Participants praise MU sexual violence summit

By Roger McKinney

Sunday, June 21, 2015 at 12:00 am

Participants in a Saturday summit between University of Missouri officials and members of the university’s Greek community praised the event.

“This could be a national model,” Cathy Scroggs, MU vice president for student affairs, told reporters after the Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Fraternity Houses.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was unable to attend his own summit because of flight delays. Reporters were not allowed in the room.

“The majority of people in the room were students, and they were looking for solutions,” Scroggs said of the more than 200 people who attended. She said there is a chance additional meetings will be held in the future.

Asked about specific plans or policies that came out of the meeting, Scroggs said they included developing a liaison among the Title IX office, the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Center and Greek leaders.

“One of our students said we can start doing some of these things tomorrow,” she said.

Scroggs said students also talked about the need to change the culture of fraternities.

“We all get it,” she said. “We understand what the solutions are.”

One specific change established is a beer-only policy at fraternity houses, which would prohibit hard liquor. Jason Blincow, president of the MU Interfraternity Council, said the policy will start either at the beginning of the fall semester or early in the semester.

Blincow said the council’s education plan would include teaching fraternity members about Title IX requirements and issues involving consent to sexual activity. He said peer-to-peer education among fraternity members also was important.
“We got everyone in the room together, which was a big step,” he said.

Guest visitation policies at fraternity houses did not appear to have been resolved at the summit. An early proposal by the University of Missouri Fraternity Alumni Consortium to restrict or ban female guests at fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. on weekends drew widespread criticism, including from Greek leaders.

Ted Hellman, consortium spokesman, said Friday that the consortium had loosened its proposal to require fraternity houses only to keep a list of all guests.

Allison Fitts, president of the MU Panhellenic Association, said there was no consensus about the guest list proposal during the summit.

The Panhellenic Association, an umbrella organization for MU sororities, presented a sexual violence education plan that will be introduced in the fall semester. The plan includes a yearly education requirement for sorority members as well as developing peer educators for new members. Fitts said participants seemed pleased with the plan.

Fitts said she saw the summit as laying the groundwork for future ideas, policies and plans.

“Everyone in the room is very invested in preventing sexual violence,” she said.

In addition to education, Fitts said respect for women was key to preventing sexual violence in fraternities.

“That’s how everything starts,” Fitts said.

Mizzou aims to be 'model' for prevention of sexual violence

June 20, 2015 8:30 pm  •  By Jack Witthaus

COLUMBIA, MO. • A top University of Missouri official said Saturday that its efforts to prevent sexual violence could be a “national model,” though the plan has yet to be finalized.

More than 200 MU alumni, administrators, representatives involved in Greek life and others attended the Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault & Student Safety in Greek Life.
The summit was held to address “student safety” in fraternities and sororities and occurred in a campuswide effort to address issues involving sexual assault.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs said the scale of Saturday’s meeting to address sexual violence in the Greek community has not happened in the three decades that she has worked at MU.

“I think within a year, they’re going to be saying, ‘Let’s do things like the University of Missouri,’” Scroggs said after the nearly five-hour meeting. “That’s our goal. We intend to be a national model.”

Scroggs praised student-led efforts to change the culture of Greek life but cautioned that a culture change would take time.

Still, details from the summit were few.

Reporters and the public were not allowed inside the meeting room, and drapes were pulled over the windows.

In the morning part of the summit, participants watched videos and listened to presentations from various groups.

In the afternoon, participants were involved in discussion and small-group meetings. Attendees were later asked to submit written feedback forms that would be reviewed later. Applause was heard following the summit’s conclusion.

Following the meeting, it appeared that two changes will likely occur in MU fraternities and sororities, while more proposals are planned for continued discussion, according to participants.

MU Interfraternity Council spokesman Jason Blincow said that there’s a good chance in the fall semester that MU fraternities will be able to serve only beer, not hard alcohol.

Panhellenic Association spokeswoman Allison Fitts said a Sexual Violence Education Plan is planned to start for sororities at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. The plan, announced in a statement Monday, was discussed in the meeting.

University spokesman Christian Basi said Wednesday that the summit had been evolving over the last few weeks to include the Mizzou Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention center, Title IX office, Greek Life office, the chancellor and Office of Student Affairs. On Saturday, he said he couldn’t name all of the dozens of groups that attended.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin could not attend the meeting because of issues with a flight back to Columbia.
At least one Twitter account — the MU Panhellenic Association’s Twitter account, @MizzouPHA — live-tweeted the event. The account tweeted that “290 reports of sexual violence in the 2015 school year on Mizzou’s campus. 111 of those reports involved Greeks.”

However, Basi said the figures didn’t represent just reports of sexual violence. The figures included other incidents, such as acts of discrimination and harassment, that are reported to the university’s Title IX office.

Basi said had no information on how many of those 290 reports involved sexual violence.

Basi said MU has been working to address sexual assault issues for the last 18 months. Outside of fraternities and sororities, Basi said, for example, that there has been faculty and staff Title IX training, and he said all students will be required to complete the “Not Anymore” program in August.

The training involves completing an online program that addresses various issues, including sexual assault.

“This (summit) just got a lot of public attention,” Basi said.

Late last year, Loftin asked the Mizzou Fraternity Alumni Consortium advocacy group to come up with recommendations to improve student safety within Greek organizations, specifically related to sexual assault. Those proposals were discussed Saturday.

No date has been set for a future summit or meeting.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU seeks to be 'national model' in handling campus sexual assault

JESSICA SHERWIN, Jun 20, 2015

COLUMBIA — The much anticipated Chancellor's Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Greek Life ended with no concrete decisions for policy changes in the fall. Stotler Lounge was at capacity with more than 250 people gathered for the summit Saturday. Greek life student members, Panhellenic Association leadership, Interfraternity Council leadership, national representatives, faculty, staff and alumni gathered, creating such a high attendance for the summit that some were forced to stand. Drapes on the
windows prevented passers-by from seeing the event that Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs called a landmark.

Echoes of "enough is enough" filled the air as a sexual violence awareness video played, marking the beginning of the summit. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was unable to attend because of flight delays.

Scroggs said the three objectives of the summit relayed to the audience were:

- Providing an outlet for student voices
- Coming up with short-term objectives
- Creating a framework for long-term objectives and ongoing conversation

Despite the uproar on social media about the rumored proposals, attendees remarked to one another after the summit how productive and polite the conversation was.

"Honestly, I think everyone came with a really open mind today, which made everything just so productive," Interfraternity Council President Jason Blincow said.

The summit was the first of its kind at MU, and administrators were optimistic about the progress made.

"I’ve been here a while, and we did something similar to this in the '90s but nothing to this degree," Scroggs said. "It’s very exciting and, in fact, I think this could be a national model. I think within a year they’re going to be saying, 'Let’s do things like the University of Missouri.' That’s our goal. We intend to be the national model."

The first two hours of the summit consisted of formal presentations from the Title IX Office, Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Association leadership and the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium. After a lunch break, the summit reconvened as a large group and had an open-microphone question-and-comment session.
This large group activity was followed by smaller group discussions about potential policy changes. The small groups were divided into groups of fraternity men, sorority women, alumni advisors/national headquarters representations and university offices/programs members. The groups were asked to provide written feedback about the proposals to be sorted through and considered after the summit.

Although the summit was initially thought to be focused on the Greek community, representatives from different student affairs offices were invited to the event. The conversation was expected to revolve around women's safety in fraternity houses, but it shifted to safety and education across campus.

Scroggs said communication between groups is key.

"We understand what the problem is," Scroggs said after the summit. "We know there are solutions, and if we will work together, we can find those solutions."

Scroggs said students voiced a desire for additional meetings similar to this summit in the fall. She said MU will most likely honor that request.

The summit was moderated by University of Virginia Dean of Students Allen Groves, who has been involved at several different levels of fraternity management throughout his career.

“They were looking for someone with an appropriate background to moderate,” Groves said. “I’ve worn a lot of the various hats that are in that room.”

Groves said Scroggs contacted him roughly a month ago to facilitate the conversation about sexual violence, one that his university is having as well.

"It's not a problem that is unique to any school," Groves said. "We’re all grappling with this."

Ellen Eardley, MU Title IX administrator, said there were 290 reports of sex discrimination* made to the Title IX Office in the 2014-15 academic year. Eardley said 111 of those reports involved Greek members in some capacity.
The Title IX Office will release additional numbers in a report later this summer. Eardley said the summit was a good platform to promote all of the resources the Title IX Office provides and the positive impact it can make.

"It’s exciting to see so many people in the room who care about sexual violence and preventing it from occurring in the first place," Eardley said.

This idea of education being the catalyst for a culture change was shared by many leaders at the summit.

"We did talk quite a bit about the changing of the culture, and that’s something that takes some time," Scroggs said. "But the exciting part about that conversation is that the students are talking about it. ... We’re right there with them; we’ll provide the resources they need, but that’s an issue that they have to work on for themselves."

Blincow said the fraternities were working on several changes meant to rebrand their recruitment and image. These changes include a "We Must" campaign for diversity, Title IX and consent education, a peer education program and a new alcohol policy to be implemented in the fall.

"I think it’s getting past images like ("Animal House") of fraternities and kind of getting back to the values that we were established on hundreds of years ago," Blincow said.

Blincow and Panhellenic Association President Allison Fitts said they could also see other schools taking MU’s lead and hosting meetings about sexual violence. Fitts said the publicity the summit and its topic have received in the past few weeks is a good thing.

"By having this conversation, we’re making the safety of women and preventing sexual violence — we’re putting it in the forefront of everyone’s minds," Fitts said.

The proposed visitation policy revealed at the summit stated that any woman in a fraternity house between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights would need to be on a guest list. This proposal was revised several times by the consortium, and Fitts
said it was the idea most discussed throughout the day, but no final decisions regarding its implementation have been made.

"I think we have more questions than answers about that," Fitts said. "I look forward to discussing that (guest list) policy, or if there’s a better alternative, I’m definitely interested in that."

Fitts also said no one made an apology or comment regarding the lack of female input on the visitation proposals, as stated in Panhellenic Association's letter to Chancellor Loftin.

Members of the consortium did not comment on the summit.

Some of the social media comments included statements from students expressing their indignation at being left out of the conversation. However, that is the problem the summit was created to remedy, Scroggs said.

"I don’t think anybody would ever think we would leave our students out (of this conversation)," Scroggs said. "If we’re going to develop policies, we’re going to develop policies and engage our students because they’re the ones that have to live with them and actually enforce them."

**Students address sexual assault at MU summit**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **Students, faculty, and alumni came together on the University of Missouri's campus at a summit Saturday to discuss how to curb sexual assault within Greek Life.**

The summit comes on the heels of widespread outrage from students after they saw a list of proposed limitations on fraternities and sororities.

The four protested proposals included restrictions on visiting hours for women at fraternities, a no hard liquor policy, a drug testing policy and a limit to out-of-town formals.

Additionally, one proposal recommended Greek students be required to attend a sexual assault education summit.

The women of the Panhellenic Association sent a letter to Chancellor Bowen Loftin - protesting the restrictions put on women visiting fraternity houses.

While administrators said the summit was planned before the policies were released and that they were only suggestions meant to encourage debate, Greek women said they deserved to have a say in the discussion regardless.

"Our intent of the letter was to make sure we got a seat at the table, which we definitely did today," said PHA President Allison Fitts. "I think the big thing moving forward is to continue to have women at the table when it comes to making policies regarding their safety."

Greek leaders said they believe if everyone, administrators and students alike, stay committed to open conversations like the summit, it could produce better ideas and concrete plans to address sexual assault on campus.

"There were so many rumors going around about what is it going to be, what the proposals and policies were going to look like, so it was nice to get all the parties sitting at one table discussing it," said Interfraternity Council President Jason Blincow said. "Honestly I think everyone came in with an open mind, which made everything so productive."

"If we all continue to work together, I know I'm committed to it, I know PHA is committed to it, then good things will definitely result," said Fitts.

Fitts said although the groups at the summit discussed many of the consortium's policies, they have made no final decisions on any of them.

Blincow said many Greek members left optimistic about the future and have decided to work on other policies that will bring more education on sexual assault not just to leaders in the Greek community, but to all members.

Vice Chancellor Cathy Scroggs said there will be more meetings in the future and hopes MU's discussions can be a model for colleges across the nation.
MU leaders gather for sexual assault prevention summit


COLUMBIA, MO -- After several sexual assaults on the University of Missouri's campus, over 200 university leaders gathered on Saturday to hold a sexual assault prevention summit.

Although the summit was not made to the public, after the meeting KRCG 13 caught up with some leaders to talk about what was discussed.

University of Missouri students, alumni, national representatives and faculty members from the Greek community gathered in Stotler's Lounge in Memorial Union to talk about sexual assault issues on campus.

Student Affairs Vice Chancellor, Cathy Scroggs says, "It's something that we all need to look at…it's something that our fraternities and sororities for sure and they were here in the room today to talk about ways that they can work toward making it safer and so are there policies and issues…maybe, but I think we just had a much broader conversation than that."

The summit comes after high profile sexual assaults on college campuses across the country including the highly publicized case of former MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey.

She took her own life in 2011 after she said she was raped in 2010.

The center of the discussions were the rule changes drafted by the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium.

Scroggs explains, "The alumni said you know, these are ideas that we're thinking of and suddenly they became the issue. The alumni said you know, we're just like everybody else, trying to find solutions but I think their effort at finding solutions prompted us all to come
together to start to say look we all have to talk about what the solutions are to this really important issue that's not just an issue for the University of Missouri but in higher education across the country."

Some of the proposed new rules would include banning hard liquor from fraternity and sorority houses and only allowing beer.

The group also proposed banning female guests in fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday. The first week of the semester and Stop days were also included in the proposed rules.

Panhellenic Association President, Allison Fitts says, "I think everyone in the room is very invested in ensuring the safety of women in the Greek community and on campus. So I would say that if we all continue to work together like I know I’m committed and PHA is committed too… then I know good things will definitely result out of that."

MU spokesperson Christian Basi says the original plan for the summit was to discuss potential fraternity rule changes, but was opened up to include Title IX service issues and sexual assault prevention training.

Leaders from the Interfraternity council said that in terms of their policies, the first change could be the beer only policy.

Interfraternity Council President, Jason Blincow says, "I thought it was a great idea… I'm glad that they came up with this so like I said there was so many rumors going around what was going to be, what the proposals and policies were gonna look like so it's kinda nice to get all of the parties sitting at one table discussing and honestly I think everyone came in with an open mind today which made everything so productive."

Blincow says the beer only policy could be implemented in as early as the start of the fall semester.

Scroggs says that they plan to hold more summits like this in the future.

Saturday’s sexual assault prevention summit came less than a week after ESPN's Outside the Lines report claiming Mizzou's athletic department had the highest number of alleged sexual assaults.
Summit gives Greek students chance to address proposed changes

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29399&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - Greek students at the University of Missouri had the opportunity to address the Fraternity Alumni Consortium's proposals that would drastically change Greek life at the university.

"We wanted to come in open-minded," said Interfraternity Council (IFC) President Jason Blincow.

"I think the big thing moving forward is to continue to have women at the table when it comes to making policies for our safety," Panhellenic Association (PHA) President Allison Fitts said.

Greek leaders said they were optimistic coming into the meeting. Blincow said the chapter presidents took a survey to gauge support of the various proposals. He said only the ban on hard liquor had student support.

"Our students told us loud and clear what they thought," Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs said.

Scroggs said the administration plans to have a follow-up meeting in the fall and another next summer.

"What we're leaving with is saying, 'We all get it, we understand what the problem is, we know that there are solutions, and if we work together we can find those solutions," Scroggs said.

Part of moving forward includes holding people accountable for their actions and better informing students of the resources available on campus, such as the Rape and Sexual Violence Prevention Center or the Wellness Resource Center Scroggs said.
The ban on hard liquor in fraternity houses could go into effect as early as this fall, Blincow said. He also spoke about changing the culture of fraternity life on campus, specifically improving Title IX education, consent education, and basic awareness among all fraternity members.

**Summit unites Greek student leaders, alumni, administration in tackling sexual assault**

Of the Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s four proposed regulations that surfaced earlier this month, one is likely to be enforced, while two remain to be a toss-up and the fourth has been completely scrapped.

Stotler Lounge’s glass doors were outfitted in long black curtains June 20, screening the attendees of the first-ever Greek summit on preventing sexual violence from view. The room was filled nearly to capacity with more than 250 students, faculty, administration and alumni in attendance.

*The University of Virginia Dean of Students Allen Groves was invited to moderate the summit, as per an invitation from Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs.*

“My role was to come in and help ... facilitate a good conversation so that all the voices in the room got heard,” Groves said. “We are trying to elicit all possible viewpoints.”

He said the summit’s objectives were to provide a voice, especially for students; to construct some short-term goals to achieve; and create framework for longer-term objectives.

Scroggs said the majority of people in the room were students who vocalized their opinions on the Consortium’s proposals.

“These were very, very early proposals,” she said. “And they were that. They were proposals. They were ideas and nobody had gutted them to the degree that they needed to be gutted.”

The day commenced with presentations from the Title IX office, IFC, PHA and the consortium about the proposals. Consortium spokesman Ted Hellman said they were happy to be at MU to have this conversation.

Both sorority and fraternity leadership support for the Consortium’s proposed alcohol policy, but Panhellenic Association has also voiced support banning out-of-town social events and formals.
In April, PHA penned a letter to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin voicing concerns about two of the policies and the consortium’s failing to consult women when drafting them, and providing insight on prevention of sexual assault at MU.

“Our intent of the letter was to make sure we got a seat at the table, which we definitely did today at the summit,” PHA President Allison Fitts said after the summit. “I think the big thing moving forward is to continue to have women at the table when it comes to making policies in regards to their safety.”

Last Monday, PHA published their own proposal on how to prevent sexual assault, which has been in the works since January.

Fitts addressed at the beginning of the summit, and it was mentioned several times during the day, which she is taking as a positive reaction.

“It was going to happen regardless,” she said.

Other organizations in attendance were staff members from MU’s Title IX office and the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center, several of the consortium’s members and administrators. Loftin’s flight back to Columbia was delayed, however, and he was unable to attend the summit.

“I think something we took from today was definitely increase education for all of our members,” IFC President Jason Blincow said. “And beyond the leadership, it’s more of the regular members that don’t get to see stuff like the summit or go through some of the trainings that we do.”

He also introduced IFC’s new alcohol policy,

After a lunch break, the mic was passed around the room for attendees who wanted to share their thoughts and ideas. Then, they broke out into peer groups, in which they collaborated on their own proposals for sexual assault prevention.

“I think everyone in the room was very invested in ensuring the safety of women in the Greek community and on campus,” Fitts said.

Scroggs said hosting more meetings such as the summit would be “a tremendous action step” that they will probably be taking.

“I think this could be a national model,” she said. “Within a year, they’re going to be saying ‘Let’s do things like the University of Missouri.’ That’s our goal. We intend to be the national model.”
The Panhellenic Association announced their sexual violence education plan Monday, just days before the June 20 Chancellor’s Summit to discuss proposed Greek Life regulations.

The plan, which PHA Vice President of Risk Management Kendall Foley said the association has been developing since January, calls for new education and training programs for sororities. Foley said input from the Greek community started rolling in during early April and the plan took off from there.

PHA worked with the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center and the Title IX Office on the initiative, according to a statement written by Foley released Monday.

“... The PHA board recognizes that it is unrealistic and ineffective to treat the issue of sexual violence as if it affects all of our members in the same way,” Foley wrote in the news release. “We have tailored the education plan to address members throughout all phases of their time in college and different types of members within the sorority chapter.”

The plan creates mandatory guidelines for educating and training new members, chapter leaders and other chapter members on sexual violence. The news release called previous education programs “surface-level.”

New members of sororities will be required to attend an education session facilitated by new member peer educators, a group of about 10 members from each pledge class who will undergo training on educating their classmates.

"The reason that we didn't want to have (a one-size-fits-all plan) is because you're in college for four years,” Foley said in an interview. “We see a lot of development and change in our members in those four years, and they need different things from the beginning to the end. It's just more effective to treat them differently when they're younger than when they're older. If you treat them all the same, you're not getting through to them as well as you could be if you develop plans that follow them throughout their time.”

Foley said these differences explain why the plan has guidelines specifically for new members.

“When new members come to college, they're kind of thrown in the party scene and they don't really know what's going on and especially not know the different definitions of types of sexual violence, things could happen to them and they could not really know what's going on,” Foley said.
Chapter leaders will be trained in responding to sexual violence in their chapters through a summit and a resource manual.

“Leaders of a sorority chapter are often put into difficult situations when their attention is called to a member of their chapter who has become a victim of sexual violence,” the release stated. “... They are often not trained on how to navigate situations like these. A climate that allows the politics of the Greek system and misunderstandings of the reporting process can also be cultivated when the leaders of a chapter are not thoroughly educated on sexual violence and how to address it.”

Chapter members will be required to attend an educational session developed by PHA, the RSVP Center and the Title IX Office annually. These will be on a four-year loop to reduce the chance that any one member sees the same presentation twice. Chapter members will also be offered further support training.

"I think education is probably the most important factor,” Foley said. “When it comes down to it, most of what's happening in the community in terms of sexual violence has had to do with people who are not educated — men and women. When people don't know the definition of sexual assault and rape and people don't know what they're doing and what's happened to them, there's no way we can report it accurately and there's no way we can help people who have been victims."

Foley said she expects to discuss the plan at the Chancellor’s Summit.

“We are excited to see what a well-researched and well-prepared initiative like PHA's new sexual assault education program can do to bring Mizzou closer to our shared goal of eliminating sexual misconduct on our campus,” said Parker Briden, Interfraternity Council vice president of public relations. “PHA's actions are a perfect example of strong student leadership on this issue.”

The new guidelines will go into effect regardless of the outcome of the Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s proposed fraternity regulations, according to the release.

“The overall culture of sexual violence in the community reflects the lack of education that the average chapter member has had,” the release stated. “... The Panhellenic Association believes that this education plan addresses the concerns presenting themselves in our community and that it will be immensely effective if executed consistently in the coming years. Together, we can change the culture of our community and create a place where our women feel safe and comfortable, while still empowering them to be the strong and amazing people we know they are.”
Survey shows majority of students think consortium’s proposals would be ineffective

Just over 20 percent of students who responded in a recent survey reported that they were sexually assaulted in a fraternity house or knew someone who was.

Members of the Greek Community from alumni to current students have been working to address sexual assault in fraternity houses. Earlier this week, Panhellenic Association announced plans for a sexual violence education program, which will start in the fall and be mandatory for all current and prospective members. A summit on sexual assault in fraternity houses has been scheduled for Saturday.

In addition to PHA’s plans, the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s proposed regulations are also sure to be discussed. The proposals, dated April 8, were delivered to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin by the Fraternity Alumni Consortium and include policies to ban hard alcohols and prohibit women from visiting fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

The Maneater surveyed MU students over the course of eight days in response to several regulations proposed by the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium. The survey, which had 1,940 responses, found that a majority of students do not think the regulations would be effective. A majority of surveyed Prospective fraternity and sorority members also said their recruitment plans would be negatively affected by the regulations.

“Your ideas are ridiculous,” one student wrote in the survey. “We are young adults now and if women want to stay at a fraternity house past 10 she should be aloud (sic) to. You are just trying to create problems for everyone. This will not solve anything. It will cause more problems on campus.”

Seventy-eight percent of the responses were from current Greek Life members. The grades of the respondents were distributed fairly equally. Thirty-seven percent listed themselves as sophomores. Students who took the survey were required to give a pawprint, which was then verified by Maneater staff.

Since news of the proposals hit social media June 1, mandatory drug testing has been dropped as a potential measure, consortium spokesperson Ted Hellman told The Maneater in a June 5 article.

More than 1,100 prospective fraternity members responded in the survey, and 64 percent said they will not participate in recruitment if house parties are restricted and women are not allowed
in fraternity houses on the weekends. Additionally, 29 percent said they would still rush, but it would be a disappointment.

Recruitment for IFC starts June 26. The Office of Greek Life tweeted Friday that IFC recruitment is full, a first for the organization.

Incoming freshman Alex Weinstock told The Maneater in a June 3 article that he is interested in joining Greek Life, but he is hesitant after hearing the proposed regulations.

“I was planning on rushing, but now I am kind of weary about doing so after these proposals,” he said at the time.

Prospective sorority members who were surveyed felt similarly. Out of the 1,099 who responded, 50 percent said they will not go through recruitment if their ability to socialize with fraternity members was restricted.

For current members of both sororities and fraternities, there was no clear majority on if they would’ve joined a chapter if the regulations were in place. Eleven percent of current sorority members said they joined a chapter for the sisterhood while 52 percent said it would’ve been a disappointment. Meanwhile, 46 percent of current fraternity members said they would not have gone through recruitment, and 45 percent said it would’ve been a disappointment.

Students were also asked for any suggestions as to how to prevent sexual assault on campus and around 600 people responded.

“To prevent sexual violence, it is a matter of education every student on campus, not just Greek Life,” one junior wrote. “From day one the tone from students, staff, and administration should be that this is not tolerated on MU’s campus. Give everyone the tools to identify sexual violence and be able to report it. Educate everyone on how to be safe around campus and be aware of what is happening around you. Developing an intolerance among the student body for such behavior is key. These sanctions will only make the students revolt and won’t help the cause.”

Education was a common theme throughout the suggestions.

“EDUCATION earlier on,” a sophomore wrote. “Not education on what happens after sexual assaults but education on what is considered a sexual assault. Women need to feel comfortable calling for help or disclosing the assault and men need to feel comfortable knowing when a line has been drawn and things are no longer consensual.”
Chancellor's summit scheduled for Saturday with proposals in flux

By Roger McKinney

Friday, June 19, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri Fraternity Alumni Consortium does not seek to ban or restrict women guests at fraternity houses, a spokesman said.

Instead, it seeks to have the names of all guests — women and men — on a list kept at the fraternity houses, consortium spokesman Ted Hellman said Friday.

The consortium is a voluntary association of fraternity alumni who are chapter advisers and presidents of fraternity organizations.

The Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Fraternity Houses will be from 10 a.m. to about 3 p.m. Saturday in Memorial Student Union. No reporters will be allowed at the invitation-only event.

Hellman said the guest list will include leaders of the Interfraternity Council and individual fraternities, leaders of the Panhellenic Association and individual sororities, leaders of national fraternities and sororities, the Fraternity Alumni Consortium, representatives with the Office of Greek Life, the vice chancellor of student affairs and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Hellman said widely reported information about a proposal to ban women from fraternity houses was from a draft of proposals that is being refined.

“We won’t submit anything in writing” at the summit, Hellman said of proposals. “These are things that have been discussed, but no decisions have been made.”

The earlier proposal would have prohibited or restricted female guests at fraternity houses between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. on weekends. The University of Missouri Panhellenic Association and Interfraternity Council opposed that idea.

Parker Briden, vice president of public relations for IFC, said he is encouraged that the consortium’s proposals are evolving. He said many fraternities already have guest lists.
“We’re going into the summit with an open mind,” Briden said.

Hellman said the requirement that names of guests at fraternity houses be on a guest list is part of best practices of the Fraternity Insurance Purchase Group, a liability insurance pool.

At MU, he said, alumni of fraternities and sororities own the fraternity and sorority houses and property.

“There’s no backtracking involved,” Hellman said of earlier reports that women would be banned from fraternity houses during certain hours. “It’s a continual process to refine ideas.”

He said the idea to ban all alcohol except beer at fraternity houses was one put forward by the Interfraternity Council. The idea to prohibit out-of-town fraternity formals was developed by university officials.

Briden said the beer-only idea was one the IFC had proposed. He said he is optimistic about Saturday’s summit.

“I think there’s going to be a lot of smart people in the room,” Briden said. “I hope something good comes out of it.”

Former UM President Elson Floyd dies at 59

By STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Sunday, June 21, 2015 at 12:00 am

Elson Floyd, president of Washington State University and former president of the University of Missouri System, died Saturday of complications from colon cancer.

Floyd, 59, started as president of the UM System in 2003. He left UM in 2007 to take over as president of Washington State University and went on medical leave earlier this month. He died Saturday morning at Pullman Regional Hospital, WSU spokeswoman Kathy Barnard said.

Those who were close to Floyd during his time in Missouri remembered his leadership and service to students.
Scott Charton, former director of communications for the UM System, said he and Floyd worked together to spread the message that the UM System is one of the state’s greatest assets. He said Floyd was the first to add economic development as a basic mission of the university.

“The mark of success for him was increased awareness of the role the university plays in the lives of every Missourian on some level,” Charton said. “That was Elson’s message, and his vision was to serve students while maximizing Missouri’s assets for the good of the state.”

Charton said Floyd had been aware of his health issues for some time, but Floyd did not take a leave of absence earlier because he “didn’t want to be a distraction from … serving students and focusing on academics.”

“I saw that as incredibly unselfish,” Charton said. “Selfishly, we would all want to reach out to him to tell him how much we loved him and let him know his legacy continues through his extended family and friends in Missouri.”

Tom Atkins, a former UM curator, was part of the committee that selected Floyd to serve as president. Shortly after Floyd took the job, Atkins said, the two became close friends. Atkins said Floyd took over during a rough financial time and did a respectable job of handling it.

“Anybody that got to know him even a little bit started to respect him very quickly,” Atkins said. “He did a great job for Missouri and went on to do a great job at Washington State.”

Referring to Washington State’s athletic mascot, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Floyd “turned Washington State into Cougar State, dramatically expanding the scope of the university on both sides of the mountains.”

WSU Board of Regents Chair Ryan Durkan credited Floyd for the university’s record-breaking $1 billion capital campaign, its largest enrollment in 125 years and successful efforts to double the number of students from minority groups.

“Higher education has lost a giant, and the world has lost one of its kindest human beings,” Durkan said in a statement.

Floyd, a native of North Carolina, was the first black UM System president.

Floyd’s tenure at UM was not without its hardships, including a dispute regarding the name “Missouri State University,” a faculty mutiny on the Kansas City campus over the conduct of then-Chancellor Martha Gilliland and double-digit tuition increases because of state budget issues.

Perhaps most notable was the scandal Floyd became embroiled in related to MU basketball player Ricky Clemons. Clemons violated the terms of a criminal sentence to attend a July 4, 2003, party at Floyd’s home, where Clemons wrecked an all-terrain vehicle. The incident pushed the relationship between Clemons and the Floyd family into the spotlight for months because of
taped jailhouse phone conversations in which Carmento Floyd, the president’s wife, advised Clemons against dating white women.

“You guys have no idea, no earthly idea of the grief that I’ve gone through in the context of Ricky Clemons,” Floyd said at the time.

Floyd was one of the highest-paid public-college presidents in the country. Earlier this year, the WSU regents approved an increase that brought his annual salary to $775,025. In 2008, Floyd voluntarily reduced his own salary by $100,000 a year during the recession and its aftermath. He described that pay cut as leading by example, at a time when faculty salaries were frozen, programs were being cut and tuition was growing by double-digit percentages.

In 2014, his contract was extended by seven years after he told the board of regents that he had a lot of work he wanted to accomplish at WSU and intended to stay until he retired.

Floyd served as president at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo before coming to Missouri. He began his career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had done his undergraduate and post-graduate work. He received a doctorate in higher and adult education from the school.

Elson Floyd, Washington State president and former UM president, dies at 59

June 20, 2015 6:45 pm  •  FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Updated at 6:30 p.m.

PULLMAN, Wash. • Elson Floyd, president of Washington State University and former president of the University of Missouri System, has died at 59 of complications from colon cancer.
Earlier this month, he went on medical leave. He died Saturday morning at Pullman Regional Hospital, said a school spokeswoman, Kathy Barnard.

Floyd had been president since 2007.

"Though his prognosis and outlook remained positive, recently the illness took a more serious turn," wrote Board of Regents Chair Ryan Durkan in an email to faculty and staff.

Among his achievements, Durkan said, are a successful $1 billion capital campaign, bipartisan support for a medical school at WSU’s Spokane campus and the Washington State's largest enrollment in 125 years.

Durkan said Floyd maintained a positive outlook as he led the school and dealt with cancer.

Floyd, a native of North Carolina, was the 10th president of the school, whose main campus is in Pullman in far eastern Washington.

Gov. Jay Inslee credited Elson with "dramatically expanding the scope of the university on both sides of the mountains."

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray of Washington called him "truly one of a kind. He led WSU with incredible energy, passion, and a deep and personal commitment to our students and communities." U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington cited his enthusiasm for a range of initiatives, from biofuels to medical education.

Details of a memorial service are pending, the school said.

Floyd was the first black president of the University of Missouri system when he took the position in January 2003.

Affectionately nicknamed "E-Flo" by some students, Floyd built bridges among the system's campuses and helped recruit top university leaders.

During Floyd's time as president, the UM system saw a boost in enrollment and its hospital in Columbia return to financial health.

Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor for student affairs at the University of Missouri-Columbia, said Saturday, "I remember him being very involved with students. They meant a lot to him." She said he would give out his cell phone number all the time and meet with students individually. Scroggs said he was always seen around campus.

"He was a real student advocate," Scroggs said.

But his tenure included setbacks. The most publicized one involved Ricky Clemons, a basketball player befriended by Floyd.
Floyd had Clemons to his house for a barbecue when Clemons was supposed to be in a halfway house for choking his girlfriend. At that party, Clemons crashed Floyd's all-terrain vehicle and was hospitalized. Clemons was jailed for the rest of his sentence in the choking incident.

Floyd's other posts included president of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. He began his career at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he had done his undergraduate and post-graduate work.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**Former UM President Elson Floyd was an 'apostle for public higher education'**

**KYLEE MAY, Jun 20, 2015**

COLUMBIA— The scars on Elson Floyd's hands reminded him of more than just his upbringing when he couldn't afford pen and paper. Those scars, which he received while working in an insulation plant, symbolized the trials students go through to complete a college education.

Eight years after leaving the University of Missouri System for Washington State University, Floyd died Saturday of colon cancer. He was 59. He took a leave of absence from his post as president of Washington State University earlier this month.

Scott Charton, who worked under Floyd as director of communications for the UM System, said Floyd was diagnosed with cancer years ago but kept it to himself because he did not want to divert attention away from the students and higher education.

Floyd, a leader of five universities from Washington State to the University of Missouri System, devoted his career to students. In return, his students gave him the affectionate nickname, "E-Flo."

Charton attributed the nickname to Floyd's friendly demeanor toward students, who even made buttons emblazoned with the slogan.
"He would tell me that the scars on his hands are just a reminder of what students go through," Charton said.

He will be most remembered as a great supporter who was committed to the growth of MU and the students' welfare.

Floyd was the 21st president of UM's four-campus system from 2003 to 2007. He was also the first African-American to be UM System president. Floyd left Missouri in 2007 to become president at Washington. Before the UM System, he was president at Western Michigan University. Floyd earned his bachelor's, master's and a doctorate from the University of North Carolina, where he later was an administrator. He also served as an administrator at Eastern Washington University.

To Charton, Floyd will be remembered as a dear friend and coworker who was a sincere leader. Charton said that Floyd first approached him in 2005 for communication purposes, hoping to hire him to promote Floyd's vision for public higher education. It was then that Charton first saw this "apostle for public higher education."

"Elson had tremendous charm, a smile that could light up a room and a handshake that stuck with you," Charton said. "He remembered so many names, knew so many people and touched so many lives."

Charton said the presidency gave Floyd the chance to lead an institution and interact with students every day; he adored the students, and the students adored him.

As UM System president, Floyd led long-term fundraising campaigns to compensate for the decreases in state funding for higher education, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Part of Floyd's lasting legacy is the appointment of former MU Chancellor Brady Deaton in 2004. Deaton, who worked with Floyd for four years, watched the president commit himself to students, research and many other aspects of higher education.
"He elevated the aspiration of MU, inspiring us to think more creatively," Deaton said. "He was committed to research and rebuilding the economy. Even though MU struggled financially, Floyd was committed to keeping the tuition reasonable."

Floyd's time as president was also marked by optimism. Deaton said it was an exciting time because of the new ideas Floyd brought to the table. As president, Floyd restructured the MU Extension program, reorganized the MU Health Care and created Discovery Ridge, a research park in south Columbia.

"It is very sad and very shocking," Deaton said. "I just found out about it (Floyd's cancer), and then he was gone."

2 University of Missouri athletes hurt in Columbia crash

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - A football player and a women's basketball player from the University of Missouri have been injured after their car flipped in Columbia.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol says Harold Brantley, a defensive lineman, was seriously injured in the Sunday afternoon crash on U.S. 63. The patrol report says Madeleine Stock, a women's basketball player, sustained minor injuries.

University of Missouri Hospital spokeswoman Anne Kettenbrink said Brantley was in serious condition Sunday evening and Stock was treated and released.

The report says Brantley overcorrected after driving off the left side of the highway. The car then slid off the right side of the road, struck a guardrail and overturned. The patrol says Brantley and Stock weren't wearing seatbelts.

Missouri spokesman Chad Moller told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch he didn't have specifics on Brantley's injuries.
Mizzou's Brantley seriously injured in car accident

June 22, 2015  •  By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch

COLUMBIA, MO. • Missouri defensive lineman Harold Brantley suffered serious injuries in a car accident Sunday afternoon in Columbia.

Brantley, 21, a junior defensive tackle, was the driver in a one-car accident along U.S. 63 at 1:55 p.m., with Missouri women’s basketball player Maddie Stock also in the vehicle, according to the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Both were transported to University Hospital by ambulance. Stock, 21, a senior from St. Louis who played at St. Joseph’s Academy, was listed with minor injuries.

Hospital spokeswoman Anne Kettenbrink told The Associated Press on Sunday night that Brantley was in serious condition and that Stock was treated and released.

Mizzou team spokesman Chad Moller issued the following statement: “Harold was injured in a car accident this afternoon on Highway 63 south of town. He was taken from the scene to University Hospital and is being treated for injuries. ... We are hopeful that he will be OK.”

According to the accident report, Brantley was driving a 2000 Chrysler Concorde that traveled off the left side of the road. Brantley overcorrected and the vehicle slid off the right side of the roadway, struck a guardrail and overturned.

Neither passenger was wearing a seat belt, according to the report. The vehicle was listed as totaled in the report.

**Brantley, who is from Hershey, Pa., is MU’s top returning defensive lineman and posted 54 tackles and five sacks last season.**

Stock played in all 33 games for Mizzou last season and averaged 7.2 points a game. The former Post-Dispatch All-Metro player of the year finished her high school career as St. Joseph’s second-leading career scorer.
Two MU athletes injured in Highway 63 accident

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29401&zone=2,5&categories=2,5

BOONE COUNTY - The Missouri State Highway Patrol confirms that two MU athletes, football player Harold Brantley and basketball player Madeleine Stock, are the victims involved in the single-car crash on Highway 63 Sunday afternoon.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the driver, Brantley, 21, and passenger Stock, 21, slid off the rightside of the highway, struck a guardrail and overturned. Neither were wearing a seat belt at the time of the accident, according to the accident report.

The accident happened at around 2 p.m. on southbound Highway 63 near Tom Bass Road, south of Columbia.

The 2000 Chrysler Concorde was found flipped upside down. Firefighters removed Brantley from the vehicle. He was transported to University Hospital with serious injuries and Stock had minor injuries, according the MSHP report.

Brantley is a defensive lineman for the Mizzou football team. Stock is a guard on the Mizzou women's basketball team.

The Missouri Athletic Department confirmed that Brantley was involved in the accident and they are hoping he is okay.

KOMU 8 will update with the latest information as it comes in.
UM System holds Women in Leadership Conference

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29405&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - The Equal Pay Act just had its 52nd anniversary on June 2. However, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women earn 82% of what men do.

In Missouri, the number is even lower, with women earning 78% of men's earnings.

To put it into perspective, in Illinois women earn 82% of men's earnings, and in Arkansas they earn 86%.

Here in Mid-Missouri, the University of Missouri System is working to educate people about equality in the workplace.

The UM System is holding an event called the Women in Leadership Conference, and it's being held from Monday morning into Tuesday afternoon at the Columbia Courtyard Marriott.

The event will host discussions, presentations, and lectures from people all across the UM System.

Some of the topics to be discussed include employee engagement, networking, and negotiation tips.
Limitations, 'non-compete' clause part of MSU name change

In securing a name change 10 years ago, Missouri State University agreed to a series of concessions aimed at making sure it wouldn't attempt to compete with the University of Missouri in key areas.

Legislation barred the Springfield-based institution from trying to use its new name to leverage state funding or ask for the "land grant" status obtained by the Columbia-based system.

The law also stipulated Missouri State couldn't "offer or duplicate" the same engineering and professional programs — which train medical doctors, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, optometrists, lawyers and architects — available at Mizzou.

"Some of the concern, especially from the University of Missouri, was that we'd try to duplicate what they were doing and try to use the name to leverage more funding," said Jim Baker, vice president for research, economic development and international programs. "There were concessions taking place to make it more palatable."

So, what impact have the concessions had on the university's growth? Virtually none, Missouri State officials say.

Baker contends there is no need for Springfield, just three hours away from Columbia, to offer many of the same doctoral and professional programs now available at Mizzou.

"That would make absolutely no sense," he said. "It isn't good for the state."

A decade after the agreement, Missouri State has made inroads in offering other, allowed doctoral and professional programs.

It now offers six doctoral programs, two of which are cooperative agreements with other institutions. In one case, MSU collaborated with the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Pharmacy to offer a doctor of pharmacy — known as Pharm.D — to students in Springfield.

A collaboration with the Missouri University of Science & Technology led to two engineering programs — civil and electrical engineering — being offered on the MSU campus.

"We are developing a lot of programs that are good for the Springfield area but we are doing them cooperatively. There hasn't been a negative impact whatsoever," Baker said.
He added: "We've not had a single program proposed in recent years that hasn't been approved."

The rules dictate that if MSU wants to offer a doctoral or professional program currently offered by the University of Missouri, it must notify the system in writing. Mizzou has a set period of time to respond.

At that point, Mizzou has the option of entering into an agreement to offer the program collaboratively with MSU or it can step aside, allowing MSU to offer the program itself or in cooperation with another school. Final approval on new programs rests with Missouri's Coordinating Board of Higher Education.

"They have two choices," Baker said of Mizzou's response.

MSU's promise not to seek "land grant" status, was, in essence, an acceptance that it could never try to get the additional funding that comes with such status. In addition to Mizzou, the status is held by Lincoln University in Jefferson City.

Gift to Nixon raises questions about Missouri campaign funds

June 20, 2015 10:38 am  •  By SUMMER BALLENTINE

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — An internationally known union donated $50,000 to Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon days after he recently vetoed a contentious right-to-work measure, a sizeable contribution that could help fund a re-election campaign — if he was not term-limited from running again.

The campaign contribution, which has spurred criticism from Republicans, raises questions about how Nixon will spend the money when it appears unlikely that's he's planning for a campaign anytime soon.

"What use, then, does he have for this money?" said Republican Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, who called the donation a "reward" in a written statement. Unions have said right to work could weaken the organizations. "He should return the money. Otherwise, it smells of more 'pay to play' politics by this administration," Kinder said.
A spokesman for Nixon's office deferred comment to his campaign, and his treasurer did not respond to multiple requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Quirks in Missouri campaign finance laws, which have no limits on the size of contributions, allow term-limited and former elected officials to continue receiving, spending and hoarding donations even after they have left office.

With more than $212,000 in his fund as of the most recent report that runs through the end of March, Nixon is one of a number of current and former officeholders without immediate plans to campaign who nonetheless have sizeable pots of money at their disposal.

Former Democratic Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, whose term ended in January 2013, still has roughly $147,000 in a campaign fund. Former Republican House Speaker Steve Tilley, who resigned his position in 2012 to work as a lobbyist, has been accruing interest on more than $675,000 left over from his days of campaigning.

Tim Jones, another former Republican House speaker who followed Tilley, still has $860,000 in his campaign fund after term limits prevented him from seeking re-election last year.

The stashes could come in handy if, years from now, candidates decide to run again. Jones said like many who have served in elected office, it's difficult for him to rule out ever running again.

"However, in Jay Nixon's case, I don't know that there's been any indication whatsoever that he is considering another elected office run for anything ever again," Jones said. "That's what makes this particular contribution suspect."

Those who opt not to run again can also use leftover money for anything from charitable donations to lavish meals. Funds can be used for expenses including those related to official duties, entertaining constituents or other elected officials and donating to charity, according to documents from the Missouri Ethics Commission. Using campaign money for personal use is not permitted.

Jones has used some of his money for travel expenses, donations to charity and contributions to other candidates. He spent more than $800 in gifts from Harry and David in February.

Public reports detailing how, or whether, Nixon chooses to spend campaign dollars after the donation from the international United Automobile Workers, with an address listed in the organization's Detroit headquarters, will not be available until mid-July.

**But documents show Nixon has previously used campaign funds to support other Democratic candidates, pay for political consulting and attend sports events. For example, Nixon paid more than $5,700 in October for tickets to see the Kansas City Royals and spent more than $7,000 for**
"refreshments" at University of Missouri sports events between January and the end of March this year.

While in Washington, D.C. for meetings with the Council of Governors and the White House as scheduled on his calendar, Nixon dropped nearly $2,600 for a meal at Bobby Van's Steakhouse, a swanky restaurant blocks from the White House that features $50 steaks.

He also gave $75,000 to the Democratic State Committee in the month before the 2014 elections, as well as $25,000 to Sen. Jill Schupp, D-Creve Coeur, as she ran a tight race against Republican Jay Ashcroft.

Lawmakers can attempt to override Nixon's veto of the right-to-work bill during a special session in September.

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Follow Summer Ballentine at https://twitter.com/esballentine.

Marco Rubio, Everyman

Americans say they empathize all too well with the GOP candidate’s financial struggles.

At first glance, Marco Rubio and Jonathan Unverzagt seem to have little in common. Rubio, a 44-year-old U.S. senator and Republican presidential contender from Miami, Florida, gives fiery speeches to large crowds and has racked up some $40 million in campaign commitments. Unverzagt, a plainspoken minister and 52-year-old father of 11 from Onalaska, Wisconsin, delivers weekly sermons to small groups and collects $4,000 in tithes and offerings each Sunday from his congregation of roughly 200 at Christ is Lord Free Lutheran Church. Rubio earns a Senate salary of $174,000. Unverzagt takes home a more modest income of $65,000.

But when Unverzagt, who describes himself as a “fiscal and social conservative,” heard of Rubio’s financial struggles in recent news reports, it struck a familiar chord with him. “The numbers may change a little, but that story is quite common,” he says, especially among his friends and acquaintances. Instead of being appalled at the state of Rubio’s finances, Unverzagt says he empathized.

If you put the two of them in a room, they’d be able to swap stories of making tough financial decisions in recent years, liquidating significant sources of savings to create cash flow and dealing with the dull ache of personal debt. Granted, Unverzagt had never purchased an $80,000
boat with a windfall from an $800,000 book advance, but he did once splurge on a $700, 50-inch TV, an amount that constituted more than 10 percent of his annual $6,000 tax refund. Like Rubio, who paid off $150,000 in student loan debt, Unverzagt had long ago retired his own student loans, which totaled $40,000. And Unverzagt had never cashed out a $68,000 retirement account, but he did once liquidate $1,500 from a whole life insurance policy his father-in-law had taken out on his wife, and he stopped contributing to his pension during one five-year period—just to make ends meet.

Others echo the view that Rubio’s life story—and finances—resonate with a lot more Americans than, say, Mitt Romney’s mysteriously gotten millions. “When I first read the [Rubio] report, I was like ‘what a joke, he can never be elected,’” says Peter Dunn, an Indianapolis-based former financial planner who hosts a new call-in show called the “Ask Pete the Planner Podcast.” “But I actually see a lot of everyday Americans in his decisions. That doesn’t make them right, but it does make them real.”

While every presidential candidate seeks the common touch, getting oneself into financial trouble doesn’t necessarily translate into votes; Americans generally like their presidents to be competent, at finance and everything else. Asked whether Rubio’s familiar troubles made him more likely to support him for president, Unverzagt said: “Yes, but only partially. It makes him relatable, but his vision for America and his stance on the issues will be the determining factor in the vote. On the other hand, by no means does this disqualify him.”

Nonetheless, says Michael Guillemette, assistant professor of personal financial planning at the University of Missouri, it doesn’t hurt that “a lot of Americans can empathize with Rubio—what he’s going through is not uncommon. … Most Americans didn’t inherit their wealth. When that’s the case, you’re always going to hit speed bumps.”

Rubio’s woes, as chronicled by the New York Times, were those of a man who entered public service from a “deep financial hole of his own making”— zero net worth, student loans, $30,000 in credit card and retail debt, and a $135,000 line of credit secured against a $735,000 home.

Unverzagt’s story parallels Rubio’s in many ways. A little more than four years ago, Unverzagt stared down what seemed like an unscaleable mountain of $45,000 in credit card debt. His stomach churned. He tossed and turned at night. He experienced the symptoms of acid reflux. All of which he attributed to the disarray of his finances.

The average American is facing similar hardships, despite having overconfidence in their own knowledge of personal finance best practices. According to the Washington, D.C.-based National Foundation for Credit Counseling’s 2015 Consumer Financial Literacy Survey released in April, 70 percent of American consumers are worried about their finances. And while 92 percent of respondents reported in a March online Harris Poll that they were “very or somewhat confident in their most recent big financial decision,” whether it was purchasing a new vehicle or refinancing their mortgage, 60 percent of Americans said they didn’t maintain a budget—the highest percentage in the last six years. One in three households don’t pay off their credit card debt each month.
Turns out, American Exceptionalism has a way of seeping into our wallets, whether you are a national figure or a local pastor.

“In flyover country,” Unverzagt says, “I see a lot of people living that way: ‘Oh, we'll pay it off tomorrow.’ Nobody ever pays. Tomorrow never comes.”

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To take the temperature of the average American’s financial anxiety, just listen to two of the most popular call-in financial talk radio and podcast shows. One is Peter Dunn’s, which debuted earlier this year and quickly gained an audience of more than 10,000 listeners a month, according to Dunn, who once advised professional athletes and startup founders. Now, Dunn dispenses his advice as a corporate speaker, television personality and newspaper columnist. The other is “The Dave Ramsey Show,” heard weekly by an estimated 8 million listeners and available on 550 radio affiliates, ranking as the third largest talk radio show in the country—edged out only by “The Rush Limbaugh Show” and “The Sean Hannity Show.” From his studio in Brentwood, Tennessee, Ramsey, a conservative high-octane talker with a Tennessee drawl and several New York Times bestsellers under his belt, dishes out homespun wisdom over the course of three hours Monday through Friday to callers concerned about whether they’re driving a car that’s too expensive, or whether they should declare bankruptcy (former Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Republican presidential contender even appeared as a guest earlier this year to appeal to Ramsey’s audience). “Wanna win with money,” Ramsey is fond of telling callers, “live on less than you make—a concept Congress can’t grasp.”

Dunn, who describes his political views as “fiercely independent,” fields weekly chats with callers who are granted a pseudonym so they can feel free to share their deepest financial mistakes and fears. In a recent episode, for instance, a 28-year-old newlywed dubbed “Rudy” reported $14,000 in credit card debt, two car loans totaling $27,800, and $22,000 in student loans. Rudy told Dunn he wanted to pay off his consumer credit card debt in 2015. Dunn told Rudy he was about a year away from regaining a third of his income from debt repayment. Should Rudy close old credit card accounts as he went, he asked Dunn. Or, would that hurt his chances of securing a mortgage? “You’re in the midst of shifting your perspective and philosophy on debt altogether,” Dunn encouraged him. “Screw it—get rid of the cards.”

For the many worried Americans who can sympathize, even if only a little, with Marco Rubio, Ramsey’s and Dunn’s shows—and their financial advice—offer them a certain kind of comfort, especially the 75 percent who say they would benefit from the advice of a professional financial adviser.

As Dunn sees it, Americans are doing a “pretty poor job” managing our finances. One contributing factor: the demise of the pension. Ten to fifteen percent of private sector companies have already eliminated them, he says, and that places the onus of wise spending and saving on the individual consumer, more so than ever before. As that retirement crunch tightens, Wall Street lobbyists representing big banks and brokerages have spent years—and fortunes—in a battle royale against reforming fiduciary rules for retirement advisers, with an estimated $11 trillion in IRA and 401k funds at stake. Meanwhile, the Labor Department marches on with
regulations that would prevent advisers from redirecting clients’ savings toward higher-fee funds, a potential ruling that’s in public comment phase. In an April news release, the department said such conflicts of interest result “in annual losses of about 1 percentage point for affected investors — or about $17 billion per year in total.”

Further complicating matters is easy access to credit cards—even in the Great Recession’s wake, says the University of Missouri’s Guillemette. “We’re definitely a consumption driven economy, a phenomenon that started when the Boomers hit their stride with earning power. You see it with the Millennials, too. It’s keeping up with the Joneses,” Guillemette says. “People think, I’ll be fine, I’ll pay this debt off down the road. But it becomes very difficult to get out of that way of thinking.”

If Rubio himself dialed into Dunn’s show, Dunn would first give him some perspective: Rubio did some smart things—that starting college savings accounts for his four children and paying off his student loans, among them.

But for Dunn, Rubio’s liquidating of a retirement account is the one thing he can’t understand. “He’s created a lot of dependency on high-income,” Dunn says. “He is making a bet right now that he will continue to have high income because of the debt obligations he’s taken on.”

Dunn sees the same kind of short-term thinking from the thousands of consumers he talks with each year. “The more I thought about Rubio’s story, the more I thought of the people I talk to everyday,” Dunn says. “Just knock one zero off at the end of every one of these numbers—the percentages are the same.”

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In 2010, as his financial stress and credit card debt peaked, Unverzagt realized it was time to confront his problem. He had four credit cards, three of which had climbed to 28 percent interest. “I’m sick of being in debt,” he told his wife one day after coming home from work. The couple sought financial counseling with a local affiliate of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling. In time, they built a $1,000 rainy day fund, and developed a budget. They drove their car less, ate out less, and put the difference toward their debt.

And last year, they paid off their last credit card.

Like the Unverzagts, other Americans may be beginning to see “a light at the end of the tunnel that’s not an oncoming train,” as Ramsey, the radio show host, sometimes says. According to the 2013 Survey of Consumer Finances, the most recent version of the triennial Federal Reserve report, Americans had a median debt of $60,400, down 20 percent from $75,800 in 2010. For the median family, debt burdens decreased from 2010 to 2013. The percentage of these families with payment-to-income ratios greater than 40 percent declined below levels not seen since 2001. (A statement from the Rubio campaign’s Alex Conant responding to the New York Times story maintained that “Marco’s monthly financial obligations do not put his family finances above the 43 percent debt-to-income ratio the federal government suggests is worrisome.”) Still, education debt increased during the same time period, essentially backfilling whatever portions of
American’s monthly budget were consumed by other types of debt service payments. All told, the median American family had $2,300 in credit card debt in 2013, an 18 percent decrease from $2,800 in 2010.

Today, Unverzagt has no credit card debt, but still owes $155,000 on his mortgage (like Rubio’s was before selling one of his Florida properties, Unverzagt’s mortgage is underwater—to the tune of $10,000). “My wife says I’m much more relaxed,” he says in a phone interview as he played a round of golf, a hobby he now enjoys more frequently after getting his finances in order.

As for Rubio’s dilemma, Unverzagt says he’s watching for how the presidential candidate handles his finances going forward. “It's about what he does next,” Unverzagt says.

Penny pinching: Personal financial planning

By Alicia Stice

Saturday, June 20, 2015 at 12:00 am

Andrew Zumwalt calls it a tar pit.

The messy emotional baggage people carry into their financial lives can stop them from being smart with their money, the assistant University of Missouri professor said. He sees it often.

“Maybe it goes back to how they were raised or what they were taught in school or on Sunday,” he said. “They have feelings and emotions that dictate how they interact with debt or with savings or personal finance in general.”

People often get wrapped up in long-term goals before they have solved urgent short-term problems, he said, and get hung up on impressing their friends with money they do not have or living in fear of debt.

So what is the best way to look at financial planning? The concept encompasses a huge swath of almost everyone’s life, from day-to-day financial decisions to mapping out future steps such as retirement.
“It’s not something that you just kind of go and do,” Zumwalt said. “We think about it like that, but ... we’re always doing financial planning. It’s just, ‘How far do you want to take it?’ ‘How serious is it?’ “

There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to personal financial planning, but there are some general rules to keep in mind and resources people can turn to when they need help.

**BABY STEPS**

One of the first questions that comes to mind when people start thinking about planning their personal finances is simple: What should I do first?

Michael Guillemette, an assistant professor at MU, said those initial steps depend on each person’s goals. A number of factors can shape personal finances and shift one’s priorities. Things such as high-interest debt, age and occupation all play competing roles in the planning process and can make it hard to give general advice, Guillemette said.

Traditionally, financial experts suggest building up an emergency savings fund first. This usually means having between six and 12 months of living expenses in the bank. For people with more stable jobs and steady incomes, six months usually is enough. Those who work on commission or who do not have great job security should try to save closer to 12 months of expenses.

But — and here’s where things get messy — making that a priority in financial planning assumes a lot.

People who have high-interest credit card debt or, worse, payday loan debt, should start paying those items down first, Zumwalt said.

“Accumulate a small savings account, a couple grand, enough to replace the transmission on your car if something really bad happens, and then maybe start paying off that high-interest credit card debt,” he said.

Once that debt is gone, he said, it might make sense to start putting more money into an emergency savings fund to build a bigger financial cushion.

**BUDGETING WOES**

David Keller, community bank president at the Bank of Missouri, has a clean answer to the messy budget management questions people ask: handle your money as little as possible.

“If you never have it in your checkbook, you never have a chance to spend it,” he said.

Keller said people should make sure they set up automatic deposits for their savings and retirement accounts. Whether this is through an automated bank transfer or simply by having an employer disburse the money between those accounts does not particularly matter. The most
important thing is keeping money intended to be saved from ever reaching a checking account, he said.

“I think there are a whole lot of people who really manage their monthly budget according to whether there’s any money left over at end of month,” he said. “We see a great deal of families who really would benefit from exercising better budgeting habits.”

The Bank of Missouri offers its customers a service called My Money, which provides a breakdown of their individual spending habits. The program sorts money withdrawn from a person’s checking account based on store names and then categorizes it into categories such as “meals” and “entertainment.”

People whose banks do not offer this sort of service can sign up for an account at Mint.com, which similarly monitors bank account spending. The free program also can track a person’s net worth by pooling data from savings and retirement funds.

Keller said the bank has offered the budgeting service for years, but the number of people who actually use it is “anemic” compared to what it should be. He said this could be because people either are intimidated by managing monthly budgets, do not think it is important or, frankly, are trying to avoid spats with their partners.

If a married couple has one person who trends toward the thrifty and one who spends money hand over fist, Keller said, they are less likely to closely examine their budgets.

“It can be a real source of friction,” he said.

London Evans started Harmony’s Treasure Box, located at 1900 N. Providence Road, Suite 201, because she knew many parents work to save money where they can. Evans sells used children’s clothing and gives parents the chance to find low-cost outfits for their kids. Customers also can earn cash or store credit if they decide to sell items back after their kids outgrow them.

“I just always noticed a lot of people just always telling me how expensive children’s items were,” she said. “They just grow out of them extremely, extremely fast, especially the babies. I wanted to figure out a way we could have clothes at affordable prices.”

THE ‘R’ WORD

A Pew Research survey from this year found that 43 percent of U.S. residents are not saving for retirement.

That figure grows significantly when looking at younger workers. The survey found that about 60 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 29 are not saving for retirement, apart from contributing to Social Security.
“Boomers are way more of a spending gen than their parents, and that’s where we’re going to see that, unfortunately, in retirement planning,” Guillemette said. “They’re not saving, and they didn’t save enough.”

Guillemette said it remains to be seen whether millennials will learn from their mistakes. “You have to have a lot of money over social security to be able to sustain a lifestyle you want.”

Guillemette said he sometimes talks with students who are in good financial shape and who want to get started saving for retirement. Other times, people want to skip steps and open retirement accounts before they have established emergency savings or eliminated high-interest credit card debt, for example.

“We need to talk about why you have credit card balances,” he said. “Like, is this a spending issue? Is this a one-time medical expense? And try to fix those overspending behaviors and then fix the emergency fund before we even start talking about what they immediately want to jump into.”

**FIXER-UPPER**

Similar to budget planning and savings accounts, delving into the real estate market depends greatly on a people’s financial circumstances.

Budget plays the biggest role in which homes people can buy, but other financial factors also come into play.

Columbia real estate agent Carol Denninghoff said her clients increasingly are seeking energy-efficient homes, hoping to save money on utilities while paying down their mortgage. People often look at what improvements they would need to put into a house and what property taxes they likely will need to pay, she said.

Denninghoff also sees out-of-state parents buying houses for their children to live in during college. This is not a new trend, she said, but it has increased in the past few years as rents have increased and interest rates have remained low.

“The roommates pay the mortgage, and when the kids graduate, they’re done,” she said.
With revamped app, news to be at core of Apple

Apple is diving deeper into the news business with a new application that could make the US tech giant a key industry player.

Apple News, part of the upcoming iOS 9 operating system, aims to be the primary news source for users of the iPhone and iPad -- likely at the expense of sources such as Facebook, Google and news apps such as Flipboard.

In a surprising move, Apple has unveiled it will be hiring experienced journalists to manage its news feeds -- marking a departure from the algorithmic process used by rivals.

"Apple is eager to have news created by human beings and not algorithms -- it fits in with the brand statement Apple has been making," said Judd Slivka, a professor of mobile journalism at the University of Missouri.

"The expectation is they will put together a smart team that works well broadly across news and specific content areas."

Although Apple has offered few specifics on its plans, the company's jobs listing page said it is "looking for passionate, knowledgeable editors to help identify and deliver the best in breaking national, global, and local news."

The page said the editors should have "great instincts for breaking news, but be equally able to recognize original, compelling stories unlikely to be identified by algorithms."

This marks a distinction from rivals such as Facebook, which is crafting formulas that aim to deliver articles users want based on their Web habits, demographics and interests.

- Fed by robots? -

Although Apple is likely to use some algorithms to filter stories, the hiring of experienced journalists is a positive step, said Dan Kennedy, a journalism professor at Northeastern University.

"A lot of people don't want to be fed news that a robot has decided interests them," Kennedy told AFP.
"Especially if you don't have any say how the robot makes that decision. The Facebook algorithm is highly mysterious, and people are starting to resent that."

Kennedy said it is "encouraging that this is moving journalism to the center of Apple's universe."

But he remains cautious about technology companies increasingly becoming gatekeepers for news.

"I'm not crazy about the idea of shifting news to huge corporations like Apple and Facebook that have their own agendas," he said.

Apple says its news app "follows over a million topics and pulls relevant stories based on your specific interests."

Partner news organizations include Conde Nast magazines, ESPN, The New York Times, Hearst, Time Inc., CNN and Bloomberg, but Apple will be opening to other publishers and bloggers.

Joshua Benton of the Nieman Journalism Lab said the app will be important because "though the awesome power of default, Apple distribution puts it in an entirely other league. This app will be on hundreds of millions of devices within 24 hours of its debut."

Benton said it could help news organizations struggling to raise ad revenues, with Apple allowing them to keep 100 percent of money from ads they sell and 70 percent from what Apple's iAd platform sells.

Rob Enderle, a Silicon Valley analyst at Enderle Group, said Apple is following a formula it has used in other areas, aiming for tight control of content to assure quality -- and shutting potential rivals out.

Enderle said Apple prefers to have its own application on its devices to give iPhone and iPad users easy access without turning to third parties such as Google or Facebook.

He said that when rumors surfaced that Google was interested in buying Flipboard, this spurred Apple to act.

"They didn't want Google to own a news device used by so many Apple users," Enderle said.

As a major media player, Apple will need to deal with conflicts of interest such as managing news that is unflattering to the company or which promotes rivals, analysts say.

Kennedy said that like other media owners, Apple will realize "that it would be a public relations fiasco if they did try to manipulate the news in their favor."

Enderle said Apple understands the need to keep its hands off the editorial process.

"If it's a core app and people don't like it, that would hurt the iPad," he said.
Lost and found: In processing death, artist creates visual language of grief

By Amy Wilder

Sunday, June 21, 2015 at 12:00 am

Halation, the current show at Imago Gallery and Cultural Center, features work by Marcus Miers centered roughly on his experiences with death and loss. It is not so much *memento mori* as a meditation on the visceral impact of death on self and one’s relationship with living.

Miers and his wife, during their graduate school years, were confronted with the loss of several family members and close friends.

“We experienced a lot of loss and tragedy in our immediate family, one after another, and so I started to make work to counterbalance that,” he said.

THE HALO EFFECT

Selected by University of Missouri Professor Matt Ballou, who organized the show, halation is a term first used in the mid-1800s to describe a phenomenon that occurs in photography, and later in television, in which light is reflected at oblique angles on an emulsive surface and creates a halo effect around bright objects in an image.

In the mid-20th century, artist Josef Albers explored the way in which colors interact with one another in the realm of human visual perception and rethought halation as the interplay of colors and hues with their surrounding spaces.

Most of us are familiar with optical illusions that play with these phenomena: two shapes of the same hue on a neutral field that appear to be different colors or sizes due to their arrangement, two blocks of the one color placed in fields of two different colors, making the two appear to be different colors.

We also know that staring at an image of a certain color, and afterward looking at a blank white field, produces an after-image in another color. And of course most of us were at least aware of the black-and-gold or blue-and-white dress debate online earlier this year.
These perceptual effects happen autonomically, unconsciously and independent of our knowledge about what is happening and why. And this plays into Miers’ choices of color and in his work.

“I wanted to show how he started with that idea from Josef Albers about halation,” Ballou said, “and that phenomenon or color, or action of color, became something where he could abandon paint and play more directly with color through duct tape.”

WOUNDS AND VOIDS

The experience of loss catalyzed Miers to think differently about his approach to art-making, and his conceptual process shifted from cerebral to intuitive and more reflective of his life experiences and interests.

“I don’t think that’s necessarily a requirement for all artists,” he said. “But for me, in order to make it through school and to continue a practice and survive … I had to figure out how to use the really weighty, compelling and challenging influences in my life that were out of school — school was almost secondary. Well, it was certainly secondary. Losing the people we lost was a really heavy hit, so I started making work about loss and about tragedy.

“So that’s ultimately what started to ground me, and led me to using duct tape a little more actively,” he added.

Miers reflected on the meaning and use of duct tape, which is about quickly shoring up broken pipes or other objects until they can be repaired or replaced.

“It’s never used in a permanent situation,” he said. “... Its meaning is cultivated through anxiety and repetitious attention and fixing. That rang with more truth to my situation at the time than anything else I could have been working with.”

The arrangement of work — most of it created with elements of fuchsia, neon green and traditional gray/silver duct tape and other items such as foam core, wood panels and sponges — in the space is spare, leaving a vacuous sensation, a subtle sense that something is missing. There is an overall unease; one’s visual orientation is askew.

“If you’ve experienced loss, then you know it’s more vacuous than adding something to the world like poetry and beauty and meaning,” Miers said.

There are a couple of abstract pastel drawings, in mostly green and blue hues, titled after a parachute Miers drew as an undergraduate student at MU.

The rest of the work — with a few additions: pink tape patches covering openings in the wall or chips in the tile floor of the gallery — were the culmination of Miers’ graduate study at the University of Wisconsin and were part of his thesis exhibition this spring.
One piece is placed well above the traditional sight lines that determine the height of paintings or objects in traditional gallery arrangements. Titled “Comes to Nothing,” the work is an homage to Eric Sweet, a mentor who died shortly before Miers completed his graduate show at UW. Unable to attend Sweet’s memorial service, Miers made the work in response to his former teacher’s death and included it in his thesis exhibition.

“It’s fascinating how you can have a simple shape, put a couple of lights on it and all of the sudden it becomes this really theatrical piece,” Miers said. “That’s a common tool in theater and the history of film, and so I think, using the type of materials that I do, that are really basic and common, adding a simple thing like light and showing that there’s this concerted effort toward these geometric forms shooting off of it just makes it that much more relevant — that much more grounded.”

SUNRISES AND SUNSETS

The gallery lights cast shadows down at opposing angles onto the piece and project shadows, shaped like an inverted mountain range, onto the wall. These shadow forms play with one another, much like Albers’ squares, in relative shades.

This effect can be observed in almost any gallery with a track lighting system; the shadows beneath the frames create their own visual narrative. Normally this is unintentional.

In “Comes to Nothing,” the phenomenon is the center-point of the piece.

The catalyzing experience for Miers to create this body of work, and in particular to use the hue of pink he chose for the pieces, was the death of his father.

“It was very decisive. My wife and I got a call at 3:30 in the morning that my dad had passed away, and on the drive from Wisconsin to Missouri ... we were immersed in this pinkish-fuchsia sunrise,” he said.

“There was mist in the farmlands, and it was just gorgeous. At the same time, we were listening to this Sufjan Stevens’ ‘Illinois’ album. That’s the album we’ve gone back to in pretty much every momentous life change. It’s been deeply resonant with everything I’ve thought about and processed. ... The way he spoke about death was deeply challenging and very poetic, but that’s not how it felt.”

Miers began making large color field paintings using pink hues.

“After sitting in the gallery for a while, the rods in your eyes would get exhausted, and so you’d start seeing the pink in your eye as brown and get nauseated. … I had this other shade of pink underneath it, and it turned green, so it was no longer pink that you’re looking at,” he said.

The physical discomfort and the observable phenomena related to color perception felt relative to his experiences of loss.
He included green duct tape in the pieces “because that was the color you’re going to see anyway, after staring at pink for too long, and it was this really harsh contrasting color … and I’ve continued to use gray to address the historical and cultural context and understanding of what duct tape is,” he said.

“Trying to make a work directly about losing people like my dad or Eric is challenging, because I mostly have emotional and psychological reactions to those things,” Miers said. “Allowing them to be attached to different objects or phrases or common tropes and metaphors, and letting those kind of manifest themselves, was how I’ve approached all of the work.”

He thought of trite phrases people often use to comfort others faced with loss, phrases that can unintentionally hurt their recipients, and conceived his work accordingly: “Hold it Together,” “Keep Them Close” and “The Soft Tongue Breaks the Bone.”

The latter is a limp basket, made of woven green and pink duct tape, which, Miers observed, looks like a bunch of tongues interwoven with each other, or could provoke an image of tongues of fire. The basket also references gift baskets given to bereaved individuals, “and the types of cards and things people would say in them. They either hurt or totally destroy or ruin someone in the moment,” he said.

“Language is this thing we often take for granted. Sometimes we have to learn a lot about what we have to say to people.”

“Duct tape feels really in tune with the human experience,” Miers added. “Going through life, you’re constantly addressing and re-addressing things, and in some ways bandaging and piecing it together and just making it work.”

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Reminding States to Regulate

June 22, 2015

by Doug Lederman

NO MU MENTION
After years of delays spurred by concerns from states and colleges, a new federal requirement that colleges obtain authorization from regulators in each state in which they are physically located is finally due to take effect.

The U.S. Education Department on Friday issued a Dear Colleague letter reminding institutions and state regulators of the looming July 1 effective date for the so-called state authorization regulation for on-ground campuses (which is distinct from a parallel rule about online programs, which is in a holding pattern because of legal challenges).

The rule, which imposes requirements on states and college alike, is aimed at setting some minimum standards for how a state approves colleges operating within its borders. In addition to requiring institutions to have legal authorization from every state in which it physically operates a postsecondary program, the rule requires states to have a process for considering student complaints about a college, and sets out the conditions under which state regulators can use an institution’s accreditation or business licenses as a substitute for a more intensive approval process.

The regulation, originally drafted in 2010 to take effect in 2013, has been delayed twice amid colleges' complaints that the rule is confusing, particularly for independent nonprofit and for-profit institutions, unlike public colleges and universities that are almost automatically considered to be authorized because of their direct state ties.

In an interview Friday about the Dear Colleague letter, Education Department officials said they believed the delays in implementation gave most states and institutions time to work their way through any major problems with meeting the state authorization requirements. The government will review colleges' compliance with the state approval rule when it recertifies an institution's eligibility to award federal financial aid funds (a process that occurs every three to six years) or when a college triggers another federal review, such as when it seeks approval for a new program or undergoes a program review.

"To be eligible during this past year, an institution had to demonstrate that it was either compliant or working toward compliance -- that it was along a pathway" toward meeting the regulation's requirements, said Jamienne S. Studley, a deputy under secretary of education. And states that didn't have a complaint system in place, she said, "had to show that they had it underway."

Jeff Appel, the department's other deputy under secretary, said the agency had another motivation beyond reminding colleges and states of a pending obligation that most of them have under control.

The recent collapse of Corinthian Colleges and the potential federal bailout of borrowers' student debt from that and other troubled colleges has led to intensified scrutiny of whether the three-headed framework for regulating higher education (the federal government, state governments and the accreditation system) is up to the task.

"This is a good time to highlight the original rationale for the [state authorization] regulation back in 2010 -- to highlight the important role that states have, in addition to the department and accreditors, in
serving as gatekeepers to colleges' access to federal financial aid coffers," Appel said. "It's important to emphasize that there is a shared responsibility for the federal government, states and accreditors in terms of protecting students and taxpayers."

College officials agreed with Studley and Appel that institutions are unlikely to need the reminder that the state authorization rule is about to take effect. But that doesn't mean, they said, that college and university leaders fully understand what's expected of them under the regulation, despite the department's efforts to clarify the requirements.

"It concerns colleges when they think they are in compliance, have made a good-faith effort and find out they are not considered in compliance," Sarah Flanagan, vice president for government relations at the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, said via email. "But that doesn't happen until someone goes through the recertification process and gets dinged. Until then, it is the uncertainty that gnaws at institutions."

The department's Dear Colleague letter signals, though, that the agency may be flexible in dealing with institutions that struggle in the first year to show compliance with the state authorization rule. "Institutions located in states where agencies are still putting in place a sufficient state authorization process may have their current status continued for a reasonable period of time," the letter states.

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**Ending Racism Is Still a Civil Rights Issue**

June 22, 2015

By Michelle Asha Cooper

**NO MU MENTION**

Racism exists in American society. This fact may be an inconvenient truth for some, but for millions of Americans it is an ever-present, inescapable aspect of their reality. And while racism -- or its persistent threat -- characterizes the lived experiences of so many, there are still those who will dismiss civil discourse on the topic of race until tragedy strikes, thrusting these societal ills into the spotlight.
And once again that has happened -- this time in my beloved hometown, Charleston, S.C. The news coming out of Charleston has left me crestfallen. As I watch this chapter in America’s racial history unfold, I am saddened beyond comprehension. Saddened by the loss of lives -- people and families whose lives are intertwined with my own. Saddened by the cruelty that was unleashed on the innocent. And saddened by the pockets of our society unable to see the existence of racism until a hate crime surfaces.

As president of an organization committed to increasing college access and success, reflecting on racism in the broader society has made me acutely aware of the manifestations of racism on college and university campuses. While racial diversity in higher education has improved, instances of overt racism still exist and hurt students of color directly but also affect everyone on campus, white students included.

Two of the individuals killed in the Charleston shooting were members of the higher education community. DePayne Middleton Doctor was an admissions coordinator at Southern Wesleyan University, and Cynthia Hurd was a librarian at the College of Charleston, my alma mater. Because of this racist act, a cloud of sadness and grief now hangs over both of these institutions. Other overt acts, such as the incidents at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Mississippi, also elicit a collective disdain that transcends the color line. Yet, despite general disapproval of such acts, rarely do they propel sustained collective action to address race and racism.

In addition to these overt acts, insults and ignorance leave many minority students feeling unwelcome on their own campuses. For example, Asian-American and Pacific Islander students, viewed as a monolithic group, constantly must confront the model minority myth. Also, all across the nation, campus buildings and symbols, such as Amherst College’s mascot, honor individuals whose historical legacy is disconnected from the current campus’s mission and student body. And far too few colleges are providing education and training on how to be an inclusive campus.

However, the more systemic instances of racism that permeate higher education are rarely acknowledged. Our failure, for example, to really talk about race manifests in a growing trend among higher education professionals and advocates, like myself, to use the more mainstream term of “equity.” While race is often implicit in these conversations, “equity” is quickly becoming a catchall phrase that could easily, once again, marginalize the issue of race.

Equity does prompt attention to a range of marginalized populations based on markers such as socioeconomic status, gender, etc. -- important lenses for addressing discrimination -- but discrete attention to race is often lost in the process. I also recognize that the term equity is more palatable; after all, initiating a conversation by talking about race is often a nonstarter. But just because we are uncomfortable with the word, or more specifically, uncomfortable with our country’s racial past and its lingering effects, does not mean that the blemish is not there. To the contrary, our discomfort allows these wounds to deepen.

In higher education, when we do talk about race, we highlight growing college enrollments fueled by communities of color, which now represent 42 percent of the student body. But too often we fail to ask
the hard questions about whether colleges are serving and educating students of color well. Failure to do so -- and then blaming poor outcomes on the student’s native language, academic preparation or family circumstances -- further demonstrates how accustomed we have become with racial judgments. Even well-intentioned people -- free of racist or malicious intent -- unconsciously reinforce these notions.

Too often, politicians, policy makers and higher education leaders couch calls for an improved higher education system solely in economic terms. Yes, for our economy to succeed, we will need to better educate our increasingly diverse society. And yes, a college education pays off in tangible economic benefits. However, by allowing this economic narrative to dominate, we have subjugated the crucial social justice and civil rights justifications for racial diversity and equity. In doing so, we have once again minimized the historical injustices and everyday lived experiences of people of color in America.

I recognize that higher education alone cannot undo or address all of the issues of racism and hatred that stem from our country’s racial legacy. But we can do our part. And doing so begins with recognizing that our words and approach are reinforcing -- not remedying -- the problem. Honest, race-centric conversations are hard, but nowhere near as hard as facing decades of oppression, discrimination and unequal access to educational opportunity. College faculty and administrators should foster inclusive learning environments on their campuses, where historical and current-day issues of race and racism can be discussed and interrogated civilly and provocatively.

We should tackle these issues for the sake of our economy, but we must tackle them for the sake of our national values. Ending racism is about civil rights. It is about social justice. Higher education leaders must embrace these racial realities to catalyze real change and hold true on the promise of equality and opportunity that we have made to all Americans.