A Controversial Proposal to Fix Fraternities: Keep the Women Out

The University of Missouri in Columbia is considering an alumni group’s idea to ban women from fraternity houses on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

The idea was included in a series of proposed changes entitled “Safety of Women Students in Fraternity Houses,” which was submitted by the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium and leaked last week. The consortium is not an official alumni group of the university, a university spokesman said, but the group has been working with the administration on ways to improve Greek life over the past several years.

In addition to prohibiting women from entering fraternities between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, the proposal also suggests disallowing fraternities from hosting social events outside of Columbia, Mo., restricting the alcohol that can be served at fraternities to beer, and requiring fraternities and sororities to conduct mandatory drug tests. Most national sororities already do not permit alcohol in sorority houses.

After the proposal leaked, students took to social media to complain. The university is hosting a summit on June 20 to discuss the proposal and solicit input from student leaders in the Greek community. “Nothing has been finalized yet,” said Christian Basi, a university spokesman. “The perception among Greek students that the proposals were final is not the case.”

The proposals at Missouri come after a period of heightened scrutiny on the problem of sexual assault on campus and the misbehavior of members of the Greek community, particularly fraternities.

In a statement released by the Panhellenic Association, which represents sororities, and Interfraternity Council at Missouri, the Greek councils expressed concern about the proposals, writing that they “strongly [disagree] with several of the policies proposed.”
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) – A proposed ban of alcohol other than beer and restrictions on visits by women at fraternities at the University of Missouri in Columbia are among possible changes being criticized as too overreaching.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports proposed rules such as barring women from fraternity houses during peak party hours from late Thursday until early Sunday is meant to cut down on sexual assaults.

Mizzou Fraternity Alumni Consortium spokesman Ted Hellman says the chancellor should be applauded for being proactive, and that nothing’s been finalized.

But students will get a chance to weigh in during a summit June 20 including administrators and members of Greek organizations.

The university’s Panhellenic Association says restricting women from locations under the guise of safety suggests women cannot make safety choices for themselves.
Mizzou considers ways to make campuses safer

Watch the Fox story: http://fox2now.com/2015/06/11/mizzou-considers-ways-to-make-campuses-safer/

COLUMBIA, MO (KTVI) – Mizzou students are reacting to possible changes aimed at making college life safer. The Mizzou Fraternity Alumni Consortium will soon meet with a number of other groups and the University of Missouri chancellor to discuss ideas.

Nothing has been finalized, but some ideas have been made public. Banning hard liquor from fraternity houses and banning visits from females during weekend overnight hours are some of the ideas sparking debate. The idea is to minimize the risk of anyone becoming the victim of a sexual assault.

Some students feel the ban on females is sexist. Some students feel there’s more trouble away from fraternity houses than inside them.

“Just doesn’t make a lot of sense to me,” said Mizzou student Mark Hughes.

“They’re trying to keep girls safe which is a good thing,” said Mizzou student Joey Lucas. “I just think they’re putting their focus on the wrong place.”
A university spokesperson said nothing has been decided. An invitation-only summit will be held June 20. The university chancellor will listen to ideas and determine where to go from there.

Some students who disagreed with the ideas expressed appreciation that the university is engaged in safety. They just hope their voices are heard.

Here is a joint statement from the University of Missouri Panhellenic Association and the Interfraternity Council regarding the upcoming chancellor’s summit.

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**Proposed rule changes for Mizzou frats draw criticism**

By Associated Press

Posted Jun. 11, 2015 at 7:24 PM

COLUMBIA, Mo. – A proposed ban of alcohol other than beer and restricted visits from women are among possible rule changes for University of Missouri fraternities meant to lower the frequency of sexual assaults — steps many have criticized as overreaching.

The proposals, outlined Thursday in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, were part of an overall effort to bolster student safety on campus, and "no one is being singled out," university spokesman Christian Basi said.

Students will get a chance to weigh in on the proposals — including one that would prohibit women at fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays — during a June 20 invitation-only summit that will include administrators and members of Greek organizations.

Ted Hellman, spokesman for the Mizzou Fraternity Alumni Consortium advocacy group that has worked with the university on coming up with the rules, said Chancellor Bowen Loftin should be applauded for being proactive, and that nothing’s been finalized.

"People are getting all riled up over old and incomplete information," Hellman said, calling student safety "a significant issue."

Since 2010, the newspaper said, 22 sexual assaults and rapes have been reported to University of Missouri police; just one of those alleged attacks took place at a fraternity.
The university's Panhellenic Association, which governs sororities, says restricting women from certain locations under the guise of safety lends itself to the notion that women cannot make choices for themselves. And Laura Palumbo, a prevention campaign specialist at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, said restricting women from fraternities at certain times "misses the mark" of creating a fraternity system based on respect.

"The goal is to address the safety of women students in fraternity houses, but the proposal was written by men who are not entrenched in daily campus, fraternity and sorority life," the association said in a letter to the chancellor.

Parker Briden, a spokesman for the Intrafraternity Council, said fraternities already were taking greater steps to police themselves, including establishing a peer education system to help fraternity members better understand sexual assault.

Sexual assault has been a focal point at the university since early 2014, when ESPN aired an "Outside the Lines" segment about former University of Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey's claims she was raped by several football players more than a year before her suicide drew sharp criticism about the university's handling of the matter. In March, university police said they failed to identify a suspect and closed their investigation, citing "several obstacles" that included the lack of DNA and video evidence, uncooperative witnesses and the elusiveness of firsthand accounts.

**THE COLLEGE FIX**

**No Women in Frats on the Weekend under Mizzou’s Proposed Greek Life Rules**

Women and spirits are out. Peeing in a cup and staycations are in.

*Proposed puritanical rules governing Greek life at the University of Missouri, particularly at fraternities, have sparked both local and national outrage in the Greek community.*

One alumni adviser from a different school ridiculed the proposals as the first step toward enacting strict curfews and segregation of men and women – measures more typical of the pre-sexual revolution campus.

Mizzou is likely to get an earful from Greek leaders at an invitation-only “chancellor’s summit” next week to discuss the rules, proposed by the Fraternity Alumni Consortium without any consultation of campus Greek organizations.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin tasked the alumni consortium with devising policies that effectively communicate to the fraternities the pressing nature of sexual assault and alcohol abuse issues, with an eye on “eliminating” assault on campus.

Unfortunately for the chancellor, the consortium’s April 8 draft leaked, according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

The proposed rules would limit alcohol at frat houses to beer, prevent frats and sororities from hosting out-of-town formal events and require them to drug-test members.
In perhaps the most controversial provision, the consortium would ban women from frat houses Thursday through Saturday from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. each night, as well as certain other times of the year.

The Panhellenic Association of sororities and Interfraternity Council at Mizzou expressed their “strong” disagreement with the overall proposal in a joint press release.

Tellingly, the sororities took the lead. The association said the “very premise of the proposal” was “problematic” and that many provisions were “ineffective and uneducated.”

In a letter to Loftin attached to the release, the sorority leaders said that while the proposal’s purpose is protecting women in frat houses, it “was written by men who are not entrenched in daily campus, fraternity and sorority life.”

The sororities support the restriction on alcohol and suggest that it be expanded, so that even beer would be limited to “common areas.” They also back the elimination of out-of-town formals because sharing a bed with a date creates “expectations” and it would hard for a victim of sexual assault to get “out of that situation that weekend.”

The sororities are insulted by other provisions, though.

“By restricting women from certain locations under the guise of ‘safety’, this [curfew] policy lends itself to the notion that women cannot make choices for themselves about their own safety,” said the letter, signed by all members of the association’s executive board and each sorority president. The drug-testing policy is “absurd and unwarranted,” they told Loftin.

The council of fraternities said in the release that its board has been working “throughout the year” on a new “alcohol policy and education initiative” to fight sexual assault in frats, one that “closely mirrors” the consortium’s proposal.

The association and council pointed to recent news coverage of the council’s “peer educators” group, which educates men about sexual-assault prevention.

A spokesman for the consortium that proposed the new rules told the Post-Dispatch that Greek leaders were “getting riled up over old and incomplete information.”

For example, the drug-testing provision has been downgraded to an “option,” not a requirement, and the rest haven’t been finalized, the spokesman said.

**Potential to drive drinking off campus**

Some of the provisions drew scorn on Total Frat Move, a news and commentary site for Greek life.
Mizzou alum Rob Fox wrote that the beer-only rule was “not the worst idea,” though a ban on grain alcohol like Everclear would make a better target. (Some states already ban the sale of Everclear and liquors of similar strength.)

But Fox said the no-women-after-10 rule would “drive drinking further underground and off campus, where there will be significantly less control over the parties” than in frat houses. Drunk driving would “definitely” increase, he added.

If Mizzou wants to make curbing sexual assault its “highest priority,” it should “segregate” the campus by sex, “build a wall around the women’s campus” and institute daytime visiting hours for men, according to Bill Frezza, an alumni adviser to a fraternity at MIT who has previously warned that drunk women are a threat to frats.

Frezza told The Fix by email the school should also require dates to be chaperoned – “preferably by a member of the Title IX staff” – expel students for alcohol possession and shame college women into avoiding premarital sex.

“Many colleges operated on this principle back in the 1950s and they had nothing like the problems we have today,” Frezza said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Prominent MU researcher dies
COLUMBIA — Ray Semlitsch, an MU Curators' professor of biology and an international leader in amphibian ecology, died Wednesday in Columbia. He was 64.

Dr. Semlitsch's research focused on amphibians in seasonal wetlands and headwater streams. He was particularly interested in how amphibian habitat was affected by a range of disturbance, including land use. His research focused on ways to manage and conserve wetland species.

According to the MU News Bureau, local, state and federal agencies used his work to protect wetlands and terrestrial habitats, as well as to write more effective conservation plans.

Within the past decade, he conducted studies on golf courses in western North Carolina and determined that amphibians could thrive in the streams that crossed fairways. His research demonstrated that negative or positive impacts can result from mankind's interaction and alteration of the environment.

He had a particular interest in salamanders and studied the factors that affected their populations and survival in aquatic environments.

Recently, he and a team of other researchers studied the salamander population in the Mark Twain National Forest and found that these and other amphibians could assist in soil enrichment.
and insect control. His research provided an example of how all living and non-living aspects of nature are ecologically connected.

Dr. Semlitsch was the recipient of several awards and honors. He was awarded the University of Missouri's 1999 Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity, the 2008 National Wetlands Award for Science Research from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the 2011 Fitch Award for Excellence in Herpetology from the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A colleague of his, Carl Gerhardt, a Curators' professor of biology, said he was impressed by Dr. Semlitsch's passion about his work and his students. Dr. Semlitsch and Gerhardt joint-advised a graduate student who studied sexual selection in common tree frogs.

"He was smart and critical," Gerhardt said. "The project would not have been able to get off the ground without his expertise."

Tom Anderson, a graduate student who worked in the Semlitsch lab, said that Dr. Semlitsch was a great mentor.

"He was very good at motivating and encouraging us," Anderson said. "His own work ethic and experience was an example of how to be successful. He was a great person to be around."

Dr. Semlitsch served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1968 to 1972.

He graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology from SUNY College at Buffalo in 1975, a master's degree in zoology from the University of Maryland in 1979, and a doctorate in zoology from the University of Georgia in 1984.

Before joining the faculty at the University of Missouri in the Division of Biological Sciences, he held positions at Memphis State University and the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Services will be announced at a later date.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Get to know Gracie Gold

On Saturday, American figure-skater Gracie Gold will take the stage, but not in the most typical way.

The 19-year-old Olympian is the University of Missouri High School's commencement speaker. She is also a graduate of the school.
The commencement will ... well, commence at 2 p.m. in Stotler Lounge, inside MU's Memorial Union.

Here are seven fun things to know about Gracie Gold.

1. Gold is a fraternal twin. Her (slightly) younger sister, Carly, is also a competitive figure skater.

2. She started skating at the age of 8 after she attended her best friend's birthday party at an ice skating rink, according to Gracie's website. She signed up for lessons the following week.

3. Gold made her international figure-skating debut in 2011 at the Junior Grand Prix competition in Tallinn, Estonia. She won gold. Watch her free-skate at the competition.

4. She became friends with Taylor Swift after T.Swift tweeted at her during the 2014 Sochi Olympics. And on Valentine's day ... aw! Here's the beginning of their Twitter love.

5. Gold not only skates, she also juggles. In fact, before every competition, Gold juggles as a pre-competition ritual to help her focus and relax.

6. One of Gold's favorite jumps to do on the ice is called a triple-lutz, named after Austrian ice skater Alois Lutz. Not sure what a lutz looks like? That would be the first jump Gold makes in the video below.

7. She's currently ranked No. 4 in the world by the International Skating Union World Standings.

Want to know more about "Go for the Gold" Gracie Gold? Follow her on Twitter and Instagram, or like her Facebook page.

June 12, 2015

Sex-Assault Prevention Program Sees Results, and Raises Questions

By Katherine Mangan

NO MU MENTION
A program designed to help female college freshmen resist sexual assault is creating a lot of buzz among victims’ advocates and college educators. Most were encouraged to learn that incidents of rape had been cut in half among participants in a Canadian study of the program, which involved four three-hour sessions in which the women learned to recognize the danger of coercive situations and to fight back, verbally and physically.

Still, some questioned whether the approach puts too much responsibility on women to resist rape, and not enough on men to treat women with respect.

The study involved about 900 freshmen at three Canadian universities and was written up in *The New England Journal of Medicine* on Thursday.

During the year following their participation in the study, 5 percent of the women enrolled in the resistance program reported having been raped. That compared with 10 percent of those in a control group who read and discussed brochures. Incidents of attempted rape and nonconsensual sexual contact were also much lower among participants in the resistance program.

The lead author of the study, Charlene Y. Senn, a social psychologist at the University of Windsor, talked with *The Chronicle* about the study. An edited and condensed transcript follows.

**Q. How does this approach differ from others that are intended to empower women?**

**A.** This is 12 hours, and the longest risk-reduction program before was about seven and a half hours. All of those other efforts so far have been either ineffective for all women, or effective only for women with no history of prior victimization. Or the effects only lasted for two to four months.

**Q. How would you respond to concerns that this approach puts the onus on women to avoid being raped?**

**A.** Many of the poster campaigns in which women are told what they should wear, or where they should go, or what they should do — I agree, they’re entirely inappropriate. This program is not that. But we have to do multiple things. We do need to stop perpetrators and hold them accountable, but our efforts to do that at the college or university level have been almost entirely ineffective and have created a backlash.
We can’t do perpetrator kinds of education at the university level. We have to do that much earlier.

We can make ending sexual violence everyone’s business through bystander intervention, like the program I’m involved in on my campus. At the same time, we need to support survivors and give women the tools they need to fight back. If we know we can actually reduce the number of rapes women are experiencing, it would be unethical not to do it.

Q. Why focus on acquaintance rape?

A. On campuses, over 90 percent of the perpetrators are acquaintances. Most women are oriented and trained and socialized to fear the stereotypical stranger rape and to avoid the underground parking garage or walking home alone at night across campus. That doesn’t protect them from far-more-common threats. We’re trying to help women work through the complex emotional obstacles to recognizing cues in the men they might like or at least know. It’s giving women information skills and practice to more quickly identify potentially dangerous situations and to get out or use force if necessary.

With acquaintances, women are unlikely to use force, and much more likely to use methods like reasoning or pleading or crying, and we know those are ineffective.

Q. Was there anything in the results that surprised you?

A. I didn’t expect the size of the impact to be so large — that only eight women would need to have participated in the program in order to stop a nonconsensual, nonpenetrative act, and only 22 women to avert one completed rape. Also, the fact that the impact was apparent one year later, while most programs don’t work for more than a few months. I was pleased that we didn’t need a booster within that first year.

Q. Your phone has been ringing off the hook with media calls. What do you think about the response?

A. I’m thrilled because it seems that giving women the best knowledge and tools, and confidence that they can defend themselves, has been missing from the dialogue. Bystander intervention is very important, but it’s a long-term process. I’m thrilled this is getting out there so we’ll be working on all of those fronts simultaneously.
Congress May Finally Offer the NIH More Money — at a Price

By Paul Basken

The good news for the National Institutes of Health and its university researchers is that after some 14 years of flat budgets, Congress may be about to loosen the purse strings.

The bad news is that the scientists might not like the terms.

Evidence of a possible break in the budgetary logjam is headed by legislation, expected to reach a floor vote this month in the House of Representatives, that would give the NIH an extra $2 billion a year in each of the next five years.

The other encouraging signs include enthusiastic pledges of support for the NIH from various presidential candidates, from some fiscal conservatives, and from the 23 members of a new congressional caucus formed specifically to help the agency.

At the same time, NIH officials and some of its advocates have warned, there’s a troubling trend among lawmakers to get more deeply involved in deciding what the NIH should and should not study, down to specific disease categories.

A common theme among such lawmakers, the NIH’s director, Francis S. Collins, told his advisory committee on Thursday, is the concept of "burden of disease" — trying to weight NIH spending on various diseases by their estimated economic cost to society.

Examples include the growing calls by advocacy groups for the NIH to spend more money on Alzheimer’s disease, estimated to cost the U.S. economy more than $200 billion a year. Such calls are often accompanied by comparisons to diseases, such as AIDS, that affect far fewer people. The NIH spends about $600 million a year on
Dr. Collins told the semiannual meeting of the NIH’s Advisory Committee to the Director that he appreciated lawmakers’ desire to better understand the nation’s $30-billion annual investment in his agency. But, he said, "simply adding up burden-of-disease calculations and saying that’s how NIH should be spending its money is shortsighted."

**The NIH’s Priorities**

Pressure on the NIH — the largest single source of research money for universities — to be more specific comes in several forms. One chief element, contained in legislation enacted last year to set the overall federal budget, asked the NIH to draft an agencywide strategic plan.

That request is being reiterated in the legislation now moving through the House, known as 21st Century Cures (HR 6), that would give the NIH an additional $10 billion from 2016 to 2020. The measure passed a House committee last month on a 51-to-0 vote, and is expected to face floor votes this month. The Senate is working on a similar bill.

Dr. Collins told his advisory panel that lawmakers have made clear they want to see an NIH strategic plan in return for improving the budgetary prospects of the agency, which is getting the same amount of federal support it received more than a decade ago, as measured on an inflation-adjusted basis.

"They want to know what are our priorities," he said. "That’s a fair question, that’s a question we should have an answer to."

At the same time, the question has potentially worrisome implications, Dr. Collins and several advisory-panel members said. In drafting the strategic plan, the NIH should be wary of suggesting too many statistical measures, said one member, Christopher B. Wilson, director of the Global Health Discovery Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Be very careful about what you measure," Dr. Wilson said.

Another panel member, Helen Haskell Hobbs, a professor of molecular genetics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, reiterated the point. "That’s how you can change behavior overnight — and not in good ways," Dr. Hobbs said of a strategic plan that rested too heavily on statistics-based arguments.

In the case of AIDS research, Dr. Collins said, the relative financial burden of the disease may not be the best measure of whether it’s worth maintaining a strong push
toward a cure, given how close scientists may now be to defeating it altogether. "This is a disease we could eradicate, and that ought to count for a lot," he said.

It’s an example, he said, of why lawmakers should stick to their longstanding tradition of largely leaving medical experts to set priorities within medicine. He endorsed the assessment of the NIH’s associate director for legislative policy and analysis, Adrienne A. Hallett, who told the panel that there’s been "a little bit of fraying" in the "unwritten gentlemen’s agreement" that the NIH’s peer-review system for judging grant applications should be the primary driver of spending allocations.

"The word ‘frayed’ describes a little bit that the bargain right now is not quite as robust as it has been in the past," Dr. Collins said.

‘High-Risk, High-Reward Research’
Similarly, the prospects for actual increases in NIH spending are tough to read, Ms. Hallett told the advisory panel. The 21st Century Cures bill and influential lawmakers’ public advocacy of more NIH spending are encouraging, she said. Yet it’s "a bit of a paradox" in that nobody is actually crafting a "grand bargain" that would end the fundamental constraints caused by the budget-sequestration vote of 2013.

"We have wide-scale support," Ms. Hallett said. "But the appetite for some sort of breakthrough on a deal is fairly weak." There’s also the risk, she said, that Republicans might try to finance NIH increases through cuts that Democrats would find unacceptable, such as reductions in support for carrying out the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as Obamacare.

In addition to its demand for an NIH strategic plan, the 21st Century Cures bill would direct the agency to spend the additional $10 billion in specific areas. The House version calls for 35 percent of the increase to be dedicated to younger researchers, and 20 percent to "high-risk, high-reward research."

The NIH has already identified those areas as priorities, and as such they don’t appear especially troublesome, said Howard H. Garrison, deputy executive director for policy at the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology.

But the precedent of taking money with restrictions is worth at least some caution, Mr. Garrison said. And the specific source of the $10-billion increase could raise some concerns for universities, said David B. Moore, senior director of government relations at the Association of American Medical Colleges. About half of the money would come from selling oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the federal government’s emergency stockpile of crude. The next-biggest source, however, would
involve cuts in Medicare reimbursements, and that could hurt some academic medical centers, Mr. Moore said.

Over all, though, both Mr. Moore and Mr. Garrison said congressional drafting of the 21st Century Cures bill appeared to be moving in a positive direction. "But it’s a long way," Mr. Moore said, "to anybody cashing checks."

June 11, 2015

Federal Dollars Finance Ever-Greater Share of Higher Education, Analysis Shows

By Goldie Blumenstyk

NO MU MENTION

In debating the merits and value of higher education, knowing who pays for what can be an important part of the discussion. When it comes to government funding, the decline in state support is well documented. But a report released on Thursday by the Pew Charitable Trusts shows just how much the balance of responsibility has shifted from the states to the federal government.

The report, which includes a state-by-state analysis, shows that from 2000 through 2012 spending from federal sources per full-time-equivalent student increased by 32 percent, while state spending dropped by 37 percent.

"That’s a really significant shift in a very short time," said Phillip Oliff, a manager at Pew, who helped develop the analysis. The balance tipped in 2010.
For the report, the Pew researchers counted federal student-aid grants (but not federal student loans or the value of education tax credits), federal education benefits provided to veterans, and federal spending on research at universities.

The biggest factor driving the federal increase was the rise in spending on Pell Grants, said Mr. Oliff. During the period studied, the size of the maximum Pell Grant was increased, and college enrollment by needy students expanded.

Meanwhile, state funding, the bulk of which is provided to institutions, not individuals, did not increase at the same pace as the growth in enrollment.

In 2013 states appropriated a total of about $73 billion to higher education, while the federal government provided $76 billion, the analysis shows.

The state-by-state comparisons highlight not only the differences in states’ higher-education spending but also which states benefit the most from federal dollars.

For example, on a per-student basis, federal funding to Hawaii was three times what it was to New Jersey, most likely because Hawaii has fewer students but many federally funded research projects at its universities.

Impact of Pell Surge

June 12, 2015

By Kellie Woodhouse

NO MU MENTION

Federal spending has surpassed state spending as the main source of public funding in higher education, and the primary reason is a surge in Pell Grants in the last decade.
Federal and state funds have different missions. The majority of state funding is used to fund specific public institutions, whereas federal funding is generally awarded through student aid and research grants. State funding goes primarily to public institutions, while federal funding goes to student at public, private and for-profit colleges, and to researchers at public and private universities.

Historically, state funding has been heftier than federal funding. In the 25 years leading up to 2012, states spent 65 percent more on higher education than the federal government.

Yet that trend has rapidly changed in the past decade.

In 2010 federal funding overtook state funding as the main source of public support for universities and colleges throughout the country, according to a report released Thursday by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

That same year funding for Pell Grants -- grants awarded to college students from low-income families -- hit an all time high of about $36 billion. In fact, during the five-year period leading up to 2013, Pell funding increased by 72 percent, and funding of college benefits for veterans tripled.

In 2013 the federal government spent nearly $76 billion on higher education, while states spent about $3 billion less, according to the "Federal and State Funding of Higher Education" study. Federal support include nearly $25 billion in research funding obligations, which are paid over a series of years depending on the length of a research project.

“Our biggest surprise was just the shift that we saw in federal and state higher education funding,” said Phil Oliff, a higher education analyst at Pew. “This is a really significant shift in a pretty short period of time.”

Though the federal government now funnels more money to higher education as a whole, states still supply a greater share of funding to public universities. Public colleges educate 68 percent of all students in the U.S., and in 2013 they received an average of 21 percent of their funding from state funds and 16 percent of their funding from the federal government. Tuition and fees also accounted for 21 percent of public university revenue.

Those averages hide wide variations. Community colleges and nonresearch public institutions tend to get much larger shares of their budgets from state funds. And even at research universities, research grants have a big impact on faculty projects and graduate education, but don't necessarily pay for undergraduate education.

Total public funding per full-time-equivalent student for higher education fell 12 percent in the 12-year period starting in 2000, when adjusted for inflation.

Yet during that time, federal funding nearly doubled while state funding fell -- federal funding grew from $43 billion to $83 billion, while state funding dropped from $78 billion to $71 billion.

Meanwhile, enrollment skyrocketed, growing by 45 percent.

Pew’s report shows that state funding is responsive to the economic climate, while federal funding was less restricted by the economic downturn that began in 2008. In fact, more low-income students attended college during the downturn, and the federal government actually increased its Pell Grant support during that time.
Oliff noted that both federal and state funding vary widely by state. For example, Alaska universities receive, on a per-student basis, six times the state funding of New Hampshire universities. Meanwhile, per-student federal funding in Hawaii is more than double the federal funding in most other states.

Pell funding also varies state to state. There are higher concentrations of Pell recipients in the Southeast, compared to relatively lower concentrations in the Northeast.

On average, the federal government provided nearly $2,100 in Pell funding for every full-time-equivalent student in 2013.

Does Humor Have a Place in Higher Ed Marketing?

June 12, 2015 - 3:00am

By Tim Jones

No Mu Mention

College is a funny thing. It’s full of scholarly pursuits in the halls of academe, centuries-old institutions with cherished seals, histories of tradition, prestigious alumni, trustees, chancellors, regalia, committees on committees, formal ceremonies, and countless other idiosyncrasies.

Hilarious, right? Maybe not so much. In comparison to an ad like the 90-second video/commercial from DollarShaveClub.com, a favorite among teens, higher ed might come across as, well, a little stuffy, outdated, and definitely not funny.

I know: “We’re a university, not a company. We’re not selling things like razors, deodorant or insurance.” Really? Indeed, what we offer is so much cooler, so much more interesting, and important. But why does our marketing have to be completely devoid of humor?

Especially when it’s well established that humor works.

Yes: Humor Works
That humor works is a fact supported by scholarship. Consider the International Society for Humor Studies and tell your boss this is all scientifically legit.

More proof. A 1993 Journal of Marketing study looking at the effects of humor on advertising concluded that, “humor is more likely to enhance recall, evaluation, and purchase intention when the humorous message coincides with ad objectives, is well-integrated with those objectives, and is viewed as appropriate for the product category. Under such circumstances, humorous advertising is more likely to secure audience attention, increase memorability, overcome sales resistance, and enhance message persuasiveness.”

That’s especially true for one of higher ed’s most prized targets -- the Millennials. Research by textbook rental company Chegg showed that the promos millennials remember best are funny -- 80 percent recall ads that made them laugh.

That’s exactly what we want as higher ed marketers, right? We want people to remember us. We want to differentiate our institutions, programs and opportunities from the vast sea of sameness in an increasingly competitive industry. Humor can help us do that.

The downside? Humor is hard.

Advertising legend David Ogilvy wrote, “I must warn you that very, very few writers can write funny commercials which are funny. Unless you are one of the few, don’t try.”

And there’s a fine line between funny and fail. The Chegg research on Millennials showed that they can be extremely harsh toward failed attempts at humor. For proof, just spend five minutes on Twitter or imgur.

So using humor effectively in your marketing and communications requires a good bit of consideration and, well, a sense of humor.

Here are some ways to start.

**Have Fun with the Familiar**

Humor scholar and William & Mary Religion Professor John Morreall offers an encouraging approach to finding funny: “You know, all you’ve got to do for humor, really, is take something familiar and look at it from a fresh angle.”

Look for those undeniably relatable moments, experiences or realities of university life that you can play with. Things like parking, exam stress, weird professors, text book costs, residence halls all make for good material.

Acknowledge and celebrate them with a funny gif, custom meme, lighthearted video, maybe a mildly tongue-in-cheek tweet. The more authentic and dialed-in to your audience’s experiences, the better. At Clarkson University, students held a Snapchat contest asking for submissions around during the week before finals commonly called Dead Week. Nearly every single one was humorous (or at least an attempt at humor).

**Know Your Brand, Inside and Out**
If your brand is confined to a rigid style guide, talking points and a positioning statement, you’ll have a hard time having a sense of humor about it. Finding the most relatable aspects of your brand means knowing what others are saying about you. Monitoring their comments can give you great insight into where you’ll find traction with your audiences. Sometimes, it just takes weather.

**Study The Internet**

To be effective, hitting the right tone with the right audience is a must. At least that’s what you’ll need to be prepared to explain to your boss as you’re cruising YouTube, Reddit, Tumblr, Twitter, YikYak, Instagram, quickmeme, Giphy, etc. to find out what’s hot on the web. This is a great way to identify current trends you can spin for a unique take.

**WARNINGS:** Contrary to popular belief, just because it’s “on the internet” doesn’t mean it’s funny or that you can pull it off. And just because something worked for another institution doesn’t mean it will work for yours.

**Test Your Material**

Fortunately, testing new material can be relatively low stakes. Use social media to test out ideas and you’ll know quickly if it’s got legs. Limit exposure by using paid social advertising options on Twitter and Facebook to publish to a small group that resembles your target audience. Then evaluate the response. Give it some time. Humor can be subjective.

**Be Appropriate**

Humor won’t work for everything. But it can be a valuable part of your marketing strategy. Make sure to experiment with humor where it makes sense. Sometimes that means scaling back the sarcasm and limiting the jokes to be humorous or lighthearted instead of LOL funny. Take small steps when in doubt. Above all, be true to your brand.