also tweeted the incident but called it a "shooting," not a "shots fired," and reported that the location was Tenth and Walnut streets.

Stroer said an investigation found no evidence of any shots fired and the person who reported the noise had said it wasn't clear if it was gunshots or fireworks.

MU Alerts are posted online and sent via Twitter, Facebook and desktop alert software on campus computers and computers connected to Mizzou wireless.

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**No need to tweet during bomb threat**

COLUMBIA, MO -- **Police continue to search for the caller of a bomb threat on the Mizzou campus on Tuesday night.**

The University of Missouri Police Department got a report from a worker about 7 p.m. in the Student Center that a male individual had called in a bomb threat for the coffee shop.

Authorities evacuated the Student Center and the Memorial Union as a precaution.

Members of Jefferson City’s Capitol Police K-9 Unit drove to Columbia and did not find anything suspicious.
Some MU students and members of the Columbia community are upset over the University’s alert system after the bomb scare.

University officials sent out a twitter alert that warned of a shooting in Downtown Columbia about 3 hours after the bomb threat.

They did not send out a twitter alert during the campus evacuations.

MUPD Captain Brian Weimer said, “The big difference is the bomb threat was in specific areas. Those specific areas were evacuated using beacons and desktop alerts within those buildings along with staff. We had those secured with officers and such outside. People were safe. They weren’t in those buildings.”

University officials and members of the MUPD held meetings to discuss possible changes to their alert system.

They did not announce any new policies on Wednesday.

MUPD Searches for Caller of Bomb Threat


Woman assaulted in University of Missouri parking lot
COLUMBIA, Mo. - A woman was assaulted on the University of Missouri campus early Wednesday morning.

University Police said it happened around 1 a.m. in the parking lot at Tiger Avenue and Stadium Boulevard.

The woman told police a man grabbed her arms and pushed her into the side of the car, but she was able to escape and run away.

Police said the suspect is a white man between 18 and 24 years old, around 6 feet tall, with short brown hair.

This assault comes just days after two women were groped by a group of men on campus, and two other women were robbed at gunpoint by a man, both this weekend.

MUPD said they don't believe the crimes are related because there are different suspect descriptions in each one.

This was another incident where no MU Alert was sent to students. MUPD said that is because they didn't believe there was an active threat to students at the time.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU police seek information on early Wednesday morning assault

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 | 8:38 p.m. CDT

BY KELSI ANDERSON

COLUMBIA — The MU Police Department has requested help in identifying a man who assaulted a woman early Wednesday morning in a parking lot near Tiger Avenue and Stadium Boulevard. It is offering up to $1,500 to anyone who provides information that leads to an arrest.

MU police issued a Clery release about the assault Wednesday evening.

According to the release, the woman said that a man grabbed her by the arms and pushed her into the side of a vehicle around 1 a.m. The woman was able to escape, according to the release.
Police described the suspect as a white male between 18 and 24 years old. He is estimated to be 6 feet tall and has short brown hair.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call MU police Sgt. Shawn Spalding at 882-5928. Anonymous tips can also be made to Crime Stoppers at 875-8477.

KSDK-STL (NBC) – St. Louis, Mo.

MU Freshman Charged with Possible Hate Crime

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=8806dc11-0a13-41fd-b1eb-df68d951b97f

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia police does not have video of Adair shooting, chief says

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 | 8:37 p.m. CDT; updated 7:45 a.m. CDT, Thursday, April 23, 2015
BY JILL DEUTSCH

COLUMBIA — The Columbia Police Department has no body camera video of the fatal shooting of robbery suspect Mark Adair on April 15 because the two Columbia police officers involved were not wearing cameras.

The Columbia officers were plainclothes undercover detectives, Columbia Police Chief Ken Burton said. All Columbia police officers who routinely contact the public do wear body cameras.
"They were just available, and the guy was dangerous, and they were in the area," Burton said. "It was just a fluke."

The MU Police Department does have video from the shooting, which has been turned over to the Missouri State Highway Patrol for its criminal investigation. Columbia police Deputy Chief Jill Schlude said after the shooting that the MU officer was wearing a body camera, according to previous Missourian reporting.

A phone call Wednesday afternoon to Highway Patrol Sgt. Kevin Hunter was not returned.

Columbia Police Department is also conducting its own internal affairs investigation, Burton said.

The video could provide more information to the public about the events that led to the fatal shooting of Adair, 51, at the Hitt Street Garage. Police still have not identified the officers involved.

The initial pursuit began at about 5:30 p.m. after Adair hid in a woman's car at Moser's Supermarket on Keene Street and held her at gunpoint. The woman managed to escape, and Adair fled on foot.

An MU police officer tracked Adair to the northwest corner of the second floor of the garage at about 11 p.m. that night, according to previous Missourian reporting. The officer approached Adair, and shots were fired after a fight between the two when Adair was cornered.

A Columbia police officer arrived, and more shots were fired.

Whether Adair also fired his gun has not been released.

After the shooting, the Missourian requested from MU police — via the University of Missouri System's custodian of records — and Columbia police: body camera video from both officers, the dashboard camera video from the Columbia police vehicle and the surveillance camera video from the second floor of the garage at the time of the shooting.

All requests were denied.
Along with the university, Columbia police had originally rejected the requests and cited 610.100 of the Missouri Revised Statutes in its rejection of the request. The statutes state that although law enforcement must keep records of investigations, they "are closed records until the investigation becomes inactive."

Police departments in Missouri and across the country have been pushing to outfit police officers with body cameras after then-Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Michael Brown in August. No video of the incident ever surfaced, and national attention turned to whether police officers should be required to wear body cameras.

Yet bills moving through the state legislature could restrict access to such video.

One bill proposed by Rep. Galen Higdon, R-St. Joseph, would exempt police body and dashboard camera video from the state's open records law. Another bill proposed by Republican Sen. Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff prohibits the state from requiring police officers to wear body cameras or have dashboard cameras.

While the bills are still in the Missouri legislature, police departments are taking different approaches to releasing body camera footage.

After two police officers killed a man last weekend in Jennings, Missouri, a small city in St. Louis County, the St. Louis County police uploaded one of the officer's body camera video to YouTube, according to The Associated Press.

"Body cameras are fairly new, and we're trying to figure that out," Columbia police spokeswoman Latisha Stroer said.

Grant to MU to help energy conservation

Low state revenue stymies 50-50 fund match program

MU administrators and Missouri legislators gathered on campus April 13 to break ground on Lafferre Hall, the first state-funded capital project on MU’s campus in 12 years.

Lafferre Hall has been in need of renovation for a long time, but the new project is not a product of the 50-50 fund match program, the UM System’s effort to match private donations with state funding to fund construction projects across the four campuses. Rather, it was funded as a maintenance and repair from the bonds authorized in 2014, Marty Oetting, the UM System’s director of government relations, said in an email.

As the UM System’s chief lobbyist, Oetting plays a major role in ensuring lawmakers recognize the value of private donations and the potential opportunities they could provide for the state. Legislators passed four projects last year and apparently see the value in the 50-50 program, Oetting said. He said the question that remains is: “Will there be funds available this year to dedicate to the projects?”

Gov. Jay Nixon decided to withhold the matching funds and put a hold on all four projects, including one for the Trulaske College of Business' Applied Learning Center, due to limited tax revenue.

MU came forward with funding requests for four projects last year: Lafferre Hall, a teaching and research winery, a fine arts and music building and the Applied Learning Center for the Trulaske College of Business. The Applied Learning Center was the only project to be greenlit by the legislators.

The Center is currently slated to be built on the southeast corner of Tiger Avenue and Rollins Street, across the street from Cornell Hall. Vice Chancellor for Advancement Tom Hiles said legislators approved $10 million of the $22 million MU submitted last year to fund the construction of the center.

College of Business Dean Joan Gabel said the center will provide space for “facilitated, experiential learning and research,” including areas dedicated to the practice of entrepreneurship, real-time trading and marketing.

But Nixon has put a hold on the center’s funding, just like he has for other projects approved by legislators since 50-50 was created in 2013.

Thus far, MU raised approximately $35 million in donor gifts for capital projects through the 50-50 program. Hiles said he is working to encourage the state to match that private funding.
“A lot of private dollars are coming from out of the state,” he said. “It only enhances the economic development opportunities in the state. Why would you leave any private dollars on the table?”

Nixon’s decision to withhold funds from legislature-approved capital projects is symptomatic of the state’s meager tax revenue, Hiles said. The governor’s office sets a bar for expected tax revenue in a fiscal year and when reported numbers fall short, the governor has to make cuts. These cuts often first strike capital projects.

“It is a challenge in a low-tax state like Missouri that is moving toward reducing the size of government and the amount of funding it collects from taxpayers,” Oetting said. “There are competing interests including social services and health care costs that take up much of the growth in revenues.”

Oetting said universities only raised about 20 percent of the funding in the past, as opposed to half.

“We have raised the bar for our folks and encourage the state to do the same,” he said.

Hiles said the potential for state funding that the 50-50 program provides is an exciting prospect for donors, but not seeing that potential come to fruition has been vexing.

“When you raise expectations from donors and then can’t follow through with the match, it is frustrating for them,” Hiles said. “They’ve expressed that both to me personally and to a number of legislators and the governor.”

The hurdle presented by the governor’s funding hold is a relatively new challenge for Hiles, who came to MU three years ago from states whose legal procedures do not allow for executive holds on capital projects after they’ve passed through legislators.

Hiles brought with him 29 years of experience as a fundraiser for universities like Rice University, DePaul University, University of Maryland, Bowling Green State University and Western Kentucky University.

During his time in Kentucky, Hiles said, the state approved nearly $500 million to match funds for the Bucks for Brains program. That program used state funds to match private donations like the 50-50 program, Hiles said. He is optimistic this model could also be successful in Missouri.

“It puts incentive where it should be,” he said. “It doesn’t ask the state to do everything and it doesn’t ask the donor to do everything. I’m very excited and supportive of the project. I’m really hopeful we can use this year as a model to get it off the ground and then really build and make it a spectacular program going forward.”
Why Section 8 isn’t working

By Rebecca Rivas

One of the original goals of the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program was to racially integrate the country – but instead it’s become a driver of segregation, said Philip Tegeler, president and executive director of the Poverty and Race Research Action Council.

“It’s the program that gives us the most immediate ability – as public officials, as policy makers, as advocates – to change some of the patterns of segregation,” Tegeler said at the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing and Opportunity Council’s 18th annual Regional Fair Housing Training Conference on April 10. The day-long event was held at the Missouri History Museum.

Tegeler showed two maps – one that highlighted the most racially concentrated neighborhoods in the St. Louis area, and another that shows where Section 8 vouchers are being used. They were almost identical maps. When the Section 8 program was rolled out during President Richard Nixon’s administration, it was partly a Republican response to public housing, he said. They wanted to use private market and landlords to provide housing.

“It was also a reaction to the intense segregation in public housing,” Tegeler said, “and the idea that people should have a choice in the market to move into lower-poverty areas.”

However, 2.2 million families participate in the program, and the maps look very similar nationwide. Tegeler said he has been shocked to see some of the apartment listings that housing authorities hand out to families. The lists are disproportionately housing units in high-poverty areas.

“It’s akin to steering the real estate market,” he said. “This is a practice that needs to end. It’s a practice that violates the Fair Housing Act. And it goes on and on.”

Both the city and county housing authorities have the ability to cut the rents and discourage families from moving into housing in the worst areas, he said. The systematic segregation of the federal housing programs bleeds into many other areas. The pattern of school segregation mimics the housing segregation, he said.

Tegeler said, if successful, the housing voucher program would help to integrate the school systems. Yet, the schools are even more segregated than they were in the 1970s, when school desegregation programs began. In the 1990s, the U.S. Supreme Court began pulling back from school desegregation programs, and the effects were grave, he said.
Following Tegeler’s keynote speech was a panel discussion looking at local views of modern segregation. **Rigel Oliveri, a University of Missouri-Columbia law professor, spoke about the discriminatory impacts of occupancy permits.** Throughout the St. Louis region, both tenants and home owners are required to request occupancy permits from a local municipality before occupying their homes. In some municipalities, there are requirements about what a “single family” looks like. Oliveri said this poses a problem because of the growing rate of blended families, or live-in couples with children who aren’t married.

One such family in the City of Black Jack was denied occupancy to live in a home they purchased. The city now faces legal action.

Oliveri said these permit processes pose several problems, including invasion of privacy, infringement of liberty and excessive government oversight.

Representatives from the St. Louis Association of Realtors, Gail Brown and Denise Outlaw-Adams, talked about the need to take proactive steps to stabilize North County neighborhoods after the Ferguson unrest.

They are planning an open house tour in Ferguson, and they invite anyone to lend a hand and volunteer.

“Whatever happens in Ferguson happens in St. Louis,” said Outlaw-Adams, earning applause. “It’s not just a Ferguson thing.”

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**Why Nobody Is Really Happy With New Guidelines For Punishing White-Collar Criminals**

WASHINGTON -- A federal panel voted earlier this month to amend the guidelines that federal judges use when sentencing people who commit economic crimes. But few are happy with those changes: Sentencing reform advocates say they don't go far enough to fix draconian sentences, while the U.S. Department of Justice contends that the changes could give some white-collar criminals a new avenue for unfair leniency.

Recommended sentences for economic crimes under the current rubric are so severe, they are no longer taken seriously, some prosecutors and judges suggest. Those guidelines have relied on complicated calculations involving criminal gain and inflicted losses that spit out sentences that
can appear inconsistent or absurd. One federal New York judge called the math "hocus-pocus." In 2008, for example, a federal judge sentenced a 72-year-old man to 330 years in prison for an investment scam.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission is responsible for coming up with the road map that federal judges can use when issuing these sentences. On April 9, the commission approved new guidelines, which now will be submitted to Congress and will go into effect in November, unless lawmakers intervene.

Chief Judge Patti Saris, who chairs the commission, contended last week that the economic crime guidelines are not broken, but has acknowledged that they could provide more clarity on what to do in the cases of certain first-time, low-level offenders.

The changes aim to make punishments more fair by giving greater weight to a criminal's role and his or her intent. So, for example, a receptionist who was aware of a massive kickback scheme in her office, but didn't share the profits, might get a lighter sentence than those behind the scheme. The commission also clarified that when judges look at "intended loss," they must consider whether a defendant purposefully sought to cause harm.

Another change would allow for harsher penalties for criminals who substantially harm a few people, rather than focusing on the sheer number of victims. So a sentence might be greater for a low-life who stripped a grandmother of her savings, rather than a bank executive who swindled a dollar each from thousands of people.

In March, the Justice Department came out against some of these changes, in favor of more targeted reforms. DOJ is worried that the intent clarification could allow white-collar criminals to claim they never meant to hurt anyone. A fraudster running a Ponzi scheme who is caught early, for example, could argue that he hoped the scheme wouldn't fail.

It makes sense that the Justice Department would want to preserve the option to impose harsher sentences in certain cases. Frank Bowman, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Law who has commented on the draft guidelines, said that from DOJ's perspective, stringent guidelines can give them leverage when negotiating plea bargains.

But some legal experts argue that the Obama administration is missing the point in this case. "All we want to do is make guidelines such that a federal prosecutor can actually look a federal judge in the face and say, 'Impose these guidelines as written,'" Bowman said.

If the guidelines had more credibility, he added, judges might be more inclined to follow them and hand down stronger sentences. "The Justice Department is cutting off its nose to spite its face," he said.

Mark Holden, senior vice president and general counsel for Koch Industries, told The Huffington Post that he considered the commission's emphasis on offender intent "a positive development and consistent with the Bill of Rights." He added that the guidelines "are an effort to make the punishment fit the crime," but that more needs to be done on criminal justice reform overall.
Billionaire Charles Koch has said he became interested in criminal justice reform after a lengthy legal battle in which his company was forced to defend itself against dozens of charges for alleged environmental crimes, before they were almost entirely dropped.

Advocates say that when it comes to sentencing reform, there are parallels between drug crimes and economic crime.

Mary Price, general counsel for Families Against Mandatory Minimums, asked, "Do we just count drugs, or do we look at [the harm] people really intended? How much harm did they cause? … Are they the courier or the mastermind?"

She added that she was disappointed with the pending changes to the economic crime guidelines, calling them "rather minimal."

Last year, the commission also focused on reforming drug sentences, but did not reduce the oft-criticized mandatory minimums, which are set by Congress.

Brandon Garrett, a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law, pointed out that under the current guidelines, there is still "no comparison" between the severity of drug sentences and white collar sentences, nor the number of drug offenders in federal prisons compared to those in for economic crimes.

According to the most recent data, about half of federal inmates were in prison for drug offenses, and about 0.4 percent are in for banking and insurance or embezzlement crimes.

He added, "There is far greater need to reform drug sentences."

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
April 23, 2015

8 Courses a Year for Every Professor? N.C. Lawmakers Ponder the Possibility

By Madeline Will

A bill introduced late last month in the North Carolina General Assembly has set faculties across the state abuzz with a bold suggestion: Require all professors in the University of North Carolina system to teach at least eight courses each academic year.
Senate Bill 593 — titled "Improve Professor Quality/UNC System" — would reduce the salary of any professor who failed to hit that annual mark. Sen. Tom McInnis, a first-term Republican who sponsored the bill, said in a written statement that his mission was to "generate legitimate debate about the role of professors in the classroom."

Mr. McInnis said he was motivated by "countless" complaints from constituents frustrated by the number of public-college classes that are not taught by credentialed professors. (None of the institutions in the public-university system reside in his district.)

The backlash from faculty members across the state was immediate — and unsurprising. Professors expressed outrage: A mandated 4/4 course load — four courses per semester — would make it almost impossible, many said, to focus on their research and other responsibilities. Some faculty members predicted that the bill, if enacted, would lead to faculty attrition and difficulty in recruiting professors, graduate students, and even undergraduates.

Of course, the bill almost certainly will not pass, at least in its current state. Since its introduction, Mr. McInnis has met with professors, students, parents, and university-system officials about their concerns. He said he would submit a revised bill "in the coming days."

But some professors say the damage has already been done. They view the proposal as the latest salvo in a brewing fight between North Carolina's higher-education system and its increasingly conservative politicians.

"It’s been a real blow to morale," said Laura Wright, an associate professor and head of the English department at Western Carolina University. "This indicates a real disconnect between what university faculty are doing and what the legislature seems to think we’re doing."
'Far-Reaching’ Consequences

It’s not yet certain what the final piece of legislation will look like. In fact, the bill's key supporters have floated two options.

Mr. McInnis was not available for an interview, but last week he told the Salisbury Post that he would alter the bill by taking into account how much research each institution conducts. Under that model, professors at institutions like North Carolina State and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill would have a smaller required course load than their colleagues at Appalachian State University and the University of North Carolina at Asheville, for example.

But Jay Schalin, director of policy analysis for the conservative John William Pope Center for Education Policy, said a substitute bill, to be put forth in committee, would increase course-load requirements only at North Carolina's research institutions. That proposal would hold professors in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields to lower course-load standards than professors in the humanities or social sciences, Mr. Schalin said.

"That’s a more realistic look at the way the world works," he said, adding that professors in the STEM fields often get grants to do outside research, which provides a benefit to the local economy.

The goal, he said, is to recenter the university system on education: "Too often undergraduate education is given short shrift."

Many campus administrators have spoken out against the broad reach of Mr. McInnis’s bill. Joni Worthington, a spokeswoman for the university system, said in an email that applying a blanket teaching requirement would have "significant and negative impacts on the research and service missions" of the campuses. Faculty teaching loads are annually approved by the system’s governing board, she said.

Professors from across the system echoed those concerns. A minimum course load, they argued, would limit the faculty's ability to do research. That, in turn, would lead
to a "mass exodus" of existing professors and hurt departments’ ability to recruit top newcomers. Without active research or a world-renowned faculty, they said, students would be less drawn to the public research institutions.

The consequences of the bill would be "so far-reaching," said W. Fitzhugh Brundage, a professor and chair of the history department at Chapel Hill. "Faculty will divert ship, and they’ll go to other research institutions that remain committed to supporting research through reduced teaching time," he said.

Professors also said they worried that the proposal would hurt their ability to recruit graduate students. Chapel Hill’s graduate stipends are low, Mr. Brundage said, but the fact that graduate students get opportunities to teach is a major selling point.

Mr. Schalin, however, said that argument actually worked in favor of the bill.

"The universities are simply producing too many Ph.D.’s who intend to teach," he said. "This will help address that. If there are fewer graduate programs, or graduate programs are smaller and fewer Ph.D.'s are produced, there won’t be quite such a glut."

With tenured and tenure-track professors teaching more courses, he added, universities would have less incentive to hire faculty members into low-paying, less-secure adjunct positions.

Mr. McInnis’s bill would reduce the salary of any professor who taught fewer than eight courses per year, but institutions could restore the lost pay using endowment proceeds.

That stipulation fails to consider the smaller institutions or the system’s five historically black colleges, said Tony E. Graham, chair of the Faculty Senate at North Carolina A&T State University. Those colleges don’t have large endowments, so they’d be at a disadvantage to the bigger institutions, he said.
"It’s dangerous legislation at best," he said. "It’s thoughtless. Quite frankly, this is a cruel legislation."

**A National Conversation**

It's not entirely clear to what extent a course-load mandate would change professors' semester-to-semester lives. According to the university system’s data, faculty members already teach an average of 3.7 courses a semester, and the actual numbers vary drastically across the campuses. For instance, Elizabeth City State University professors teach an average of 5.2 courses a semester.

But Mr. Schalin said that number dwindles for tenured professors. According to his own research, the average number of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track professors is closer to 2.4 per semester.

But regardless of the numbers, some professors said the idea doesn’t bode well for higher education in North Carolina or elsewhere.

"There have certainly been elements in North Carolina, and elsewhere in the country, that politicians want to play a much bigger role" in higher education, said Jürgen Buchenau, chair of the history department at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Mr. McInnis's bill, he said, is an example of that.

"Certainly if that’s ever successful in one state, it may be successful in others," he said.

One state that could bear watching is Wisconsin, where Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, said in January that universities could save money "just by asking faculty and staff to consider teaching one more class a semester."

It’s become a trend for legislators across the country to try to micromanage university systems, said David A. Zonderman, chair of the faculty at North Carolina State.
That’s problematic, he said, because universities and departments already set course loads based on faculty responsibilities. "How would the legislature know that?" Mr. Zonderman said. "That’s what’s known at the campus level."

Whatever comes of the bill, Senator McInnis appears to have gotten the conversation he wanted. But professors, said Ms. Wright, the Western Carolina English chair, "are tired of this particular conversation."