After University Of Missouri Sexual Assault Summit, Students Finally Get A Voice In Fraternity Policies

A recent summit to discuss sexual assault prevention policies at the University of Missouri has calmed anger over previous proposals targeting fraternities and sororities, as a plan to ban women from fraternity houses during typical party hours appears to have been taken off the table.

The invitation-only summit held June 20 attracted more than 200 members of MU Greek life, alumni and school administrators, according to a university news release. On the table were four proposals from the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium that would have drastically changed Greek life at the university, including policies largely opposed by students.

A document leaked before the summit, which the university said was only a draft, had proposed mandatory drug testing, prohibiting hard alcohol and banning out-of-town events, in addition to banning women from fraternities during "high risk periods." While the summit provided a space for students to voice their discontent -- and prompted the dropping of the more contentious proposals -- it yielded few tangible results.

"I didn't even have answers for the questions students were bringing to me over the last few weeks," Jason Blincow, president of the MU Interfraternity Council, told The Huffington Post. "It's not that we disagree with all of the consortium's ideas, because we like what they are trying to accomplish. We just didn't like the approach they took by never inviting students to the table to discuss our thoughts, especially since we live this environment day to day."

Others criticized the male-only Fraternity Alumni Consortium for proposing policies affecting female students. "Consortium members are not women so, well, you're not women," Panhellenic Association President Allison Fitts declared during the summit.

Of the four proposals from the draft "Safety of Women Students in Fraternity Houses" document, jointly authored by Office of Greek Life and the MU Fraternity Alumni Consortium, only the ban on alcohol received unanimous support. However, the Panhellenic Association has also expressed approval of another proposal which would ban out-of-town formals. The proposal for mandatory drug testing was previously dropped as was the suggestion for women to be "restricted from being guests during high-risk periods." Instead, the consortium suggested fraternities keep a guest list to track who is coming in and out of their houses.
"I'll admit that the administration and the consortium left things unclear with their proposals," Blincow said. "Not that we weren't on the same page as to the direction we wanted to take with them, but I'm not sure that there are tangible next steps that were decided on."

University Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin insisted in a statement the summit was "not the end" and that discussions on safety measures would continue.

While discussions continue, student leaders of Greek life are moving forward on some reforms on their own, including the ban on hard alcohol within fraternities. That policy has become a trend among schools seeking to change their sexual assault reputation on campus. In recent years, Dartmouth College, the University of Notre Dame and Colby College, among others, have enacted similar bans. This fall, the University of Kansas will join in prohibiting "the presence or consumption of hard alcohol by any members or guests on fraternity property."

MU to give discount to veterans

COLUMBIA – **Beginning immediately, the University of Missouri Columbia campus will offer a 10 percent tuition break for military veterans and their dependents.**

According to a press release, the award will reduce the amount of students' base tuition and applies toward a maximum of 150 hours of undergraduate credit or 75 hours of graduate credit.

To qualify for the award, students must be active-duty service members, veterans with honorable discharges, National Guard members or reservists, or their dependents; they must be seeking degrees; and they must maintain a 2.0 grade point average.
MU offers tuition discount to veterans and military members

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri announced Wednesday it will offer a 10-percent online tuition discount to military members and veterans, along with their spouses and children.

Officials say it will apply up to a maximum of 150 hours in undergraduate courses, or 75 hours of graduate classes, through Mizzou Online.

MU Chancellor Bowen Loftin said "we hope this new award will be both an incentive and an aid as they enroll and work toward receiving a degree at Mizzou in their chosen fields."

"With the tuition award in place, I can apply the amount of my federal benefits that exceed my tuition toward classes that do not otherwise qualify for federal benefits," said Joseph Osmack, an MU grad student in Jacksonville, N.C., who is already using the Chapter 30 Montgomery GI Bill.

Students who qualify need to be accepted at Mizzou Online and earn a 2.0 GPA. They also have to be an active service member, a veteran with honorable discharge, a nation guard or a reservist.
MU offers tuition discount for veterans, military personnel

Watch story: [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29446&zone=5&categories=5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29446&zone=5&categories=5)

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri announced Wednesday it will offer a new tuition award for military personnel, veterans and their families.

MU will offer a 10 percent tuition discount to reduce the cost of base tuition for online classes. Individuals can apply the discount toward a maximum of 150 hours of undergraduate credit and/or 75 hours of graduate credits toward a distance degree or certification process through Mizzou Online.

Air Force Colonel Randall Sparks said the military life can make higher education difficult and sometimes impossible for service members and their families. He said online courses and distance education makes the challenge easier to overcome.

"Indeed every single member of my own family has taken multiple online courses, including my wife Suzanne, who accomplished her master's degree with an American university, almost completely online, while we were stationed overseas," Colonel Randall Sparks said.

MU designed the program to help make higher education more accessible through its online programs. It said service members are eligible for state and federal educational benefits, but many members of the Armed Forces and their families have exhausted those benefits. MU said this award was designed to help those veterans.

"Mizzou's commitment to making higher education more accessible through online programs, a full-service Veterans Center and now this tuition assistance illustrates for veterans and their families that they have a place here," MU Veteran's Center Director Carol Fleisher said. "This tuition award will help those veterans, including their spouses and children, using the various forms of educational assistance."

To qualify for the award, individuals must complete the following requirements:
• Be an active-duty service member, veteran with honorable discharge, national guard or reservist. Dependents of these military personnel are also eligible for the award
• Be accepted to Mizzou as a degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate student who is working on a distance degree or certificate program through Mizzou Online
• Maintain a 2.0 GPA

The discount is effective immediately.

Mizzou announces tuition discount for military members and families

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=c89c442e-c23a-4c27-8a22-4860383c2c72

New tuition benefits from University of Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri announced Wednesday it will offer a new tuition award for military personnel, veterans and their families.

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The discount is effective immediately.

MU to offer military discount for online classes

By Roger McKinney


University of Missouri officials said at a news conference Wednesday that MU will immediately start offering a 10 percent tuition discount for online courses to current military members and veterans and their spouses and children.

The discount applies to base tuition for a maximum of 150 hours of undergraduate credits and 75 hours of graduate credits through Mizzou Online. Recipients must be seeking a degree.

Those who qualify for the award must maintain a 2.0 GPA to continue receiving it. The discount is needed because many veterans have already exhausted their military educational benefits or don't qualify for full coverage, MU officials said.

Loftin said during the presentation that the tuition discount will improve access.

"One key issue is making the barriers as low as we possibly can," MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said. "Money is a factor. This is one way we can chip away at that barrier."

Provost Garnett Stokes said service members are a subset for students that can most benefit from online learning.
"This is a big deal for our military and their families, a very big deal," said Col. Randall Sparks, 509th Mission Support Group commander at Whiteman Air Force Base. He said the discount is a gift to military members and veterans, but also a gift to the nation.

"Education is a cornerstone of our readiness," Sparks said.

He said after the presentation that a degree from MU is prestigious and an online degree often is the best option for active-duty military personnel.

"This is vital," Sparks said. "We have a very transient, mobile and impermanent lifestyle."

Lt. Col. Larry Crowder, deputy to the chief of the joint staff headquarters of the Missouri National Guard, said the discount would ensure that the men and women in the ranks have the ability to attend a fine university.

Larry Kay, executive director of the Missouri Veterans Commission, said the tuition break also would benefit military veterans.

"Mizzou realizes how important veterans are to the state and nation," Kay said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Mizzou Online announces military discount, effective immediately

COLUMBIA — Starting Wednesday, Mizzou Online will offer a 10 percent tuition discount for active-duty military personnel, veterans, their spouses and their dependents, MU Provost Garnett Stokes said.

Students seeking an undergraduate or graduate degree are eligible for the online tuition discount as long as they maintain a 2.0 GPA. The discount can count towards a maximum of 150 hours of undergraduate classes and 75 hours of graduate classes. Students' income won't factor into whether they qualify, Mizzou Online spokeswoman Stacy Snow said.

In the 2014-15 school year, 84 students with a military background were enrolled in Mizzou Online classes, Snow said.
Lt. Col. Larry Crowder of the Missouri National Guard said soldiers need the flexibility of an online program.

Civilian education enhances basic military training and performance, said Craig Chandler, scholarship enrollment officer for MU’s Army ROTC. "If there is a tornado, or if there is a civil disobedience thing, we need to be able to engage and intelligently interact with our civilian counterparts as we support them," he said.

Mizzou Online offers classes that count towards more than 90 degrees or certificates across 13 of MU’s colleges, according to its website. Students can apply for the discount at online.missouri.edu/military.

MU course on Zionism canceled

By Bruno Vernaschi

Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Pro-Israel groups are rejoicing over the cancellation of “Perspective on Zionism” — a one-credit-hour University of Missouri honors course that Professor George Smith planned to teach during the fall semester.

Posts published on Jewish news websites attacked Smith, a professor of biological sciences, citing a bias against Israel. In the end, a lack of enrollment led to the course’s demise.

The class description said the coursework would “consider the history of Zionism from the turn of the 20th century to the present day” and “consist of discussions, five formal debates, and occasionally an in-class film screening.”

Smith plans to retire at the end of the summer but would have returned to teach the course as an emeritus professor.

The course is an honors tutorial. The tutorials, according to MU’s website, are small classes that involve discussion and reading. MU spokesman Christian Basi said professors who want to
instruct an honors tutorial must “submit a syllabus and an online proposal form.” The information is reviewed and approved by a curriculum committee.

Smith, who says he is a former Zionist and whose wife is Jewish, said the course would have included two main books: “Israel: A History” by British historian and Zionist Martin Gilbert and “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine” by Israeli historian and anti-Zionist Ilan Pappé. Smith said he wanted the class to be “many-sided.”

MU alumnus Daniel Swindell, though, said using Pappé’s work “already by default, is questionable.” He wrote a blog post for about the course for The Times of Israel called “Crude joke at U of Missouri” and helped organize a letter-writing campaign that sought to cancel the class.

“I’m opposed to the course because Dr. Smith teaches that a Jewish state should be destroyed, should not exist, that it has no right to exist,” Swindell said. “Not only does he teach that, he teaches that Zionism should be destroyed. He believes that everything that I believe in should be destroyed.”

Yossi Feintuch, a rabbi at Congregation Beth Shalom, questions Smith’s objectivity. He is also against the idea of Smith teaching in a field that is outside of his area of expertise. Smith is a member of Beth Shalom through his wife.

“If you come in with a definite obsession against the topic that you are about to teach, that should be a red flag from the get-go,” Feintuch said. Smith, though, believes strongly that anti-Zionism is not a form of anti-Semitism.

“It’s not opposition to Jews and it’s not opposition to Jews living in Palestine,” Smith said. “It’s opposition to Jewish ethnic sovereignty over other peoples. That’s what I’m against — I’m certainly not anti-Semitic. I know huge amounts about contemporary and modern Jewish history. I’m extremely immersed in that. It couldn’t be further from the truth that I’m anti-Semitic.”

Smith said his wish is not for Israel’s Jewish population to be expelled, but he “would like to see an end to the discriminatory regime in Palestine.”

He said anti-Zionists “think that Jews and Palestinians can live together as equals in the land that they share.”

The letter-writing campaign Swindell helped organize included signatures from 16 different organizations “concerned about bigotry and misinformation.”

Swindell has had various debates with Smith and said Smith has “made his bias and his teachings so solid and concrete that I don’t think he could separate himself from it.”

Smith said the course would have been balanced, incorporating multiple viewpoints.
“I hate the idea of professors browbeating their students into agreeing with them politically,” Smith said. “I hate that — that’s like proof by intimidation. I’m an enemy of proof by intimidation. I don’t think a professor’s job is to use their power over students to assure that they have views similar to them. And I think professors who penalize students, are critical of their thinking, that’s actual academic misconduct. They should be sanctioned for that — fired.”

Despite heavy opposition, Smith hopes to be able to teach the course in the future.

“If the tutorial is proposed again, it’ll have to go through a committee again,” Basi said.

Highway Patrol to send prosecutors case files from MU Parking Garage Shooting

COLUMBIA -- The Missouri State Highway Patrol said it completed its case from a police shooting that killed a wanted suspect in a Columbia parking garage.

According to Corporal Scott White, the Highway Patrol received the Boone County Medical Examiner’s report on Mark Adair Tuesday.

Adair was allegedly shot by an officer in a University of Missouri parking garage in April.

The shooting happened after he allegedly tried to car-jack two women at gunpoint and then ran from officers that same night.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol said it will submit case files to the Boone County prosecutors sometime this week.
MU Researchers aim to better nursing home, hospital communication

COLUMBIA - A group of MU researches said Wednesday many nursing homes do not have the resources they need to properly track resident healthcare.

The team from MU Sinclair School of Nursing assessed 16 nursing homes and evaluated their ability to communicate with hospitals about resident dietary needs, medications or to complete other administrative activities. The group aimed to increase patient health outcomes by increasing secure communication using an electronic system called Health Information Exchange (HIE).

Researchers assessed current communication systems in place and found many nursing homes used technology to keep track of patient medications or schedule appointments, but those communication systems were often separate.

"The exchange of accurate, complete and timely information between hospitals and nursing homes can be complicated when other adults transfer from one place to another, said Greg Alexander, lead researcher of the study, "We want to prepare nursing homes to communicate externally as well as internally so that care transitions smoothly and patients have better health outcomes."

Alexander and his team concluded many nursing homes need additional technological and human resources to build and implement an effective HIE network.

With funding from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the team purchased equipment to improve communication infrastructure for the facilities. The group then conducted 32 hours of observation and 230 interviews to see how staff integrated HIE into their workflow.

Alexander said, "Our goal was to develop a more integrated system by providing an information exchange that could be used by all stakeholders involved in patient care. We want to build a network through identifying key players and their needs."
The team's next step was to evaluate whether HIE improves communication about resident care, and how nursing home and hospital employees can integrate the system into their workflow.

Alexander was the co-principal investigator on a $14.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The grant was intended to reduce avoidable re-hospitalizations among nursing home residents.

High schoolers enjoy varied experiences at Missouri Scholars Academy

By Roger McKinney

Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Carly Dobert said she likes being surrounded by other motivated and ambitious students.

“What’s most rewarding for me is being able to be here with 300 kids with the same drive as me,” she said.

**Carly, 16, of St. Charles is one of about 320 high school students taking part in the Missouri Scholars Academy at the University of Missouri.**

The academy started June 7 and runs through Saturday. The participating students will all be high school juniors this fall.

Missouri Scholars Academy began in 1985 to help gifted students expand their educational and social skills during the summer.

Each student chose a major and a minor area of study during the academy. Carly chose nature writing as a major and genetics as a minor.

Aside from the educational experiences, Carly said, she has been enjoying the food at the academy.

“There’s unlimited ice cream at every meal,” she said.

Eight students from Columbia high schools are part of this year’s academy. Each Missouri high school is able to nominate one junior-to-be, and larger schools may nominate more.
Brandon Hodges, 16, will be a junior at Hallsville High School this fall. Brandon, who majored in physics and minored in world religions, said he took some advanced physics classes at Hallsville High School.

“I got to go to the research reactor” at MU, he said. “It was really interesting.”

Brandon said he also made a banjo as part of his physics studies at the academy.

“We’ve been talking a lot about waves of light and sound,” he said.

He said he enjoyed a presentation by a chemist who demonstrated a number of experiments using gases.

On Tuesday, Brandon watched a presentation by Woodrow Petrovic, education coordinator with the Raptor Rehabilitation Project at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine.

Petrovic brought an American kestrel, a red-tailed hawk and a barred owl along as part of his session.

Petrovic said the kestrel has ultraviolet vision, which allows it to see the urine of its prey.

“Falcons tend to eat mostly birds,” he said of the kestrel, which is the smallest falcon in North America. “They can take out another bird in midair.”

He said the red-tailed hawk resembles its ancestors.

“They are effectively dinosaurs, but they’re raptors, not velociraptors,” Petrovic said.

Sarah Crook, 16, traveled from Fenton to attend the academy. Sarah said she was impressed by a speaker who survived the 1994 Rwandan genocide and now helps refugees in St. Louis.

“She’s super busy but really inspirational,” Sarah said.

Other speakers during this year’s academy have included Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein and former astronaut Linda Godwin, who is a physics professor at MU.

Sarah said the Missouri Scholars Academy has been a rewarding experience.

“I’m still me, but I feel like I know myself better,” she said. “It’s been really awesome.”
Missouri memorial service for former UM system president

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, MO. - About 50 people attended a memorial service in Columbia for Elson Floyd, former University of Missouri system president.

Floyd died Saturday at age 59 due to complications from colon cancer. He was president of the UM System from 2003 to 2007, when he left to take a job as the president of Washington State University.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/1GzdxjP ) the memorial was held Wednesday at the Reynolds Alumni Center on the university campus. Former Missouri Curator Tom Atkins said Floyd was student-focused and often gave out his cellphone number to students to make himself more accessible.

Washington State says it's also planning a "celebration of life" for Floyd for Aug. 26 after students return for fall semester at the Pullman campus.
Dr. Floyd remembered at MU

COLUMBIA, MO -- The University of Missouri community honored former University of Missouri System President, Dr. Elson S. Floyd.

Family, friends and co-workers gathered in the Reynolds Alumni Center Wednesday afternoon to celebrate the life of a man they called classic.

Dr. Floyd or known to students as “E-Flo”, was the 21st University of Missouri System President from 2003-2007.

He passed away at the age of 59 on June 20th after complications from colon cancer.

Dr. Floyd was the 10th president of Washington State University from 2007 until his passing.

Former University of Missouri System Director of Communications, Scott Charton, says Dr. Floyd was a great man to work with, but also a great friend.

"It was a great privilege to work with Elson Floyd. So many Missourians owe a debt to this man because he worked tirelessly for the good of the state, he worked tirelessly for the students and those students are the next leaders of the state. Elson knew that and that's why they were his passion," said Charton.

Charton says Dr. Floyd will be buried this Saturday in his hometown Henderson of North Carolina.

The Floyd family asks for memorial gifts to be made the Dr. Elson S. Floyd Founders Fund for the Washington State University College of Medicine.

This new fund will help support the operations of the new College of Medicine at Washington State University.
MU remembers former System President

COLUMBIA, Mo. - MU students and staff are remembering a former University of Missouri System President Wednesday.

Officials honored the life of Elson Floyd during a ceremony at the Alumni Center in Columbia.

He held the position from 2002 until 2007, when he left for a position at Washington State University.

Floyd died from cancer this past Saturday.

UM System President Remembered at Memorial

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29439&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - A memorial for former University of Missouri System President Elson Floyd was held at the Reynolds Alumni Center at the University of Missouri Wednesday afternoon.

Floyd died on Saturday after a battle with colon cancer. He was the UM president from 2003 to 2007. He left the UM System to become Washington State University's President, where he was president until his death. While at Washington State, Floyd advocated and eventually succeeded in creating a medical school, which there is now a petition to name it after him.
Current UM System President Tim Wolfe was one of the guest speakers sharing anecdotes and Floyd's passion for his work.

"His legacy remains strong in Missouri, and I only wish I could have seen him again and told him that," Wolfe said.

One of his old colleagues, Jacqueline Kelly, had a particular memory of Floyd that has stuck with her.

"He was the first one to introduce me as his colleague," Kelly said. "I was a director, and he was president. But he introduced me as his colleague."

Most of those who spoke talked about Floyd's dedication to higher education, his ability to get a job done well and his ability to make everyone feel like they were important.
About 50 people gathered Wednesday in the Great Room at the Reynolds Alumni Center on campus to honor Floyd.

The memorial began with testimonials from Missouri Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell, UM President Tim Wolfe, former UM curator Tom Atkins, former UM System Vice President for Human Resources Kenneth Hutchinson, University of Missouri–St. Louis Chancellor Thomas George and former Mizzou Alumni Association governing board member Walter Pfeffer.

Speakers said Floyd made an impact on higher education. Atkins said Floyd was student-focused and often gave out his cellphone number to students to make himself more accessible.

In his time as president, Floyd added the economic development pillar to the UM System’s mission.

George said he worked closely with Floyd in various roles, and was always impressed with the president.

“He was someone who got right to the meat of an issue,” George sai.

After a short program, Floyd’s colleagues were invited to share their memories.

Gerald Hitzhusen, MU associate professor and director of the Midwest Symposium on Therapeutic Recreation, said Floyd was the only able-bodied president in the country that he knew of who took a tour of campus in a wheelchair. Floyd, Hitzhusen said, cared about accessibility on campus.

During his reflections, Hitzhusen challenged Wolfe to do the same. Shortly after the memorial concluded, Wolfe told Hitzhusen that he accepted that challenge.

Willie Jones, who has been on staff long enough to see several UM presidents, said Floyd always remembered to thank the staff. Floyd, Jones said, always remembered the names of Jones’ wife and daughters, even though he had only met them once.

Floyd is survived by his wife, mother, three brothers, daughter, son-in-law, son and three granddaughters.

Floyd’s wife, Carmento, sent a letter to the university, which was read during Wednesday’s memorial.

“Your comments, prayers and well wishes have provided great comfort to the rest of our family,” the letter said. “I hope that your happy memories of him will help ease the pain of his loss.”

Kelly shared one regret: She never told Floyd how much she respected and appreciated his leadership.
“My biggest regret when I got the news on Saturday morning was that I never had the chance to say to him the things that I’ve said to you. I realized that he was gone and it was too late,” Kelly said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Faculty, administrators and staff share memories of Elson Floyd at MU gathering

MICHAELA MARSHALL DUNGEY, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — More than 80 faculty, staff and administrators gathered Wednesday at MU’s Reynolds Alumni Center to celebrate the life of former University of Missouri System President Elson Floyd.

Floyd, 59, died of colon cancer Saturday. He served as the 21st system president from 2003-07 and more recently as president of Washington State University.

Thomas George, who came to Columbia from St. Louis for the event, said he has known Floyd since 1991. Floyd hired him in 2003 as chancellor of University of Missouri-St. Louis, a position he still holds.

"When you were around him, you felt important, and you felt good," George said. "That was Elson. He just kind of put you on a pedestal."

Floyd's death, which came just weeks after he went on medical leave, took many people by surprise. "It was a real shock to me — I was unaware that he had any health issues," former MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said.

Others spoke of Floyd's character and charisma — even his amazing sense of style. "He was probably the best dressed person I knew," George said. "I always looked like a bum compared to him."

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE
—COLUMBIA, MISSOURI—

Architect renderings, plans for new softball stadium to be presented to UM board

By Blake Toppmeyer

Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri Board of Curators will receive an update on Missouri’s softball stadium project, including architect renderings and an updated projected seated capacity, at its meeting Thursday at the Reynolds Alumni Center.

The stadium, which is slated to be completed by December 2016 and ready for the 2017 season, is projected to be a 1,500- to 1,700-seat venue, with additional seating for 500 to 1,000 fans in the form of berm seating beyond the outfield wall.

This is a slightly revised figure from plans presented to the board in February that called for a 1,800-seat venue.

The new stadium will be located east of the Hearnes Center along Stadium Boulevard, a site the board approved in June 2014. The stadium will be oriented north toward Stadium Boulevard.

Thursday’s update on the stadium is an information item rather than an action item. It serves to update the board on plans and renderings drawn up by Lempka Edson Architects, which the board approved in February as the project architect.

The plans outline the dimensions for the new field, which will be 190 feet down the lines and 230 feet to center field, with a 6-foot outfield wall.

University Field, Missouri’s home since 1980, is also 190 feet down the lines but is 220 feet to center field.

University Field has a grandstand seating capacity of about 600, with additional seating in the form of portable bleachers in the outfield.
The plans also update the amount of parking spaces that will be displaced because of the stadium’s construction within an existing parking lot east of the Hearnes Center.

The stadium project will displace 503 parking spaces, but the project will include the installation of 516 new, reclaimed or reassigned parking spaces southeast of the Hearnes Center along Champions Drive and Providence Point Drive. Part of the parking overhaul includes plans to construct a band practice field southeast of Providence Point Drive.

That will allow for the former band practice area south of Champions Drive to be reclaimed as parking.

The project continues to carry an estimated $16 million price tag. The board approved that figure and a funding plan at its February meeting.

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Airport investors set to recoup their money

By Alicia Stice

Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Two years after doling out $3 million for a revenue guarantee fund for American Airlines, private and public investors are set to get their money back.

**Public groups including the University of Missouri, Boone County and the city of Columbia partnered with more than 40 private investors in 2013 to pool their funds into a $3 million revenue guarantee for American Airlines, which offers flights to Chicago and Dallas.** The deal created a financial cushion for the airline by minimizing the financial risk it assumed by coming to a new market.

All but $500,000 of the guarantee expired this year, meaning investors will get their money back with interest — about $1.03 for every dollar they contributed.

“The deal had run its course, and this was not a gift,” Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid said. “It was a guarantee. The deal was we give the money back at the end of two years.”

Dozens of private investors — including the Columbia Daily Tribune — contributed to the fund. The city had to make one $22,562 payment from the fund to American to offset losses from empty seats in the airline’s first two weeks of service, but it has not had to pay anything since.
Across the country, airlines have pushed for revenue guarantees when entering new markets through regional airports. The subject has come up at airports in Moline, Ill., Riverton, Wyo., and Kalispell, Mont., for example.

“It’s pretty common in the industry and today’s aviation business world,” Columbia Regional Airport Manager Don Elliott said, describing the risk many airlines encounter when they enter a new market. “You have to be careful adding additional capacity and go slow.”

McDavid said entering this type of financial agreement with airlines is a calculated risk for investors. He cited the Jack Brooks Regional Airport in Beaumont, Texas, as an example of such an arrangement ending badly. American Airlines had a revenue guarantee in Beaumont, which it quickly depleted before service ended.

“That was a risk we understood, but we did a lot of analysis,” he said. “We understood the market, the costs involved, fares involved, and we thought it would work in Columbia.”

If the airport decides to expand its service, it seems likely another revenue guarantee could come into play. McDavid said that is something the city must deal with on a case-by-case basis.

“We’re not willing to take an unnecessary risk,” he said. “It requires … a situational analysis whether the route makes sense.”

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As 'brown patch' invades St. Louis lawns, even the experts surrender

By Jack Witthaus

ST. LOUIS • Beneath the pristine white steeple and leafy green trees, a fungus of biblical proportions pockmarked the lawn Wednesday around the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Over the last few weeks, brown patch, the name of the fungus, nested in the normally green church confines near the River des Peres in south St. Louis. Constant moisture and warm nighttime temperatures created favorable conditions for the fungus to spread recently.

“It’s heaven for it,” said Nathan Brandt, a bishop at the church and horticulture specialist with the University of Missouri Extension in St. Louis County.

Across the area, brown patch has scarred thousands of lawns in one of the worst cases of the fungus in recent memory. The fungus is the most common lawn disease in Missouri. Brown patch attacks the grass leaves and thrives in warm, wet conditions.
Calls with questions have swamped lawn care companies and other experts. Hardware stores and lawn care suppliers have seen large demands for fungicide remedies.

Experts doubt the return of completely green lawns, and, even with a specialist tending to the fungus, green grass can take weeks to return. Chip Tynan, a horticulturist at the Missouri Botanical Garden, recommended using a lawn care company to fix the problem.

But Tynan wasn’t convinced that most people in the area would experience luscious lawns this year. His solution? Use an environmentally friendly dye and spray the unsightly spots green.

“There aren’t any quick fixes,” Tynan said.

Meanwhile, Jeff Roth, production manager for Weed Man, said the lawn care service company has been fighting back against brown patch. He said the company has received hundreds of calls a day, and the outbreak is the worst he’s witnessed in 35 years.

Roth said Weed Man hasn’t turned any customer away, but is using a “backup” fungicide. His preferred fungicide is out of stock at his supplier.

Even preventive measures failed to buffer Roth’s own lawn against this year’s brown patch. Despite applying a fungicide in early June, Roth’s experienced minor fungus damage recently.

“I have a hard time driving down the street and seeing lawns that aren’t affected,” Roth said.

The problem is so pervasive this year that Brandt advised people to do very little to their lawns. He said people should avoid ineffective fungicides and only water in the morning so as not to add moisture at night that combines with the evening dew. He said brown patch thrives in moisture and lawns that have been fertilized this year.

Brandt said brown patch isn’t a killer but will lead to “ugly” lawns.

Sufferers of brown patch shouldn’t worry, he said. When really hot temperatures roll around, everyone’s lawn will look “crappy.”

In the meantime, Brandt suggested everyone should close their shutters and wait until September for lawns to green up again.

“Give up,” Brandt said, “and don’t make it any worse.”
MU Bird Flu Expert Says Poultry Farms Should Isolate Flocks


June 25, 2015

Removing Confederate Symbols Is a Step, but Changing a Campus Culture Can Take Years

By Katherine Mangan

NO MU MENTION

It’s hard for Charles K. Ross to shake his first image of the University of Mississippi. He was watching a televised football game, and the Ole Miss stadium was a sea of Confederate-flag-waving fans.

Mr. Ross, who was completing a doctorate on African-Americans in sports at Ohio State University, was appalled.

"To see that many flags waving — it felt like very hostile territory," he recalls.
That was in 1994, two years before he took a job at the university, where he is now an associate professor of history and director of the program in African-American studies.

Today, when he walks across the campus, the signs he sees are far more welcoming.

The statue of a Confederate soldier still stands at a prominent circle, but now, nearby, there’s also a bronze likeness of James H. Meredith, the university’s first black student. Mr. Meredith was admitted by federal order amid rioting that left two people dead.

Waving the Confederate flag has died off at football games, and the Colonel Reb mascot, the white-haired old man who bore a striking resemblance to a plantation owner, has been retired. Confederate Drive is now Chapel Lane, and another street was renamed for a beloved black football player who was paralyzed in a game and later died.

Mr. Ross’s email address, with its @olemiss.edu tag, still stings because of its ties to the antebellum past, but over all, he believes, the symbols and signs that have become flashpoints in a national conversation today are starting to point in a more positive direction on his campus.

Distancing itself from its Confederate past has been a long, painful, and continuing struggle for Ole Miss.

Perceptions of the historic campus, in Oxford, Miss., before and after the changes provide a glimpse at how statues, symbols, and relics of the past can affect a college’s racial climate. The setbacks the university has experienced along the way — like the noose that appeared one day on the statue of Mr. Meredith — illustrate the limits of what can be accomplished by erecting a new monument or banning a tradition.

It’s a debate that gained greater urgency on many Southern campuses with last week’s murders of nine people in a historic black church in Charleston, S.C.

Photographs of the alleged killer posing with Confederate flags have helped persuade politicians across the Deep South, including South Carolina’s governor, Nikki R. Haley, to call for the flags’ removal from state grounds.

In Mississippi the university’s acting chancellor, Morris H. Stocks, added his voice on Tuesday to those calling for removing the Confederate emblem from the state flag. The university long ago decided that that image didn’t reflect the institution’s values,
he said.

The Power of Symbols
In 1996, when enrollment was suffering, the university’s chancellor at the time, Robert C. Khayat, commissioned a study of public perceptions about the university, including the Confederate flag and other symbols of the Old South. He found that the racially divisive symbols were hurting the university’s efforts to recruit and retain minority students and were harming its national reputation.

The following year, the university banned the longstanding tradition of waving Confederate flags during football games. Angry alumni and students accused the university of caving in to political correctness, and Mr. Khayat received death threats, which he said came from outside the state. Still, he doesn’t regret the decision.

"For years, we were burdened by the Confederate flag," Mr. Khayat said in an interview this week. "It was much loved by many people and much despised by many people, and we spent a lot of years trying to condition people to understand that it was a thing of the past and it was harmful to Old Miss and the state."

A flurry of changes since then have made the campus a more welcoming and inclusive place, he said.

From 2008 to 2014, the number of freshman applications to the Oxford campus doubled, to 16,101. The number of black students doubled from 2001 to 2014, to 2,880, increasing from 12.5 percent to 14.3 percent of the enrollment.

Changing a university’s culture takes years, even generations, said Marvin P. King Jr., an associate professor of political science and African-American studies at Ole Miss.

But at the same time, "cultures and attitudes rally around symbols," he said, and when those symbols are inclusive, rather than exclusive, the university benefits.

As that shift has occurred in Mississippi, Mr. King said, "the university has become a bigger and better school."

Even after the university banned Confederate flags at football games and ditched its longtime mascot, outbreaks of racism erupted.

Last year vandals hung a noose and an old version of a Georgia flag adorned with the Confederate emblem on the statue of Mr. Meredith.
Three members of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity were expelled from the campus chapter, and this month a former student pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of threatening force to intimidate African-American students and employees at the university. The incident illustrates that, "despite all of our progress, some people are going to resist or remain ignorant, and we still have work to do," said Mr. Ross.

‘A Welcoming Environment’
In August, six months after the noose incident, the then chancellor, Daniel W. Jones, released an action plan for racial healing that drew on the work of a Sensitivity and Respect Committee. It also included recommendations of outside consultants, including Edward L. Ayers, a Civil War historian who is stepping down this month as president of the University of Richmond.

The consultants recommended placing plaques on racially sensitive symbols, like the Confederate statue, rather than removing them. The plaques would provide historical context.

Last fall the university opened a Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement to provide programs and services that bring people together. "We strive to provide a welcoming environment, and if we have symbols that are exclusive, we have a responsibility to change them," said the center’s director, Shawnboda Mead.

Other campuses are struggling to come up with their own solutions as the pressure to remove Confederate symbols intensifies.

The University of Texas at Austin was already debating a proposal to move a statue of Jefferson Davis, who was president of the Confederacy, from its prominent place on a central mall to a museum when the Charleston massacre occurred.

Several days later the statues of three Confederate leaders were spray-painted with the words "Black Lives Matter" as a petition circulated by the student government was gathering more than 2,800 signatures of people calling for the statues’ removal. The university’s new president, Gregory L. Fenves, has appointed a task force to consider options. It will be headed by Gregory J. Vincent, the Austin campus’s vice president for diversity and community engagement.

Mr. Vincent was a consultant to the University of Mississippi when it was scrutinizing its Confederate imagery as part of its effort to improve race relations. Although he
was focusing on the university’s administrative structure, he saw how racially divisive symbols were hurting the university’s prestige.

"The symbols were a very tragic and candidly racist part of the history, and in order for the university to move forward it had to move away from that," Mr. Vincent said in an interview on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the Board of Visitors of the Citadel, a public military college in Charleston, voted 9 to 3 this week to move a Confederate naval flag that hangs in a chapel to another location on the campus. Moving the flag would require the approval of the state's Legislature but was the right thing to do, the institution’s president explained.

Other colleges that have struggled with their past include Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Va., where protests by black law students helped persuade the university to move Confederate flag replicas from a campus chapel to a museum, and Sewanee: the University of the South. In the mid-1990s, Sewanee took down flags from Southern states, some of which had Confederate imagery. Removing such images is "a step in the right direction," said Justavian Tillman, president of the University of Mississippi’s Black Student Union.

"It will definitely take more than the removal of mere symbolism," he added. The inevitable backlash that occurs "serves as a great learning opportunity on how doing what is right is not always popular, and it certainly won’t always be easy."
The U.S. Department of Education has retreated from its controversial plan to create a giant college-ratings system, top officials revealed on Wednesday. Instead, by late summer the department is now promising to produce a customizable, consumer-oriented website that won’t include any evaluations of colleges but will contain what one official described as "more data than ever before." In effect, it will be a ratings system without any ratings.

The as-yet-unnamed new system will allow students and others to compare colleges "on whatever measures are important to them," said Jamienne S. Studley, deputy under secretary of education.

The proposed federal ratings have been contentious since the moment they were announced. In Congress, Republicans in particular have introduced measures to keep the department from spending money to develop them. And many college leaders and higher-education associations have questioned the department’s capacity to devise an accurate or fair system.

A number of academic researchers have raised similar concerns. As recently as last week, Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the Republican chairman of the Senate’s education committee, predicted that the ratings would "collapse under their own weight."

Ms. Studley and Ted Mitchell, the under secretary of education, briefed The Chronicle on the department’s plans on Wednesday afternoon. They offered the briefing on the condition that reporters refrain from contacting other people for...
reaction until an embargo on the announcement lifted, at midnight on Wednesday, because department officials were still briefing key constituencies.

‘Customizable Approach’

It is clear, however, that the department’s new direction was influenced by the comments and criticisms about the proposed system that have been aired over the past year and a half. For instance, as recently as December, the department said it was "considering three rating levels — high-performing, low-performing, and those in the middle" — to assess colleges on varying measures.

But Ms. Studley said the department had now decided to proceed with this different tactic because "we really heard that what people want is the customizable approach." As with the department’s College Scorecard, the new website may include ancillary data that put the customized data into context, by, for example, showing a college’s graduation rate in relation to a national average.

Mr. Mitchell said the department was "still discussing" what specific data would be included in the system, but he said the intention was to give students, families, policy makers, and others the kind of information that would allow them to "compare college costs and outcomes."

He said categories that the department discussed back in December were still under consideration. Those include data on graduates’ earnings, loan-repayment rates, and information that could be drawn from sources other than the department’s own databases. In that respect, the new system will probably include more information than can now be found in the College Scorecard or other consumer-oriented sites, like College Navigator.

In March an official in the department said it was considering creating two different rating systems, one for consumers based on raw metrics and another designed to hold colleges accountable for student outcomes that would include adjusted metrics based on institutional and student characteristics.

‘Not Giving Up on Accountability’

Mr. Mitchell insisted that the decision to make the consumer site the top priority had not altered the department’s interest in both objectives. "We’re not giving up on accountability at all," he said. The consumer tool, he said, "will become a form of public accountability."

He said the department would be drawing on the expertise of the Obama administration’s new U.S. Digital Services team to help create the site and ensure it is user-friendly. The department also plans to make the data and programming tools for
the site available to outside developers, companies, and nonprofit organizations, so that other parties could also create apps and tools using data from the new site. Mr. Mitchell stopped short of saying that the department had given up on its original goal of creating an actual rating system, but he suggested that that project was on the back burner. "We’re going to be focusing on the consumer-focused tool for this year’s project," he said.

While acknowledging that the new site represented a tacit admission of a new direction for the scorecard effort, Mr. Mitchell said he did not consider it a setback. "This is the exact opposite of a collapse," he said. "This is a sprint forward."

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Ratings Without ... Rating

June 25, 2015
By Paul Fain

**NO MU MENTION**

The federal government will not compare colleges or pass judgment on their relative merits as part of the ratings system the U.S. Department of Education plans to release before the end of the summer, department officials said Wednesday.

But the department isn't bailing on the idea entirely, as some would have liked. Instead, the system will be more of a consumer-facing tool that students, their families and high school guidance counselors can use to learn more about how undergraduate institutions stack up, said Ted Mitchell, the under secretary of education. "We want to empower them to make comparisons based on measures that matter to them," Mitchell said.
The new tool will feature a broad range of data about college costs and outcomes, officials said, some of it publicly available for the first time. That information will be available to researchers, colleges and others, who can use it to rate colleges and compare them against one another.

“It’s a chance for institutions to get better,” said Jamienne S. Studley, the deputy under secretary.

The department, however, will not create a scoring system for colleges at this point. That means no singular rating or set of ratings that would group colleges into high-performing, low-performing and middle categories, as department officials previously said they were considering.

The department announced this significant shift in its approach to the ratings in a Wednesday afternoon call with Inside Higher Ed, on the condition that the news not be shared until Thursday.

The move toward a primarily consumer-facing tool rather than a ratings system with teeth is a departure from the rhetoric President Obama used to describe the plan when he unveiled it, almost two years ago. “What we want to do is rate them on who’s offering the best value so students and taxpayers get a bigger bang for their buck,” Obama said at the time.

The president also proposed linking the ratings system to institutions' receipt of federal financial aid. But that would require the approval of the U.S. Congress -- always a long shot, and even more so after Republicans took control of both chambers last year. Colleges and their proxies in Washington pushed back on the plan from day one. So did congressional Republicans, who have sought to prevent federal funding from being used for the creation of the ratings.

Complaints about the proposed accountability system included concerns about whether the federal government could generate data that are complete enough to accurately measure the performance of colleges. Firing back was Arne Duncan, the secretary of education, who said the higher ed lobby was “propping up the status quo.”

And supporters of the rating system noted that some higher education leaders have long fought against the feds collecting more student-level data, which could be used to learn about how students fare in the job market.

Another widely cited concern has been whether the ratings could account fairly for the differences among institutions. Many wondered how to compare colleges across geographic areas, with widely varying student populations, missions and budget situations. How to rate cash-strapped, open-access community colleges that serve local areas and don’t compete for students? And would historically black colleges be rated against each other in a separate category or lumped in with other types of institutions? Studley and other department officials spent much of the last 22 months hearing those and many other concerns, at public forums, from written comments and in meetings with a wide range of people, including many who work in higher education. “We’ve heard from thousands,” Mitchell said. “The needs of students are very diverse. The means they use to pick a college vary widely.”
Following Through
The change in plans for the ratings might not be a surprise to some, as the task increasingly appeared to be Herculean, if not quixotic. At times department officials seemed to acknowledge they were facing an uphill battle.

Even so, many higher education leaders will welcome a consumer-facing tool that has less punitive potential. And department officials can make a good case that they listened in all those public forums. But some consumer groups and think tanks will be disappointed that the White House has tabled its stab at a federal form of performance-based funding for higher education.

Mitchell signaled that the debate over the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the law that governs federal financial aid, would be where the drive for new public accountability systems would occur.

“We need Congress’s help,” he said.

Department officials did not say which data would be used to create the final system. Some of those decisions have yet to be completed, they said. But they promised that the metrics will be ready by the end of the summer.

Last December the department released a ratings framework. The 11 categories of data in that document remain the basis for what will emerge in the next couple months, according to Mitchell and Studley.

Those 11 data points are grouped into three broad areas: college access, affordability and performance. They include measures of net price, the percentage of a college’s students who receive Pell Grants, completion and transfer rates, and former students’ employment outcomes, such as earnings.

The final product will be customizable, said Mitchell, and will “empower consumers to make their own decisions.”

It will join other attempts by the White House to get more information about colleges in front of students and others who care about higher education. Those efforts include the interactive College Scorecard and a website the department and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs created specifically to help recipients of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Obama administration also appears to be closing in on successfully launching its gainful employment accountability system, which goes live in July and is primarily aimed at for-profit institutions.

The ratings will be an “an important contribution to the suite of tools,” said Mitchell, and not just for consumers. “The data will be as interesting to institutions as they are to students.”

The department plans to disseminate the ratings far and wide. Mitchell said officials will work with college advising organizations and developers of web and smartphone apps to make sure the data get into the hands of students and their families.

“We are going to do what we set out to do,” he said, by releasing a “tool kit that provides for public accountability.”
Do you want to be a student at the lobotomized university?

June 24, 2015 - 8:00pm

By Anamaria Dutceac

**NO MU MENTION**

This is a provocative question for a post that has at its heart the desire to stir a response from the informed readers of this blog. The recent debate about trigger warnings and campus safety that originated in the United States has now reached the shores of Scandinavian academia. The Internet is full of anecdotal evidence on how students have made demands on the university administration and on the faculty to protect them from exposure to materials considered disturbing. The argument I sketch here is simple: I believe that the universities are spaces for freedom of thought, without which creativity and innovation cannot exist.

For those unfamiliar with the triggers debate, there are several articles that illuminate the dilemma between safety and freedom that campus administrators and university staff are faced with. In a nutshell, the current situation is as such: some students and student associations have redefined safety in a way that includes not only protection from physical harm but also freedom from psychological distress. In the name of this redefined safety demand, changes in the curriculum have been made and campus activities have been combed for politically disturbing or provocative elements. I come to the debate from a theoretical standpoint and ask **what are universities for?** From the point of view of the students demanding forewarning, universities appear to be factories for delivering diplomas. The point of attending courses, getting good grades and finally a diploma is to further one’s career goals, with content secondary to form. In the opinion of some idealistic academics, universities are not diploma delivery devices. Universities are spaces of learning and creativity, of thinking outside the box, of problematizing and questioning existing norms. In short, spaces of freedom of thought. Impinging on this academic freedom is synonymous to lobotomizing the brain – the basic survival functions may still be performed but the patient has lost her/his ability to reason. Who wants to be a student at the lobotomized university?

Universities are (and, from my normative perspective, must remain) **safe spaces for free thought**. In dictatorships, historical and contemporary, universities have
traditionally been places of dissidence and resistance. When the authoritarian regime of communist Poland forbade the discussion of certain “sensitive” (aka critical to the government) subjects, intellectuals organized the so-called “flying universities”. Hosted in scholars’ private homes, permanently changing addresses to avoid being arrested by the police, these underground meetings provided an opportunity for Polish students to read forbidden texts and to have free discussion about subjects the government tried to hush. In today’s Belarus, the last dictatorship in Europe, university curriculum is censored. This is why an alternative higher education institution, the European Humanities University, located in the neighboring country Lithuania, functions in exile as an alternative space of learning. It is enough to look on the homepage of the organization Scholars at Risk to see how many academics are living under threat for the sake of their right to think freely. And now, in the democratic West, should we reproduce these authoritarian practices of censorship by placing cautionary warnings on our syllabi, not forced by governments but out of our own free will?

If we succumb to the demands of (self) censorship, we run the risk of turning into cyclops. As author Karl Ove Knausgaard writes in a critique of the conformist Swedish intellectual life, “[t]he cyclops do not want to be aware of the parts of reality that don’t accord with how they believe it should be.”

In a world where we live in ‘filter bubbles’ or ‘echo chambers’ of partial information, there is a pressing need to take in and discuss a variety of information. The history of humanity is ridden with disquieting events: wars, slavery, cannibalism, the Holocaust. Art is disturbing too: the monsters of Hieronymus Bosch and Goya are not a pleasant sight. Literature and film abound in examples that provoke and unsettle. All this may be disturbing, yes. But the risk of looking at the world through a cyclops’s one-eyed perspective is even more disturbing.

There's No Faking It

June 25, 2015 - 3:00am

by Donna Lehmann

NO MU MENTION

Last month, AdWeek urged us marketers to move on. "Still Obsessing Over the Millennials?” it asked, "Here are 6 Rules for Reaching Generation Z." We have seemingly ushered another generation into adulthood and now here’s a new crop of college-bound youngsters with a listicle of distinct attributes and marketing
vulnerabilities. Ready the cannons.

One attribute stood out, however, as familiar. “For brands looking to engage Gen Z, authenticity rules,” writes Bill Aperti, senior VP of a software company that creates online communities for corporate brands. “Don't be afraid to create content that is real.”

For several years now in higher ed marketing circles, authenticity has been a frequent theme when talking about Millennials. Write in an authentic voice. Create authentic video. Offer authentic experiences on a campus tour. For Generation Z, the AdWeek article suggests, "Have #NoFilter."

And to this I say, well d’uh.

Hasn’t good advertising and marketing always been authentic? The best marketing is always in lock step with a company’s or institution’s identity and for that reason it rings true and resonates with audiences. Authenticity has been and will always be valued.

Meet Generation Z
But that’s not to say this new generation doesn’t experience authenticity differently, especially in the context of choosing a college. That idea is what I set out to explore in an informal interview with Emily Martin, a 20-year-old Fordham University student. Born in 1995, Emily has just completed her freshman year, and our discussion moved between advertising in general, her online media consumption, and the factors that influenced her college decision. It was an offhand anecdote, though, that made this Gen Xer feel Victorian and deeply nuanced the notion of authenticity in higher education marketing for me. As an eight-year-old, having saved up her allowance to buy a new CD player, Emily conducted extensive online research prior to making her purchase. Yup, by eight, she was proficient in comparison shopping on the internet.

Our Voice is but One of Many
Authenticity in our marketing materials is important, but it is a small piece of the picture a prospective student will craft of our institutions. We are but one voice in a massive cacophony of online opinions.

When making her college decision, Emily took in all the user-generated content available online about Fordham and her other top choice Villanova — Youtube, College Confidential, Unigo, Rate my Professor, Yelp. “You learn to separate the negative comments into ones that matter and ones that don’t. At every school, people complain about the food.”

She also pored over each school’s officially-sanctioned website, brochures, and videos. “They provided a background on the schools so I understood what each offered.” These claims would be fact-checked in various online forums where other prospective students, current students, and alumni are sharing personal experience with abandon.

It was the campus visit that sealed the deal for Emily, which is the case for more and more prospective students. A recent Boston Globe article describing some of the fickleness of teenage visitors to campus reported that schools have been seeing 30-50
percent increases in the number of campus visits in the past few years. Perhaps for these young people, the only way to gauge authenticity is to see a place with their own eyes.

In the deluge of opinion in our data-soaked world, authenticity is very difficult to judge. Maybe this generation holds authenticity especially dear because disingenuousness is so easily discovered. Yes authenticity matters. It has always mattered. It’s just a lot harder to come by these days.

*Donna Lehmann is the director of online communications at Fordham University in New York City.*