Mizzou News

Daily Clips Packet

May 29, 2015
Officials cite law for withholding intern info, even though it likely doesn't apply

May 27, 2015 11:00 am  •  By Alex Stuckey

JEFFERSON CITY • Missouri legislative officials remain tight-lipped about the college interns working in the Capitol this year, citing a 40-year-old law meant to protect a student's education records. But state and national officials say that law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA, likely doesn't apply to the Legislature.

"FERPA does not generally apply to the state legislature or information that the legislature has on student interns," reads a statement from U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office.

Reporters began seeking information about college interns in the Legislature even before news broke that former House Speaker Diehl, a Republican from Town and Country, exchanged sexually charged text messages with Katie Graham, a 19-year-old intern from Missouri Southern State University. Shortly after the news broke, Diehl resigned. The university is now investigating.

When news spread that the University of Central Missouri was conducting a Title IX investigation after a male and female intern abruptly ended their internship in the office of state Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Independence, reporters continued to push for information. The Senate also is investigating but it's unclear if LeVota is the subject of either investigation.

House and Senate officials continually refused to provide intern's names, colleges and legislative office assignments, citing FERPA as the reason the information was kept under wraps.

But FERPA, passed in 1974 to protect a student's education records, applies to educational agencies and institutions that receive U.S. Department of Education administered funds.

"I don't think the law applies to (the Legislature) because they're not an education institution," said Jean Maneke, legal consultant for the Missouri Press Association.

But that hasn't stopped those in the Legislature from citing the act when barring access to its list of participants. The Missouri Attorney General's Office directed all FERPA inquiries to the education department.

An education department spokesman said universities can use their discretion to determine what it releases.

David Welch, counsel for the Missouri House, said House internships are done in conjunction with colleges and universities, so House officials believe that information is covered under FERPA.

Senate Administrator Marga Hoelscher, who previously cited the act when she refused to release information on the interns, could not be reached for comment this week.

"Part of my responsibility as the Senate administrator is to make sure the privacy of individuals working at the Senate including interns is protected," she said in an email last week. "Due to the sensitive nature of a university Title IX investigation, we will not provide any further comment."
Rep. Jeanne Kirkton, D-Webster Groves, told the Post-Dispatch on Wednesday that, to the best of her knowledge, there were 159 interns from 20 schools in the Capitol this session. Her count includes interns in the offices of the governor and the lieutenant governor, as well as the House and Senate.

Before receiving that information, the Post-Dispatch contacted more than 30 public and private institutions. Of the 20 that responded, only five said they had legislative interns during the 2015 session.

**Four of those schools -- Missouri Southern, Central Missouri, University of Missouri-Columbia and Missouri State University -- also cited FERPA in refusing to provide the names and legislative office assignments for the interns. Both Truman State University and Westminster College had interns but did not respond to a request for comment.**

Some universities said they consider the internship a class because students receive credit hours and they do not release class rosters.

But the fifth school, Northwest Missouri State University, posted information about its Capitol interns on its website. A press release featured the names and pictures of each of their four legislative interns.

Maneke said these issues likely would not be resolved unless someone went to court.

"Sometimes you're just stuck in a middle ground where people argue both ways," she said. "Unless someone goes to court, you don't have a definitive answer and you can't enforce it."

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**Lawmakers to review conduct guidelines for internship program**

Posted: May 28, 2015 3:30 PM by Andria Kirkland, KOMU 8 Reporter

**VIEW THE STORY (MU Mentioned in Video):**
http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29079&zone=2,5&categories=2,5

JEFFERSON CITY -- Although the legislative session ended May 15, lawmakers will come together to review the Missouri House’s internship policy. This action follows the controversy surrounding
former House Speaker John Diehl and sexually suggestive texts he exchanged with a college freshman intern.

Rep. Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, was selected to replace Diehl following his resignation. Richardson said reviewing the current internship policy would be a high priority, even after the session closed.

The review committee will be a bipartisan effort of House members, clerk staff and legislative analysts. The board will compare policies with that of other programs and working with state universities partnered with the Capitol to gather feedback and suggestions for improvements.

GOP House members are scheduled to have a private meeting at the end of July.

"It's a priority to have a policy in place long before the universities start their selection process, which is going to start in the fall," Richardson said. "So everybody has some confidence in the policy."

Potential additions to the legislative internship handbook may include communication and social standards. The current manual outlines how to report harassment and the process for subsequent investigations, however it does not include guidelines for texting and other communications between interns and lawmakers or capitol staff.

Katie Graham, the Missouri Southern State intern who exchanged the controversial texts with Diehl, released a statement May 14 thanking those who have provided her with support.

"This is extremely difficult for both families, and I hope everyone can begin the healing process," Graham said. "I strongly support the Missouri Capitol Internship Program, and hope it remains a positive experience for other students in the future."

Richardson said the policy analysis will be a "robust review."

A Disorder That's Hard to Swallow

Dysphagia can cripple your quality of life and lead to other (deadly) conditions.

By Anna Medaris Miller May 28, 2015 | 10:26 a.m. EDT
Ed Steger’s last meal was a bowl of soup in Las Vegas. “I remember it all too clearly, as if it were yesterday,” he says. But it wasn’t yesterday – it was 2006. “Life is very different” now, says Steger, a 63-year-old former program manager in Houston.

Steger was diagnosed with head and neck cancer in 2005. In addition to 36 rounds of radiation and eight regimens of chemotherapy, he underwent six surgeries, including one that replaced a portion of his pharynx and removed parts of his left jawbone, tongue, epiglottis and soft palate.

“The part that makes it odd is that I’m alive after having four recurrences,” Steger says. The part that makes it distressing is that he can’t eat solid foods.

“There are many case studies I’ve seen where patients have said [their] swallowing disorder is the worst part of their disease – and I believe this to be true,” says Steger, who’s president of the National Foundation of Swallowing Disorders. His daily diet consists of four 8-ounce cans of the nutritional drink Boost Plus, along with two to four bottled Starbucks Frappuccinos, which he buys at his local supermarket. “It’s a very boring diet that allows me to maintain my weight,” says Steger, who’s 5 feet 10 inches tall and 155 pounds.

It’s unknown how many people have dysphagia, or difficulty swallowing, but the condition can be caused by any one of 30 diverse health events, Steger says. While his dysphagia is a result of surgery, other people have difficulty swallowing due to neurological conditions such as Parkinson’s disease or stroke, digestive disorders including acid reflux or head injuries. Children with developmental disabilities like autism also often have dysphagia.

“[Dysphagia] isn’t a disease, it’s a sign or an outcome of a disease,” says James Coyle, an associate professor in the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences who specializes in treating adults with swallowing disorders.

**Difficulty swallowing can also be a part of normal aging, suggests research led by Teresa Lever, an assistant professor of otolaryngology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. But that doesn’t mean it’s without consequence. For example, people with dysphagia are at risk for choking, dehydration, malnutrition and pneumonia, which can be triggered when food or drink enter the lungs.**

“If you can’t walk, you don’t die. If your skin looks horrible, you don’t die. But if you can’t eat and drink, you die,” Lever says. “[Swallowing] is a vital biological function that is a hugely overlooked contribution to morbidity and mortality.”

**Aiming to Eat and Drink Again**

How clinicians treat dysphagia depends on its cause. If, for example, the condition is brought on by a stroke that paralyzes one side of the throat, a swallowing specialist like a speech-language pathologist first might use an imaging test to identify what exactly is going wrong, and then coach the patient on ways to tilt his or her head while eating in order to better prevent food from getting into the airway. Such “compensatory strategies,” Coyle says, are “more or less exploiting either gravity or using the change in position to redirect the swallowed material more efficiently and with better airway protection.”
Steger, for one, was trained to swallow by holding his breath, reclining and “letting the liquid flow” down the back of his esophagus and avoiding the airway. “When I swallow, I need to concentrate very hard,” he says.

Mouth and throat exercises can also help patients boost their swallowing abilities. One mouthpiece-like device called SwallowSTRONG, for instance, senses how hard the patient pushes the tongue against the roof of the mouth and progressively guides him or her in resistance exercises. “It’s like weightlifting,” Coyle says. “You start off doing low levels of exercise, and we increase the targets every two weeks until the tongue is stronger.”

Other exercises use a similar technique but to improve respiratory function rather than tongue strength. When patients blow against progressively increasing resistance, for example, they’ll develop a better cough reflex. That, in turn, will make it more likely that any food particles or liquids inhaled into the airways will be expelled and not enter the lungs to cause harm, Coyle says. “Dysphagia doesn’t always go away,” he says. “Sometimes we have to teach the person to swallow differently, sometimes we have to beef up other parts of the body to compensate for the fact that the swallowing isn’t going to get better.”

If dysphagia is caused by dementia or another condition that compromises someone’s ability to learn, clinicians must defer to environmental or dietary modifications like prescribing a diet of thickened liquids. The route is a last resort, Coyle says, since “gobs of studies” show that people don’t like thickened liquids, don’t drink them and therefore, are at risk for dehydration.

“All of our cases aren’t successful,” he says, “but when we do have a successful case, it’s so rewarding – the ability to restore a person’s ability to eat and drink.”

**Food is Secondary**

If Steger woke up tomorrow without dysphagia, he’d eat a T-bone steak grilled with Lawry’s spice, a baked potato with all the fixings and crème brulee for dessert. But what he’d look forward to most is going to a restaurant with friends, ordering anything he wants and keeping pace with his companions. “The food is secondary at this point,” he says.

Living with dysphagia isn’t just a medical risk, but can also hamper one’s quality of life and mental health. People with the condition can feel isolated not only because they avoid social eating situations, but also because many of them have medical conditions that affect their voices and compromise their communication. In the support groups for people with Parkinson’s that Steger sometimes attends, the participants, many of whom have dysphagia, “are embarrassed to go out, they’re ashamed, it’s sad,” he says.

One of his goals is to boost funding for dysphagia research, which is slow-going since major funding organizations like the National Institutes of Health are more focused on the diseases that underlie the condition, Steger says. “[Swallowing] is never top of mind when you have head and neck cancer or Parkinson’s until it happens to you,” he says. But a focus on swallowing itself is not trivial since, for example, hospital patients with dysphagia stay in the hospital 40 percent longer than patients without it, Coyle says. “It’s very important to identify early.”
It’s also important to dedicate resources to the disorder since it will affect more and more people as the population ages, Lever says. She’s now working to identify traits that protect mice – and hopefully, people – from developing dysphagia as they grow old. “Now that we can diagnose dysphagia, we can identify which mouse models have it, and then we can use those mouse models to try to understand what is going wrong to cause dysphagia,” she says. That, in turn, “can then give [us] some targets for treatment.”

KCWE-TV (ABC) – Kansas City, Mo.

Crews Respond to Fire at Trinity House on MU Campus

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=9fb74882-f9f8-4f7c-a5db-745ca8f486f5

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Columns construction to help with drainage and re-sodding issues

TANZI PROPST, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Relaxing on MU's Francis Quadrangle will be more difficult for the next month or so as MU Facility Operations works to prevent wear and tear around the bases of the MU Columns and fixes drainage issues on the quadrangle.

The $396,798 project began May 18 and is scheduled to continue through June 30. Construction will take place from 7 a.m. through 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and on Saturdays if necessary.
Money for the project comes from the Student Fee Capital Improvement Committee, Landscape Services general funds and donations to the Mizzou Botanical Gardens, said Karlan Seville, spokeswoman for MU Campus Facilities.

“This project will eliminate the need to re-sod around the Columns four to five times each year due to people climbing on the Columns and wearing the sod down,” Seville said.

Workers will lay individual, man-made concrete stones around the bases of the MU Columns and install pipes to help with water drainage.

“The drainage will be improved on the south half of the quad by adding additional storm sewer pipes and inlets to capture stormwater runoff,” Seville said.

On Thursday, the MU Columns were surrounded by a black plastic barrier more than five feet high, and a temporary construction road from the circle drive at the north end of the quadrangle to the MU Columns had been created. Excavation work had also begun on the west side of the quadrangle's south end.

Construction on and around campus during the summer months is easier and faster for crews as there are fewer people on campus, Seville said. Larger projects such as these can be completed in a shorter amount of time without causing too much disruption.

Five win college-sponsored scholarships

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Five high school seniors in Columbia will receive college-sponsored merit scholarships, the National Merit Scholarship Corp. said in a news release.
The scholarship amounts aren’t included in the news release but range from $500 to $2,000 annually for as long as four years.

Ruth Bondurant, a senior at Columbia Independent School, received a National Merit Scholarship to Baylor University.

**Rock Bridge High School seniors Alain Chen and Robert Schmidt each received a National Merit Scholarships to the University of Missouri.**

Sarah Freyermuth, also a Rock Bridge senior, received a National Merit Scholarship to St. Olaf College.

Alyse Heaston, a senior at Hickman High School, received a National Merit Scholarship to the University of Oklahoma.

**Effect of bird flu on egg prices no yolk**

By Tim Barker

A troubling nationwide outbreak of bird flu is on the verge of announcing itself to consumers by way of higher prices for eggs.

Already, avian influenza is responsible for the deaths of millions of chickens and turkeys. And it’s wreaking havoc on the bottom lines of companies such as Brentwood-based Post Holdings, which has seen about 35 percent of its egg supply interrupted by the disease. That could cost the company at least $40 million, according to a recent research note by Stifel Nicolaus.

But earlier this week, a U.S. Department of Agriculture report on wholesale egg prices offered a glimpse of what could be facing consumers.

Prices paid by wholesalers and retail stores jumped above $2 for a dozen large eggs. A week earlier, they were about $1.50 a dozen, according to the USDA’s weekly egg market news report.

**“We’re talking about an egg price story that’s just beginning to unfold,” said Scott Brown, agriculture economist at the University of Missouri-Columbia.**

The surge, however, doesn’t mean grocery store shoppers are going to see an immediate increase in prices. In the short term, it’s more likely to mean fewer sales. That could change, though, if those wholesale prices remain high for an extended period, Brown said.

One of the bigger uncertainties is that no one knows how long it’s going to take to contain this outbreak of the so-called H5N2 virus, which does not appear to be a threat to humans.
After first appearing in British Columbia late last year, the disease crossed into the United States in December and began working its way through a scattering of farms in the Pacific Northwest.

“No one really thought it would cross the Rockies,” said Dan Shaw, veterinarian and poultry pathologist at Mizzou’s College of Veterinary Medicine.

And then it did.

First, it hit a Minnesota turkey flock in early March, claiming 26,000 birds.

A few days later, the disease was found in Missouri, striking two commercial turkey flocks (one in Moniteau County and the other in Jasper County) with a combined 29,000 birds.

Since then, there’s just been one other reported incident in Missouri, involving a small backyard flock in Lewis County. There have been no reported cases in Illinois.

But the disease has devastated flocks in northern states such as Minnesota and Iowa, with containment efforts claiming the lives of more than 41 million turkeys and chickens. Once a flock has been diagnosed with the disease, all of the birds are killed.

Frustratingly for investigators, they’ve been unable to pinpoint exactly how the disease is spreading or where it might go next.

“In the old days, you could track it, because it would follow lines of transportation,” Shaw said.

It made it easier to contain, by isolating farms that were contaminated — or likely to be contaminated.

“We’re not having that kind of result with this outbreak,” he said.

One possible factor, he said, has been this year’s erratic winter, which has witnessed periods of warming followed by more cold. That may be forcing ducks and other waterfowl — likely carriers of the disease — into haphazard migratory patterns.

It doesn’t help he said, that some northern states are still relatively cold.

“We’re hoping for some help from Mother Nature, if they can ever get warmed up, up there,” he said.

MORE OF THE SAME

Unless something changes, the most dramatic impact — from a food supply standpoint — is expected in the realm of eggs. The way the industry operates, flocks are dedicated either to egg or meat production. And it’s been the northern egg-laying flocks that have suffered the most.

Meat production is actually running ahead of where it was a year ago, according to the USDA. Last week, farmers produced 726 million pounds of ready-to-cook chicken, nearly 7 percent more than they did during the same week last year.

For now, stricken growers will focus on rebuilding their flocks, a process that could happen relatively quickly, considering that it takes just four months before newly hatched chicks are old enough to start laying eggs, said Ken Koelkebeck, agriculture professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In the meantime, we could see egg prices rise 25 to 30 percent as consumers, bakeries and companies such as Post Holdings scramble for a more limited inventory.
And while there could be price increases on everything from ice cream to cake mixes, Koelkebeck isn’t expecting anyone to be forced to go without eggs.

“The small bakers will still find a supply. It just might be from someplace else,” he said. “The immediate concern is economic pressure — people will be spending more money but getting the same product.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Mizzou Motion Analysis Center engineers techniques to enhance therapy

CRYSTAL DUAN, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — In the basement of Clark Hall at MU, biomechanical engineers spend their days in the “gait lab” in Room 6. It looks like a typical lab, with its windowless white walls and fluorescent lighting — except for the infrared cameras strategically aimed at four blue tiles in the middle of the floor.

That's where the action happens.

Two computers are ready to track movements, and a monitor behind them is ready to display them.

For Columbia resident Josh Tucker, 15, the monitor helps him pretend he’s a video game character, said his mother, Donna Tucker.

But there's a serious side to the technology.

When Josh was in an all-terrain vehicle accident in April 2012, he suffered a traumatic brain injury that left him in a coma for five months. When he regained consciousness, he had to relearn to eat, speak and walk.

While trying to help Josh recover his walking abilities, therapists at the Children’s Hospital Therapy Center found the left side of his body was significantly weaker than his right.
They advised Josh to go to the Mizzou Motion Analysis Center, as the gait lab is formally known. At the lab, researchers would be able to see what was going on mathematically in Josh’s limbs.

It’s all part of the way MU biomechanical engineers have been researching improvements in measuring and maintaining human motion. The Mizzou Motion Analysis Center, which opened in the summer of 2014, combines research in biomechanical engineering, orthopedics and physical therapy.

So while Josh is pretending he’s a video game character, the forces acting on his muscles and nerves are being measured in the hopes of providing him with a better, more precise treatment plan.

**Research and benefits**

On a recent day, researchers placed motion markers — small plastic balls with reflective tape — on Josh’s muscles and had him walk on the four force plates in the center of the floor, which act like scales when weight is applied. When Josh moved, his multi-colored skeleton on the computer screen also moved. On the display, lines and balls around his limbs indicated the forces on his muscles.

The infrared cameras were focused on the balls, tracking motion and calculating extension angles and muscle flexion. The force plates also tracked the power generated by Josh’s joints — especially on his weak left side.

Through imaging called electromyography (also known as EMG), the computers show which muscles are being activated during each movement. Later, the lab also uses computational models that combine such gait measurements with images from Josh’s tests at the Children’s Hospital Therapy Center.
It was exciting for Josh to watch a different version of himself on the screen, his mother said. For the researchers focused on the “computational side” of physical therapy, it was just another day’s work, center director Dr. Trent Guess said.

“It’s just fascinating to me how you don’t even think about touching your nose,” Guess said. “But how we coordinate the motion of all our arms and fingers is a pretty amazing task. And when you think about how our tissues withstand these forces we put on them in a lifetime, there’s no man-made material that can do what our cartilage does.”

Guess has a background in mechanical engineering, but he first took an interest in biomechanics while studying for his doctorate at the University of Kansas. He decided that he wanted to promote wellness and health using computational methods.

“Being immersed in the clinical side, every day I get to see where the problems are,” Guess said. “I was at an engineering school for 10 years. It was fine, but it just felt like we were building a lot of tools and not really doing anything with them.”

The center has been working on two studies since it opened. One has been in partnership with the University of Missouri women’s soccer team. Guess’ research team uses computational models to look at the power distribution in the athletes’ limbs. The engineers specifically look at the symmetry and rotation of legs during jumps to measure possible indicators of knee injury, specifically to the anterior cruciate ligament, known colloquially as the ACL.

It takes about a year to measure the athletes and sort through the data, Guess said.

But the other study, which explores how knee tissues called menisci absorb shock, has already yielded success. Guess and his researchers found that if menisci become slack over time, this damage can hinder knee movements significantly.

According to the center’s research on osteoarthritis, this finding may ultimately impact research on how to prevent joint pain and degeneration.
Such research can benefit patients at the Children’s Hospital Therapy center, physical therapist Mary Meyer said.

When Josh was scheduled for a heel lengthening surgery after the weaknesses in his left side became apparent, Meyer recommended going to the gait lab before and after the surgery. That way, Guess’ researchers could do a direct comparison to detect changes.

“In Josh, we were seeing a lot of lower extremity weakness,” Meyer said. “We wanted to see what kind of motor control he truly has, to dictate what medical therapy is best for him at this time.”

**Benefits to pediatric patients**

Meyer broached the idea of partnering with the gait lab around half a year ago after seeing the success of the James R. Gage Center for Gait and Motion Analysis, which is operated by Gillette Children’s Specialty Health Care in St. Paul, Minnesota. Meyer believed that the lab could help the hospital in Columbia make similar strides in treating its patients.

The EMG imagery that MU’s gait lab produces can further indicate which muscles a physical therapist should pay attention to, making their jobs easier, Meyer said.

"When working with children, sometimes it’s hard to determine and prioritize what the best medical recommendations are,” Meyer said. “A lot of our children have multi-system impairments. We’ve seen how beneficial it is for the pediatric population to make better recommendations.”

For now, the hospital is assigning patients to the lab once a month; the goal for the near future is to double that. So far, Guess and his researchers have been able to do computations for six patients, Meyer said. A single appointment is about three hours long.

The gait lab and its interactive science have taken Josh's recovery “a step up,” his mother said.
"He's had so many big moments in his recovery, but this is one that just gets the details (of how he walks)," his mother said. "We often forget in his recovery how far he's come."

Editorial: No quarrel with free public preschool in St. Louis

By the Editorial Board

The St. Louis school district is providing free public preschool education for 2,200 pre-kindergarten children in 44 neighborhood schools. That’s a good thing, even though there are 19,000 city children under age 4 who are not being served by the public schools. Some of them may be attending private child care centers and some of them may not be in preschool. But 2,200 is a start, and an important one.

But advocacy groups such as United 4 Children and Child Care Aware of Missouri are complaining that the majority of children who went into the city’s free preschools came from established child care centers, as reported last week by the Post-Dispatch’s Nancy Cambria.

They’re pointing their fingers at the wrong culprit. Any blame to be leveled belongs to the Missouri Legislature, which not only underfunds schools, but cheats it out on helping low-income families with child care expenses. Missouri ranks 47th in the nation for income eligibility for child care benefits. As child care advocate Pam Mitchell put it: “You have to be poorer than a potato to even qualify for financial assistance.”

Potatoes aside, a family of four in Missouri must earn less than 127 percent of federal poverty guidelines, about $2,500 a month, to be eligible to receive the full child care assistance benefit. The Department of Human Development and Family Science at the University of Missouri says a single mother with two young children making $23,000 a year — $1,917 a month — is not eligible for financial assistance for child care. The department says the average cost for such child care is $11,325 a year. That would swallow almost half of that single mom’s total income.

It gets worse: The state’s also chintzy when it comes to paying child care providers. The university says child care provider rates in Missouri are roughly 65 percent of the market rate for infant care and 50 percent for preschool and school-age care. Bingo, Missouri: 50 out of 50 for preschool care reimbursements and 44th for infant care.

Instead of squabbling over whether the St. Louis Public Schools’ free preschool is stealing children from the private providers, both sides — which care deeply about the welfare of children — should get together to lobby lawmakers to do better for kids, even if it means they must do less for corporate interests.

The school district, under the direction of Superintendent Kelvin Adams, took the money from a $21 million settlement of a legal dispute over desegregation funds to pay for the initial preschool expansion. There may be better uses for that money, but study after study has shown that pre-K education is one of the best investments the public can make.
In future years, the pre-K program may be funded through the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A new law will allow free preschool to be delivered to underperforming school districts. Paula Knight, an assistant superintendent overseeing early childhood education for the school district, told Ms. Cambria that the district has not yet made plans for how to spend any DESE funds for pre-K education.

At this point, the district has a waiting list of 700 preschoolers. It is referring parents on the list to its “neighborhood partners,” private child care providers across the city.

Child care advocates are correct when they point out that when licensed centers close around the community, neighborhoods lose infant and toddler child care slots, not just those for pre-K students. The public schools’ preschool program is available only for 3- and 4-year-olds. Keeping the neighborhood partner idea alive and well will make sure that resource is not lost to families.

Private-care advocates also note that state law exempts schools from mandatory licensing of child care programs. Meanwhile, the law requires day cares that are not school- or church-based to be licensed. The licensed facilities get regular state inspections for basic health and safety standards and have caps on enrollment and student-teacher ratios.

These are legitimate concerns, but they shouldn’t keep the sides from working together to provide what’s best for the children in the St. Louis community. Start talking and stop throwing stones. That’s kid stuff.

May 29, 2015

Universities Yelp as Elsevier Pulls Back on Free Access

By Paul Basken

A blossoming experiment in allowing a form of open-access scientific publishing appears to have hit a roadblock, after the world’s largest journal publisher found that too many universities were moving to take advantage of it.

The publisher, Elsevier, has told universities that have built their own online repositories of journal articles written by their researchers that they now must respect waiting periods typically lasting a year or two before allowing free access to Elsevier-owned content.

Elsevier is describing the policy shift as merely a reiteration of what it always has required. "We are now communicating our embargoes more clearly," Alicia Wise, the publishing company’s director of access and policy, said on Thursday.
But representatives of universities and their researchers are crying foul, saying Elsevier is reneging now that a movement to create university repositories — web-based storehouses of articles — is rapidly gaining momentum.

The perceived threat to Elsevier comes from a combination of the repositories and a subsequent series of faculty votes at various universities establishing the expectation that researchers contribute to them. Now more than 50 campuses have such policies, many of them major research institutions, said Heather Joseph, executive director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, an advocacy alliance of 225 institutions in the United States and Canada.

"When those policies started proliferating, in 2012, you could see that Elsevier got very nervous," Ms. Joseph said.

Battle Lines Over Access

Elsevier publishes more than 2,000 journals, including the prestigious Cell and The Lancet. It has long been a focal point for groups such as Ms. Joseph’s coalition, which has argued that research financed by taxpayers should be immediately available to anyone. Thousands of researchers signed a pledge in 2012 to boycott the company. Elsevier and other publishers have pushed back, saying they need some period of exclusive access for paying subscribers so that they can finance the costs of editing and publishing scientific work.

The Obama administration has been part of the broad battle, saying it wants federal agencies to set policies requiring free access within 12 months to the results of research they finance.

The specific dispute this year with Elsevier stems from a 2004 company policy that, according to Ms. Joseph, allowed universities to create their own online repositories that gave outsiders free and immediate access to the plain text of articles that appeared in Elsevier journals.

Elsevier agrees that it let its authors post their articles on their own websites, Ms. Wise said. But the company technically did not extend that right to universitywide repositories, even if it did not seek out and shut down transgressors, she said.

As more and more universities began creating repositories and faculty members began urging their use, Elsevier in 2012 asked universities to negotiate agreements establishing the terms of how the repositories would operate, Ms. Joseph said. Then, one month ago, it set specific embargo periods for most of its journals, ranging from six months to 48 months, that it expected the repositories to observe before making articles freely available, she said.

More than 80 university-based groups, and more than 500 researchers and other open-access advocates, have now signed a letter to Elsevier protesting the action. "The policy has been adopted without any evidence that immediate sharing of articles has a negative impact on publishers' subscriptions," said the letter, organized by Ms. Joseph’s group and a Europe-based ally, the Confederation of Open Access Repositories.

The Association of American Universities, which represents dozens of leading research institutions in the United States, did not sign the letter but expressed support for it. "We’re
disappointed also in Elsevier’s new policy," said the group’s spokesman, Barry Toiv. "It curtails legitimate sharing that we believe does not threaten their business model."

An Evolving Landscape

Elsevier, however, felt the emerging university-based repositories were getting too close to replicating the services it sells to survive, Ms. Wise said. Even the permission for individual scientists to post freely on their own websites might cross that line as the ability to search throughout the Internet improves, she said.

"Maybe we will continue to watch as the landscape continues to evolve, which it’s doing very rapidly." Ms. Wise said. At the same time, she said, "it is clear that open access is an important part of the landscape and it’s here to stay, so we need to find ways to make it work, that are sustainable, and we’re doing that."

"We’re learning as we go, as are other stakeholders," Ms. Wise said.

And universities, for their part, apparently have not reached the point where they are so bothered by Elsevier and other publishers that they refuse to use their services altogether, Ms. Joseph acknowledged.

"Universities are pretty conservative organizations, and it’s taking them a long time" to understand the relative trade-offs in relying on private publishers, she said.

At least one concern appears to have been allayed: The protest letter organized by Ms. Joseph’s group said that Elsevier’s latest policy shift appeared to be retroactive, meaning universities might have to remove some articles already posted publicly in their repositories. Ms. Wise made clear in an interview, however, that the company was not making any such request.

May 29, 2015

My Title IX Inquisition

By Laura Kipnis

NO MENTION

When I first heard that students at my university had staged a protest over an essay I’d written in The Chronicle Review about sexual politics on campus — and that they were carrying mattresses and pillows — I was a bit nonplussed. For one thing, mattresses had become a symbol of student-on-student sexual-assault allegations, and I’d been writing about the new consensual-relations codes governing professor-student dating. Also, I’d been writing as a feminist. And I hadn’t sexually assaulted anyone. The whole thing seemed symbolically incoherent.
According to our campus newspaper, the mattress-carriers were marching to the university president’s office with a petition demanding "a swift, official condemnation" of my article. One student said she’d had a "very visceral reaction" to the essay; another called it "terrifying." I’d argued that the new codes infantilized students while vastly increasing the power of university administrators over all our lives, and here were students demanding to be protected by university higher-ups from the affront of someone’s ideas, which seemed to prove my point.

The president announced that he’d consider the petition.

Still, I assumed that academic freedom would prevail. I also sensed the students weren’t going to come off well in the court of public opinion, which proved to be the case; mocking tweets were soon pouring in. Marching against a published article wasn’t a good optic — it smacked of book burning, something Americans generally oppose. Indeed, I was getting a lot of love on social media from all ends of the political spectrum, though one of the anti-PC brigade did suggest that, as a leftist, I should realize these students were my own evil spawn. (Yes, I was spending a lot more time online than I should have.)

Being protested had its gratifying side — I soon realized that my writer friends were jealous that I’d gotten marched on and they hadn’t. I found myself shamelessly dropping it into conversation whenever possible. "Oh, students are marching against this thing I wrote," I’d grimace, in response to anyone’s "How are you?" I briefly fantasized about running for the board of PEN, the international writers’ organization devoted to protecting free expression.

Things seemed less amusing when I received an email from my university’s Title IX coordinator informing me that two students had filed Title IX complaints against me on the basis of the essay and "subsequent public statements" (which turned out to be a tweet), and that the university would retain an outside investigator to handle the complaints.

I stared at the email, which was under-explanatory in the extreme. I was being charged with retaliation, it said, though it failed to explain how an essay that mentioned no one by name could be construed as retaliatory, or how a publication fell under the province of Title IX, which, as I understood it, dealt with sexual misconduct and gender discrimination.

Title IX was enacted by Congress in 1972 to deal with gender discrimination in public education — athletics programs were the initial culprits — and all institutions receiving federal funds were required to be in compliance. Over time, court rulings established sexual harassment and assault as forms of discrimination, and in 2011 the U.S. Department of Education advised colleges to "take immediate and effective steps to end sexual harassment and sexual violence." Since then, colleges have been scrambling to show that they’re doing everything they can to comply, but still, more than 100 of them are under federal investigation for violating Title IX policies.

I should pause to explain that my essay included two paragraphs about a then-ongoing situation on my campus involving a professor who was himself the subject of two sexual harassment investigations involving two students. This professor subsequently sued university officials and one of the students for defamation, among other things. The charges had occasioned a flurry of back-and-forth lawsuits, all part of the public record, which had been my source for the two paragraphs. My point in citing this legal morass was that students’ expanding sense of vulnerability, and new campus policies that fostered it, was actually impeding their educations as
well as their chances of faring well in postcollegiate life, where a certain amount of resilience is required of us all.

The email from the Title IX coordinator provided a link to information about our university’s Title IX policies, which brought me to a page containing more links. Clicking around, I found information about the rights of accusers and what to do if you’ve been harassed, though I couldn’t find much that related to me. I did learn that Title IX protects individuals who’ve reported sexual misconduct from retaliation — characterized as “intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination” — but I failed to see how I could have retaliated against anyone when it wasn’t me who’d been charged with sexual misconduct in the first place.

I wrote back to the Title IX coordinator asking for clarification: When would I learn the specifics of these complaints, which, I pointed out, appeared to violate my academic freedom? And what about my rights — was I entitled to a lawyer? I received a polite response with a link to another website. No, I could not have an attorney present during the investigation, unless I’d been charged with sexual violence. I was, however, allowed to have a "support person" from the university community there, though that person couldn’t speak. I wouldn’t be informed about the substance of the complaints until I met with the investigators.

Apparently the idea was that they’d tell me the charges, and then, while I was collecting my wits, interrogate me about them. The term "kangaroo court" came to mind. I wrote to ask for the charges in writing. The coordinator wrote back thanking me for my thoughtful questions.

What I very much wanted to know, though there was apparently no way of finding it out, was whether this was the first instance of Title IX charges filed over a publication. Was this a test case? From my vantage point, it seemed to pit a federally mandated program against my constitutional rights, though I admit my understanding of those rights was vague.

A week later I heard from the investigators. For reasons I wasn’t privy to, the university had hired an outside law firm, based in another Midwestern city an hour-and-a-half flight away, to conduct the investigation; a team of two lawyers had been appointed, and they wanted to schedule “an initial interview” the following week. They were available to fly in to meet in person — the phrase "billable hours" came to mind — or we could videoconference. The email contained more links to more Title IX websites, each of which contained more links. I had the feeling that clicking on any of them would propel me down an informational rabbit hole where I’d learn nothing yet not re-emerge for days.

I replied that I wanted to know the charges before agreeing to a meeting. They told me, cordially, that they wanted to set up a meeting during which they would inform me of the charges and pose questions. I replied, in what I hoped was a cordial tone, that I wouldn’t answer questions until I’d had time to consider the charges.

We finally agreed to schedule a Skype session in which they would inform me of the charges and I would not answer questions. I felt the flush of victory, though it was short-lived. I said I wanted to record the session; they refused but said I could take notes. The reasons for these various interdictions were never explained. I’d plummeted into an underground world of secret tribunals and capricious, medieval rules, and I wasn’t supposed to tell anyone about it.
Because I strongly believe that the Title IX process should be far more transparent than it is, let me introduce some transparency by sharing the charges against me.

Both complainants were graduate students. One turned out to have nothing whatsoever to do with the essay. She was bringing charges on behalf of the university community as well as on behalf of two students I’d mentioned — not by name — because the essay had a "chilling effect" on students’ ability to report sexual misconduct. I’d also made deliberate mistakes, she charged (a few small errors that hadn’t been caught in fact-checking were later corrected by the editors), and had violated the nonretaliation provision of the faculty handbook.

The other complainant was someone I’d mentioned fleetingly (again, not by name) in connection with the professor’s lawsuits. She charged that mentioning her was retaliatory and created a hostile environment (though I’d said nothing disparaging), and that I’d omitted information I should have included about her. This seemed paradoxical — should I have written more? And is what I didn’t write really the business of Title IX? She also charged that something I’d tweeted to someone else regarding the essay had actually referred to her. (It hadn’t.) Please pause to note that a Title IX charge can now be brought against a professor over a tweet. Also that my tweets were apparently being monitored.

Much of this remains puzzling to me, including how someone can bring charges in someone else’s name, who is allowing intellectual disagreement to be redefined as retaliation, and why a professor can’t write about a legal case that’s been nationally reported, precisely because she’s employed by the university where the events took place. Wouldn’t this mean that academic freedom doesn’t extend to academics discussing matters involving their own workplaces?

Since the investigators had refused to provide the charges in writing, and I can often barely read my own handwriting, I’d typed notes during the Skype session, though I’d wondered if they’d object to that, too — could they? The extent of their powers was mysterious to me. (I’d briefly considered furtively recording the session despite the ban but decided against it — I’m a law-abiding type, I realized to my chagrin.)

I made what sense I could of my wildly mistyped notes and emailed the investigators a summary, adding that I’d answer only questions related to the charges I’d been informed about. I wrote up a peevish statement asserting that the essay had been political speech, stemming from my belief, as a feminist, that women have spent the past century and a half demanding to be treated as consenting adults; now a cohort on campuses was demanding to relinquish those rights, which I believe is a disastrous move for feminism. I used the words "political" and "feminist" numerous times.

Let me interject that I don’t think my university necessarily wanted to be the venue for a First Amendment face-off — indeed, the president himself had recently published an op-ed in defense of academic freedom. As I understand it, any Title IX charge that’s filed has to be investigated, which effectively empowers anyone on campus to individually decide, and expand, what Title IX covers. Anyone with a grudge, a political agenda, or a desire for attention can quite easily leverage the system.
And there are a lot of grudges these days. The reality is that the more colleges devote themselves to creating "safe spaces" — that new watchword — for students, the more dangerous those campuses become for professors. It’s astounding how aggressive students’ assertions of vulnerability have gotten in the past few years. Emotional discomfort is regarded as equivalent to material injury, and all injuries have to be remediated.

Most academics I know — this includes feminists, progressives, minorities, and those who identify as gay or queer — now live in fear of some classroom incident spiraling into professional disaster. After the essay appeared, I was deluged with emails from professors applauding what I’d written because they were too frightened to say such things publicly themselves. My inbox became a clearinghouse for reports about student accusations and sensitivities, and the collective terror of sparking them, especially when it comes to the dreaded subject of trigger warnings, since pretty much anything might be a "trigger" to someone, given the new climate of emotional peril on campuses.

I learned that professors around the country now routinely avoid discussing subjects in classes that might raise hackles. A well-known sociologist wrote that he no longer lectures on abortion. Someone who’d written a book about incest in her own family described being confronted in class by a student furious with her for discussing the book. A tenured professor on my campus wrote about lying awake at night worrying that some stray remark of hers might lead to student complaints, social-media campaigns, eventual job loss, and her being unable to support her child. I’d thought she was exaggerating, but that was before I learned about the Title IX complaints against me.

My Midwestern Torquemadas were perfectly pleasant at our on-campus meeting — they’d indeed flown to town to meet in person — so pleasant that I relaxed and became overvoluble, stupidly gratified by their interest and attentions. There I was, expounding on my views about power and feminism; soon I was delivering a mini-seminar on the work of Michel Foucault. Later, replaying the two-and-a-half-hour session in my mind, I thought, "You chump," realizing that I’d probably dug a hundred new holes for myself. They’d asked endless questions about particular sentences in the essay, the sources for my ideas and claims, and what I’d meant in that fateful tweet. They didn’t record any of it, nor was there a stenographer. One of the lawyers typed notes on her laptop; they’d send me a summary of my remarks, they said, which I could correct or add to, if I chose. I found these procedures utterly mystifying.

Toward the end, I asked how the complainants could possibly know that my essay had created a "chilling effect" on campus. One of them, I was told, had provided the lawyers with the names of students and staff members who’d testify that the essay had chilled them. I, too, could supply names of witnesses to interview, if I liked.

That was our only face-to-face meeting, though there were numerous phone calls, emails, and requests for further substantiation, including copies of emails and tweets. I tried to guess what all this was costing — two lawyers flying back and forth to conduct interviews of the complainants, myself, and an expanding list of witnesses, review the sources for a 5,200-word article, adjudicate their findings, and compose a thorough report. I’m no expert on legal fees, but I was pretty sure the meter was ticking in $10,000 increments.
I’d been asked to keep the charges confidential, but this became moot when, shortly before my campus meeting with the investigators, a graduate student published an article on a well-trafficked site excoriating me and the essay, and announcing that two students had filed Title IX retaliation complaints against me. She didn’t identify her source for this information or specify her own relationship to the situation, though she seemed well versed on all the inside details; in fact, she knew more about the process than I did.

It wasn’t me alone on the chopping block. She also excoriated our university’s president for his op-ed essay on academic freedom, which, she charged, was really a veiled commentary on the pending Title IX charges against me and thus subverted the process by issuing a covert advance verdict in my favor. (He’d obliquely mentioned the controversy over the essay, among other campus free-speech issues.) She didn’t seem particularly concerned that she herself was subverting the process by charging that the process had been subverted, and by revealing the complaints in the first place.

She was also surprisingly unconcerned about how effectively her article demolished its own premises about the asymmetry of institutional power. If a graduate student can publicly blast her own university’s president, mock his ideas, and fear no repercussions, then clearly the retaliatory power that university employment confers on anyone — from professors to presidents — is nil. Nor had my own essay exactly had a chilling effect on anyone’s freedom of expression.

An academic friend and I disagreed about whether the graduate student’s article would be seen as a good career move on her part (a courageous example of "punching up") or a self-wounding one ("collegiality" is still a factor considered by hiring committees; no one wants a high-drama potential colleague). He thought the former; I wasn’t so sure, though we agreed that given the shifting political winds on campuses these days, it was impossible to call.

At the end of the interrogation, the investigators asked if I wanted to file my own retaliation complaint against the student who’d revealed the charges. I said that I believed all parties involved were using the process for political purposes. I declined to press charges against anyone.

They’d issue a report on their findings within 60 days, they said, though on what basis I had no idea. The standard that applied was "preponderance of evidence," they’d explained — "more likely than not" as opposed to "beyond a reasonable doubt" — but that seemed pretty vague. Note that I was never actually presented with any of this evidence. Given that the investigators doubled as judge and jury, and the extralegal nature of the proceedings, I wished I’d been more ingratiating.

The Title IX bureaucracy is expanding by the minute. A recent emailed update from my university announced new policies, programs, hires, surveys, procedures, websites, and educational initiatives devoted to sexual misconduct. What wasn’t quantified is how much intellectual real estate is being grabbed in the process. It’s a truism that the mission of bureaucracies is, above all, to perpetuate themselves, but with the extension of Title IX from gender discrimination into sexual misconduct has come a broadening of not just its mandate but even what constitutes sexual assault and rape.
Ambivalent sex becomes coerced sex, with charges brought months or even years after the events in question. Title IX officers now adjudicate an increasing range of murky situations involving mutual drunkenness, conflicting stories, and relationships gone wrong. They pronounce on the thorniest of philosophical and psychological issues: What is consent? What is power? Should power differentials between romantic partners be proscribed? Should eliminating power differences in relationships even be a social goal — wouldn’t that risk eliminating heterosexuality itself?

Nothing I say here is meant to suggest that sexual assault on campuses isn’t a problem. It is. My concern is that debatable and ultimately conservative notions about sex, gender, and power are becoming embedded in these procedures, without any public scrutiny or debate. But the climate on campuses is so accusatory and sanctimonious — so "chilling," in fact — that open conversations are practically impossible. It’s only when Title IX charges lead to lawsuits and the usual veil of secrecy is lifted that any of these assumptions become open for discussion — except that simply discussing one such lawsuit brought the sledgehammer of Title IX down on me, too.

Many of the emails I received from people teaching at universities pointed out that I was in a position to take on the subjects I did in the earlier essay only because I have tenure. The idea is that once you’ve fought and clawed your way up the tenure ladder, the prize is academic freedom, the general premise being — particularly at research universities, like the one I’m fortunate enough to be employed at — that there’s social value in fostering free intellectual inquiry. It’s a value fast disappearing in the increasingly corporatized university landscape, where casual labor is the new reality. Adjuncts, instructors, part-timers — now half the profession, according to the American Association of University Professors — simply don’t have the same freedoms, practically speaking.

What’s being lost, along with job security, is the liberty to publish ideas that might go against the grain or to take on risky subjects in the first place. With students increasingly regarded as customers and consumer satisfaction paramount, it’s imperative to avoid creating potential classroom friction with unpopular ideas if you’re on a renewable contract and wish to stay employed. Self-censorship naturally prevails. But even those with tenure fear getting caught up in some horrendous disciplinary process with ad hoc rules and outcomes; pretty much everyone now self-censors accordingly.

When it comes to campus sexual politics, however, the group most constrained from speaking — even those with tenure — is men. No male academic in his right mind would write what I did. Men have been effectively muzzled, as any number of my male correspondents attested.

I suspect that most Americans, if pushed, would go to the mat for the First Amendment, which is what academic freedom is modeled on. You can mock academic culture all you want, and I’ve done a fair amount of it myself, but I also believe that unconstrained intellectual debate — once the ideal of university life, now on life support — is essential to a functioning democratic society. And that should concern us all. I also find it beyond depressing to witness young women on campuses — including aspiring intellectuals! — trying to induce university powers to shield them from the umbrages of life and calling it feminism.

As of this writing, I have yet to hear the verdict on my case, though it’s well past the 60-day time frame. In the meantime, new Title IX complaints have been filed against the faculty-support
person who accompanied me to the session with the investigators. As a member of the Faculty Senate, whose bylaws include the protection of academic freedom — and believing the process he’d witnessed was a clear violation of academic freedom — he’d spoken in general terms about the situation at a senate meeting. Shortly thereafter, as the attorneys investigating my case informed me by phone, retaliation complaints were filed against him for speaking publicly about the matter (even though the complaints against me had already been revealed in the graduate student’s article), and he could no longer act as my support person. Another team of lawyers from the same firm has been appointed to conduct a new investigation.

A week or so earlier, the investigators had phoned to let me know that a "mediated resolution" was possible in my case if I wished to pursue that option. I asked what that meant — an image of me and the complainants in a conference room hugging came to mind. I didn’t like the visual. The students were willing to drop their complaints in exchange for a public apology from me, the investigators said. I tried to stifle a laugh. I asked if that was all. No, they also wanted me to agree not to write about the case.

I understand that by writing these sentences, I’m risking more retaliation complaints, though I’m unclear what penalties may be in store (I suspect it’s buried somewhere in those links). But I refuse to believe that students get to dictate what professors can or can’t write about, or what we’re allowed to discuss at our Faculty Senate meetings. I don’t believe discussing Title IX cases should be verboten in the first place — the secrecy of the process invites McCarthyist abuses and overreach.

For the record, my saying this isn’t retaliation. It’s intellectual disagreement. If more complaints are brought, I suppose I’ll write another essay about them. To my mind, that’s what freedom of expression means, and what’s the good of having a freedom you’re afraid to use?

May 29, 2015

White Like You: The Challenge of Getting White Students to Grapple With Racial Identity

By Steve Kolowich

Washington

NO MU MENTION

When Frances E. Kendall talks to college leaders about race, she tends to hear a lot of facts and figures about minorities.
Three percent black. Five percent Asian. Three percent Latino. And maybe one or two Native Americans.

And then the numbers stop.

"No one says, ‘We have this many white students,’” says Ms. Kendall, a consultant who works with colleges on race issues.

"What they believe they have is this many students of color,” she says. “And the remainder are not students of another color, but are just students.”

Whiteness is the prevailing racial atmosphere on most college campuses. Yet while students of color perceive that constantly, white administrators, faculty members, and students just don’t see it, says Ms. Kendall.

How to open their eyes? That is what Ms. Kendall was hoping to help college officials figure out this week during a two-day seminar here at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education.

Having better conversations about race on college campuses does not just mean building multicultural centers and academic programs where students of color can learn more about their own racial identities, says Ms. Kendall.

It also means teaching white students that they are white.

Privilege and Struggle

Lately conversations about whiteness on college campuses have centered on the idea of "white privilege," and they tend not to go very far. Last spring a white, male student at Princeton University took exception to being asked repeatedly to "check his privilege."

The student fired back in an op-ed for The Princeton Tory, a right-leaning student publication, in which he described his grandfather’s struggle to build a life in America after being driven out of Poland by the Nazis.

"Maybe my privilege is that they worked hard enough to raise four children, and to send them to Jewish day school and eventually City College," he wrote in the essay, which drew national attention.

That is a common response, says Robin DiAngelo, a former associate professor of education at Westfield State University, in Massachusetts.

Ms. DiAngelo, who recently left academe to serve as director of equity for a nonprofit service provider for senior citizens, says white students often reject the premise of white privilege by citing the various other ways that their people have overcome oppression. But that misses the point, she says.

"They see this as mutually exclusive, that you can’t have struggles and be privileged," says Ms. DiAngelo. "You have to think of privilege as the lack of struggle in a very specific and profound aspect of life. It does not mean no struggle, just not that struggle."
The toughest cases, according to Ms. Kendall, are not necessarily the students who dismiss the concept of white privilege, or even those who seem to celebrate their privilege. It’s the well-meaning white students who acknowledge the problem but believe they’ve already solved it.

"White liberals, they’re the hardest," says Ms. Kendall. "They believe, and many were raised to believe this, that the best thing is to be colorblind. Which, of course, none of us is."

Ms. Kendall, a slightly built 68-year-old white woman with short gray hair and the vestiges of a Texas accent, cultivates a disarming presence that is useful in her line of work. She was not shy about challenging seminar attendees when she felt they were being ignorant or disingenuous. But she always did so gently, and with reassurance — a method she referred to as "calling people in" rather than "calling people out."

She knows how easily people can become frustrated and withdraw from discussions of race, especially if they sense that the conversation is happening on someone else’s terms. (White people are especially sensitive to this, says Ms. Kendall, because they are not used to it.)

"It’s definitely a balancing act," says Ms. DiAngelo. "You want to push people right up to their learning edge, but not go past it so that they shut down."

Puncturing Students’ Skepticism

During the seminar, Ms. Kendall asked the attendees how they might persuade white students on their own campuses to confront their whiteness in a productive way.

"Ideally, you have a place where the conversation can go for an hour or two and people feel comfortable," said Alex Bruce, who helps manage residential programs at Indiana University at Bloomington. "Realistically, in my world, I don’t see that happening."

Student-affairs officials might be able to use free pizza and other tactics to entice some students to such a workshop, said Mr. Bruce. Drawing in students who are skeptical of the very concept of white privilege is a harder challenge.

"In my situation, I picture my bros on campus," he said. "How do I engage those bros in this conversation? That’s a tough one."

It’s especially tough because most white students have the ability to opt out of any sense of racial awareness, said Sherri Benn, an assistant vice president for student affairs at Texas State University. "They can always escape back into just being white."

Even for those who are eager to talk about whiteness — like, say, white people who flew to Washington for a conference on race and ethnicity and who chose to attend Ms. Kendall’s seminar — the conversation is not easy.

After several black attendees spoke passionately about how difficult it is to work on college campuses where white privilege reigns but is seldom acknowledged, Ms. Kendall asked the white people in the room to talk about how hearing that made them feel.

One woman tried to express her support, but struggled to find the right words. "Please, keep sharing your experiences," she said, blushing a bit. "Keep persisting."
At this Ms. Benn’s brow furrowed. Ms. Kendall noticed, and asked her to speak her mind.

Ms. Benn rose from her seat and firmly explained that she didn’t need any white person’s help or permission to "persist." The comment had been condescending, she said. Good intentions are not going to solve any problems, and neither is guilt.

"I just need white people to own your stuff," she said.

May 29, 2015

A Global Education Opens Doors, but Leaves Many Shut Out

By Karin Fischer

Boston

Employers say that international experience matters in hiring decisions. Chief executives fret that today’s graduates lack the skills to succeed in a global economy. Even the U.S. secretary of education, Arne Duncan, in recorded remarks to the annual conference here this week of Nafsa: Association of International Educators, called global education a must-have.

"In the 21st century," Mr. Duncan said, "a quality education is an international education."

For all the talk, you might be tempted to think that every American graduates from college with a diploma and a well-stamped passport. The reality is far different. Study-abroad participation remains persistently low; less than 10 percent of all undergraduates go overseas.

The rates are even lower among the students who increasingly populate the country’s college classrooms — black and Hispanic students, and those who are the first in their families to go to college. While national data are not collected on study abroad by income, surveys of international educators consistently rank cost and lack of funding for students as among their greatest concerns.

And a 2012 report by the American Council on Education said that American colleges have actually taken a step backward in certain key areas of campus internationalization: Fewer colleges today require students to take courses that emphasize global perspectives as part of their general education, and the number with mandatory study of a foreign language continues to plummet.
The trends deeply worry those who believe that international experience is an imperative for all graduates. "It’s a moral issue," said Martin Tillman, a higher-education consultant and longtime expert on career development and international study. He’s leading a session on Friday at the Nafsa conference on economic inequality and the growing gap in access to international education.

Given the employability advantages that can accrue to students with such expertise, Mr. Tillman said, American colleges risk producing a generation of global haves and, mostly, have-nots.

He and others argue that efforts to increase study-abroad numbers likeGeneration Study Abroad, an initiative to double overseas study by the end of the decade, must concentrate on low-income and first-generation students and those from racial and ethnic minorities.

"What if the result is to double the number of the same population that already goes abroad?" Mr. Tillman said. "If we merely have 600,000 upper-middle-class white women going abroad, what will we have accomplished?"

Expense or Investment?

Daniel Obst, deputy vice president for international partnerships at the Institute of International Education, the nonprofit group that is spearheading Generation Study Abroad, said diversifying international study is an important part of the effort. The institute just announced around of scholarships for students at colleges that are seeking to improve access in study abroad. Almost every grant application singled out the need to especially serve first-generation college students, Mr. Obst noted.

The University of California at Irvine, one of the grant winners, has started an ambassadors program that sends students who have previously gone abroad to talk to community and student groups, including Upward Bound and nearby high schools where family incomes are low. At least half of the 14 ambassadors are on Pell Grants themselves, said Marcella J. Khelif, associate director of the study-abroad center at UC-Irvine.

Colleges may sometimes make the mistake of thinking that there is a single solution to improving diversity and inclusiveness in study abroad, said Andrew Gordon, president and founder of the Diversity Abroad Network, a consortium of higher-education institutions, government agencies, and study-abroad providers focused on the issue.

In reality, the problem is complex and so too must be the response. For example, a minority student at a majority-white institution may not respond to the idea of study abroad as an opportunity for cultural immersion because, for him, just going to college may be an "extreme cultural experience," Mr. Gordon said. That pitch also could fall on deaf ears for a student who is the first in her family to go to college. If educators can’t articulate the real-world value of overseas study, Mr. Gordon said, it may be seen as "an expense, not an investment."

‘A Speeding Train’

But Fanta Aw, Nafsa’s president, said if colleges cling to the notion that the way to internationalize is to send students to study overseas for a semester or a summer, they will continue to graduate few with global skills. Educators, for instance, have been slow to embrace
international-service learning, viewing it as insufficiently academically rigorous. Still, students love it, and it gets them abroad, said Ms. Aw, who is assistant vice president for campus life at American University, in Washington, D.C.

The real push, however, has to be in home-campus classrooms, Ms. Aw argued. "Even if we double the numbers, most students will not go abroad," she said. "The place where there is the opportunity to make the greatest inroads is the internationalization of the curriculum."

Such a strategy, Ms. Aw pointed out, also can make use of a critical asset on many American campuses: the large and growing numbers of international students in the United States.

Changing the curriculum has been a key part of what Winston-Salem State University, a historically black college in North Carolina, has done to bring more international perspectives to its campus. The institution was able to use federal grants to help professors develop internationally focused courses and short study-abroad trips. Faculty members have taught a course that links Winston-Salem State students with their counterparts in India via videoconferencing and have taken classes abroad to China and Brazil.

Before the effort, the university sent about 15 students abroad each year, said Joti Sekhon, director of international programs. Now it averages about 45 annually. "It’s small but meaningful for us," she said after a Nafsa session.

Ms. Aw said global labor demands, combined with changing demographics in this country, mean that educators can no longer afford to be complacent in preparing internationally minded graduates. "This is a speeding train," she said, "and we have to get out in front of it."