U. of Missouri IFC fraternity houses will ban hard liquor in the fall

University of Missouri fraternities in the Interfraternity Council (IFC) will say goodbye to hard liquor in all fraternity houses in the fall, says an IFC representative.

This decision comes in light of the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s list of proposals for improving the “safety of women students in fraternity houses” and limiting the number of sexual assaults on campus. These proposals include prohibiting women guests in fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, forbidding out-of-town social events and formals, outlawing hard alcohol and implementing mandatory drug testing for all Greek members.

Parker Briden, IFC vice president of public relations at Mizzou, says IFC does not support all of the consortium’s proposals as they currently stand.

“We don’t like what most of them are — with the exception of the alcohol policy — in their first form,” Briden says. “I kind of think it’s the wrong direction to go, but we don’t want students to be in a panic and think that these are the new policies without amendment.”

However, the council will be changing some of its own policies sometime during the fall 2015 semester.

“While alcohol doesn’t necessarily cause sexual assault, it’s definitely a contributing factor,” Briden says. “So, in order to try and discourage people from binge-drinking, we’re going to be banning hard liquor in all fraternity houses and having a system that allows for people to drink beer and wine.”

He says this new policy will hopefully “discourage people from going overboard with their alcohol consumption.” Any fraternity found in violation of this policy will be turned over to the Office of Student Conduct.

IFC fraternities will also change the ways in which they educate fraternity members on sexual assault.
Briden says IFC has begun training people to talk about sexual assault issues, who will go into fraternities and teach people about what leads to sexual assault, bystander intervention and other ways to prevent sexual assault.

The original purpose of the Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s proposals was to eliminate sexual assault on Mizzou’s campus.

But some think their passage could lead to change for the worse.

“For freshman year, I think it would lead to a lot more drinking in dorms and places that aren’t — I mean, honestly — as safe as fraternity houses,” Panhellenic Vice President of Public Relations Carolyn Welter says. “I think it just would lead to trying to find ulterior places to do the same things that you do in fraternity houses in a less safe and controlled manner.”

According to the National Institute of Justice, university women know their perpetrator in 85-90% of sexual assaults. The most common locations of reported sexual assaults are at the man or woman’s home. Even in the environment of a fraternity house, a random meeting between two individuals has a smaller likelihood of ending in a sexual assault than between two people who previously knew each other.

“It could happen in fraternity houses, but it’s just as likely to happen in other places,” Welter says.

And if the proposals are enacted as is, female students will not be allowed in fraternity houses during specific hours on the weekend. However, female students and male students are allowed to live on co-ed floors in residence halls, share gender-neutral bathrooms and live in gender-neutral housing, as USA TODAY College reported.

“You’re allowed to socialize in the dorms with no restriction on when women are allowed to be in your dorm room, but in your private house that you all own, you wouldn’t be able to do that,” Briden says. “I think that would be inconsistent and be a cause of frustration for a lot of students.”

Over the past week, members of Mizzou’s Greek community have expressed outrage over the proposals the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium introduced. On June 5, 2015, IFC and the MU Panhellenic Association (PHA) put out a press release detailing their positions on each of the proposed policies.

Attached to the press release was a letter PHA wrote to MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. The letter said the women of PHA supported the social and recruitment events and the alcohol policies.

“Some of the policies that we supported I think would change it for the better,” Welter says. “For example, the one that is only allowing beer in fraternity houses, I think that definitely would lead to less intoxicated people and therefore have the ability to make more informed decisions.”
According to the letter, PHA members do not, however, support drug testing for all Greek members or prohibiting female students from becoming guests in fraternity houses.

“By doing that, it makes women feel like they don’t have the ability to [make that decision],” Welter says. “PHA probably should have been consulted or at least some current college women should have been consulted prior to the policies being written.”

And Briden agrees.

“I think that women on our campus are generally adults,” Briden says. “They should be able to decisions for themselves, and I think it does show a certain lack of respect for their decision-making ability.”

And it’s not just the Greek community that will be affected if the proposals are enacted.

“Greeks are 27% percent of the campus, so anything that affects the Greek community affects the entire Mizzou community,” Briden says.

According to the Office of Greek Life, 7,651 students were involved in Greek life out of 27,654 undergraduate students in 2014.

The proposed policies affecting MU students will be discussed further at the Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault & Student Safety in Fraternity Houses, which Loftin will host on June 20, 2015. The summit is by invitation-only and will include members of PHA and IFC, and various stakeholders.

Both Welter and Briden expressed hope that the number of sexual assaults on campus will decrease and that the summit will begin to help change the culture.

But until then, the dialogue will continue.

“A complete 180-degree change like this – completely banning women from fraternities for certain hours, banning something that’s been a tradition on Mizzou’s campus like out-of-state formals – you’re just going to get so much pushback, incentivize so many people to find ways around the rules. You’re not actually going to affect real positive change, at least in our opinion,” Briden says.

Editorial: Education and self-defense training can help end campus 'rape culture'
Students in fraternities and sororities and administrators at the University of Missouri-Columbia are commendably seeking to reduce sexual assaults on campus. But they need to take a deep breath before they proceed much further.

The goals of the Greeks and the administrators are the same. The proposed pathways of getting there differ and need some thoughtful consideration before the effort collapses under the weight of odious rules and an expected backlash.

A draft of the university’s proposals was leaked online — not much of a surprise on a college campus. Koran Addo and Jack Witthaus of the Post-Dispatch wrote about the recommendations, and the resulting outcry from Greeks and non-Greeks, on Thursday.

Some students will get to air their opinions on the proposals on Saturday during an invitation-only summit that Mizzou Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin has organized. It will include administrators and members of the Greek community.

The proposals that have been drafted are draconian. They miss an opportunity to educate young men and women about respect and about establishing community standards that eliminate sexual assault from the culture.

It’s hard to acknowledge, but here is where higher education is today: Campuses across the country have a “rape culture.” Women must be continually on guard against sexual assault.

The university’s proposals, as leaked online, are a joint effort by the Office of Greek Life and the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium. It restricts female students from being guests in fraternity houses during “high risk periods,” defined as 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and some other nights during the semesters.

It also prohibits fraternities and sororities from holding social events outside of Columbia and fraternities from conducting float trips as recruitment events. It bans all alcohol except beer from fraternities. That one seems particularly silly. Don’t students get drunk on beer? Is this a remnant of St. Louis’ beer-baron history? A proposal for mandatory drug tests in frats and sororities already has been scaled back as optional.

The university’s Panhellenic Association, which governs sororities, was particularly hostile to the suggestion of restricting women from visiting fraternity houses. The organization wrote a letter to the chancellor and said, correctly, that if women are unsafe during certain hours “we implore fraternities to remove the members who are currently contributing to an unsafe environment and to recruit members who will not make an environment unsafe in the future.”

The association also said that by restricting women for safety reasons, the policy suggests women cannot make choices for themselves about their own safety. That could lead to men thinking they are entitled to do whatever they want to women who don’t abide by the rule, the group said.

Those comments get to the crux of the matter. The boys will be boys mentality that permeates a frat house is the wrong way to teach men to be respectful and to curb their basic instincts. Women who put themselves in that environment have to be mindful of their behavior and surroundings. That is unfortunate, but it’s a fact.

It’s also an opportunity. A study published in this week’s New England Journal of Medicine found that women who are given training in how to avoid sexual assault can cut their chance of being raped in half.

The study involved about 900 students at the universities of Windsor, Guelph and Calgary in Canada. It found that women who went through a four-session program on avoiding sexual assault were half as likely to be
victims of rape. Attempted rapes were also lower in the group of women who went through the training, compared to those who were just given a pamphlet on assault prevention.

While men are at fault as the assailants in most cases of sexual assault, the study suggests women must share some responsibility for changing the campus culture. Getting drunk or stoned and passing out at parties is no way to remain safe from sexual assault. Women must learn the cues of danger and either become trained in self-defense or avoid situations where the possibility of being harmed exists.

Does a woman who wears provocative clothing have a right to expect she will not be sexually assaulted? Of course she does. Do some men see that differently and treat it as though the woman was waving a red flag in their faces? Of course they do. Is that wrong? Yes. But it happens.

No amount of rules or discussion will change that equation. The answer is not burkas for all, or forced separation of the sexes that is surely to be violated. It is education.

It's great that the university and the students in the Greek community are having this discussion. The issue of sexual assault is not limited to fraternities and sororities, but those are good places to test some lessons that the entire campus needs to learn. Lesson No. 1: This stuff is serious.

The key is education. Women must learn how to recognize danger and how to resist pressure to have sex. Men need to learn to back off and to understand there will be consequences if they don’t. Women would also help themselves by learning some self-defense strategies.

Mizzou can help with all this. Establishing rules that beg to be broken sends the wrong message. Women don’t want to simply be protected — they also want and deserve to be empowered. Offering free self-defense classes is one place to start.

Missouri has second-highest number of alleged in sex assaults in OTL study

An examination last year of how the University of Missouri athletic department handled off-the-field issues involving some of its athletes was the impetus for a broadened Outside the Lines investigation, released Sunday, that studied similar issues at nine other major football and men’s basketball programs.

To determine how often crimes involving college athletes are prosecuted and what factors influence them, Outside the Lines requested police reports involving all football and men’s basketball players on rosters from 2009 to 2014 from campus and city police departments covering 10 major programs: Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Michigan State, Missouri, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Wisconsin.
To determine how often crimes involving college athletes are prosecuted and what factors influence them, Outside the Lines requested police reports involving all football and men's basketball players on rosters at 10 schools from 2009 to 2014. The Missouri results:

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<th>CRIMINAL INCIDENTS</th>
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<td>ATHLETES INVOLVED</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>ATHLETES IN MORE THAN ONE INCIDENT</td>
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- % PLAYERS INVOLVED: 14%
- CASES NOT PROSECUTED/DROPPED: 38%
The roster-police report examination was initially completed by Outside the Lines at Missouri, when reporters investigated criminal allegations against former football player Derrick Washington. That report, published in August 2014, detailed how Washington faced multiple allegations during his time at Missouri: the rape of a fellow student in October 2008, punching a women’s soccer player in May 2010, sexually assaulting his former tutor in June 2010, and beating up his ex-girlfriend in September 2010. He was convicted of the last two offenses. Washington, who was suspended from the team after being charged with sexual assault, left Missouri after the 2010 beating allegation.

In that story, Outside the Lines reported the soccer player told police that her coach said she might lose her scholarship unless she dropped the assault allegations against Washington. That kind of pressure was found at other colleges in Sunday’s more expansive investigation and was part of Outside the Lines’ overall finding: that what occurs between high-profile college athletes and law enforcement is not as simple as the commonly held perception that police and prosecutors simply show preferential treatment, though that does occur. Rather, the examination of more than 2,000 documents showed that athletes from the 10 schools mainly benefited from the confluence of factors that can be reality at major sports programs: the near-immediate access to high-profile attorneys, the intimidation that is felt by witnesses who accuse athletes, and the higher bar some criminal justice officials feel needs to be met in high-profile cases.

Missouri had 63 criminal cases involving 46 athletes during the five-year time period. Twelve athletes were involved in more than one incident, Outside the Lines found, and Missouri had the second-highest number of allegations of sexual assault, violence against women, and harassment. Florida State had the most.

In several of the Missouri cases, victims declined prosecution because of the suspect’s status as an athlete and/or because they feared unwanted publicity and harassment from fans.

In one case, a woman reported to police that her ex-boyfriend, a football player, was threatening to post explicit photos of her online, and she implied that he had hit her, according to a police report. But the officer wrote that she stated “she did not want me to contact the MU athletic department” and she dropped the case, telling the officer that she was moving out of Columbia.

In a 2010 rape case against basketball player Michael Dixon, the alleged victim declined to press charges, and one of her reasons was fear of “the pressure and harassment from outside sources,” according to police. “[She] stated she was concerned that since Dixon is a basketball player that no one would believe her about what happened and she may be persecuted for it.” After a second allegation against Dixon, which also did not lead to charges, Dixon was suspended, left Missouri and transferred to the University of Memphis.

Allegations in April 2014 that football player Dorial Green-Beckham had injured a woman by pushing her down the stairs went nowhere after the woman’s roommate -- who was dating Green-Beckham -- convinced her to not press charges. A police report states that the alleged victim “was afraid of being harassed and having her property damaged just because she was the victim.”
It was not the first time that an incident involving Green-Beckham had been reported to police. In November 2012, a woman reported to police that he had pushed her into a doorframe several times after she accused him of cheating on her friend, whom Green-Beckham was dating. The woman told police that the people who witnessed the incident would lie to protect him, because he was a football player. When police interviewed the witnesses, they refuted her account and said she was the aggressor. Police declined to pursue charges.

About 18 months after reporting the incident, the woman emailed with police, whether her initial report was a public record that anyone could access. She told police that she was interested in speaking out about what happened in 2012, “but that she changed her mind after hearing about some of the negative attention other people involved with Green-Beckham were getting.” Green-Beckham was dismissed from Missouri football on April 11, and officials cited the April 2014 incident and a prior marijuana arrest.

Outside the Lines contacted Green-Beckham’s’s agent regarding the 2012 incident, which had not previously been reported in the media. He declined comment and did not make Green-Beckham available for an interview. Officials from the University of Missouri police declined to comment on specific cases; Columbia police department officials declined to answer questions due to the magnitude of the Outside the Lines request.

Campus Corner

JUNE 14, 2015

ESPN report reveals additional incident involving Dorial Green-Beckham at MU

BY TOD PALMER
tpalmer@kcstar.com

More than a year before former Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham was booted from the football team, he was accused of pushing a female student into a door frame several times during a November 2012 incident.
The previously unreported incident surfaced as part of an “Outside the Lines” investigation into how crimes involving athletes at 10 major football and men’s basketball programs are handled by campus and city police.

Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Michigan State, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Wisconsin also were included among the schools examined.

According to the study, 46 athletes at MU were involved in 63 criminal incidents between 2009-14, but the cases weren’t prosecuted or charges were dropped 38 percent of the time. There were 12 athletes involved in multiple incidents.

That includes the Green-Beckham incident in which a student alleged that Green-Beckham, who was selected in the second round by the Tennessee Titans during last month’s NFL Draft, pushed her and cursed at her for telling her friend, Green-Beckham’s girlfriend, that he was cheating on her.

Green-Beckham was a freshman at the time and Michael Scherer, who will be a junior linebacker at Missouri this fall, intervened, according to the police report.

Police interviewed Green-Beckham, the alleged victim, Scherer and two other witnesses but determined “there was simply not enough evidence to support charging Green-Beckham with a crime,” the incident report said.

The victim, who had been drinking and had confronted Green-Beckham in other incident that didn’t involve the police, said she believed the witnesses probably lied to protect Green-Beckham, who was ranked by Rivals as the nation’s No. 1 overall prospect in the 2012 recruiting class.

Similar incidents and accusations were found at other schools and “Outside the Lines” concluded that several factors conspire to create an atmosphere of seemingly preferential treatment for athletes.

Occasionally, the favoritism shown toward high-profile athletes by police and prosecutors is blatant.

Access to prominent attorneys, aid from athletic department officials inserting themselves into investigations and a chilling effect on victims who fear of harassment from fans or the media also play a factor in why many cases are never prosecuted.
Green-Beckham was dismissed from the Tigers football team and transferred to Oklahoma last summer after details of a April 2014 incident in which he allegedly forced his way into an off-campus apartment, pushed a woman down several stairs and dragged another from the apartment by her neck.

No charges were brought in that case either when the second woman, who was involved with Green-Beckham, convinced the victim who was pushed down the stairs not to press charges.

Green-Beckham signed a four-year, $5.6 million rookie contract June 1 with the Titans.

Compared to the other nine programs “Outside the Lines” investigated, MU athletes appeared to receive preferential treatment less often than counterparts at Florida State, where 70 percent of cases weren’t prosecuted, Texas A&M (60 percent), Oregon State (60 percent), Michigan State (62 percent), Florida (56 percent), Notre Dame (50 percent) Oklahoma State (46 percent) and Wisconsin (40 percent).

However, Missouri did have the second-highest incidence of cases involving alleged sexual assault and violence against women during the time period studied.

That timeframe includes former running back Derrick Washington’s conviction for felony deviate sexual assault and alleged sexual assaults committed by former basketball player Michael Dixon that were never prosecuted in addition to Green-Beckham’s alleged assaults.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Another Green-Beckham incident a lowlight in ESPN's latest report on Missouri athletes' misbehavior

MICHAEL MANDELL

15 hrs ago
COLUMBIA — ESPN's "Outside the Lines" detailed 10 college's recent histories with crimes by athletes Sunday. Missouri played a prominent role in the report, which shed light on a previously unreported 2012 incident between former Tigers football player Dorial Green-Beckham and a woman who accused the since-dismissed wide receiver of pushing her.

According to an MU Police Department report, the alleged victim said Green-Beckham pushed her into a door frame "several times" in his South Hall dorm room on Nov. 11, 2012. Upon arriving at the scene, a police officer noticed red marks on the alleged victim's upper arms, and a "triangular scratch" on her lower left arm.

The alleged victim said the confrontation began when Green-Beckham approached her and accused her of telling her roommate — Green Beckham’s girlfriend at the time — that the then-Missouri wideout had been cheating on her. Statements from three witnesses, including current starting linebacker Michael Scherer, indicated the alleged victim was the one who instigated the dispute.

The officer informed the alleged victim that there was not enough evidence to charge Green-Beckham with a crime. Although the alleged victim said she understood, she mentioned the possibility that the witnesses had been lying to keep Green-Beckham out of trouble.

Green-Beckham was twice involved in marijuana-related arrests during his time at Missouri and was dismissed from the football team after an April 2014 incident in which he was investigated in a suspected burglary. A police report of that incident includes information from a woman who said Green-Beckham pushed her down at least four stairs.

ESPN revealed the earlier, 2012 police report as part of an investigation on crimes among football and men’s basketball players at 10 different universities from 2009 to 2014 in an effort to "determine how often crimes involving college athletes are prosecuted and what factors influence them." It concluded that many victims choose not to come forward in fear of possible community backlash, which was one reason cited by the victim in the incident that led to Green-Beckham’s dismissal to not press charges.
The study found that Missouri had the second-highest number of sexual assaults, behind Florida, among the 10 schools examined.

During the five-year period, former running back Derrick Washington was convicted of sexually assaulting a former tutor, basketball shooting guard Michael Dixon was accused of rape in two incidents — though no one pressed charges — and swimmer Sasha Menu-Courey committed suicide one year after being the victim of an alleged sexual assault.

According to ESPN's study, 46 Missouri athletes committed a total of 63 crimes during the five-year period. Twelve committed more than one crime.

After his dismissal from the Tigers football team, Green-Beckham enrolled at the University of Oklahoma and sat out the 2014 season. The Tennessee Titans selected him with the No. 40 overall pick in the 2015 NFL Draft and signed him to a four-year, $5.6 million contract on June 1.

ESPN report uncovers 2012 incident involving Green-Beckham

By David Morrison

Sunday, June 14, 2015 at 11:45 am

Former Missouri football player Dorial Green-Beckham was involved in a previously unreported November 2012 incident in which a woman alleged he pushed her into a door frame "several times" during an early morning argument, according to an ESPN "Outside the Lines" report released Sunday.

In the University of Missouri Police Department report obtained by ESPN the alleged victim said Green-Beckham, then a freshman wide receiver, confronted her because she had told her friend -- Green-Beckham's girlfriend -- that he was cheating on her.
The 6-foot-6, 220-pound Green-Beckham began pushing and cursing at her, the alleged victim told police, and she went up a floor in the residence hall to try and get into her room. When she couldn't, she came back down to Green-Beckham's floor to talk to another of her friends and Green-Beckham again began pushing her, the alleged victim told police.

She said Green-Beckham pushed her into the door frame of his room "several times" before his roommate -- current rising junior linebacker Michael Scherer -- stepped in to separate the two. The alleged victim said she pushed Green-Beckham "several times" during their second encounter. The police officer dispatched to the scene observed redness and a scratch on the alleged victim's arms.

Police interviewed Green-Beckham and three witnesses -- including Scherer -- who all said that, while the two did argue, the alleged victim was the instigator. Scherer, who said he was asleep when the incident started a little before 3 a.m., told police the alleged victim was pounding on their door and trying to force her way past Green-Beckham into the room. It took another of the witnesses, former Missouri baseball player Gerrion Grim, to pull the alleged victim away, Scherer told police.

The alleged victim told the officer the day of the incident that any witnesses they interviewed "would probably tell me that Green-Beckham had done nothing wrong because he plays football." She also inquired with the department about obtaining a copy of the incident report last April and stated that the witnesses "probably lied for Green-Beckham to keep him out of trouble." The officer told the alleged victim all the witnesses interviewed had a "similar account" of the incident, and there was not enough evidence to charge Green-Beckham.

The incident came a little more than a month after Green-Beckham was one of three Missouri football players arrested on suspicion of marijuana possession in October 2012. He was suspended a game and later pleaded the charges down to a city trespassing violation.

Green-Beckham was again arrested with two other men in his hometown of Springfield in January 2014, when police say they found about a pound of marijuana in the car in which Green-Beckham was a passenger during a traffic stop. The case is still open, but the two other men in the car have said the marijuana was not Green-Beckham's in sworn affidavits shortly after the incident.

Green-Beckham was dismissed from Missouri's football team last April after an incident in which he allegedly forced his way into a woman's apartment and pushed her down some stairs while searching for his girlfriend. The alleged victims in the incident declined to press charges because they said they feared backlash from the community.

That was a common thread running through the ESPN report, which studied reports of criminal acts by football and men's basketball players at 10 FBS schools -- Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Michigan State, Missouri, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Wisconsin -- from 2009 to 2014. The report found that, on the whole, alleged victims' fear of consequences and the ready availability of legal representation for the athletes led to a low percentage of athletes being prosecuted or charged.
ESPN's study found 63 criminal incidents among Missouri football and men's basketball players from 2009 to 2014 involving 46 athletes, including 12 who were involved in more than one incident.

The ESPN report also references an incident in which a woman implied to police that her ex-boyfriend, a Missouri football player, had hit her and was threatening to post explicit pictures of her online. She decided to drop the case and moved from Columbia, telling the officer she contacted that "she did not want me to contact the MU athletic department," according to ESPN.

Missouri had the second-most number of sexual assault, violence and harassment complaints against women to Florida State of the 10 schools studied.

Green-Beckham transferred to Oklahoma in July and sat out an NCAA-mandated redshirt season before declaring for the NFL Draft, in which the Tennessee Titans selected him in the second round in May. Green-Beckham signed a four-year, $5.6 million contract with the team.

Study claims Mizzou athletic department has high number of alleged sexual assaults


COLUMBIA -- A recent study by ESPN’s Outside the Lines claims Mizzou's Athletic Department has the second highest number of alleged sexual assaults.

The study examined ten major programs: Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Michigan State, Missouri, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Oregon State, Texas A&M and Wisconsin.

Outside the Lines says it requested police reports involving football and men's basketball players at each college from 2009-2014.

The study found Mizzou had 63 criminal incidents with 46 athletes involved, and 12 athletes involved in more than once incident.
Outside the Lines found 38% of the cases were either dropped or not prosecuted.

The report also revealed an incident that went unreported in 2012 involving ex-Mizzou football player, Dorial Green-Beckham.

An investigative narrative provided by the MU Police Department to ESPN, says Green-Beckham pushed a woman into a door frame several times after she apparently told his girlfriend he had been cheating on her.

Within two years, Green-Beckham would have two highly publicized incidents involving marijuana.

Coach Gary Pinkel finally kicked Green-Beckham off the team after the star wide receiver allegedly pushed a different woman down a set of stairs last spring. He was charged with burglary and assault.

This past May, the Tennessee Titans took Green-Beckham in the NFL Draft. He is still on the team.

The report claims in several of Mizzou's cases, victims declined prosecution of athletes because of their status and feared publicity as well as harassment from fans.

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Local

JUNE 13, 2015

Transgender student visibility has Missouri and Kansas colleges making accommodations

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
mdwilliams@kestar.com
Caitlyn Jenner’s Vanity Fair cover kick-started a national conversation about what defines gender and what that means.

Yet college campuses have buzzed with conversations about transgender issues, unisex bathrooms and the rest for years.

That talk yielded changes, with more in the works, both big and small.

Barnard College, a private school in New York City, this spring became the seventh elite women’s college to admit applicants who self-identify as women regardless of their sex at birth. Stephens College, an all-women school in Columbia, has talked about a similar move for nearly a year and expects to decide before January.

At public colleges in the Kansas City area, unisex bathrooms and gender-neutral dorms have opened up. Wording in some anti-discrimination policies has been tweaked to protect transgender students.

But “things can always be better,” said Luke Harness, a trans man and graduate student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and co-founder of the school’s new Trans+ Social Group for transgender students.

Harness transitioned from female to male from 2012 through 2013, about the same time he helped start Trans+. This year, the group became the first officially recognized student organization for transgender students and their allies at UMKC.

Trans+ started with fewer than 10 members and now lists 26, Harness said. With the rising visibility of transgender celebrities — Jenner and Laverne Cox of “Orange is the New Black” — Harness expects membership in Trans+ at UMKC to climb.

Except for Kansas State University, which said three transgender students signed up for dorm rooms for the fall, officials at area universities said they don’t know how many transgender students currently are on campus or living in dorms. For now, all dorm rooms at UMKC, K-State, the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri are assigned by gender.

“If a student doesn’t let us know ahead of time” that they have some special need where gender is concerned, “we may not know at all,” said Jonathan Pryor. He’s
coordinator of UMKC’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and questioning, Intersex, Asexual, or LGBTQIA, services on campus.

But when a student self-identifies as transgender, he said, “we try to make sure we work with transgender students to make sure they don’t feel further marginalized.”

UMKC’s housing website speaks directly to transgender students: “If you are a transgender student looking for on-campus housing, you may indicate this on the online contract or select the gender with which you identify. You may also call our office to talk to someone if you do not feel comfortable selecting one of the gender options on the contract.”

In Columbia, MU is piloting gender-neutral housing in the fall. Fewer than 20 spaces with restrooms offering more privacy than the communal bathrooms found in many college dorms are set aside for special requests, said Cathy Scroggs, vice president of student affairs at MU.

K-State is building a new residence hall and renovating another. Both will have gender-neutral bathrooms and space for gender-neutral bedrooms.

“Ideally, we want our students who happen to be transgender to live among our other students. We don’t want to isolate,” said Nick Lander, assistant director for residence life at K-State. The school also has maps that point out the gender-neutral restrooms on campus.

Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville has had gender-neutral housing since 2012.

UMKC is considering providing some gender-neutral living arrangements for its students. But like at most other area schools, unisex bathrooms are still scarce across campus.

“These are conversations we have been having on campuses for a while,” Pryor said.

After months of discussion, this past school year the UM system added protection for gender identity and gender expression to its nondiscrimination policy at all four campuses in Kansas City, Columbia, St. Louis and Rolla.
And a year ago, UMKC adopted a preferred-name policy that allows students in gender transition to go by a name other than the one given to them at birth but that relates to the gender they identify with. That name can appear on all university paperwork, rosters and emails.

On some campuses, considering gender diversity goes much further than what a student wants to be called.

While at most universities the student insurance policy does not cover sexual-reassignment surgery, Campus Pride, a national LGBTQ student advocacy group, lists 62 schools, including MU and Washington University in St. Louis, with policies that do. MU students use Aetna, which covers hormones and gender-reassignment surgeries. Kansas Board of Regents university student policies cover hormone therapies under their policy’s prescription benefit.

The continuing challenge for state schools, officials said, is accommodating a diverse population of students. Even among the transgender student community, the stories vary.

Three years ago, Harness, who was raised in a conservative family in Lee’s Summit, didn’t even know gender transition was possible, he said. But when the then-21-year-old was between his sophomore and junior years at UMKC and doing work study in the Multicultural Student Affairs office, he heard about an informational event — The T in LGBT — on campus.

“I wanted to go for the free lunch,” said Harness, who at the time did not fully understand the gender identity confusion he says he’d felt his entire life. “I was just sitting there eating my spaghetti, and the panel started talking about transition. I realized that was me.”

Harness wasn’t aware of any support network on campus for people like him.

“It was really scary,” he said.

The first few times he called a Kansas City therapy line for help, he said he hung up the moment someone answered. A year later, in 2013, Harness went through breast-removal surgery and fast became a campus spokesman for transgender issues.

Once a month now, Harness co-hosts “Trans Talk,” a program that’s part of the KKFI radio show “The Tenth Voice.”
While UMKC and other campuses have had a university-managed LGBTQIA center of some kind for years, Harness said there’s still need for transgender support groups like Trans+.

“Most times, when people say LGBT, they are talking about gay, white men,” Harness said.

The rapid growth in Trans+ membership, Harness said, isn’t because more transgender students are enrolling at UMKC. He said it’s more likely because now there’s a place for them to find people with whom they can relate.

Jack Warner, a 21-year-old second-year UMKC pharmacy student and a trans man, said Trans+ changed his life.

“I was looking for solidarity and there, on a wall on campus, was a Trans+ flier,” Warner recalled. “That was a great feeling. I don’t even know if I would be transitioning right now without my group. … They showed me that I could do it. That you can actually be who you are. And that makes me very happy.”

Colleagues mourn death of popular MU professor

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Friday, June 12, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Michelle Boone warmly remembers University of Missouri biology professor and researcher Ray Semlitsch as someone who demonstrated “random optimism.”

“If it didn’t look like things were going well with the research — he had amazing faith in his students — he’d be like, ‘It’s going to work,’” said Boone, a former MU graduate student under Semlitsch and now a tenured biology professor at Miami University of Ohio. She was among more than 100 students mentored by Semlitsch, an international leader in amphibian research and ecology, who died Wednesday at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis.

Semlitsch was diagnosed with leukemia on April 20. He was 64.
“When he was ill, I hope he had some of that random optimism for himself,” Boone said. “I hope he was able to channel some of that for himself like he always did for other people.”

Malissa Peacock, a tutor in the MU athletic department, said she wasn’t surprised by the immediate outpouring of support and praise for her late husband. Peacock and Semlitsch would have celebrated their 26th anniversary next Wednesday.

“He was really important to a lot of people,” Peacock said. “He had a very, very deep respect and love for the environment.”

As an accomplished bowhunter, Semlitsch routinely donated venison from the deer he killed to students and to local food banks through the Missouri Department of Conservation’s Share the Harvest program. Peacock said her husband “kind of felt like Teddy Roosevelt” when it came to conservation, ecology and hunting.

Semlitsch was also well known for the dessert parties that his research labs held every year, awarding a frog trophy for the best entry — which he won once with a pear tart.

“You had to have a really strong constitution to survive those dessert parties,” Boone said, recalling that some years there were as many as 10 entries. “You had to eat them all to vote.”

The dessert dinner is a tradition that Boone has continued and other former students and colleagues of Semlitsch also maintain.

Peacock said the dessert dinners began in 1994, a sort of evolution from the “herp dinners” featuring snakes and alligators that Semlitsch started when he was on staff at Memphis State University.

Biologists are just known to be good cooks,” Peacock said.

The dessert parties were the cornerstone of a flood of memories that students and colleagues are sharing on Twitter and Facebook, she said.

The MU News Bureau issued a release that said Semlitsch established himself as a national and international leader in amphibian ecology and that his research efforts have raised the awareness of state and federal agencies “concerning the critical need to protect small wetlands, terrestrial habitats and to increase landscape connectivity.”

Semlitsch received his doctorate in zoology from the University of Georgia in 1984. He held faculty positions at Memphis State University and the University of Zurich, Switzerland, before joining the faculty in the Division of Biological Sciences at MU in 1993. He was promoted to full professor in 1999 and appointed a Curators’ Professor in 2004.

Semlitsch authored or coauthored more than 220 scientific articles in the nation’s top scientific journals and wrote an influential book on amphibian research, “Amphibian Conservation,” published by the Smithsonian Institution Press.
He presented his findings throughout the country and conducted workshops on amphibian conservation and management for state and federal biologists.

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

Peacock and Semlitsch had two children, Sarah Margaret and John, both of Columbia.

The funeral will be June 19 at The Crossing, 3615 Southland Drive. Visitation will be at 10:30 a.m. with the service at 11 a.m.

Boone said she is trying not to dwell on her mentor’s death as “a really huge loss to science.” Semlitsch trained scores of students and other researchers.

“It was a huge benefit that he ended up doing science in the first place,” she said. “Everybody is heartbroken over this. He was our greatest fan.”

Missouri lawmakers' bills raise questions about conflicts

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — During Missouri's legislative session, a landlord worked to change rental policy, farmers pushed agricultural legislation and a grocery association official pushed a bill that would prevent communities from banning environmentally costly plastic bags.

Those are just some of the examples in which lawmakers championed legislation benefiting the industries in which they work, and it's a fairly common practice in the part-time Legislature, where many members hold private-sector jobs to supplement their roughly $36,000 annual salaries.

The dual roles can create the appearance of a conflict of interest. But some lawmakers contend that their private-sector expertise also leads to better policymaking.
Sen. Mike Parson, a Bolivar Republican who is running for governor in 2016, has sponsored bills related to cattle ranching. He owns 48 acres of farmland and a cattle and calf operation near his home, according to personal financial disclosure documents.

A new law backed by Parson, who is a member of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, would allow trucks to carry heavier loads of livestock on some Missouri roads, which could reduce costs for transporting the animals on multiple trucks or trips. State transportation officials warned that the heavier loads would damage Missouri's already strained roads.

"I've been a farmer all my life, so naturally I'm going to be supportive of agriculture," said Parson, who added that he doesn't see a conflict of interest. "But I don't see anything that's giving an advantage to any owner."

**Richard Reuben, a University of Missouri-Columbia law professor, cautioned that lawmakers need to ensure their work passes the 'smell test'.**

"Obviously, particular industries are going to benefit through the course of interest-based legislation," Reuben said. "But the idea is that even within that, it's the larger public that's going to benefit."

Meanwhile, Rep. Gary Cross — a Republican from Lee's Summit who rents out houses and is a member of the Mid-America Association of Real Estate Investors — has sponsored rental bills, including a law signed last year that made it easier to evict the guests of tenants. The group's website describes him as an advocate for the industry and "a landlord like many of you."

Cross denied that there is a conflict with legislation he introduces, and said "it may not affect me at all."

"How many accountants introduce legislation regarding their background or their career?" Cross said. "How many schoolteachers get involved in education?"

Rep. Dan Shaul, an Imperial Republican and the state director of the Missouri Grocers Association, sponsored legislation sent to the governor that would ensure that stores can keep offering customers plastic bags by preventing communities from banning them. He said the bill would give grocers and consumers options.

Plastic bags costs about a cent per bag, while paper bags cost from 5 to 7 cents per bag, according to the American Progressive Bag Alliance, an industry group that opposes bans and taxes on plastic bags.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, only about 12 percent of plastic bags, wraps and sacks that were thrown away was recycled.

Lawmakers' outside experience also bleeds into legislation in other ways. Sen. Jason Holsman, D-Kansas City, was involved in negotiations that resulted in three Kansas City-area school
districts being carved out from a bill to allow the expansion of charter schools. Those include Center School District, where Holsman's wife works. He has said that did not influence him.

Legislative leaders generally defend the overlap of public and private-sector interests. House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, said lawmakers need to follow conflict-of-interest rules, which ban members from voting on bills with which they have a "direct personal or pecuniary interest." But he said it's "entirely appropriate" for lawmakers to use their experience in legislation.

"If we had a situation where we said every farmer in the Missouri House can't consider agriculture policy or set agriculture policy, that would be bad for the state," Richardson said.

Firefighters, veterinary students team up for large animal rescue training

Before Saturday, Kurt Doolady had never placed a halter on a horse.

The Boone County Fire Protection District captain has now added that to his set of skills. The Boone County Fire Protection District and the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine teamed up for a large-animal rescue training class that started on Friday and continued Saturday and Sunday at the fire district’s training center, 5225 Roger Wilson Memorial Drive, next to the county sheriff’s department.

Doolady said he had an easy time after he understood how the halter went around the horse’s head.

“Fortunately, these are very tame horses and very tolerant,” Doolady said.

He said he has learned the importance of getting to know the animal and letting the animal get to know him. He also has learned how to recognize signs of stress in large animals.

“We look like a predator to them, and they become defensive,” he said.

Doolady said at the end of winter, he was on an animal rescue call where two cows had fallen through ice on a pond. One cow was saved, and the other drowned.

Rebecca Gimenez, with Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue Inc., was the trainer Saturday.
“Horses are rude, and they’ll take advantage of you,” Gimenez told her students.

More complicated than the halter was the next exercise — placing a sling around the horses. One horse resisted, causing the students to scatter to the sides of the pen.

“A horse that’s really bad would have freaking exploded,” Gimenez said.

Gimenez and all her students were wearing helmets, which she encouraged everyone to do at all times while around or riding horses.

Katie Duneman, a second-year veterinary student from St. Louis, said it’s good that students and veterinarians worked alongside firefighters at the training session.

“We need each other to be able to rescue large animals,” she said.

Loren Schultz, a veterinarian and clinical assistant professor in the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, said as a veterinarian, he has the medicine to treat animals, but not other tools needed to help in an emergency.

“They have a lot more equipment,” Schultz said of firefighters. He said it would be ideal if veterinarians and veterinary students could work with emergency workers on large animal rescues.

“These exercises have been invaluable,” Schultz said.

Chuck Leake, a battalion chief with the Boone County Fire Protection District, said the department takes part in four or five large animal rescues a year. He said many times, his men have to stop pet or livestock owners from putting themselves at risk by trying to rescue the animals.

“It takes the right type of equipment” to rescue large animals, Leake said. Firefighters also have thermal protective clothing to prevent hypothermia.

Gimenez said it’s a challenge instructing people with different skill sets, but all of the participants were doing well.

“If they know which skills each other can do, it makes it easier to plug and play,” Gimenez said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Teamwork leads to successful large animal rescues
COLUMBIA — Large animals will have an increased chance of survival after an unlikely group of firefighters, veterinarians and students gathered at the Boone County Fire Protection District Training Center this weekend to improve their handling of large animal rescues.

The MU College of Veterinary Medicine and the Boone County Fire Protection District teamed up to bring in a Georgia-based consulting company to improve their response to large animal emergencies. Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue offered the weekend session for about 20 to 30 people. The training was funded largely by faculty at the College of Veterinary Medicine. Participants also paid to take the course.

Emergencies include situations such as horses stuck in mud, cattle stuck in ponds or calves falling through ice, according to a news release from the fire protection district.

Chuck Leake, the district's battalion chief, said animals that require rescuing are usually of value to the owners. Losing cattle can cause a financial burden for farmers, and the death of a horse that is more family pet than livestock can be devastating to a family.

He said owners will risk their lives to save their animals. While their hearts are in the right place, Leake said that it can be dangerous to attempt to rescue a large animal without proper training and direction.

"We protect the public," Leake said. "They're well-intentioned, but they don't have the equipment or expertise to do it safely."

Leake estimated that there are four or five large animal rescues annually in the area.

"We want to get to the point where we safely rescue large animals," Leake said. "We want to stay calm, professional and do the job in a coordinated effort."
Rebecca Gimenez is the primary instructor for the Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue class. She said she trains emergency responders and animal services around the world to work together when a large animal becomes trapped during an emergency or disaster.

The class and training this weekend involved lectures, demonstrations and hands-on training to learn the proper techniques associated with large animal rescue. Live and mannequin horses were used to demonstrate appropriate actions to take during emergencies.

Gimenez strives to develop and improve equipment and techniques that are used for large animal rescues. She said that improvements can aid in the prevention of injuries to or fatalities of the animals, their owners and responders.

"Responders bring expertise to the scene, especially in regards to safety and logistics," Gimenez said. "Veterinarians bring expertise in animal behavior, handling and medical drugs that may be necessary."

Katie Duneman, an MU veterinary student, participated in the training this weekend. She said that it is important to know what they need to do as veterinarians and what they can do to help responders.

"You never know when an emergency is going to happen," Duneman said. "It's better to know what's going on."

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**Sinquefield collection displayed at London art fair**

By Aarik Danielsen
Regionalist art from the collection of a prominent Missouri couple has found its way across the pond.

Starting Thursday, the Olympia International Art and Antiques Fair in London will feature assembled works owned by Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield.

No Place Like Home: American Scene Painting (1850-1940) is the guest exhibition at the 43rd annual event.

Selected works from Midwestern artists, including native and eventual Missourians Thomas Hart Benton, George Caleb Bingham and Joe Jones, present scenes from “the Dust Bowl era, a time of austerity in American life that resonates today,” a news release said.

Other artists that are on display include Grant Wood, John Steuart Curry, John Atherton and Marvin Cone.

The collection “repeatedly shows that the preservation of home requires an ethic of determination and perseverance,” said the couple’s art director, Susan Barrett of Barrett Barrera Projects, in the release.

“It is an ideal that resonates powerfully throughout: home as domestic space, as a region, a city; home as an ideal worth cherishing.”

As part of the display in London, two events will give viewers further insight into the collection. On June 22, Melissa Wolfe of the St. Louis Art Museum will discuss American painting from the 1850s to 1950s and the Regionalists’ role in that period; June 25, Andrew Walker of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, will participate in a dialogue with Barrett about the works. Both museums have curated exhibits drawing from the Sinquefield collection.

Rex Sinquefield is a major player in Missouri politics, known for his contributions to conservative causes.

He and his wife have donated to a number of cultural concerns, and Jeanne Sinquefield has been especially instrumental in the formation and success of the Mizzou New Music Initiative at the University of Missouri.

This year’s fair runs through June 28. More information can be found at olympia-art-antiques.com.
Summer is risky time for college-bound students

June 15, 2015
By Koran Addo

NO MU MENTION

They don’t know it yet, but a good many of the promising high school graduates who have applied and been accepted to college won’t actually make it there.

It’s called summer melt, and as many as 20 percent of young adults “melt away” between the time they graduate high school and when college classes begin in the fall.

Students melt away over missed deadlines, difficulty navigating complicated enrollment paperwork and uncertainties over financial aid.

After tuition, students also have to cover registration fees, orientation fees, housing application fees, extra costs for science labs and any number of deposits required to secure their spot on a college campus.

First-generation college students and students from low-income backgrounds are the most susceptible, with as many as 40 percent melting away, said Alan Byrd, dean of enrollment services at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

“I’ve seen students not arrive over a couple hundred dollars,” Byrd said.

For three summers, a group of schools, businesses and nonprofits calling themselves St. Louis Graduates have been working out of an office in the Delmar Loop, trying to put a dent in the number of students who melt away over the summer.

It’s called the High School to College Center, and since 2013, the group has worked with more than 400 students.

In the first year, 63 percent of the students served at the center enrolled in college, according to Project Manager Laura Winter. Last year, they raised that number to 75 percent.

With a network of counselors, financial aid experts and representatives from area colleges volunteering to walk students through the financial aid and enrollment process, Winter said the goal isn’t just to help students navigate the bureaucracy of enrollment, but also to help students find the school that best suits them.

Tiara Luna, 17, is one of the students who visited the center this spring. The recent graduate from Central Visual and Performing Arts High School said she’s been admitted to six colleges.

Luna’s father died of stomach cancer last year, and money is tight.

After a trip to the High School to College Center, Luna said, counselors there helped her get into a 14-week program at St. Louis Community College at Meramec.

“It’s the best fit for me right now,” Luna said. “I want to be a teacher, so this will help me get into a four-year school with a good teacher education program.”

The work happening at the center is based on research conducted by Lindsay Page, an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Education.
Page said as little as two or three hours of counseling over a summer can be the difference between students who enroll in college and those who melt away.

Page’s approach has been adopted by the center, which uses software to create a profile of each student and generate a unique task list. Simultaneously, financial aid experts and volunteers from area high schools and colleges are there to counsel students and track their progress.

The center recently added a text message system to encourage students and keep them on the path to enrollment.

The benefit the center provides is not just to the individual student, but also to the community at large, said Allison Williams, senior vice president at the Wyman organization.

It’s projected that 60 percent of the jobs that will be available in the St. Louis area in the coming years will require some type of postsecondary degree, Williams said.

“Currently, we’re only at 43 percent of the adults in our region and 26 percent of African-Americans,” she said. “A significant economic and moral need exists.”

**About the center:**

**What:** The High School to College Center is a free service. It will be open until July 31.

**Where:** 618 North Skinker Boulevard in the Delmar Loop.

**When:** Counselors and advisers are available to meet with students 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

**Information:** www.stlouisgraduates.org

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**1 in 5 After All?**

June 15, 2015

By Scott Jaschik

**NO MENTION**

For years, advocates for colleges to do more to prevent and punish sexual assault on campus have cited a 2007 federal statistic that one in five female students experience sexual assault in college. President Obama and members of Congress have used the statistic, as have many others. But the statistic has been questioned for as long as it
has been around. It is based on a survey of only two colleges and includes a definition of sexual assault so broad that, critics say, an unwanted kiss is effectively counted the same way as a rape.

Other studies (typically with different definitions) have offered conflicting data. A 2014 report by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 6.1 female students per thousand were raped or sexually assaulted in college, and that the rate was higher for nonstudents. Some activists for victims of sexual assault have stopped using the one in five figure.

But the 20 percent figure received renewed backing on Friday when The Washington Post released a new national survey of college students, conducted with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and avoiding some of the shortcomings of the 2007 study. The Post's finding? One in five female college students experience sexual assault while in college. The survey also found that 5 percent of college men experience sexual assault.

Unlike the 2007 study, The Post's sample is national. Further, it defined sexual assault more narrowly than did the 2007 survey (although not narrowly enough for some critics).

While people may agree that sexual assault is terrible if it happens to even 1 percent of female students, the validity of the 20 percent figure is an important issue. Those who want colleges to toughen their rules and those who want new legislation from Congress or state legislatures have a stronger case when they are talking about a widespread problem. Many of those who argue against new legislation or new rules have repeatedly expressed doubt about the 20 percent figure -- so debates over the magnitude of the problem are linked directly to debates over policy questions.

In explaining the methodology of the Post/Kaiser survey, the newspaper said that it avoided simply asking students if they had been sexually assaulted because students would use different definitions. Instead, the survey findings are based on asking students if they had experienced any of five incidents that were counted as sexual assault: forced sexual touching, oral sex, sexual intercourse, anal sex and sexual penetration with a finger or object.

For any of the above to count as sexual assault, the incident had to involve either physical force (including threats of force) or incapacitation (typically due to alcohol or drugs) past the point where consent could be given. In the survey, 9 percent of women reported physical force and 14 percent reported incapacitation. Those numbers add up to more than 20 percent, because 3 percent of female students reported being sexually assaulted both with physical force and through incapacitation. For male students, the figures were 1 percent involving physical force, 4 percent involving intoxication and less than 1 percent reporting both.

The figures do not count "unwanted" but not forced sexual contact, or attempted but not completed sexual assaults, although the survey asked about and reported on such incidents.

The survey asked a series of questions about behaviors of female students who reported being sexually assaulted. Eighty-nine percent said that no one was held
responsible for the assault. That figure may reflect the relatively small percentage of women who report assaults to the college or local police -- only 12 percent.

Sixty-two percent of women who report being sexually assaulted said that they had been drinking alcohol shortly before the incident. And 47 percent reported that their attacker was someone they knew very well or fairly well. Only 28 percent said it was someone that they did not know at all.

In the last two years, students on many campuses and many politicians have repeatedly criticized colleges for not doing enough to deal with sexual assault issues. But the Post/Kaiser survey found that more than two-thirds of students gave their colleges an A or a B for the way they handle sexual assault complaints. Only 8 percent gave a D or an F.

The Post/Kaiser survey is not the only new research that has suggested the assault of female college students is all too common.

A study released last month found that 18.6 percent of women at a university in upstate New York who started there in 2010 experienced either rape or attempted rape in their freshman year. The study was published in The Journal of Adolescent Health. Numerous studies on campus sexual assault -- with varying definitions of sexual assault -- have prompted much debate over how prevalent rape and sexual assault are on campus. This study used a narrow definition of rape as “vaginal, oral or anal penetration using threats of violence or use of physical force, or using the tactic of victim incapacitation.”

Will the New Study Change the Debate?

The Post/Kaiser survey attracted immediate attention in the traditional press and social media. But will it draw more support for the view that 20 percent of college women are sexually assaulted?

Some critics of the 2007 study were quick to criticize this one as well.

Via email, Cathy Young, a contributing editor at Reason who has written extensively about sexual assault on campus, said she was concerned about basing totals in part on those who experienced certain behaviors while intoxicated. "The question about incapacitated sex is prefaced by an introduction in which respondents are told that 'drunk' equals incapacitated and unable to consent, so it's really difficult to know how many respondents were talking about actual incapacitation (i.e., being passed out or severely disoriented) and how many about impaired judgment," she said. "This is particularly true since many colleges now have training programs that define all drunk sex as incapacitated."

David French, a writer for National Review, published piece calling the new study "bogus" because it asked both about sexual assault and various forms of unwanted sexual conduct that may not be illegal. (The survey does note this and reports separately on unwanted sexual behavior that it does not classify as sexual assault.)
He also noted that the poll found students more concerned about alcohol and drug use on campus than sexual assault, and said he feared that the survey would create more pressure on colleges to adopt unwise policies on sexual assault rather than focusing on what he considers more widespread problems.

"The sexual revolution has failed America’s college students," he write. "In their quest to create a campus sexual utopia, administrators and professors instead preside over an alcohol-soaked hookup culture where very large numbers of students have regrettable sexual experiences -- including experiences that can be completely lawful while still inflicting lasting psychological harm. Yet even in this atmosphere, serious sex crimes -- thankfully -- are on the decline, and college students are safer from true predators than nonstudents."

Others, however, were more impressed with the findings.

John Foubert is professor of higher education and student affairs at Oklahoma State University and president of a group called One in Four, which gets its name from a Justice Department survey of 4,000 college women in 2006 that found that nearly one-quarter of college women have survived rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. He has been critical of the one in five figure that has been widely used based on the 2007 report.

He said that while he prefers peer-reviewed studies, he was impressed with the Post/Kaiser poll and that it seemed sound. He said he thought the definitions of sexual assault, going beyond rape, were appropriate.

Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, said via email that he thought the numbers sounded "about right" and consistent with other surveys he considers reliable.

In terms of impact, he said he didn't think it would be huge on campuses. "This issue is already the number-one issue for virtually every campus. Increased staffing, more training with boards, students and staff have been implemented. Everywhere I go, this is still a major focus for every campus and student affairs division," he said.

There may be more of an impact off-campus, Kruger said. "I do think this Post research will create more energy from external stakeholders -- to increase compliance and regulatory expectations for campuses. Unfortunately, the public still feels that campuses are more concerned with reputation than addressing the problem and supporting victims -- an opinion... that I do not support."
Lazy Rivers and Student Debt

June 15, 2015

By

Kellie Woodhouse

NO MU MENTION

There’s not much Elizabeth Warren and Chris Christie agree on. But last week they struck a similar chord in speeches that knocked increasingly common and luxurious college amenities like climbing walls and lazy rivers.

Such features, Warren said in a June 10 speech, contribute to rising tuition. A day later, Christie criticized colleges that are “drunk on cash and embarking on crazy spending binges,” including the building of amenities like climbing walls.

“Some colleges have doubled down in a competition for students that involves fancy dorms, high-end student centers, climbing walls and lazy rivers -- paying for those amenities with still higher tuition and fees,” Warren offered to the American Federation of Teachers.

Such critiques are hardly new, and they tend to frustrate those who work at community colleges and many other institutions that have never invested in anything resembling a country club amenity.

But for those colleges that compete for full-pay residential students and status, they do invest in amenities. But how much are amenities really driving up the price of college?

Minimally, says David Feldman, a professor of economics at the College of William & Mary and co-author of Why Does College Cost So Much?

“Lazy rivers are only a tiny piece of the costs,” he says. “These lazy rivers are not the reason why student debt is soaring seemingly out of control. The big problem that higher education faces today, at the public side, is cuts in state spending.”

Added Jane Wellman, a higher education finance expert with the College Futures Foundation, “The symbology of this is worse than the reality of it.”

As politicians respond to concerns about tuition and rates of debt, such features can create for bad optics.

Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge has embarked on an $85 million upgrade to its student gym and recreational facilities, including a lazy river in the shape of the university’s initials, a climbing wall, a rope course and a 40,000-square-foot weight and cardio facility. The student government in 2011 voted to fund the project by quadrupling student fees. Students now pay $200 a semester in a recreational fee, or $1,080 more over four years than they would have paid under the old fee structure. The fee increase was approved by an 84 percent vote.

LSU began building its lazy river this year, at around the same time LSU’s president threatened financial exigency in an effort to ward off massive state funding cuts, which
have since been largely averted. Some questioned why the legislature should support a university that’s spending ten figures on such amenities.

The headlines rolled in, one after the other. “LSU’s $85M 'lazy river' leisure project rolls on, despite school's budget woes,” a Fox News headline read. A *Huffington Post* headline was more glib: “LSU faces dramatic budget cuts while it builds an expensive lounging pool.”

Much of LSU’s infrastructure is outdated or in poor repair, and its recreational facilities were no different. University leaders argue that the amenities like the lazy river and climbing wall will attract students and ultimately bring in revenue.

James Kadamus, vice president for Sightlines, a firm that advises colleges on their physical assets, has analyzed patterns in recreational spending in higher education, and found that campuses that make large investments in new recreational facilities typically have existing facilities that are outdated and in need of repair.

Some question the wisdom of colleges choosing to upgrade their auxiliary facilities before they upgrade their academic ones. "One can ask whether they're appropriate expenditures given that many colleges are letting their infrastructures deteriorate, even while they're investing in these things that are supposed to attract students," Wellman said.

Kadamus also found that, on average, recreational facilities typically account for a small amount -- about 15 percent -- of a college’s overall square footage. In 2012, the latest data available from advocacy group NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, there were at least 157 recreational projects in progress at 92 U.S. colleges, representing more than $1.7 billion in new constructions and renovation.

Kadamus has found that, with the exception of large public institutions, investments in pools and gyms generally don’t have a positive effect on enrollment, which is often how such spending is rationalized by administrators. Yet a separate 2013 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that spending on "consumption" preferences can help increase enrollment of students who don't aspire to elite colleges, which is the vast majority of U.S. college students.

Climbing walls, on average, cost about $100,000 to build, Kadamus found in his research. Lazy rivers and aquatic elements, however, can be more expensive.

A decade ago Texas Tech University spent more than $8 million on its 700-foot lazy river, and raised student fees by $10 a semester to pay for it. The University of Iowa spent $53 million on new recreational facilities that includes a competitive swimming pool as well as a lazy river. Ohio State University completed a $140 million overhaul to its recreational facilities that included a 250-foot hot tub.

Christie, in his June 11 speech at Iowa State University, said colleges should send students and their families itemized bills so they know exactly how much they’re spending for things like climbing walls.

Capital construction projects are often financed over a series of decades, and are generally wrapped into student fees. Often those fee increases are approved by student governing bodies, which isn't the case with tuition.
The price tags for recreational facilities can be large, and amenities that are being built become nicer with each passing year. Take LSU’s lazy river, for example. College administrators wanted to make the river in the shape of LSU’s initials in part to one-up the competition.

Feldman said such facilities can become “PR black eyes” during national discussions of college affordability, like the debates that will take place heading up to the 2016 presidential election. But universities say they are responding to market pressures and students seek out these facilities. When LSU’s student government surveyed students about what they wanted most in a new recreational facility, the overwhelming majority asked for a lazy river.

“The students are saying they want it and they want to pay for it. The consumer behavior is not always rational,” Wellman said. Even as Christie criticized climbing walls, he admitted he paid $62,000 a year to send his daughter to Notre Dame, which has a climbing wall. (And there’s also one -- see photo above right -- at Rutgers University, in Christie’s New Jersey.)

Andrew Mahtook, president of LSU’s student government, said that as the $85 million project was presented, the financial impact of raising fees to support construction was top of mind. “We debated it, we went over it and... we approved a fee,” he said.

Wellman said that when politicians or students or pundits assert that lazy rivers and climbing walls are driving up the cost of education, they’re often making a statement about the priorities of colleges, just as much as they’re criticizing spending.

“The sense is that college costs are going up too rapidly, and institutions aren’t doing enough to control them,” she said. “The critique underneath that is the critique of the decision-making culture in higher education.”
While university officials often find themselves answering questions about ethical issues and faculty members teach ethics courses, many wonder if colleges and universities spend enough time considering the ethics behind their decisions. In his new book, *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics* (Rowman & Littlefield), the Reverend James Keenan, Canisius Professor and former acting chair of the department of theology at Boston College and director of the college’s Jesuit Institute, identifies ethical issues he says challenge campuses and recommends strategies for employees at institutions of higher education to tackle those problems. He responded to questions on topics he covered in his book via email.

Q: Should universities and colleges examine their own ethics before teaching ethics to students or presenting solutions to ethical issues institutions have to handle?

A: I don’t think universities and colleges should examine their own ethics before teaching professional ethics in other disciplines; in fact, they should continue teaching ethics for the other professions as they start up their own needed courses in university ethics. I do think, however, if they finally faced their own apathy and lack of interest in university ethics, administrators and faculty might end up restoring their university’s own ethical credibility that is grossly eroding. Moreover, by facing their own intransigence, they might end up being able to teach courses in professional ethics for other professions that are more comprehensive, practical, true to ethical prudence and less remote and conceptual than they normally are.

Q: In the book, you describe how there’s vertical accountability in a university -- faculty report to department chairs, department chairs report to deans and so on -- but mention a lack of horizontal accountability. How can faculty members and university officials promote a culture of ethics among themselves?

A: As I try to explain in *University Ethics*, two fundamental social qualities of the university conspire against horizontal accountability. First, the university geography is made up of fiefdoms, wherein since the medieval times, accountability was only vertical and never affected by any modern democratic structural changes. Comfortably, no one looks beyond their blinders and each remains with one’s own competency and task. Second, faculty are really the last professionals to move toward collaborative work…. Faculty teach alone, grade alone, publish (unless they are in the sciences) alone, and evaluate individual students, etc. Their professional lives are distinctively more autonomous than any other profession….

I think the more that the university encourages anything that builds relationality and community, from collaborative teaching, newer models of grading, greater transparency in decision making, etc., the more they will encourage all faculty to realize that they are have an interest in the university that is bigger than their own classroom.

Today, I think faculty see themselves at odds with administrators and the latter’s ever-growing bureaucracy, but faculty have also to be self-critical within their ranks, and hold each other to a greater professional team approach toward teaching, mentoring and researching. The professional ethical identity of the faculty only engaged questions of their inappropriate relationships with students; now we need to be dealing with how insular faculty are from one another and everyone else….
Q: Multiple chapters of the book are dedicated to salient topics in higher ed, such as sexual assault, gender inequality and racial discrimination on campuses. What barriers do university administrators have to overcome before they can begin to tackle these pressing issues?

A: I really think that university administrators need to be trained in ethics. Physicians, lawyers, nurses, finance personnel are all trained in ethics. Why not university administrators? The first book ever published for these folks was [in] 2009 (Elaine Pritchard et al., *The Ethical Challenges of Academic Administration* [Springer]). So the first barrier is that they are uneducated in the professional ethics of their so-called competency.

But then they have the major barrier that the university, fragmented it is by a wide variety of departments, has no structural accountability for transparency. The university campus has been able to hide its problems for centuries.

Finally, besides a lack of ethical training and the university’s own structural inclination to insulation, secrecy and privilege, the university enjoys the presumption that they need not study anything, because after all, they all have Ph.D.s.... Real wisdom has an epistemic humility to it, and that epistemic humility might be the best starting place for university administrators who face the unaddressed ethical challenges on their campuses.

What I said above in response to the obstacles facing the administrators applies to faculty as well: they could learn their ethical professional responsibilities, they could recognize the way the university allows them to avoid transparency and they could develop epistemic humility in the face of university ethics.

Q: You also recommend that employees of universities make an effort to learn more about their students’ lives outside of the lecture hall or lab so that they can understand the culture students are currently experiencing. How can those officials and professors become more familiar with the issues students face without becoming too involved and stepping into unethical territory?

A: For a variety of reasons, the Ivies, and then other universities, distinguished more than 100 years ago, the personal formation of their students from the academic formation of their students. Julie Reuben’s *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (University of Chicago Press, 1996) lays out an impressive argument for why those choices were made but also warns us that our needs and expectations today are quite different than those decisions more than a century ago.

I think we need to tread carefully from academic to student affairs, but we need to acknowledge that few universities have any notable bridges between the two. We need constructive bridge building so that when students enter the classroom they are not entering a hermetically sealed academic universe where personal lives are not admitted or recognized. Similarly, student affairs needs to develop constructive ways of engaging faculty so that they might better appreciate the challenges that students encounter today.
Q: As a department chair, what steps do you take to ensure that your faculty members and students are aware of ethical issues on campus? What kind of solutions do you recommend to them?

A: I was only acting department chair for one semester last year, but during that time I called the department to recognize that we needed to strategize to achieve greater presence of women and racial diversity in our department ranks. The question was well recognized and successfully engaged.

I wonder, however, whether department meetings actually are structured to look across the university and, well, the nation. For instance, as the nation was facing events in Ferguson, Staten Island, Cleveland and the rest of the country, did racism in the U.S. come up at department meetings at all? Do departments and universities recognize that they have a responsibility to serve the common good?

Though no longer acting chair, I am the director of the Jesuit Institute at Boston College, which promotes matters related to faith and culture. My first action as the new director this year was to establish a once-a-month dinner seminar for 18 full-time, adjunct faculty.... The result has been a deep solidarity among these faculty....

Q: The issue of adjunct faculty members has been framed by advocates for part-time instructors as an ethical issue. How can colleges best promote the rights of adjuncts and ensure that part-time instructors are treated ethically within an institution?

A: The term “adjunct faculty” covers a multitude of appointments. The differences between full- and part-time adjunct faculty and their roles, responsibilities and rights at any American university are conveniently not visible at the less-than-transparent contemporary university.

I think that the more transparent and accountable the university is, the more faculty and other stakeholders will examine more judiciously the plight of their own colleagues. But tenured and tenure-track faculty need to make the move of turning in solidarity to their peers in the first place, and as I tried to argue in University Ethics, that turn has not yet substantively occurred.

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Everyone Complains About Evaluations. A Nobel Laureate Offers an Alternative.

By Meg Bernhard

NO MENTION
The list of complaints about how colleges conduct course evaluations is long and seems to keep getting longer. A survey released last week of thousands of professors by the American Association of University Professors found that student evaluations are losing much of the value they once had. Earlier research already showed that student evaluations failed to adequately describe teaching quality, and often reflected judgments about an instructor’s appearance. But if not student evaluations, what should colleges use to judge the effectiveness of teaching?

Carl E. Wieman, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and professor at Stanford University’s Graduate School of Education, says he may have found an answer. In a paper published recently in Change magazine, Mr. Wieman suggests another form of evaluation: judging professors based on an inventory of their teaching practices. The ultimate measure of teaching quality, he argues, is the extent to which professors use practices associated with better student outcomes.

"It may seem surprising to evaluate the quality of teaching by looking only at the practices used by an instructor," Mr. Wieman wrote in the paper. But he said research over the past few decades had established a correlation between the teaching methods used and the amount of student learning.

Under Mr. Wieman’s proposed method, instructors would be required to fill out course inventories using a template developed by him and his wife, Sarah Gilbert, a visiting scholar at Stanford. An instructor would be asked to quantify, for example, the average number of times per course that students worked in small group discussions.

A number of colleges and groups across the country have been testing Mr. Wieman’s teaching inventory. Some observers laud the evaluation system because it requires professors to reflect on and track progress in their courses. But others caution that the system may be too standardized and that it may be difficult to translate the teaching inventory into other fields of study, like the arts and humanities.

‘Active’ Learning

Nearly 10 years ago, Mr. Wieman began researching and experimenting with teaching methods in science departments at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of British Columbia. He also studied work on best teaching practices in math and science courses to determine which categories to include in his inventory. The research literature, Mr. Wieman said, suggests the most effective teaching method for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses — the STEM fields — is "active" learning, in which students engage in problem-solving activities during class time.

He said he was confident that his inventory method could be translated directly to engineering, and "modestly confident" that it could be used in fields outside of STEM.

But some experts and observers wonder how portable the approach can be. After all, teaching a course in chemistry is quite different from teaching one on English literature.
For Catharine H. Beyer, a research scientist in the University of Washington’s educational-assessment office, disciplines are unique and require different methods of teaching. In an art class, she said, student learning may best be assessed by a more "hands off" teaching approach, in which a teacher assigns a project and then gives students feedback weeks later. "We need to think a lot about what we’re trying to teach in each of these disciplines," Ms. Beyer said.

In his paper, Mr. Wieman acknowledged that he had tested the inventory in math and sciences only, and that some courses, like seminars, labs, and project-based classes, probably would not fit within the rubric. For other fields, the inventory might require some adjustment. "In developing an inventory like this, it’s got to really capture all the standard teaching methods that people in that discipline use," he said.

Other observers worry that standardizing teaching practices might detract from an instructor’s autonomy. Different professors have distinctive teaching styles, argued Geoffrey D. Sanborn, chair of the English department at Amherst College. "Education is fundamentally about the relationship between the teacher and the student," he said, adding that in each course, faculty members bring unique teaching styles that they’ve been developing over their careers. Mr. Sanborn said he worried about potentially harmful effects if certain teaching practices became "enshrined" in a department or a university.

Michael P. Chaney, an associate professor of counseling at Oakland University, in Michigan, said that while he welcomed Mr. Wieman’s work, certain elements of instruction would be difficult to measure with an inventory.

"There’s an aspect of teaching that cannot be taught, and that’s the nontechnical skills like personality," Mr. Chaney said.

‘Tyranny of Student Evaluations’

Mr. Wieman hopes that adoption of his inventory will lead colleges to put far less weight on the end-of-semester ritual of course evaluations, when students get to anonymously judge their professors on a standardized form. In his paper, Mr. Wieman wrote that one of his goals was to free professors from "the capricious, frustrating, and sometimes quite mean-spirited tyranny of student evaluations."

But Larry A. Braskamp, who has researched faculty assessment and who next month will become interim president of Elmhurst College, said evaluations are "incomplete" without student input.

Ms. Beyer agreed, saying that "it is wrong to not give students a voice in their own learning."

In an email interview, Mr. Wieman countered that he would keep student evaluations if he adopted the inventory system for a course but that he would use them "more appropriately."

But even if Mr. Wieman’s system was used alongside other means of evaluation, another concern remains. Mr. Wieman acknowledged in his paper that his system measures "the use of a particular practice, not how well those practices are being used." He again emphasized the
"strong correlation" between learning outcomes in STEM courses and teaching methods used, independent of other characteristics of teaching, like active learning.

Ms. Beyer agreed that while active learning in the classroom can work well, that does not give the entire picture. "Just using a teaching methodology alone doesn’t ensure that students are learning," Ms. Beyer said. Others wondered whether professors would complete a lengthy survey on their course and whether they would accurately remember specific details about it.

Mr. Wieman insisted that the survey would take little time to fill out.

Diane Ebert-May, a professor of plant biology at Michigan State University, said that professors were likely to exaggerate their classroom experiences. She co-wrote a 2011 paper, "What We Say Is Not What We Do," which confirmed that self-reported data about faculty teaching is different than observational data. While not lying outright, professors tend to misremember or inflate details, she said. That issue can be resolved by balancing self-reported data with plenty of observational data, she added.

No matter what the method, Ms. Ebert-May said that more research was needed on how best to gauge learning in college.

"These tools are fine, we can use them, but I think we need to take the step and make sure students are actually learning," she said. "There is a lot of work to do."