Mizzou News

Daily Clips Packet

May 21, 2015
Senate office under investigation for possible sexual harassment or discrimination against intern

By RUDI KELLER

Wednesday, May 20, 2015 at 9:15 pm Comments (3)

NO MU MENTION

The Missouri Senate and the University of Central Missouri are investigating allegations that sexual harassment or discrimination led a student intern to abruptly end an assignment to the office of Sen. Paul Levota, D-Independence, sources said.

Senate Minority Leader Joe Keaveny, D-St. Louis, said Wednesday that an investigation was underway but declined to name the senator involved. “There is an ongoing investigation,” Keaveny said Wednesday. “I will tell you as the minority leader and being on the administration committee we take it very seriously. We want to be an equal opportunity employer and that includes the interns.”

Several sources named LeVota as the senator involved but were unable to say whether he or someone who works in or frequents his office was the subject of the investigation.

LeVota, in a statement via email Wednesday evening, said he was unaware of any investigation or problem with any intern assigned to his office this year. He had five interns from several universities, he wrote. Two from UCM left after a month-and-a-half when Ron Berry, LeVota’s chief of staff, was “notified by e-mail that the male and female interns from UCM for my office were needed back at school to work on other projects. I was never informed by the university, or by either intern, of any issues they experienced other than that.”

In his statement, LeVota wrote that he understands the need “to look into rumors, even unsubstantiated rumors.”
Federal law known as Title IX is designed to protect students against sexual discrimination and requires schools to investigate allegations of sexually related crimes against students in an educational environment.

The Joplin Globe reported Wednesday evening that LeVota’s interns left Jefferson City around the same time Missouri Southern State University in Joplin pulled all of its interns from the Capitol. On May 13, the Kansas City Star reported that Missouri Southern’s actions came after the discovery that House Speaker John Diehl had been exchanging sexually charged text messages with a 19-year-old female intern.

Diehl resigned from the House after the Star story.

Senate President Pro Tem Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles, said the Senate has hired an attorney “for personnel issues” but would not confirm the reason.

“I don’t think anybody is being protected regarding my not commenting on any investigation that may or may not be taking place,” Dempsey said. “If there were any investigatory process the first thing would be for that process to take place.”

University of Central Missouri spokesman Jeff Murphy said in an email that “the university does not respond to questions about campus investigations.” The statement also affirmed the school’s support for Title IX.

“The university strongly supports the provisions of Title IX and what it means for the safety and security of campus members and guests,” Murphy wrote.

LeVota blamed the attention on his office on the furor surrounding Diehl’s resignation. “Now with the recent climate, rumors and speculation abound ... I am upset that any of these young people that come to experience the legislative process would be subject to sensationalism.”

Senate Administrator Marga Hoelscher on Wednesday declined to release a list of interns from all schools who worked for the Senate during the legislative session. “Part of my responsibility as the Senate Administrator is to make sure the privacy of individuals working at the Senate including interns is protected,” Hoelscher wrote in an email to the Tribune. “Due to the sensitive nature of a university Title IX investigation, we will not provide any further comment.”
UCM is in the district of Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg. He said Tuesday that “I don't know that much,” and declined to give any specifics. “I do know a couple of interns did leave a senator’s office,” he said.

Pearce said he had interns from UCM working his office from the first day of the session to the end.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said he was aware of an investigation but knew no specifics. “The only issue I am aware of is that there is some issue regarding an intern from Missouri Central and they are being tightlipped about it. I have no reason to believe they are not taking this seriously.”

Interns in the Capitol generally receive no pay, working for college credit at their schools. UCM requires students to have completed 50 credit hours at a GPA of 2.5 to be eligible. Each year, the school sends five to 15 students to Jefferson City, said Robin Coleman, intern coordinator at the university.

She declined to comment on why the school kept some interns in Jefferson City while others to left the program.

LeVota is serving his first term in the Senate. He previously served in the Missouri House, where he was Democratic floor leader from 2007-2009. He has worked with numerous intern during his 11 years in office, he wrote.

“I have had an amazing experience with the intern program with students from across the state over that decade with no problems at all,” LeVota wrote.

Sen. Paul LeVota’s full statement Wednesday evening to the Tribune:

_Recently, the Missouri Capitol was buzzing about the Speaker of the House and his relationship with an intern. Recently, there have been unconfirmed rumors about the interns in the Missouri Senate program and other interns in the Missouri House. I understand the need for universities to look into rumors, even unsubstantiated rumors. I would be open to any university taking a further look at the experience of any of my legislative interns. I had the honor of working with five students from several universities across the state this spring._

_This session, after a month and a half, my chief of staff was notified by e-mail that the male and female interns from UCM for my office were needed back at school to work on other projects. I was never informed by the university, or by either intern, of any issues they experienced other than that. I had no reason to doubt what the university said in that e-mail and still have no reason to doubt that. And as of today, I have still never been informed by any intern or staff member of any incidents at_
all. The remaining three interns assigned to my office had a great experience and finished the session. None have voiced any issues in their internship, nor any report that either of the UCM interns had any problems.

This is my 11th year in the Missouri Capitol and I have had an amazing experience with the intern program with students from across the state over that decade with no problems at all. Now with the recent climate, rumors and speculation abound and I am upset that any of these young people that come to experience the legislative process would be subject to sensationalism.

Mizzou dismisses starting DE Marcus Loud

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Missouri has dismissed projected starting defensive end Marcus Loud for a violation of undisclosed team policies, team spokesman Chad Moller confirmed.

Loud, a redshirt sophomore from Houston, played in all 14 games off the bench last season, made 14 tackles and worked with the first-team defense throughout spring practices. He was expected to start along with redshirt sophomore Charles Harris as the replacements for departed All-SEC defensive ends Shane Ray and Markus Golden.

In Mizzou's spring scrimmages, Loud had three sacks and shared the team lead with 4.5 tackles for loss.

“We try not to look at it as being Shane and Markus,” Loud said in March. “We’re Marcus and Charles. They had their own style. We have our own style. We have to understand together that we are next, but the tradition and legacy has got to continue.”

With Loud's loss, the Tigers return just one scholarship defensive end with Division I playing experience. That's Harris. MU has three redshirt freshmen whose roles could expand in Loud's absence: Walter Brady, Rocel McWilliams and Spencer Williams.

Later this summer, the Tigers will also add junior college transfer Marcell Frazier, plus some incoming freshmen who could play defensive end, including Ladue's Nate Howard.

Mizzou hires Wren Baker as deputy director of athletics for external relations
Missouri announced Wednesday that Wren Baker has been hired as the deputy director of athletics for external relations.

Baker, 36, joins new athletic director Mack Rhoades’ staff from Memphis and replaces former deputy athletic director Doug Gillin, who became the Appalachian State athletic director in April.

“We are very excited Wren is becoming a member of our team,” Rhoades said in a statement. “He is regarded as one of the up-and-coming administrators in the nation and has established an impressive track record of success at every stop of his career path.

“Throughout his career, Wren has demonstrated terrific work ethic, the ability to genuinely connect with people and uncompromising integrity. He is a high-energy person who will provide great passion and leadership for our student-athletes, coaches and staff.”

Baker, who will assume the post June 8, served as Northwest Missouri State’s athletic director for two years during 2011-2013.

He will oversee all external relations for the MU athletic department and serve as the men’s basketball administrator.

“I am honored to be joining the Mizzou family and am grateful to Mack Rhoades for the opportunity,” Baker said. “The University of Missouri has a tremendous reputation, and Mack is considered one of the best and brightest leaders in collegiate athletics. Our family is looking forward to returning to the Show-Me State and joining Mack’s team as we build on a proud and prestigious athletic tradition.”

Baker had been the deputy director of athletics for external affairs since February 2013 at Memphis, where he helped secure the largest donation in school history to launch a $40 million capital campaign.

“The University of Memphis is indebted to Wren for his work and service,” Memphis athletic director Tom Bowen said. “He is an incredibly bright, young star in athletic
administration. I want to congratulate Wren, and wish him and his family a wonderful new beginning at the University of Missouri.

Suite sales and multimedia rights revenues also reached record highs on Baker’s watch, which included membership and donation growth for Memphis’ Tiger Scholarship Fund.

“One of the first things I think about when someone mentions Wren Baker is vision,” Bearcats football coach Adam Dorrel said. “My biggest takeaway from my time working with him at Northwest was his vision, and I believe it’s one of the greatest assets he will bring with him to the University of Missouri. He challenged me each and every day to become a better coach, something I will always remember and be thankful for. As a first-time head coach, his leadership was invaluable. I think Missouri made a wonderful hire.”

Baker also previously served as the first athletic director in the history of Rogers State in Claremore, Okla., where he was the youngest athletic director at any four-year school in the country. He also served as the Hillcats’ men’s basketball coach.

Baker, who also served as a basketball operations assistant at Oklahoma State during 2001-2005, and his wife, Heather, have two daughters, Addisyn and Reagan.

He graduated in 2001 with a bachelor’s degree in education from Southeastern Oklahoma State and completed a master’s degree in education leadership in 2003 at Oklahoma State.
New Missouri athletic director Mack Rhoades meets Kansas City

BY TOD PALMER
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New Missouri athletic director Mack Rhoades got a firsthand taste of the underlying fervor that fuels his fan bases’ side of the Border War during a welcome-tour stop Wednesday at Westport Flea Market.

He fielded roughly 25 questions on topics ranging from his bow tie ownership to MU’s marketing strategy to why pro athletes don’t donate more to the universities they once played for during an hourlong Q&A with fans on his first official stop in Kansas City.

“They’re passionate, and absolutely passionate about Kansas City and our presence and what they feel about the University of Missouri and how well we do or do not engage them in our presence here,” Rhoades said.

Early in his tenure, Rhoades has made it clear that he would like to see the Border War resume, though rival Kansas remains intractable, but his proclamation drew a mixed reaction from the crowd of hundreds.

Rhoades also joked that after Missouri improved to 2-0 on his watch by sweeping two softball games against Kansas last weekend during NCAA regional action, “We’re not playing them anymore.”

He wasn’t joking about the Tigers athletic department’s stance on acting up or acting out.

Rhoades pledged “zero tolerance for breaking rules intentionally. We’re going to be a program, and we are a program, of great integrity.”
That doesn't mean that every minor-in-possession or fistfight will result in dismissal from Missouri, but it does mean that on more weighty issues of conduct, student-athletes have little wiggle room.

A few hours before his appearance, word leaked that sophomore defensive end Marcus Loud has been dismissed from the Tigers’ football team.

“It’s sad and unfortunate for that young man, but there are certain things for which we just have zero tolerance,” Rhoades said. “This particular incident, coach (Gary) Pinkel and I were on the same page, discussed it and that’s the way we’ll handle all of our discipline.”

Rhoades said such decisions will be made in conjunction with the sport’s coach and the sport’s administrator in charge.

Winning is important, Rhoades said, but winning the right way is paramount, even if it’s more difficult.

Still, mediocrity will not be tolerated.

“The vision really is about being one of the best in the SEC, and football has done that the past two years, but that needs to be the mindset for all 20 of our sports programs,” Rhoades said. “The great news is, if you’re one of the best in the SEC, then guess what, you’re one of the best in the country.”

Nearly a month into the job, Rhoades, who replaced Mike Alden on April 27 after six years as the athletic director at Houston, said he’s absorbed a lot, but there’s much more he needs to soak in to really feel comfortable in his new environs.

“Right now, it’s drinking water out of a fire hose,” Rhoades said. “My personality is I want to get everything done yesterday and tackle everything at one time. That’s hard to do. We certainly have some areas that we can improve upon and build upon, but I don’t know if there’s really one thing that’s surprised me.”

Rhoades said that Missouri is staring down the barrel of $150 million in facilities upgrades to Memorial Stadium, Taylor Stadium, the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex and eventually the razing and replacement of the Hearnes Center, which currently houses wrestling, volleyball, gymnastics and indoor track and field.
Scientists locate amino acid ‘gate’ in cystic fibrosis

Researchers have identified a key component in the protein that causes cystic fibrosis, a life-threatening disease that affects nearly 70,000 people worldwide.

The discovery could lead to the development of new medications and improved therapies.

“We know that cystic fibrosis is caused by mutations in a gene called CFTR, but we don’t know exactly how these mutations affect the function of the CFTR protein,” says lead author Tzyh-Chang Hwang, professor of medical pharmacology and physiology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

“In fact, there are nearly 2,000 mutations that could occur in the protein. However, our study identified two amino acids in the CFTR protein that serve as a sort of gate. This gate is a key factor in regulating the flow of chloride ions—one of the key ingredients in salt—into and out of the cells through the CFTR protein.”

Salt imbalance

People with cystic fibrosis have an imbalance of salt in their bodies caused by the defective CFTR protein. Because there is too little salt and water on the outside of the cells, the thin layer of mucus that helps keep the lungs free of bacteria becomes very thick and difficult to expel by coughing.

This thick mucus can clog the airways and lead to dangerous infections. Although advances in the understanding and treatment of the condition have allowed many people with the disease to live into their early 40s, the majority of patients with cystic fibrosis die of respiratory failure.

“In many ways, the function of the CFTR protein can be compared to a motion-activated water faucet,” Hwang says. “All of the parts need to be functioning properly in order for the faucet to work. The motion sensor needs to detect your hand movements and send a signal to open the gate, enabling the flow of water.”
“When the gate in the CFTR protein is defective, the flow of ions across the cell membrane is disrupted. By identifying the amino acids that make up this gate, we now have a clear idea as to why a mutation in either of these two amino acids causes cystic fibrosis.”

Broken faucet

For decades, therapies for cystic fibrosis worked to maximize organ function and stave off organ failure, but did not address the root causes of the disease. However, in 2012, the US Food and Drug Administration approved the drug, ivacaftor, to treat the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis in individuals with a specific mutation. While the drug targets the defective protein, the actual ways it enhances CFTR function are largely unknown.

Earlier research has shown how the drug affects the CFTR protein’s gate, and the new study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, builds upon that knowledge by identifying the exact location of the gate. The discovery will help researchers further understand not only how the drug works, but also could shed light on where it works and therefore potentially improve its effects.

“When your water faucet is broken, you can call a plumber to repair it,” Hwang says. “But if the plumber doesn’t understand how the faucet works, how is he supposed to fix it?

“By understanding the physical and chemical basis of CFTR function, we, the molecular plumbers, are equipped with the tools to find ways to correct the defective protein’s function, and subsequently boost treatments and ultimately improve the lives of cystic fibrosis patients.”

The National Institutes of Health and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation funded the work.

Climate Surveys Are Coming

May 21, 2015
Rachel Share and Scott Coffina

NO MU MENTION
"The first step in solving a problem is to name it and know the extent of it -- and a campus climate survey is the best way to do that." -- The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault

Campus climate surveys have become an important tool for universities in the battle against sexual assault on campus.

The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, in its April 2014 report “Not Alone,” gave the higher education community a strong hint by writing: “We urge schools to show they’re serious about the problem by conducting the survey next year.”

The task force characterizes regular climate surveys as “a best-practice response to campus sexual assault” and recommends that schools use them to examine the prevalence and incidence of sexual assault on campus, and to assess students’ perceptions of a university’s response to sexual assault.

In the wake of the task force’s report, although climate surveys are not yet required by law, colleges would be ill advised to ignore the drumbeat of support for climate surveys by the federal government.

Here are five things you should know about campus climate surveys.

1. They Will Be Mandated. The task force’s suggestion that schools conduct climate surveys is one of several signals that surveys soon will be required as part of a Title IX/Clery Act compliance program.

Beginning with the University of Montana in 2013, the Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights has made conducting climate surveys a standard requirement in resolution agreements it enters into with schools to resolve Title IX complaints. In addition, a bipartisan group of legislators recently reintroduced the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, S 590, HR 1310. This bill would require schools to administer “a standardized online survey of students regarding their experiences with sexual violence and harassment” every two years.

Thus, whether de jure or de facto, institutions can count on soon being required to conduct climate surveys.

2. Model Surveys Are Being Developed. The task force included a detailed campus climate survey tool kit with the “Not Alone” report, including sample questions, and selected Rutgers University to pilot the survey. Rutgers has been posting what its team has been learning here and plans to publish a revised survey suitable for widespread use.

The Association of American Universities, an organization of 60 U.S. research universities, is conducting its own survey with 28 members, which will be identical for each participating campus except for five questions that will address campus-specific issues.

Since each campus has a unique culture, it is important to keep in mind that the examples developed by other schools and groups are just that -- examples. Some
institutions opted out of the AAU survey because they preferred to conduct a survey tailored to their particular cultures.

Another institution, the University of Alaska, made sure to include questions addressing online harassment in its March 2015 survey, due to its large online-learning community. Colleges with limited resources can begin with the task force’s sample survey (or another model) and adapt the questions to their unique settings to assure the most meaningful results possible.

3. Participation Is a Challenge. CASA would require schools to have an “adequate, random and representative sample size of students” complete the biannual campus surveys. This vague standard may be challenging; an informal review of the results of recent school surveys indicates that 19-25 percent of students participated. Obvious questions exist about whether the students who participate represent a true cross section or are motivated by personal experience with sexual misconduct. Institutions will have to work creatively to promote the surveys to an often apathetic student body (some designs include incentives for participation, such as nominal gift cards and drawings for larger prizes).

4. How the Surveys Will Be Used Remains an Open Question. A poll of 620 college presidents conducted by Inside Higher Ed and Gallup in 2014 revealed discomfort with mandated surveys, which is likely grounded in several factors. First, climate surveys are still works in progress (only 21 percent of the presidents indicated that their schools had constructed a survey within the previous two years), and their validity and reliability remain unproven. Second, as expressed by the American Council on Education in comments on CASA last year, it is unclear for what purpose a climate survey would be used: “Is it intended as a consumer information tool, an institutional improvement tool, an enforcement mechanism or some combination of all three?” The answer to this question could have a substantial impact on how a survey is designed and on how schools and others react to its results. Underscoring concerns about how results would be used, CASA would require surveys to include questions about how reports of sexual violence were handled, and results to be published by the individual institutions and the Department of Education.

The publication of survey results could have wide-ranging implications -- from reputational harm to enforcement activity. But one can legitimately question whether, for example, negative responses in an anonymous survey with limited participation would truly reflect a systemic problem or an isolated instance.

Other questions relate to the degree, if any, that OCR and courts would consider schools to be “on notice” of a problem reflected in survey results, and the validity of side-by-side comparisons of schools using different survey instruments.

Ideally, these questions will be addressed before surveys are mandated but, as written, CASA would require schools to complete a survey within one year of its enactment.

5. Climate Surveys May Uncover Blind Spots. Despite the potential pitfalls with mandated climate surveys, they can generate valuable data points for schools looking to learn about the success of their efforts to combat sexual violence.
For example, in late January, George Washington University released the results of a 2014 survey that revealed that 80 percent of the students responding did not know how to contact the Title IX coordinator or the university's sexual assault response team. The survey results may simply reflect a general challenge in communicating sexual violence resource information to students -- the information might not be important to students until it is needed.

Still, this eye-opening result gives GW valuable insight and will encourage it to communicate the information through additional or alternative means. Consider these five issues as you plan for your own campus climate survey.

City council focuses on pedestrian safety

By Caitlin Campbell

Tuesday, May 19, 2015 at 2:00 pm

After a series of high-profile pedestrian and vehicle collisions in Columbia, the city council has shifted funding and focus to preventing more accidents.

The council on Monday unanimously approved the formation of a pedestrian safety task force that will consist of about 15 members the council will appoint during its June 1 regular meeting.

The task force, which Mayor Bob McDavid said will be co-chaired by Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas and First Ward Councilman Clyde Ruffin, will craft a report on pedestrian accident trends and strategies to increase pedestrian safety.

Capital improvement tax proposal

As part of a capital improvement sales tax renewal proposal that will go before voters in August, the council set aside funding for several road improvement and traffic-calming projects designed to improve traffic conditions and make roads safer for pedestrians. The council was presented with a list of 45 traffic-calming projects at a cost of more than $3 million and set aside funds for about half of the projects.

City staff and council members said residents voiced a strong preference for sidewalk and traffic-calming efforts during public surveys and meetings.
PedNet Coalition Executive Director Annette Triplett said the organization appreciated the council’s attentiveness to traffic-calming and safety issues in the city. She said several residents wanted the council to address pedestrian safety with its list of improvement projects.

“We believe traffic calming, traffic safety and bus shelter projects will play a key role in addressing this safety issue,” Triplett said.

Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp said the city could not fund every road safety project because of limited money. He said the council was targeting projects based on engineer recommendations.

“We rely on traffic engineers for what will get us the most amount of safety for the money we have,” Trapp said.

City, MoDOT crosswalk agreement

In early May, the council tabled a plan to renovate the intersection of Old 63 and Stadium Boulevard because of concerns about how many crosswalks would be included in the project.

The city has since had discussions with MoDOT, which controls the road, about adding additional crosswalks in what Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas called a “necessity” for pedestrian safety. Public Works spokesman Steve Sapp said the $20,000 to $25,000 cost to add two more crosswalks to the project would be paid using the annual sidewalk budget.

The original proposal included crosswalks only at the western and northern portion of the intersection, and Thomas proposed tabling the project to explore adding crosswalks to all four sides.

“I don’t think that any city should not put four crosswalks at an intersection,” Thomas said. “There are important destinations on all four sides there.”

Mike Schupp, a MoDOT area engineer, said the department’s policy does not allow for funding crosswalks at intersections that do not have adjoining sidewalks. The intersection does not have sidewalks on every side, but Schupp said the city plans to add sidewalks to the southern portion.

“We try to accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic movement at intersections,” he said. “It is important to note you can’t always address all movements, which is why there isn’t always four crosswalks.”

College Avenue barrier construction

Construction on the College Avenue pedestrian barrier, which has been in the works for more than five years, will finally begin June 1.

The MoDOT-controlled road has been the site of several pedestrian and vehicle collisions, including a pedestrian injury near Rollins Street at the end of January. A 2009 study of the road
found that two-thirds of 7,500 pedestrian crossings during two days took place outside crosswalks. While the consultants were studying the road, they also witnessed a student who was struck by a car near Bouchelle Avenue.

At the end of April, the city awarded a bid of $690,000 to construct the median barrier between University and Bouchelle avenues. The project is set to be completed Aug. 21, Sapp said.

“The goal is to have it substantially completed before classes resume at MU,” Sapp said.

The majority of the project’s cost will be funded through a Missouri Department of Transportation grant, with the University of Missouri and the city splitting the remainder.

The barrier, which will be high enough that people can’t “hop or skip over it,” will be outfitted with two HAWK pedestrian safety signals, Sapp said. He said the signals will be slightly different from what residents have seen elsewhere in the city.

“It will still be very clear they are crosswalks,” Sapp said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia mom finds solace in suicide prevention work across Boone County

THERESA NGUYEN, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — Beth Eiken stood stoic in a small auditorium as she talked to a group of quiet, attentive Hickman High School students about the death of her son.

She described the depression, drugs and divorce that were all factors in her 17-year-old son's decision to take his own life in 2009.

As a member of the Boone County Suicide Prevention Coalition, Eiken visits high school and junior high schools around the county every year to promote suicide prevention and awareness.

The coalition focuses on high school-age students because suicide was the second leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds in Missouri in 2013, according to the Missouri Institute of Mental Health.
In 2013, the overall rate of suicide in Missouri was the 18th highest in the nation with a rate of 15.88 per 100,000 people, compared to the national average rate of 13.02 per 100,000 people, according to the Missouri Institute of Mental Health. Missouri's overall rate of suicide has remained above the national average since 2003.

At every talk, Eiken retells the story of her son, the foundation that she and her ex-husband created after their son's death, and the history of the coalition.

She said she believes it helps the students understand what the coalition does and why, Eiken said.

“We don’t want to see the same things happen to your friends that happened to my son,” Eiken tells the high school students.

_His name was Stuart_

The son she lost, Stuart, was a happy-go-lucky kid until about age 13. That's when Eiken noticed huge changes in him — especially sadness.

Stuart had a hard time adjusting to changing schools after eighth grade and again after ninth grade when there was an intermediate school before Rock Bridge High School. At the time, Rock Bridge was only grades 10 through 12.

"He never liked change," she said. "It really transformed him."

He also had difficulty when they moved from one house to another.

“As a parent, you can only be supportive,” Eiken said. “I couldn’t really control him; he didn’t like to be controlled.”

Football was the one thing that Stuart continued to enjoy throughout his depression, she said. He wore out the family's VHS tape of "Remember the Titans," slept with his football and would have played the sport year round.
As a freshman, he made the varsity football team at Rock Bridge for running back, his sister, Maribeth, said.

“If it weren’t for football, I think he would have ended his life sooner,” Eiken said.

But his senior year, Stuart was ineligible to play because of his failing grades, she said.

**His last months**

Eiken said she and Stuart’s dad tried to get Stuart into therapy after watching him shut himself away from the things he loved. But he thought therapy would be like announcing to the world that he had a problem, his mother said.

They finally succeeded, though, and four months before his death, Stuart began therapy.

“We thought we were golden when we got him into therapy,” Eiken said.

But he missed appointments and didn’t take the prescribed anti-depressants. Instead, he took drugs and drank a lot, Eiken said.

His parents’ divorce also hit him hard, as did a breakup with a girlfriend.

“He was a lost soul,” Eiken said. “He had no idea what he wanted to do anymore. The last three years of his life, he was really wandering.”

In October 2009, Stuart took his own life.

**From grief to action**

Eiken said that planning her son’s funeral was a good distraction and helped her to begin to grieve. But things got real when all the people who had come for the funeral left and the house was empty again. She couldn't stay in the house and just think about Stuart.
“There was no way I was going to sit at home because that was all I was thinking about,” Eiken said. “I needed to get back out, I needed to get engaged in things again.”

She went back to work for half days and started on the idea of creating a scholarship fund in honor of Stuart, she said.

The fund, which is for athletes who want to go to college but don’t have the grades or the money, became the Stuart B. Eiken Foundation.

Eiken and her ex-husband, Brad Eiken, who also works in suicide prevention, created the foundation in the year after Stuart’s death.

Its purpose is to save lives through the prevention of teenage suicide in Stuart's memory, according to the foundation website. It hosts two fundraisers every year: a 5K run/walk and a youth football tournament.

While the coalition is her mother's own creation, the foundation is a family thing, said Maribeth Eiken, younger sister of Stuart. Maribeth is the marketing and relations spokeswoman for the foundation, but she doesn't work directly with the coalition.

The coalition was created when Pathways Community Health came to Eiken about nine months after her son died to get something started about youth suicide awareness. Other members of the coalition are organizations and individuals around town that support local youth.

The coalition focuses on high school students, but Eiken said it also has begun to expand its efforts toward middle school and college-age students. Depression can begin as early as age 10 and binge drinking is a major factor of depression among college students, Eiken said.

**Supporting the community**

Eiken and Kestrel Homer, another member of the coalition, focus on getting into the schools around the county to talk to students. Their main focus is to encourage them not to be afraid to talk about suicide and provide resources for anyone in need, Eiken said.
Homer said she was moved to work on suicide prevention when she heard the first-hand account of a parent whose child had taken his own life.

“It made me want to get more involved and have other parents not experience that,” she said.

**Homer does research at MU about suicide prevention efforts for ages 10 to 24, looking at what works best or what most students remember about suicide prevention, she said.**

Homer and Eiken are also facilitators to a suicide bereavement support group in Columbia. It meets on the first Tuesday of every month and is another function of the coalition.

The support group is different than others because it’s only open to those who have lost a loved one to suicide, Eiken said.

“(Suicide) is a just completely different flavor than a child that dies by cancer,” Eiken said.

A study about the experience of bereaved parents in the January 2004 Social Science & Medicine journal found that several parents who shared their experiences felt it was good yet painful to tell their story.

Some days, Eiken is both a facilitator and a participant.

“I think it’s gotten a lot easier for her to talk about it and share stories about Stuart,” Homer said.

"It never goes away," Eiken said. "But it gets easier as time passes."

Five years ago, Eiken said Stuart’s death was the first thing on her mind when she woke up in the morning and the last thing she thought about when she went to bed at night. That lasted for a good year and a half after his death, she said.

"When the guilt that you feel just turns into feelings of regret, that's a huge crossover right there," she said.
Just recently, she said she stopped replaying the last month of his life in her head.

“..." she said. “But it’s not at the forefront of my mind at all times.”

**Still some bad days**

Eiken said she still has what she calls "Stuart Days," when she just thinks about him, “how wonderful of a kid he is and wishing he was here.”

She can tell when Maribeth is having a bad day and struggling with the death of her brother, Eiken said. Maribeth's involvement in the foundation and the suicide prevention coalition on campus is her daughter's therapy, Eiken said.

Maribeth said she can see now, in retrospect, the strain in her older brother's relationship with their parents and how hard he was being on himself. At the time, though, she was very young and couldn't see past appearances.

“I didn’t really know what was going on,” she said. “I was 13 at the time.”

Time has helped Maribeth come to understand why her brother chose to end his life. But she has learned a lot about suicide through her mother’s work and her own research.

In the past few months, she said she has allowed herself to feel again.

“For five years I told myself I wasn’t allowed to feel that,” Maribeth said. “I sold myself a lie that if you’re not happy then life’s not worth it. But that’s wrong.”

Research plays an important role in both women's lives. Eiken's research on suicide for the coalition has also helped her understand why Stuart did what he did, she said.

“I don’t think I’ll ever completely understand it, but I have a better idea of what he was going through that contributed to him taking his life,” she said.
Eiken said the research and support of friends and family have been most helpful to her.

Maribeth said she and her mom talk every day, and Eiken said she still keeps in touch with some of Stuart's friends.

Major change transforms a person, Eiken said.

"Before Stuart's death, I wouldn't be talking to you. I'd be in there," she said, pointing to her bedroom door.

And at the age of 49, she said she's the happiest she's ever been.

“That’s my therapy,” Eiken said. "To keep the foundation going, to keep the programs going, to help people in the community.”

Who Will Listen?

May 21, 2015

By Jacqueline Thomsen

NO MENTION

For some students, Twitter isn't just a space to vent.

Students frustrated with the slow pace of administrative responses to issues on campus are taking more drastic measures, going public on social media or sharing their stories with members of the media before officials can present their own solutions. And while the publicity does create an image issue for the institution and sometimes gets results, officials say answers to students’ problems are often already in the works even before
the issue becomes public and the added pressure doesn’t change their plans.

When nursing students at Hudson County Community College found themselves charged an extra $450 in April, they were outraged. The students, 90 percent of whom receive some form of financial aid, went to local New York news channel PIX 11, which in turn sent media requests to the college. Four days later, the college announced it would absorb the additional cost, attributing it to a billing error due to a computer glitch.

But a college spokesman, Roger Jones, said college officials had planned on taking on the cost within 24 hours of learning of the issue, before hearing from PIX 11, and the media coverage had little to do with administrators’ decisions.

“It’s not just a matter of the way they voiced their concerns. What drove the decision was to not have it be a hardship to these students,” Jones said.

PIX 11 claimed partial responsibility for the refunds in its coverage, but Jones said this statement was incorrect.

Elsewhere, students at Kennesaw State University have taken advantage of national media coverage after a student posted a video, which quickly went viral, of an adviser threatening to call campus police on the student if he didn’t leave the advising office. Kevin Bruce, the student who posted the video, also tweeted images of several emails between himself and the adviser, Abbie Dawson, in which he said she was unhelpful in answering questions about course selection. Other students have followed his lead, publishing similar interactions between themselves and Dawson. Dawson has since been placed on leave.

Students at Kennesaw held a sit-in in the university’s student center Monday and submitted a list of demands to administrators, which include an apology from Dawson and a meeting with some of the institution’s top officials. Kennesaw spokeswoman Tammy DeMel declined to comment because the matter is still under review.

And at the University of Southern California, an entire M.F.A. class left the Roski School of Art and Design, saying the admission offers were misrepresented and the quality of the program had declined since their enrollment.

An open letter the students published online said several key faculty members had left the program and their financial aid has been severely depleted. The school’s dean, Erica Kuhl, said in a statement Friday that she and other school officials had met with the students several times and were under the impression that the issues had been resolved.

Many colleges and universities, including Kennesaw, offer ombudsmen to help mediate issues between students and members of the university. Kennesaw ombudsman Timothy Hedeen did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Tom Kosakowski, associate director and ombudsman for the Center for Health Sciences at the UCLA Office of Ombuds Services, said he and other ombudsmen offer a more
informal solution to problems within an institution, preventing easily resolved issues from making their way through schools’ formal grievance processes and saving universities both time and money.

Kosakowski said students might “go public” rather than seek out his office’s help or wait for an administrative response because students are unsure of where else to go. “Part of it may be they have a really strong desire to expose wrongdoing, they think it’s the most ethical option to make it known to as many people as possible,” he said. “Or they may think it’s the most effective way to force change in the institution, or if they’ve been unsuccessful with other things they’ve tried.”

Nearly 400 institutions in the U.S. and Canada offer ombudsmen to students, according to a list compiled by Kosakowski, but these officials typically only offer guidance or mediate small disputes, lacking the power to determine outcomes on behalf of their universities.

USC does not have an ombudsman, but it does have policies outlining how students can file grievances against faculty, staff and administrators. The M.F.A. students had had multiple meetings with officials at the Roski School, including the dean, but still felt as if their concerns were not adequately addressed.

Kevin Kruger, the president of NASPA: Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education, said official responses often aren’t as fast as students are used to or want them to be. “Even if the university’s working diligently, it’s often too slow for the immediacy students want,” he said.

Kruger said that while the social media commentary might create a public image issue for the institution, officials will stick to the original decision-making process in place at the time -- though they might fast-track a decision if the external pressure is great enough.

He added that administrators typically want students to voice their thoughts on problems and are willing to sit down with concerned parties and walk them through university policies and procedures.

He said the students’ ideas and variety of ways of expressing their opinions, whether it’s online or in person, are important contributions to the marketplace of ideas on campus.

“Giving them an audience for some of their concerns is sometimes just as important as being heard,” Kruger said.
Widening Wealth Gap

May 21, 2015

By
Kellie Woodhouse

NO MU MENTION

When Harvard University’s endowment fell by more than $10 billion during the 2008 financial crisis, it was a blow to the institution. But a lot of college presidents across the country considered the loss -- and the remaining $26 billion in Harvard’s endowment -- and thought that perhaps there were worse problems to have.

Harvard’s endowment has since rebounded. The university has cash and investments of nearly $43 billion, and is the wealthiest college in the country by more than $10 billion. Harvard is part of a prestigious pack of the 40 wealthiest universities in the country, which hold two-thirds of all the wealth among the 500 colleges rated by Moody’s, which rates institutions that are financially sound enough to trade in public markets.

The rest of the pack have median cash and endowments of $273 million, or just 4 percent of the median $6.3 billion in cash and endowments at each of the wealthiest institutions, according to an April Moody’s report. The other 4,000 or so universities and colleges in the U.S. not rated by Moody's generally have even less liquid wealth.

These 40 richest universities have increased their assets by half since the recession, more than double the increases experienced by the least-wealthy universities rated by Moody’s.

And while many of the wealthiest colleges offer need-based scholarships for their poorest students, they enroll a relatively small percentage of low-income students compared to their less wealthy peers.

The 10 wealthiest private colleges hold cash and endowments that, combined, total nearly $180 billion. A median 16 percent of their 2012-13 enrollees received Pell Grants, a form of federal aid only available to low-income students, according to an analysis of federal data.
"We are spending the most money as a society educating the wealthiest people." -- Ronald Ehrenberg, director of the Cornell University Higher Education Research Institute

Yale University and the University of Notre Dame have $25.4 billion and $9.5 billion in cash and investments, respectively, but had the lowest portion of Pell recipients among this group, at 12 percent. Columbia University, with cash and investments of $9.9 billion, enrolled the highest number of Pell recipients, at 30 percent. Harvard, with its $43 billion in wealth, trailed behind at 19 percent.

Meanwhile, 36 percent of undergraduates in the U.S. received Pell Grants that year.

The Century Foundation found in 2013 that for every 14 wealthy students at the most elite and selective colleges, there was one low-income student.

In short, the wealth gap not only creates inequities among universities, but also among the students they serve.

“The students who are able to go to these wealthy institutions will have extraordinary resources devoted to them, relative to the students who are everywhere else,” said Ronald Ehrenberg, director of the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute. “We are spending the most money as a society educating the wealthiest people,” he continued. “The people who need help the most are the most disadvantaged. They end up going to the universities that spend the smallest amount per student.”

The gap between wealthy colleges and the rest of the pack is clearly wide, and getting wider each year, leading some to question if these rich universities need much of the public aid they receive. And if they are receiving public money, should they be doing more to enroll a higher percentage of low-income students?

**Too Much Public Support?**

Nexus, a higher education research group, in an April report found that wealthy universities receive millions in public support through their endowment gains and land holdings, neither of which are taxable because colleges are nonprofit institutions. For America’s 10 most endowment-rich colleges, that advantage is $41,000 per student, according to Nexus. (The report measures endowment levels by the amount of endowment per student, making its list of endowment-rich colleges slightly different from Moody’s, which ranks endowments by sum.)

“It’s entirely reasonable to ask whether federal subsidies should flow -- actively in the form of student aid, and in terms of tax benefits as well -- to places that are so flush.”-- Andrew Kelly, higher education reform proponent

Princeton University’s endowment tax advantage was $105,000 per student in 2013, a sum that far surpassed the $12,300 in per-student public appropriations received by Rutgers University or the $2,400 per student received by nearby Essex Community College, according to Nexus.

“It’s entirely reasonable to ask whether federal subsidies should flow -- actively in the form of student aid, and in terms of tax benefits as well -- to places that are so flush,” said Andrew Kelly, director of the American Enterprise Institute Center on Higher
Education Reform. “Federal subsidies should help people attend college that wouldn’t attend otherwise.”

The Nexus report suggested taxing the endowments of private colleges with investments of more than $500 million, and curbing such a tax based on the financial aid investments of each university.

“The concentration of wealth in this small number of campuses was even surprising to me,” said Mark Schneider, vice president of the American Institutes for Research and a co-author of the Nexus report. “I understand these are wonderful schools, that we need schools like this for our competitiveness... but at some point it’s too much.”

He continued, “We need to focus on a fix. Just to say that Princeton is rich... what do you do with that? You get outraged. You get angry, but we have to talk about some fixes.”

It’s not the first time such a suggestion has been made. In 2008, Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley and supporters threatened to require that wealthy universities spend a certain amount of their endowments each year -- preferably on financial aid -- instead of “hoarding” the money. The proposal received a lot of attention -- Grassley, a Republican, was chairman of the Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee at the time -- and a lot of pushback. It was dropped during the recession.

Yet the debate led to some of the best-endowed colleges raising their levels of need-based financial aid.

“You saw institutions responding to that jawboning,” said Catharine Bond Hill, president of Vassar College and an economist who specializes in higher education.

“Just to say that Princeton is rich... what do you do with that? You get outraged. You get angry, but we have to talk about some fixes.” -- Mark Schneider, vice president of the American Institutes for Research.

**Equity in Education**

F. King Alexander, president of the beleaguered Louisiana State University System, which is facing nine-figure funding cuts from the Louisiana Legislature, has long been a critic of plush colleges, saying they can do more to educate low- and middle-class students. He suggests colleges should have low-income students be at least 20 percent of their total enrollment, or have their federal aid reduced.

“These institutions want to be independent. They say they don’t want any strings attached to the federal money they’re getting, yet they’re getting more public subsidy than most public universities in the country,” he said. “If you created an incentive for those institutions to use their wealth to enroll and serve and graduate more low-income students, that incentive could turn around what’s going on now.”

In addition to federal student aid, the 10 wealthiest private institutions received more than $6.4 billion in federal grants and contracts -- mostly earmarked for research -- in 2011-12.
Stanford University, in 2013, received $68,600 in federal grants and contracts per student, accounting for a higher revenue source than tuition or donations. The only higher revenue source was its endowment return, which totaled $163,300 per student. In some states and municipalities, elected officials have considered requiring payments in lieu of property taxes from colleges with vast nontaxable landholdings. In Maine, Republican Governor Paul LePage this year called for nonprofits, including colleges, to begin paying property taxes. LePage says that colleges and other nonprofits rely on local services, and that their tax-exempt status drives up property taxes for others. Hill, of Vassar, says penalizing universities is not answer to the problem of inequity in higher education.

“It seems to me that the solution is really to try to get talented poor students into the rich schools, and not go after the rich schools,” she said. “I would rather redistribute the students than redistribute the wealth.”

Hill did say selective institutions should do more to enroll low-income students, and that it would be fair for the government to expect institutions that receive a large amount of federal aid to also enroll higher numbers of low-income students.

“That’s one of the reasons we are supported by the public sector, [for] supporting notions of equal opportunity.”

She also said elite, wealthy colleges “do more than many schools” to support low-income students financially. Stanford, for example, provides free tuition to students from families making under $125,000. And while wealthy colleges enroll a smaller percentage of low-income students, they graduate a higher percentage of them than their less wealthy peers.

“\textit{I would rather redistribute the students than redistribute the wealth.}” -- Catharine Bond Hill, president of Vassar College

Yet Schneider says the wealth disparity among universities is part of the reason there is a correlating disparity in graduation rates and student performance. Wealthy universities, he said, can afford more and better-quality student services, such as mentoring, that help with things like student retention. Poorer colleges are left at a disadvantage, because they are often not only financially strained, but strapped for resources as well.

\textbf{Resource Disparity}

Colleges with less wealth have fewer resources to offer students -- yet they educate the vast majority of students. Spending per student is lower and the number of revenue streams is fewer. The 20 wealthiest private institutions receive just 15 percent of their annual revenues from tuition and other student charges, according to Moody’s. The rest of the pack? Roughly three-quarters -- the vast majority of their budgets. Wealthy institutions also attract wealthy donors: 60 percent of all money raised by the 500 colleges rated by Moody’s goes to the 40 wealthiest institutions, both public and private.
The advantage is not just financial. The wealthiest colleges can afford to pay professors more and afford better facilities for students, which helps them attract better-quality students.

"Many of these wealthy institutions, when they throw a number on the table, we can’t even match it."

-- F. King Alexander, president of the University of Louisiana System

The average salary for a full professor at a private four-year research university was $177,600 in 2014. But at Columbia and Stanford, full professors earned more than $215,000 on average, according to a survey by the American Association of University Professors. At four-year public research universities, full professors earned $130,000 on average, but at wealthy publics the rate was much higher. Full professors at the University of Virginia earned $150,800. They earned $156,900 on average at the University of Michigan.

“Certainly it gives you a faculty advantage,” said Alexander, who has seen many of his faculty poached by wealthier colleges. "Many of these wealthy institutions, when they throw a number on the table, we can’t even match it."

He continued, “If your best faculty, the ones who are writing the textbooks that everyone else is using, if they go to other institutions, not only does it impact the students they’ve left behind... it has a societal impact that disadvantages the population of the entire state. They’re not learning from the best.”

According to Moody’s data, there are no signs of a significant sea change in how the wealth is distributed in higher education. If anything, the gap has grown faster since the recession. Many less wealthy and moderately wealthy institutions have been slow to rebound from financial difficulty in the wake of enrollment declines and across-the-board drops in state funding.

The 40 wealthiest institutions grew their assets by 50 percent over the last five years -- 12 percent more than moderately wealthy institutions and 28 percent more than the least wealthy colleges rated by Moody’s.

“We expect the trend not to change dramatically until there’s a significant change in the higher education model,” said Pranav Sharma, an analyst with Moody’s. “The gap will continue to increase and those who are not well endowed will continue to struggle.”

May 21, 2015

New Graduates Test the Promise of Competency-Based Education

By Dan Berrett
After 19 years climbing the career ladder in Fort Worth’s city government, Jolene G. Applegate was stuck.

She had risen as high as acting manager but kept getting passed over for promotions. She knew why. Even though she’d earned 90 credits (at three different colleges), she didn’t have a credential to show for it. Without an associate or bachelor’s degree, she rarely got a second look from hiring managers.

"I couldn’t go as far as I wanted," she said, "because of that piece of paper."

Last year a newspaper article caught Ms. Applegate’s eye. It described a new bachelor’s-degree program at Texas A&M University at Commerce designed for people who’d racked up college credits but no degree. By that time, she had earned 120 credits and an associate degree, but with this program, even while holding down a job and juggling family commitments, she could keep going.

Ms. Applegate liked that the degree would be inexpensive, as little as $10,000, but she wasn’t sure what to make of its being competency-based — that is, based on her ability to demonstrate her knowledge of material rather than on how much time she spent in class. Would future employers, she wondered, respect that?

Regard for competency-based education is a live question as programs spread across academe. While the model has been a fixture in some quarters of higher education for decades, it is now attracting substantial interest from policy makers, foundations, and think tanks. Many traditional universities have come to see it as a way to deliver, at lower cost and greater efficiency, high-quality degrees to adult students whose lives don’t conform to semesters.

But if a degree is currency, will this one convert? Ms. Applegate and 16 fellow students graduated from Commerce’s program on Saturday. As they look to get promoted or change careers, their experiences reflect the assumptions, promises, and questions — some of them achieved and answered, others still unresolved — of this new wave of competency-based education. While relatively inexpensive, the degrees earned by several Commerce graduates have been pricier than initially projected.

"When you challenge the traditional models, everything changes," said Mary W. Hendrix, Commerce’s vice president for student access and success. "We’re all entering uncharted waters."
Same Rigor, Different Method

The Commerce campus created its program in response to a directive by Rick Perry, then the governor of Texas, for universities to develop bachelor's-degree programs that would cost students $10,000 each.

Led by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, faculty members and administrators at Commerce collaborated with their peers at South Texas College, analyzing labor-force projections and interviewing local employers. The data suggested that the state would see growing demand for midlevel managers with bachelor’s degrees in manufacturing and the service industry.

So the professors and administrators designed a bachelor of applied arts and sciences in organizational leadership, with a standardized series of courses and a competency-based model. The development phase attracted money from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Educause, and the program is now delivered in hybrid form, in person and online, at South Texas and entirely online through Commerce. Students pay $750 each for a seven-week term, during which they complete as many "competencies" as they can. That means mastering skills like problem solving and applied research, as demonstrated on written assignments or video presentations. The competencies are woven into courses for the major as well as general-education requirements.

The biggest stumbling block for faculty members was terminology, said Ricky F. Dobbs, a professor of history at Commerce and dean of its University College.

"You can make the word ‘competency’ mean just about anything," he said. As part of a team of faculty members and administrators that was creating the program, Mr. Dobbs and his colleagues used learning outcomes defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities to develop a set of broad competencies in areas like change management, organizational behavior, and information literacy.

The group of instructors across campuses arrived at a common understanding: Their task was to think about how their various disciplines helped students develop skills.

To use quantitative data to make decisions, for example, students must read a paper on data analysis in government and watch a video on big data in corporations. On discussion boards, the students answer questions about the material and respond to their peers.

To finish off that particular competency, students write at least 250 words describing the utility of statistics, offering three examples of how the field "makes a difference in
all our lives, all the time." Incorporating personal examples, they must explain how translating data into information can help in making decisions.

The program design is not well suited to traditional-age students, Mr. Dobbs said, because those enrolled must complete assignments largely on their own, often applying material they’ve learned in the workplace. "It’s the same rigor," he said. "It’s simply a different method of presenting it to a different population."

**New Perspectives**
Among the new graduates, several found the experience academically challenging, even occasionally overwhelming.

R. Michael Hurbrough Sr. said that it was one of the most difficult things he’d undertaken, and that he often felt like giving up. But he stuck with it, crediting help from Commerce faculty members.

Mr. Hurbrough enrolled in the program after losing his job selling insurance, a field he’d worked in for more than 30 years. Without a bachelor’s degree, he said, prospective employers weren’t interested in him. But with Texas A&M at Commerce on his résumé, he got a job at another firm, he said, even though he had yet to graduate.

The program changed his perspective, he said in an interview with The Chronicle. Learning about organizational dynamics made him less tolerant of ineffective or autocratic leadership, he said. He’s now considering sales or marketing work in other fields, like oil or gas.

But an education can take you only so far; Mr. Hurbrough’s newly minted degree has yet to build that bridge. "I’m not sure if anyone would take a chance," he said, wondering if his age, 51, could hinder him. The degree may not have opened the way to a new career, he said, but "I know it’s not going to hurt me."

For Ms. Applegate, the experience meant relying on herself more than she had to at community college. While she enjoyed interacting with faculty members, one on one, and having to draw on what she knew to complete open-ended assignments, she missed learning alongside classmates.

The work could be daunting, she added, because it often required her to acquaint herself quickly with unfamiliar material. For one assignment, an analysis of the video-game company Zynga, she remembers pulling an all-nighter. "That’s really what the
world of business is like," said Ms. Applegate, 59. "You have to figure out how you’re going to deliver."

Before starting the program, she had left the city government and gone to work as a buyer in the purchasing department at Weatherford College, where she got her associate degree. Now, rather than go back to the city government, she hopes to work in nonprofit management.

"It’s really about, at the end of the day, liking what you do," Ms. Applegate said. "I’m hoping the door I’m supposed to walk through will open."

**Unrealistic Expectations?**

The frequently cited premise of many competency-based programs is that they will draw legions of adults to low-cost degrees that will mesh seamlessly with work-force needs. So far, the reality in Texas seems more complex.

Start with the price. The target of $10,000 for four years of college has been difficult to hit. In their first year, students at Commerce paid an average of just over $4,000 in tuition and books, Ms. Hendrix said. That would be $16,000 over four years, though credits earned for prior learning could decrease the time to degree. Still, she added, $4,000 is a bargain: It’s about half of what a traditional student would pay for a comparable number of credits.

And enrollment has hardly surged. The programs at Commerce and South Texas were originally slated to enroll a total of 6,000 students by 2018, but published figures have put the first-year enrollment at 215.

Devising a new business model, financial-aid system, and student-support services has been difficult, Ms. Hendrix said. "Innovation takes time," she said, including getting "your market to catch up."

More closely syncing higher education and the work force is a well-documented problem, with colleges often characterized as haphazardly churning out graduates with ill-defined or irrelevant skills. But the landscape is more nuanced, according to a recent study by the consultants Parthenon-EY, conducted on behalf of the American Enterprise Institute. Competency-based education won’t fix the mismatch as long as employers remain largely unaware of it. About a third of 479 hiring managers responding to a survey said they had never heard of competency-based education. Just 45, or less than a tenth, reported a "strong understanding" of the concept.
But most surprising, said Chip H. Franklin, an author of a report on the study, was that nearly 80 percent of employers said they hadn’t formally identified what competencies they required for a given job. "Without a defined list, it is practically impossible," the report says, for a college’s competency-based program "to align program competencies with the targeted skills an employer needs."

Colleges are far ahead of businesses in thinking about competencies, Mr. Franklin, a vice president in Parthenon-EY’s education practice, said in an interview. For now, hiring managers favor traditional markers of "fit," like institutional prestige, he said, to fill entry-level positions. Meanwhile, employers complain that good applicants are hard to come by, their qualifications difficult to judge.

Eventually, said Mr. Franklin, as more graduates of competency-based programs are hired, companies may grow more receptive to the idea of evaluating candidates by their demonstrated skills. At least three-quarters of survey respondents described themselves as interested in the educational approach after they heard a description of it. But only so interested. Fewer respondents thought competency-based approaches would be good for their own hiring.

"When you ask them to put their money where their mouth is, they’re dedicated to traditional hiring practices," said Mr. Franklin. That won’t help competency-based education fulfill its promise. Getting there will require employers and colleges to have different sorts of conversations, and people to start bucking convention. "Employers," Mr. Franklin said, "will have to start to change."

'Simple and Seamless' or 'Significant Obstacle'?

May 21, 2015

By Carl Straumsheim

NO MU MENTION
Academic, library and technology organizations are denouncing a new sharing and hosting policy adopted last month by publisher Elsevier, saying it undermines open-access policies at colleges and universities and prevents authors from sharing their work.

Elsevier, which publishes thousands of journals, introduced the policy last month. It aims to strike a balance between making sharing “simple and seamless” and “being consistent with access and usage rights associated with journal articles,” the publisher said in a blog post.

Many librarians and open-access advocates, however, see the policy as an attack on institutional repositories, where colleges collect and make available research their faculty members produce. The new policy does not allow authors to share their journal article manuscripts publicly through those repositories, only privately “with a colleague or with an invitation-only online group.” Availability through the repositories is subject to journals’ embargo periods, which in some cases last for several years.

On Wednesday, 23 organizations, among them Creative Commons, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and library and open-access associations in countries such as the U.S., Australia, Canada, China, Brazil and the U.K., issued a joint statement calling on Elsevier to reconsider the policy. The Confederation of Open Access Repositories and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, or SPARC, organized the campaign.

“This policy represents a significant obstacle to the dissemination and use of research knowledge, and creates unnecessary barriers for Elsevier-published authors in complying with funders’ open-access policies,” the statement reads. “In addition, the policy has been adopted without any evidence that immediate sharing of articles has a negative impact on publishers’ subscriptions.”

Alicia Wise, director of access and policy for Elsevier, in a statement said she was surprised by the negative response to the policy, as the publisher has received “neutral to positive responses” from researchers. She called the new policy “more liberal in supporting the dissemination and use of research” throughout the publication process, in institutional repositories and across social networks.

“At each stage of the publication process authors can share their research: before submission, from acceptance, upon publication and post publication,” Wise said in the statement. “For authors who want free immediate access to their articles, we continue to give all authors a choice to publish gold open access with a wide number of open-access journals and over 1,600 hybrid titles.”

Open-access advocates described the policy as the latest attack against institutional repositories. In 2012, Elsevier became more restrictive about authors depositing journal manuscripts in those repositories, which some interpreted as the publisher punishing institutions that had created open-access policies. The publisher says it was merely “pointing out to a number of repositories that they did not have agreements with Elsevier for their mandated policies,” according to general counsel Mark Seely.
Heather Joseph, executive director of SPARC, said the latest policy update is an attempt to slow down the spread of open-access policies.

“I really do think it’s an attempt to undermine the effect of repositories and of universities controlling their own intellectual output in favor of ‘if you want to do open access, that’s fine, but you have to go through us as a publisher,’” Joseph said. “They definitely see them as potential competition and a way to undercut profit.”

Some librarians also questioned the scope of the new policy. Kevin L. Smith, director of copyright and scholarly communication at the Duke University Libraries, analyzed the policy in a set of blog posts, calling the Elsevier announcement a “masterpiece of doublespeak” and a “retreat from open access.”

According to a Elsevier, the policy applies to “all articles previously published and those published in the future.” Critics said they are not sure how such a requirement would be enforced, but the burden would likely rest on the platforms hosting the content to remove incorrectly shared articles. Elsevier said it will not send takedown notices to authors.

“I wonder if this means that ‘post-print’ versions of articles that were posted recently in compliance with Elsevier’s previous policy, but are still new enough to be inside the newly imposed embargo period, must be taken down,” Smith said in an email. “If that is the expectation, it certainly belies that claim that Elsevier’s goal is to facilitate sharing.”

Wise said the policy is not “intended to suddenly embargo and make inaccessible content currently available to readers.” She added that Elsevier is “happy to have a dialogue to discuss these, or any other, issues further.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Taekwondo master raises $25,000 for MU Women and Children's Hospital

ALEXA AHERN, 11 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — In 2010, Jade Hockman bid on a toilet.

The toilet — covered with tiger stripes and football players' signatures — was up for auction through the Missouri Credit Union "Miracles for Kids" Radiothon. An MU logo was plastered on the top and a KU Jayhawk hid inside the toilet bowl. Hockman's $500 bid won him the black and gold seat, and the money went to Women's and Children's Hospital.
The toilet still sits in his basement, plumbing and all. The Jayhawk has long been flushed away, but his commitment to the hospital endures. For the past five years, he has been raising $25,000 for a new nursing station at the hospital — a promise he realized Wednesday with a final $1,000 donation.

After buying the toilet, Hockman, who owns and teaches at Hockman's ATA Martial Arts along with his brother Jeff Hockman, was hooked; he wanted to keep giving back.

In 2010, the hospital invited him to a lunch where medical staff laid out the funds they needed to renovate the hospital. He hesitated to take on the five-year fundraising challenge. Before he left the lunch, though, he met Kellie Ann Coats, the hospital's advancement director.

"She was instrumental in my decision," Hockman said. "I remember she was like, 'five years, you can do it.' She was my little cheerleader."

He held his first fundraisers, a series of Board Break-a-Thons, at each of the four Hockman ATA locations. People pledged to pay a certain amount for every board a student broke.

"If we were to do it all alone, it would be harder," Hockman's brother Jeff said. "This is the easiest way for us to reach people."

The first events raised $12,000, but the rest of the money was harder to come by. It took another four years for smaller donations to accumulate.

Four months short of the five-year mark, Hockman achieved his goal.

Aspen Heights approached Hockman to teach self-defense classes to its residents. He offered to do it for free; instead, the apartment complex donated $1,000 to his fund, bringing him up to about $24,997. After some calculations, Hockman said he fished a few bucks from his wallet, rounding out his big pledge with a small donation.
Hockman, a sixth-degree black belt, said his instructors always emphasized that being a taekwondo master demanded selflessness. "Part of that is getting together and making a difference as a group," he said.

Hockman, a dad of three, said he doesn't intend to stop raising money for the hospital. He and Coats are working out a plan for a new pledge for the hospital. In the meantime, a bamboo plaque will hang on the door of the jungle-themed nursing station:

"Generously sponsored by: The students of Hockman's Martial Arts"