FROM READERS: Speaking out about race and oppression at MU

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 | 5:48 p.m. CDT; updated 6:32 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 29, 2015
BY KELCEA BARNES/MISSOURIAN READER

**Kelcea Barnes is a sophomore at MU studying international studies and sociology.**

This piece was inspired or better yet is in response to the interesting and profound events that have happened on our campus, here at the University of Missouri. These events range from the threat to bomb the Black Culture Center, to another Yik Yak threat to run over activists in the streets, to swastikas being found in Mark Twain Residence Hall not only once but twice.

I personally have been impacted by these events, as have many students, faculty, staff, and administration. Unfortunately, I have felt that steps in the right direction are slow and cumbersome from those in charge of student safety, health, peace of mind, and tuition.

I know that my viewpoints aren’t the most friendly and won’t win me the gold name tag that’s made with prison labor, or the spots in the coveted organizations that enact a hierarchy that at times goes against campus unity, or even a seat in the administration’s heart (which could possibly benefit me never). This is a risk I am willing to take.

Many of you may think, "If you don’t like it, leave." My answer is, "I don’t like it (being the institution) but I love those that attend this University, and if we are to uphold our 'values' of Respect, Responsibility, Discovery, and Excellence, then I will continue to fight until these are applied to all students by faculty, staff, administration, stake holders, donors, and those that sit in Jefferson City and decide our funding."

Our souls have been crying up and out for many a year — out loud, outside, at forums, at this institution. Accordingly our identities have been policed — out loud, outside, at forums, at this institution. Most currently, due to an upswing of activism, anonymous social media are the elixir
of choice, for those who choose to spew hatred, racism, violence, and close-mindedness on our campus.

They tell us to move on, to f-off or shut up. They say we’re sensitive, and we’re overreacting. They threaten to burn down our centers, to crush our bodies in the streets. They tell us that there’s not a problem.

But we know better, we know different, we experienced what they deny.

But silent we will not fall, and their platforms of choice will be used to their education, our activism, and the chance to bring our stripes together. When our activism is used to "Say that!" our truths, our stories and our struggles, along with the change our activism will bring, will spread through this school, this town, this state and this nation.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU updates students on actions taken toward diversifying students, faculty

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 | 11:40 p.m. CDT; updated 12:27 a.m. CDT, Thursday, April 30, 2015
BY TIMOSHANAE WELLMAKER

COLUMBIA — MU administrators waited expectantly for the questions to start. But no one came forward — at first.

People looked at one another and talked among themselves until one student broke the ice. Again and again, the questions focused on how MU plans to diversify the student body and the faculty.

MU held a "Call to Action: Progress Report" discussion Wednesday night at Conservation Auditorium. The session began at 6 p.m. and ran for about two hours. About 200 students attended.

Administrators came out in force, including Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, Provost Garnett Stokes, Chief Diversity Officer Noor Azizan-Gardner, and other top administrators.

The forum outlined the steps the administration is taking to address diversity at MU. The bullet-pointed list was put together by students last December, but at an April 6 session with
administrators, about 30 student leaders said they still had not received an update on what was being done to address them. Loftin said he hoped Wednesday night's forum would provide more updates about the actions the university is taking to promote diversity.

"I know you may want to ask questions, but please hold off until we get through it," Loftin said before he began the presentation. That didn't stop some students from taking to social media with their thoughts and concerns.

The "Call to Action" included eight major points, such as an the university's ongoing evaluation of the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, the One Mizzou Initiative and the requirements for students to receive a multicultural certificate.

Business Loop director no stranger to CID work

By Caitlin Campbell

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 2:00 pm

As the board of directors for the Business Loop Community Improvement District met for the first time last Wednesday, Carrie Gartner watched from the sidelines with Jack Miller.

Gartner, who assisted with the petition drive that led to the establishment of the community improvement district, or CID, said she couldn't wait for the new Business Loop board to start making a difference.

“Isn’t it just so exciting?” Gartner asked a smiling Miller, who spearheaded efforts to establish the district. “All that hard work and it’s finally happening.”

The board of directors for the community improvement district, or CID, asked Gartner that same day to serve as their new executive director. Gartner will work closely with district property owners to get new taxes established to fund capital improvement projects and oversee administrative details of establishing the CID. The board already approved a new half-cent property tax assessment estimated to bring in about $50,000 annually. The board plans to ask voters to approve a new half-cent sales tax expected to bring in about $250,000 each year.
Gartner is no stranger new community improvement districts — she was instrumental in the establishment of the Downtown CID, and served as the executive director of the district from 2001 until 2014.

Projects Gartner assisted with downtown include getting parts of the area included on the National Register of Historic Places, forming the North Village Arts District and putting plans in place for the “gateway” projects, which will put art installments at major intersections downtown.

Gartner, who does not own any property on Business Loop 70, played an advisory role for the group behind the petition drive that led to the district’s establishment. Since she already had been through the process of starting and managing a CID, she can and will provide invaluable insight, Miller said.

“Nobody knows more about CIDs in Columbia than Carrie Gartner,” Miller said. “She was the first one to walk the downtown through that process.”

Gartner’s years of experience improving the downtown area is why the board of directors selected her for the role, which will pay $70,000 annually plus benefits. Board member Paul Land said Gartner is a natural fit for the position.

“I think it’s an extraordinary opportunity to hire someone with her background,” Land said.

The job came with a $40,000 pay cut, as Gartner has been working on a $110,000 salary in public relations for University of Missouri Health Care. Gartner said her new salary is close to what she was being paid as executive director of the Downtown CID, and she couldn’t resist the call to help improve another area of the city.

The board of directors is seeking loans to pay expenses, including Gartner’s salary, until the tax revenue starts coming in next year.

“It was something I just couldn’t say ‘no’ to,” Gartner said. “These guys have come so far, and it’s a great challenge to make something of this street.”

Gartner will officially begin her position on May 1, but she said she already has been busy reaching out to local business owners and neighborhood associations in an effort to get additional taxes set up in the district and inform the surrounding residents of the CID’s plans.

Several residents from nearby neighborhood associations spoke before the Columbia City Council against the establishment of the district because they wanted more time to discuss and understand the plans.

Gartner said the CID is moving quickly to repair those relationships and set up an open house with the board of directors on the Business Loop. She said the board will invite the neighborhood associations and city officials to meet and see how the CID process will work.
Struble celebrated after five years at MU

Five years ago, the LGBTQ Resource Center was a far cry from the vibrantly colored and welcoming place that it is now. Beginning as a small corner room, the center’s presence can now be felt beyond the basement of the MU Student Center and across campus.

Spring 2010 was a pivotal time for the LGBT community on campus. The position of LGBTQ Resource Center coordinator opened up and 2004 MU graduate Struby Struble jumped at the chance to make a difference.

“I had a lot of ideas about what I wanted to bring to the table and just knew that I could help MU LGBTQ into the success I knew it could have on campus,” Struble said.

Senior Shane Stinson arrived on campus shortly after Struble and witnessed the growth of the LGBTQ Resource Center first-hand.

“When I was a freshman, I had a really hard time fitting in on the University of Missouri’s campus,” Stinson said. “I didn't really find a queer community. It was really a bad semester for me, to the point where I thought I wasn't going to be coming back to the University of Missouri the second semester.”

Stinson, who identifies as transgender, found his way to Struby through the concern of his mother and her desire to find her son a safe space on campus.

“(Struby) sat there with me and walked (me) through the fact that I was going to be OK,” Stinson said. “She walked me over to the counseling center herself and through that she asked me about my life. She asked me about who I was, why I came to Mizzou, what I wanted to do at Mizzou, and she made it feel in just those interactions that I was important.”

Shortly afterwards, Stinson began to volunteer in the center and become more and more involved within the LGBT community.

“She was a counselor for me in a lot of ways and she's been there for me through some of the hardest times of my entire life,” Stinson said.

First on Struble’s list was the intentional focus on the importance of ally development while increasing in-community programing.

“So things like the pride photo started as a very radical in-community, somewhat risky act and now has become one of our largest, most public ally showings,” Struble said.
Under her leadership, the LGBT community increased their involvement and presence during Mizzou Homecoming. By introducing the Black and Gold Drag Show that would take place during Coming Out Week and right around Homecoming, the community has become more excited about larger campus events.

“Orgs used to do very small scale pride parades, like just on their own where like maybe 20 or so people would show up and walk around,” Struble said. “We made it a centralized part of our pride month programing. Now it's a 200- to 300-person event that a lot of people look forward to every year and really helps up our visibility and shows our support on campus.”

Struble brought LGBT training to Summer Welcome leaders to ensure that students will feel accepted as soon as they step foot on campus.

Josey Herrera, recent graduate and media producer for the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, met Struble through their volunteer work in the Women’s Center and cites the Pride photo as a perfect representation of Struble’s impact on campus.

“I mean, you see them all on the wall and, suddenly the first year she's there, it's huge,” Herrera said. “Truman the Tiger is there, the chancellor is there and there's all these people, and it was the biggest photo in a long time. She's so friendly and so outgoing and welcoming and inclusive and that people really felt comfortable taking that and rolling with it.”

The center grew rapidly as more students volunteered, organizations within the center filled and students came in with ideas for new organizations.

“I think one of the things I'm most proud of is the collaboration around Michael Sam coming out and the positive response our campus had to that,” Struble said.

The center began a collaboration within the MU Athletic Department by introducing LGBT topics and the histories of LGBT athletes.

“We did a very in-depth training on how to be an ally to all of the male athletes, specifically on how to be an ally to your teammate, or at least how to be respectful of who your teammate is,” Struble said.

When Struby would visit the department, she would bring along various items from the LGBTQ Resource Center, including rainbow MU Pride bracelets. Michael Sam would wear his bracelet during every game his senior year.

“There's still work to be done all across our campus but I think that there's been a lot of positive strides moved forwards,” Struble said.

On a more personal level, Struble had a way of communicating with others in a way that is not often seen.
“She was a listening ear at the same time as being someone who would give you direction,” Stinson said. “I can personally say that I feel accepted and embraced on this campus because of the work that she's done.”

Herrera grew closer to Struby through their joint membership in LSV and work with the Vagina Monologues. Herrera decided to run for Homecoming king, and while they were sponsored by the Women’s Center, leadership was in flux, so Struby stepped in.

“She went to all the events with me, she sat with me at the Homecoming football game, went to the banquets with me and stuff like that, just because my family lives all the way in Florida and they can't visit,” Herrera said. “She worked really hard to make sure I was being supported and there was someone there for me all the time.”

At the banquet held for the top-10 royalties, the Mizzou Alumni Association had contacted the families of the candidates and asked them to write letters to be read aloud during the event. Herrera’s parents were unable to be contacted as English is not their first language, and they were unfamiliar with Herrera’s coming out process. Herrera began to get nervous, they would be the only one without a letter.

“It turns out that Struby and two other people at the Women's Center got together and had written me the best letter I could ever imagine,” Herrera said. “I was trying to figure out who wrote it, and toward the end I could start hearing Struby's voice in the writing. That was really the most touching thing that I think anyone has ever done for me it was so unexpected.”

Struble is heading back to Oakland, California, where she spent her years between graduating from and returning to MU, as a semi-professional soccer player to obtain an MFA in creative writing at Mills College. Most importantly, she is going back to write her book, most likely a memoir.

“I've always been a really big writer, so I think it's time,” Struble said. “Everyone will get to know me a lot better in two to three years.”

Struble is not saying goodbye to Columbia completely as she plans to return “all the time.”

“I'm already starting to plan when my fall return dates will be,” she said. “I'll most likely come back for Homecoming … and then come back in the spring. Columbia is definitely home. I have a lot of family here, so I'll be back a lot.”

When asked about the possibility of returning to campus, Struby answered without hesitation.

“I would be just so honored and proud to ever be invited back for campus programming,” Struby said. “I would be touched and thrilled to have the opportunity to do that.”

Struby has left a lasting impression on campus due to her passion and belief in the importance of the individual.
“It's really important to take an active role in every aspect of your life, so while you're in school here, take an active role in your education, be an active participant in what's happening around you,” Struby said.

Struby said she recommends seeking out an unrelated minor or a multicultural certificate and stresses the importance of using the resources available on campus like the MU Counseling Center, the Student Health Center and the many programs available.

“Remember that you're just making the next decision, not the final decision,” Struby said. “I think a lot of people get paralyzed by the pressure of I now have to decide my life, and no you don't. You just have to decide your next life step.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU community marches in annual Pride Parade

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 | 7:51 p.m. CDT; updated 11:36 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 29, 2015

BY SHANNON ELLIOTT

COLUMBIA — "LGBT, we demand equality," chanted MU seniors Joel Dalton and Theo Tushaus.

"Two, four, six, eight, equality in every state," the rainbow-clad crowd continued.

Dalton, Tushaus and Struby Struble, the LGBTQ Resource Center coordinator at MU, led a crowd of more than 100 people in the MU Pride Parade across campus Wednesday afternoon.

The parade marked the end of MU Pride Month. National Pride Month is in June, but the LGBTQ Resource Center has set April as MU's Pride Month so the community can still celebrate during the school year. The LGBTQ Resource Center sponsored events throughout the month that celebrate diversity within the queer community. This is the resource center's fourth pride parade.

The parade began behind the MU Student Center and made its way to Ninth Street before cutting across Francis Quadrangle. Marchers continued past Jesse Hall and Reynolds Alumni Center and ended at Tiger Plaza.

Dalton said this was the best turnout he's seen at an MU Pride Parade.
The crowd shouted a handful of chants throughout the march, but often returned to one in particular:

"We're here! We're queer! We will not live in fear!"

Dollars from degrees: a new college ranking metric

By Ashley Jost

Get ready to get ranked (again), higher education institutions.

That's right — yet another list has been introduced to show how two- and four-year colleges compare to one another.

The ranking this time is focused on "value-added" measurements, evaluating colleges' contributions to alumni's economic standing. The Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program announced the new ranking Wednesday.

The Missouri University of Science and Technology ranked alongside — and even slightly above — Harvard and Brown universities, showing the mid-career earnings for alumni averaging around $98,199, 34 percent higher than the predicted mid-career earnings for the Rolla-based school.

Mid-career earnings is one of three factors contributing to the overall score, weighed alongside occupational earnings power and loan repayment rate.

The report highlighting the new metric came from Brookings Institution fellow Jonathan Rothwell and senior research assistant Siddharth Kulkarni. The two researchers' goal was to fill "a large information gap in higher education of relevance to state education officials, college administrators and workforce development leaders," while also providing perspective for high school students weighing their options. They used a string of public data resources, as well as PayScale and LinkedIn, to develop the data.

Among Kansas City-area schools, Rockhurst University ranked highest at No. 75. The University of Missouri-Kansas City ranked No. 53, while the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and the University of Missouri-Columbia fell somewhere in between at 61st, 63rd and 66th, respectively.
"College is a major investment for individuals and the taxpayers who subsidize it," Rothwell said in a news release. "So, the public has a huge stake in promoting quality. No ratings system can capture everything about a college that matters, but these data can shed some light on how colleges compare in their contributions to student success and, hopefully, spark further research with even better data."