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Summit to discuss sex assault held at Missouri University

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A University of Missouri summit to discuss sexual assault ended with no concrete policy changes but participants said it was important that several groups convened to discuss the problem.

More than 250 people gathered Saturday in Stotler Lounge for the Chancellor's Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Greek Life. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was unable to attend because of flight delays.

The Interfraternity Council president, Jason Blincow, said that he thinks attendees approached the summit with an open mind, making it a productive meeting.

A sexual violence awareness video was shown at the beginning of the summit. Several groups including the Interfraternity Council and Panehllenic Association leadership gave formal presentations during the event, and smaller group discussions also were held about potential policy changes.

The groups were asked to provide written feedback about the proposals to be sorted through and considered after the summit.

Although the summit initially was designed to focus on the Greek community, representatives from various student affairs officers were invited to attend the summit.
"I've been here a while, and we did something similar to this in the '90s but nothing to this degree," said Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor of student affairs. "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 Columbia Missourian (http://bit.ly/1H3iRAz) reports that media were barred from attending the event, but most of the summit could be heard outside Stotler Lounge.

MU Summit On Student Safety Looks At Greek Life Changes


Fraternity and sorority leaders discussed possible changes to Greek campus life with University of Missouri officials this weekend at the Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Fraternity Houses.

Saturday's meeting, which was closed to the press, followed weeks of debate after a draft of proposals put together by the Fraternity Alumni Consortium circulated in the university community. Proposals included limiting visiting hours for women to fraternity houses, banning hard liquor and drug testing members.

The Panhellenic Association, which brings together many of the university's sororities, reacted to the document with a letter to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin that rejected several of the proposed changes, while supporting others. Allison Fitts is President of the association.

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

Last week the Panhellenic Association also released a new sexual violence education plan, which had been in development for several months.
Jason Blincow, President of the University of Missouri Interfraternity Council, says that while many possible changes are under debate, a beer-only policy in fraternities will likely soon be enacted.

“It was proposed at the end of last semester at our last IFC presidents' council meeting, so hopefully early in the fall, if not to start out the fall semester.”

Fitts of the Panhellic Association says that a visitation policy in fraternity houses was a heavily debated topic that will see further discussion – but that the most important takeaway from the meeting is that women’s safety is a priority.

“Something I started my presentation with today at the summit was 'Thank you all for being here, because by having this conversation we are making safety of women and preventing sexual violence at the forefront of everything we discuss,'” she said. “It's been a busy couple of months with the media and everything going on, but it's been good because it's gotten a lot of publicity for an issue that really matters.

University Vice Chancellor Cathy Scroggs says the university can set a national precedent in working with the Greek community to address sexual assault and student safety.

“I think within in a year, they’re going to be saying things like ‘Let’s do things like the University of Missouri.’ That’s our goal. We intend to be the national model.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Graduate School increases stipends, cuts tuition waiver

ALEXA AHERN, 14 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The MU Office of Graduate Studies announced last week that it would raise the stipends for all graduate teaching assistantships but cut the traditional waiver of tuition to 50 percent for those with 10-hour appointments.

Starting this fall, stipends will increase for all graduate student assistantships by 8 percent. Ten-hour appointments will increase from $2,550 to $2,754, and 20-hour appointments will increase from $5,100 to $5,508.
Doctoral assistantships will increase to $3,029 for 10-hour appointments and $6,058 for 20-hour appointments.

Beginning in the fall of 2016, new graduate students with 10-hour appointments will have to pay 50 percent of their tuition costs, but those with 20-hour appointments will not be affected. Currently, all graduate students with an assistantship have full tuition waivers.

Continuing graduate students and students who begin their studies before the fall of 2016 will not be affected.

Leona Rubin, associate vice chancellor for graduate studies, said the change in tuition waiver policy is part of an effort to be more competitive with other public universities, such as the University of Michigan and University of Iowa. Without full tuition waivers, graduate programs will have to offer more competitive funding to students they want to recruit.

The reduced tuition waiver is not so much a budget cut as a reallocation of resources, Rubin said. The tuition waivers amount to $30 million to $34 million every year.

Based on current graduate enrollment, the change would save a potential $3 million. According to Rubin, this money could then be funneled back to graduate programs, some for the increase in stipends.

Currently, those with 10-hour appointments total 617 of the 2,692 graduate students with assistantships at MU. Of those 617, most are assigned to the School of Journalism, the School of Music and the College of Business, Rubin said.

Dan Willett, associate director of the School of Music, said this change will have a major effect on the school’s graduate enrollment. Of the 57 graduate students with assistantships in the School of Music, 36 hold 10-hour appointments.

Those in the Business School also said the change would force adjustments.
“The reduction in waivers will require us to give thought to strategies in terms of program size and resource allocation,” Joan Gabel, dean of the Robert J. Trulaske Sr. College of Business, said in a submitted statement.

“The full impact of this decision requires more analysis, but it is highly likely changes will come in response to this news.”

The School of Journalism has the highest number of 10-hour assistantships, about 60 students among the 230 new graduate students awarded the 10-hour assistantships at the university this year.

“To lose this level of student support could easily cost us a third to a half of our annual class of students,” Esther Thorson, associate dean for graduate studies in the School of Journalism, wrote in a letter emailed to faculty and staff.

There is the possibility that a combination of 10-hour appointments and equivalent scholarship funding could still provide a full waiver of tuition, she said.

This increase in stipends will also make MU’s graduate programs more competitive with other schools, Rubin said. The University of Iowa offers graduate students a stipend of around $17,000, Rubin said.

Mizzou's Brantley breaks leg, suffers knee injuries

June 23, 2015  •  By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • It’s uncertain if Missouri defensive lineman Harold Brantley will play this season for the Tigers, but after being pulled from his mangled, overturned car Sunday, Brantley is expected to make a full recovery.

The defensive tackle from Hershey, Pa., suffered a broken leg, knee ligament damage and broken ribs in Sunday’s car accident in Columbia, Mizzou spokesman Chad Moller confirmed Monday. Brantley’s medical condition was upgraded from serious to good at University Hospital.
Brantley broke his left tibia and had surgery Sunday night. He’ll require ligament repairs on his left knee at a later date, possibly within three to four weeks, according to team trainer Rex Sharp. If his condition continues to improve, Brantley could be out of the intensive care unit Tuesday, Moller said. Missouri’s medical staff is unsure when Brantley will be cleared to play football.

“It’s too soon to put a timetable on a planned return to football activities, so we’re going to leave that open and focus all attention on helping Harold recover and get back to full health first,” Moller wrote in a prepared statement. “When that information becomes known, we’ll certainly share it with everyone.”

Missouri women’s basketball player Maddie Stock was a passenger in Brantley’s car and was also hospitalized Sunday. She was treated for minor injuries and released Sunday night.

Brantley, 21, the only returning starter along Mizzou’s defensive line, was the driver in a one-car accident along U.S. 63 at 1:55 p.m., according to the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Brantley and Stock were transported to University Hospital by ambulance. Stock, 21, is a senior from St. Louis who played at St. Joseph’s Academy.

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 road, struck a guardrail and overturned. Neither passenger was wearing a seatbelt, according to the report. The vehicle was listed as totaled in the report.

Brantley, poised to be among Mizzou’s leading candidates for preseason All-Southeastern Conference honors, posted 54 tackles and five sacks last season.

Climbing Wall Convert

June 23, 2015

by Richard Petrick

NO MU MENTION

One of the most popular critiques of higher education is that climbing walls and recreation centers are the sources of all financial problems and destructive student-coddling behaviors. Armed with outrage and anecdote, sometimes spiced with snark but little real information or context, ostensibly well-intentioned commentators have made an industry out of bashing these facilities.
I confess that, when it came to recreation centers, I was once a card-carrying member of the arched-eyebrow club. In my former position as budget director and later vice chancellor for finance for the Ohio Board of Regents, I had limited authority over campus issuance of new debt for construction. “Tut, tut, tut,” I used to think. “How could the trustees and administrators be so extravagant as to spend money on these luxurious student facilities? Why aren't running, cycling and walking on outdoor paths good enough? Why can't students do calisthenics in their dorm rooms?” (The tuts are added for dramatic effect. I never actually thought these words.)

Fortunately for the campuses and students in public institutions in Ohio, my opinion had little effect on these decisions. In terms of process, the institutions were, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. The administrations would generally seek and receive approval from students, either through an actual referendum or through student government. Students would usually approve the projects and, most importantly, the new fees associated with them.

At the University of Cincinnati, students approved the immediate imposition of new fees for a recreation center they would never use -- due to the construction schedule -- arguing that previous generations of students had supported existing, older facilities, and that the current cohort of students were in debt for these past sacrifices and investments. The staff of the Board of Regents would review the financial viability of the project, making sure that operations and debt could be financed with the plan submitted by the campus.

I was on a road in Athens -- Ohio, not Damascus -- when I got knocked off of my proverbial ass, discovered the value of these centers and changed my opinion 180 degrees. I visited the Ping Center at Ohio University on a Saturday night. What I discovered amazed me. I found the 168,000-square-foot recreation center filled with hundreds of students, faculty and staff, exercising, competing in recreational and intramural sports, socializing, doing homework in the juice bar, and generally having productive shared experiences in a safe, comfortable and challenging environment.

At a time when binge drinking and obesity are two of the most serious health issues faced by college students, and faculty-student interactions are few and far between, I was impressed with the level and type of unstructured, positive activity I witnessed among students and faculty that night. I assume that recreation centers at other institutions serve similar purposes. In addition, at urban campuses, these centers serve as a magnet on weekends and off hours that bring people, life and income to areas that otherwise would be dark and dead. In a small way, they help keep the city alive.

For someone who is still proud of his education in the liberal arts, it took me a long time to come to appreciate the words of the Roman poet Juvenal: “Mens sana in corpore sano.”

You can look it up on your smartphone, while you’re on your stationary bike, at your campus recreation center.