Retirees Association donates nearly $2.5 million to MU

COLUMBIA — The MU Retirees Association presented Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin with a check for nearly $2.5 million from its "It's My Mizzou" campaign at a luncheon on Friday.

The Retirees Association is made up of more than 800 members, who are all retired staff and faculty from the MU. The $2.495 million contribution was raised from July 1 to April 30 during the "It's My Mizzou" campaign, said Mark Barna, the Mizzou news strategist at the MU News Bureau.

MU Retirees Association President Jim Koller said the campaign was about reinforcing the idea of the MU community as a family. Koller said he believes the money can be used for any MU facility.

Loftin "thanked association members for their dedication" and said they were "the most engaged group of retirees I have seen," Barna said in a news release about the luncheon.

Several retirees were honored at the luncheon, Barna said. George Kennedy was awarded Faculty Retiree of the Year, and Susan Turner was awarded Staff Retiree of the Year.

Kennedy retired as the managing editor of the Missourian in 2001 and continues to teach part time at the Missouri School of Journalism. He has been volunteering at the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri since his retirement and encouraged retirees to volunteer there as well, Barna said.
Turner retired from the School of Medicine's Department of Child Health in 2001. For more than 10 years she has gathered clothing and toys for the Container Project, which ships the donations to Nicaragua, Barna said.

MU Retirees Give More Than $2 Million to MU


MU ranked #13 in Top 20 Online Colleges

Mizzou Online is proving that the number 13 can, in fact, be lucky.

In a recent article published by TheBestSchools.org, Mizzou Online was ranked No. 13 among the top 50 online colleges in the U.S.

TheBestSchools.org, an independent organization devoted to college rankings, rated online colleges based on a number of factors. These included academic excellence, faculty credentials, teaching methods, reputation, financial aid and range of degree programs, said Brian Jenkins, the senior editor for TheBestSchools.org. Data was also collected from college websites and sources including the National Center for Education Statistics and the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.
“[Students] know the colleges in our list have received regional accreditation, the highest form of accreditation,” Jenkins said in an email interview. “These schools put education first, not profits, and employers see these schools as legitimate schools serious about education.”

Mizzou Online was awarded a high ranking for its extensive number of degree programs and its association with the University of Missouri, Jenkins said. According to the university website, Mizzou Online offers over 90 different degree programs and more than 900 course offerings, earning the college a ranking in the top 50 national online colleges by U.S News & World Report.

With the number of students seeking online education constantly increasing, more and more universities are offering digital programs. In 2012, about 62 percent of higher education institutions offered online degree programs, according to a Babson Survey Research Group publication. About 70 percent of public institutions offered online degree programs. Those percentages have only increased in recent years, Jenkins said. TheBestSchools.org strives to assist students in selecting the right college from this large pool of options.

“We want students to know they don’t have to choose just from well known for-profit online colleges,” Jenkins said. “Often public and non-profit schools provide the online degree program they’re seeking.”

Report: MU baseball assistant steps down

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Missouri assistant baseball coach Kerrick Jackson is stepping down from his position for personal family reasons, the national website D1baseball.com reported Tuesday. A Missouri team spokesman declined to confirm or deny the report. Jackson, a Kirkwood native, was unavailable for comment.

Jackson, who also has the title of recruiting coordinator, has been with the program the last five seasons. He joined Tim Jamieson’s staff after spending three years as a scouting supervisor for the Washington Nationals. He previously coached at Nicholls State, Jefferson College, Fairfield, Emporia State and Coffeyville Community College.

Jamieson just wrapped up his 21st season as Missouri’s head coach as the Tigers finished 30-28 and 15-15 in the Southeastern Conference but failed to make the NCAA tournament for the fifth time in six years despite having the most improved league record in the SEC. Missouri was among the first four at-large teams left out of the 64-team bracket.

Jamieson’s contract expires June 30. Jamieson and athletics director Mack Rhoades are expected to meet this weekend to discuss the future of the program, according to multiple sources. Rhoades is attending the SEC spring meetings this week in Destin, Fla.
Missouri became just the eighth SEC team since 1993, when the league expanded to 12 teams, to finish .500 or better in SEC play and not get selected for an NCAA regional. The last time it happened was 2007, when Alabama and Florida, both 15-15 in league play, were not chosen for the 64-team field.

**Inside Higher Ed**

**Asking Too Much, or Not Enough?**

May 27, 2015

By

Jake New

**NO MU MENTION**

This spring, institutions that administered the campus sexual assault survey created by the Association of American Universities found some unexpected critics: students who had been assaulted and their advocates on campus.

Advocates have long told colleges that they should conduct anonymous "climate surveys" to better assess the prevalence of sexual assault on their campuses. When the University of Michigan began soliciting responses to both the AAU survey and one of its own creation, some students said the language used in the survey's questions made them uncomfortable or even triggered dark memories of their assaults.

The questions asked students if they had ever experienced a number of specific sexual activities without their consent, describing those actions with words and phrases such as “oral sex” and “penetration,” and defining the terms using definitions such as “when a person puts a penis, finger or object inside someone else's vagina or anus.”

The complaints raise a quandary for colleges hoping to better estimate how prevalent sexual assault is on a given campus. Consensus among researchers is that using more specific language in climate surveys results in more accurate data about instances of sexual assault.

But if that specific language is driving victims of sexual assault away from the survey, could that, too, cause cases of sexual violence to be undercounted?
"The more behaviorally specific, the more accurate the findings," William Flack, an associate professor of psychology at Bucknell University, said. "Thus, asking about 'sexual assault' or 'rape' is not recommended because respondents often do not know how these terms are defined by their institution or the law. Furthermore, it may be difficult for respondents to acknowledge that they've been assaulted or raped because most perpetrators are acquaintances or friends."

The AAU announced in November that it had contracted with a research firm, Westat, to develop and carry out the campus climate survey for any of its member institutions that wanted to participate. The association said that one goal of the project was to fend off congressional efforts to require universities to annually survey their students about the prevalence of sexual assault, a move opposed by many in higher education.

At the time, the AAU survey was criticized by several dozen scholars who study sexual violence as well as some victims’ advocates for, among other things, not pledging to release campus-by-campus data and to share only aggregate data. Critics also said the process lacked transparency and input from enough scientists who study sexual assaults on campuses.

Only 27 of the 60 AAU member campuses decided to participate in the survey. Some of those institutions do plan on releasing individual survey results, they said, but not until this fall. The aggregate data will be released by the AAU around the same time. Not all of the colleges that participated in the survey heard complaints from students, college officials said, but criticism that the language in the surveys could be potentially triggering did arise at a handful of institutions in addition to Michigan, including Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania.

"Some of the language used in this survey is explicit and some may find it uncomfortable, but it is important that the questions are posed in this way so that students are clear about the meaning," the University of Michigan said in a statement. "In order to understand the climate here, we need to ask direct questions about topics that some may find sensitive. It is only by directly collecting this information from students will we be able to prevent negative experiences and effectively respond when they do happen."

At Penn, some students also complained that they didn't realize the survey was about sexual assault, as it was referred to as a "climate survey," as these kinds of surveys commonly are. Thinking the survey was about climate change, the students claimed, they deleted the email. The university declined to comment on the complaints, and said it does not plan on releasing its response rate until the fall. Harvard had a response rate of 52 percent, thanks in part to a large ad campaign on campus, including a video message from Harvard graduate Conan O'Brien.

The phrasing in the surveys has also been criticized -- especially in the conservative press -- for conflating what critics considered to be more minor transgressions with sexual assault.

"Sexual assault and sexual misconduct refer to a range of behaviors that are nonconsensual or unwanted," the survey states. "These behaviors could include remarks about physical appearance or persistent sexual advances. These could also
include threats of force to get someone to engage in sexual behavior such as nonconsensual or unwanted touching, sexual penetration, oral sex, anal sex or attempts to engage in these behaviors."

In an opinion piece for *The New York Post*, Naomi Schaefer Riley, a senior fellow at the Independent Women’s Forum, mocked Harvard’s survey’s trigger warning and said that despite its specific language, the survey doesn’t really differentiate between various kinds of sexual misconduct.

“So which is which?” she wrote. “What is sexual assault? What is sexual misconduct? What is harassment? And is there any category for simply obnoxious behavior? Indeed, there are questions about people tweeting offensive sexual remarks thrown in with questions about anal penetration. And, oddly, nowhere in the whole document does the word ‘rape’ appear. Perhaps that’s because rape is a word that respondents might be a little more careful about using. But the school isn’t trying to understand a problem. It’s trying to cover its behind.”

While the introduction covers many behaviors, the survey includes specific questions about whether students have experienced specific forms of gender-based misconduct -- including in-person and online harassment -- and sexual assault, such as nonconsensual intercourse, sex while unable to consent due to intoxication and so forth.

Barry Toiv, vice president for public affairs at AAU, said how the results will be presented in the association’s final report is still being determined, but that “the survey was done in this way in order to gain as accurate and specific an understanding as possible of what is occurring at these universities.”

Indeed, while the wording in the AAU surveys might make some students uncomfortable or stir up unwelcome memories among victims, the growing consensus among researchers is that using “behaviorally specific language” is the best method for more accurately understanding the prevalence of sexual assault.

That consensus has led the Bureau of Justice Statistics to second-guess its own findings. Last year, it asked the National Research Council to look into the whether its studies based on the National Crime Victimization Survey were undercounting cases of sexual assault. The council’s conclusion: by using “ambiguous” words and phrases like “rape,” the bureau is likely undercounting rape and sexual assault. Studies have repeatedly shown that many young women and men who are survivors of rape and sexual assault have trouble identifying it as such.

“Self-report questions with behaviorally specific language have been used for more than 30 years in over 1,000 studies with no serious problems,” said Mary Koss, a professor of public health at the University of Arizona. “There are actually research studies documenting no increases in distress [for victims] and many welcoming the opportunity to report these experiences.”

Koss said that it’s important to keep in mind that victims of sexual assault might be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, and that surveys should always be clearly labeled and optional. But fear of triggering symptoms of “PTSD re-experiencing” among
survivors, she said, shouldn’t stop researchers from using current best practices for determining the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses.

“Scientists after many years of study are in consensus that these types of questions are the best way to measure sexual assault,” Koss said. “‘Triggering’ is disempowering language that has been interjected into the dialogue without thought of its unintended consequences on women’s confidence in their ability to survive and thrive.”

Loan Servicers Cleared

May 27, 2015

By Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

The U.S. Department of Education said Tuesday that its four main federal student loan servicers, including Navient, have mostly followed the law in granting special interest-rate benefits to members of the military.

Department officials released the results of their yearlong inquiry into whether the companies had overcharged service members on their federal direct student loans. The review largely cleared the companies of any wrongdoing, finding that service members were improperly charged in fewer than 1 percent of the nearly 900 cases examined.

The department does not plan to take any action against the loan servicing companies, which include Navient, Great Lakes, PHEAA and Nelnet. However, the department will work to reimburse the handful of service members it found had been improperly charged by the companies, an official said.

The review began last May when the Department of Justice accused Navient, formerly known as Sallie Mae, of overcharging members of the military by not capping their interest rate at 6 percent, as is required under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. Navient and Sallie Mae paid $97 million to settle the allegations, though they did not admit any wrongdoing.
Department officials twice missed their deadline for finishing the review, which was initially supposed to be completed within 120 days. A top department official told members of Congress last month that the review would be done by May 1.

Tuesday’s announcement comes after a group of Senate Democrats sent Education Secretary Arne Duncan a scathing letter last week, demanding to know the status of the investigation.

“The other federal watchdogs have done their jobs, and it is past time for you to do yours,” wrote the Democrats, led by Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois.

Education Department officials emphasized that their review of Navient and the three other companies focused only on members of the military who took out federal direct loans. The Justice Department’s investigation that led to the large settlement with Navient last year looked at the company’s private student loans as well as its portfolio of federally guaranteed student loans.

"We are pleased that the Department of Justice was able to do a review with a much wider scope than the Education Department’s loan portfolio to ensure greater accountability for our men and women in uniform," Under Secretary of Education Ted Mitchell said in a statement.

At least one top Democrat, though, on Tuesday indicated she wasn’t satisfied with the department’s review.

Senator Patty Murray of Washington, the top Democrat on the Senate’s education committee, said in a statement that one service member being wronged on student loans “is one too many.”

“I’ve been deeply disappointed with the Department of Education’s conduct from the moment the appalling mistreatment of our service members by student loan servicers was first discovered,” Murray said. “Unfortunately, this report appears to raise even more questions instead of providing the answers and accountability our service members are owed.”

**Rule Changes**
Loan servicing companies have said that the Education Department’s guidance on how to give service members the benefits was unclear until last year. The department has since required its loan servicers to proactively check a Pentagon database to see whether borrowers are on active duty and therefore eligible to have their interest rate capped. Last month, a negotiated rule making panel approved a new regulation that would require the servicers of older government-backed loans to also conduct such proactive checks.

**New Contracts Coming**
The four companies that were part of the review collectively manage student loan payments on behalf of government for the vast majority 27.8 million direct loan borrowers.
Under pressure from some Senate Democrats, as well as a collation of consumer, student, and labor groups, the department is exploring new ways to structure its contracts with the companies. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has also indicated recently that may become more aggressive in policing student loan servicing, including the companies that the Education Department hires.

Officials last year renewed its loan servicing contracts with some changes to how the companies were paid, though the new contracts failed to assuage the concerns of Democrats like Warren.

The department is currently deciding how to restructure those contracts again, and plans to hold a new competition for bids this summer, a department official said Tuesday.

May 27, 2015

When Students Are Disowned Over Sexuality or Gender, Some Colleges Lend Them a Hand

By Madeline Will

NO MENTION

When they encounter a student who has unexpectedly dropped out of class, or who is showing the strain of working multiple jobs, professors and administrators sometimes hear a distressing explanation: My parents cut me off, and I’m not sure what I’m going to do.

Often a thread connects their stories: The students are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, and their parents have stopped supporting them financially because of their sexuality or gender identity.

That leaves the suddenly-strapped students with limited financial-aid options. Students whose parents refuse to provide their information on the federal financial-aid form, known as the Fafsa, might not be eligible to receive any subsidized student aid. Unsubsidized loans could be the only support available unless the students achieve exemption from their status as dependents, but those exemptions are made only in extreme circumstances and after significant processing time. In the meantime, tuition, housing payments, and other living expenses can pile up.
So in the past several years, a small group of college and university officials have begun to fill the gap between familial support and financial aid by establishing emergency scholarships or grant money for such LGBT students.

The scholarships don’t offer much money — typically enough to offset some costs until a student can find another source of funding — but the symbolic nature of the grants can mean just as much as the financial help.

"At Indiana University, our students don’t have to decide between living their lives honestly and openly and an IU education," said Michael D. Shumate, a board director for the IU Foundation and former president of the university’s GLBT Alumni Association, which administers an emergency scholarship for undergraduates who lose their parents’ financial support after coming out.

‘They Just Need Help’
On any of Indiana’s eight campuses, LGBT students who are cut off financially can each apply for a maximum of $1,500 a semester. The money can be used only for tuition and educational expenses like textbooks.

So far, 13 students systemwide have received an emergency scholarship. All have been able to stay in school, said Doug Bauder, coordinator of the Office of GLBT Student Support Services at Indiana University at Bloomington. Typically, emergency grants are meant to bridge the sudden loss of familial support until financial aid or outside scholarships kick in. And they’re intended to signal to students that the campus supports them.

"I can remember one student in particular talking to a group of alumni at a gathering," Mr. Bauder said. "At the point in which she felt she lost her family, she realized there was a larger family that cared for her."

At Kent State University, the emergency fund has been used to cover not just tuition payments but also life expenses. Once the crisis money allowed a student to make a payment on a car that was in danger of being repossessed, said Molly Merryman, an associate professor of sociology who started the fund. At other times, the emergency fund has covered housing bills for students at risk of becoming homeless, she said.

There is no limit at Kent State on how much a student can use (it’s decided on a case-by-case basis), but the average amount is usually $500 or less, said Kenneth M. Ditlevson, director of the Ohio university’s LGBTQ Student Center and the fund’s administrator.
The student center works with the university’s registrar and department of financial-aid services to offer longer-term help, so the fund never has to pay a recurring expense. "It’s really important that you find those allies throughout your institution," Ms. Merryman said.

Kent State has no formal application process, she said, because that could create bureaucratic delays. The fund’s administrator does not ask students for documentation or proof of their financial hardship.

"If someone’s in crisis, they don’t really need someone saying, Bring me your bills or W-2s," Ms. Merryman said. "They just need help."

**Raising the Money**

The number of institutions that offer crisis funding remains quite small — probably just a few dozen colleges, said Shane L. Windmeyer, executive director and co-founder of Campus Pride, a national nonprofit organization for LGBT and allied student groups. But the idea is gaining favor. Members of the Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals have promoted emergency funds as a supportive option for students, said Demere Woolway, co-chairwoman of the consortium, in an email interview.

"I would venture to guess that more people would want to have such a fund than have the resources for such a thing," she wrote.

But securing the resources can be a challenge. At Indiana, Mr. Bauder said, the fund’s supporters have watched tuition costs rise in the last couple of years and thought: "We need to do better than this."

In 2013 the GLBT Alumni Association launched a $1-million campaign to endow both its emergency scholarship and an academic one for LGBT students. Almost two years into the four-year campaign, the association has raised more than $700,000, not counting a number of planned bequests, Mr. Shumate said.

The campaign’s success means that the amount of the emergency scholarships will increase, Mr. Shumate said, "very, very soon."

At Kent State a fund drive is going to be a priority over the summer, Mr. Ditlevson said, as only about $3,000 remains in the university’s fund.

The dwindling coffers worry Mr. Ditlevson: What would happen if the fund couldn’t cover a student’s request? A possible solution, he said, would be to prioritize the
needs of upperclassmen over freshmen, "knowing we wouldn’t have the resources to help with tuition every four years."

And while he wants to advertise the fund more, he is concerned that additional attention could flood it with requests.

It can take time to make an emergency fund sustainable. Robert Sherer, an art professor at Kennesaw State University, in Georgia, has been attempting to endow an emergency scholarship for LGBT students in the College of the Arts since 2007.

Throughout his career, Mr. Sherer said, he has always taught students whose parents had cut them off because they were pursuing a major in the arts. But when he put a rainbow-colored "Safe Space" sticker on his office door, "it was like the dam breaking," he said. Students arrived to share their stories.
"The most frequent one was, ‘My parents were already mad at me because I had chosen to go into the arts, and now I told them I’m gay and they disowned me completely. They’re cutting off all my funds for higher education,’” he said.

Mr. Sherer, who is gay, decided to start a scholarship that would award $1,000 a year and could be used for any expense.

It will take $20,000 to endow the scholarship, and Mr. Sherer has raised about $13,000 so far. He donates all the proceeds of a specific line of his paintings to the fund, and has collected donations from community members as well.

But Kennesaw State has been undergoing a merger with Southern Polytechnic State University this year, and that has slowed progress, Mr. Sherer said. Now he’s planning a summer fund-raising push.