University of Missouri Press moving back to campus

By Megan Favignano

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After 25 years in southeast Columbia, the University of Missouri Press is moving back to the campus where it was founded more than 50 years ago.

The new on-campus location will increase visibility, MU Press Director David Rosenbaum said.

“One of the problems this press faced several years ago was that … people didn’t know we existed,” Rosenbaum said. “This puts us both literally and figuratively back on the map.”

For more than two decades, the press was tucked away on Lemone Industrial Boulevard, which Rosenbaum said was difficult for visitors to find. The press started moving Wednesday to its new home in the Heinkel Building at 201 S. Seventh St.

“We are part of the Columbia campus,” Rosenbaum said. “Moving to campus made sense to me.”

The MU Press was part of the UM System until May 2012, when UM President Tim Wolfe announced the press would be phased out. After several months of backlash from authors, administrators announced the press would remain open and would shift from the UM System to MU.

Upon hearing the press would be closing, many authors took their projects to other university presses. When the press announced it would reopen under MU control, not all of those authors came back, and the press lost about a year’s worth of books, Rosenbaum said.

Rosenbaum started as director of the MU Press in November 2013. He previously worked as director of product development and project management for the American Heart Association.

“I recognize that the press has lost almost a year in terms of securing manuscripts during that unpleasant period that occurred,” Deputy Provost Ken Dean said after Rosenbaum’s hiring. “It’s going to take a while to rebuild, and I recognize that.”
The MU Press has since regained credibility with many of the authors who left, Rosenbaum said. “By and large, I’d say most of those authors have come back,” he said.

The university and the press had been talking about a potential move since Rosenbaum took over. Rosenbaum said the space in the Heinkel Building presented the right opportunity to move.

“The fact that we were out here” on LeMone Industrial Boulevard “made sense when we were doing warehousing and distribution, but we don’t do that anymore,” he said. “It doesn’t make sense anymore for us to be here.”

The building on Lemone was designed for the press and for its warehouse and distribution center, the latter of which the press stopped operating several years ago, Rosenbaum said. An outside vendor at the University of Chicago now handles distribution and warehousing for the press. Printing also is handled by outside vendors, which Rosenbaum said is a normal practice for university presses.

“We aren’t a printing service,” Rosenbaum said. “We do all of the work that needs to go into the creation of the book.” The press handles manuscript development, copy editing, typesetting, cover design, preparing files for the printer and marketing for its books.

Since the press no longer handles manufacturing and distribution, the building on Lemone had quite a bit of wasted space. Rosenbaum said the new location is smaller and more appropriate for the operation.

The move will be complete by mid-July, Rosenbaum said. While the address is changing, the phone numbers and emails for MU Press staff will remain the same.
University of Missouri Press moving back to campus

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, MO. - The University of Missouri Press is moving back to campus after 25 years in southeast Columbia.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports the University of Missouri Press was founded on campus more than 50 years ago but later moved to an off-campus location designed for the press and for its warehouse and distribution center.

Outside vendors now handle distribution, printing and warehousing for the press.

MU Press Director David Rosenbaum says the move to the campus site will increase the press's visibility and will be completed later this month.

The MU Press was part of the UM System until 2012, when officials announced the press would be phased out. Administrators later announced the press would remain open and would shift from the UM System to the University of Missouri.
College debt increases across the country raise concerns

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29630&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 21 million people attended college in 2014.

For those 21 million people, many have student-loan debt on their minds.

"Well I am kind of worried I won't be able to pay it off," Stephens College Student Nicole Ihler said.

According to a research bureau, Experian, student loan debt reached $1.2 trillion this year and has increased by 84 percent since the recession. In addition, the same research found 40 million consumers have at least one student loan with an average amount over $29,000.

For prospective college students, this poses an issue.

"No matter how small it is, there is always that cloud looming over you," Wade Pritchard, a student enrolled at MU said.

Pritchard's mother, Dawn Pritchard, said, "No matter what, you save, but the cost to come to college is so expensive now that you can't possibly come up with enough money."

At public colleges in 2012, average debt was $25,550, which is 25 percent larger than the amount in 2008. In Missouri, the average is slightly less at an average of $24,957, which ranks 33rd in the country. According to the Institute for College Access and Success, the average proportion of MU graduates with debt in 2013 was 55 percent. The average for Columbia College was higher at 64 percent while Stephens College was at 84 percent.

Dawn Pritchard said she paid to put herself through college. However, she said high tuition costs make it difficult to pay for students to pay for college without some sort of aid.
All 50 states have seen an increase in average tuition rates for public four-year institutions over the past five years. Colleges in Missouri have combined to average a five percent increase in tuition. Only two other states had public, four-year tuition rates increase by less than five percent over that span. Missouri also has seen the lowest increase compared to neighboring states.

However, Missouri's higher education funding per student ranks 44th in the country and is 42 percent below the national average. It is also last compared to its eight neighboring states. In 2007, the Missouri legislature passed the Higher Education Student Funding Act. This act limited the governing board of each Missouri public college or university to only raise tuition by the rate of inflation.

MU Economics Professor Aaron Hedlund said this poses issues for schools because they have to search for new ways to charge students and raise revenue.

"Even though costs are rising rapidly still, revenues aren't because of new restrictions, Hedlund said. "I think what Missouri and other states need to think about is what is our commitment to public education and then, broadly speaking, how can we bring down costs?"

For Wade Pritchard and the millions who will attend colleges across the country this fall, Hedlund said it is still a good a good choice for many Americans despite state-funding restrictions and rising tuition.

"College is still a good investment," MU Economics Professor Aaron Hedlund said. "Despite the higher debt and tuition continuing to rise, when you look over the long haul, the labor-market return for getting a college degree vastly overcompensates the debt."

Hedlund said there could be a trend to particular fields as students pay more attention to their expected salaries as opposed to other factors.

"It's going to affect career choice," Hedlund said. "If you have a lot of debt, it is going to skew that choice toward always going to that safe job."

Hedlund and another economist, Eric Parsons, said students may have to consider how long they are in school more than in the past due to these costs.

Columbia College student Shelby Blakley said, "I'm looking into grad schools too, so I'm going to have to figure out how to pay off student debt for a lot longer than most students."

Parsons said the increasing amount of student loan debt is a concern, but these numbers can be deceiving because more students are attending college than in the past.

"I think it is really hard to say," Parsons said. "The statistics show a sharp increase in student loans, but the increase in student loans per person is not as steep."

However, Parsons said future increases to student loan debt could pose an overall economic issue similar to the housing bubble.
"If loans are going out to people who can't repay them, then things could, potentially, crash," Parsons said.

To combat this issue, Parsons said the federal government needs to do a better job of providing information to people about student loan debt, the costs of tuition and projected salary information for various job fields.

Race relations committee preps for fall semester

The committee was conceived in January in response to student leaders’ Call for Action regarding campus climate and race relations.

Deputy Chancellor and Professor at the MU School of Law Michael Middleton, who was an MU student in the ’60s, was one of the first black students to attend the MU School of Law. As a student, he helped establish the Legion of Black Collegians.

When he returned to MU in 1985, he said he noted a larger population of students of color and more support provided by student groups. Aside from that, he said the campus climate is “exactly the same.” He also said he was surprised to see LBC still intact.

Middleton is one of 12 people who sit on the Faculty Council’s committee on race relations, a group established to identify the nature of the problems related to race and ethnicity on campus. With just over a month before the fall semester, the committee has dedicated their summer to understanding each other’s experiences. Once that is completed, the six-month-old committee has an even bigger task: to introduce solutions for the campus climate in the fall.

“We need to discover about one another: how (we have things in) common, and what we have that’s dissimilar,” said Berkley Hudson, the chairman of the committee. “We need to learn how to be excellent in that discovery, we need to learn how to be respectful of one another. We need to be responsible.”

The committee was created in response to a Call for Action drafted by a coalition of student leaders in December 2014 who were concerned with race relations and the experience had by students of color on campus.

The events in Ferguson, Missouri, prompted a series of dialogues throughout the 2014-15 year. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin hosted two listening sessions where students were allowed to voice concerns in front of faculty and administration. The third forum was a presentation from administrators on how the administration handled students’ requests.
“There’s still this skepticism on the part of the majority, whether there really is a problem,” Middleton said. “Whether ‘those African-American kids are overstating the problem, imagining racism or being too sensitive.’ And there’s still the sentiment that we should just ‘get over it, that we should forget the past.’”

He said those attitudes existed at MU when he was a student, and they still exist now.

“It’s a giant assumption that this committee can come up with something that will make progress, and even with that assumption, it’s very difficult to imagine how long it will take to make that progress, but we have to try,” he said.

Nine faculty members, one staff representative and two students — one a graduate student, the other an undergraduate — make up the committee on race relations.

Right now, they are “engaged in talk,” Hudson said. As for the demographics of the group, Faculty Council chairman Craig Roberts purposely made the committee predominantly white, and Roberts was unavailable for comment.

“There’s 2,000-plus faculty members and 1,500 of them would identify as white,” Hudson said. “And in some ways, that’s who we’re trying to pay attention to: What is their belief system? What are their attitudes? What are their actions? And how do they connect with helping race relations? There’s the complicated issue that race is a social construction.”

To Hudson’s knowledge, no other Faculty Council committee has appointed students before. He said the student perspective was important.

Middleton said he appreciates the fact that students are on the committee.

“This committee was formed largely as a result of the first listening session the Chancellor had back in December, when students expressed their views and talked about their experiences,” he said. “It seems to me that this committee certainly needs to hear that student perspective.”

Both students on the committee were unavailable for comment.

The committee members who remained in Columbia for the summer have already met several times during the summer. Hudson said he has been contacted several times by students who have had problems they feel are not being addressed by the university.

“I say, the provocative question is, if you want to be a leader in the SEC on the football field, on softball field, I would also say, why couldn’t you not be a leader in terms of teaching, service, research and economic development when it relates to race relations?” he said. “So let’s set an example.”
‘Perspectives on Zionism’ class canceled due to no enrollment

The class was opposed by student and community Jewish groups.

A proposed Honors College tutorial class entitled “Perspectives on Zionism,” which was greeted with criticism from students and the community, will no longer be offered in the fall 2015 semester.

The course, proposed by George Smith, professor emeritus in biological science, was canceled due to lack of enrollment. Smith said he was unable to recruit during the enrollment period and believes that is why there was no interest in the class.

“Professors have to work to recruit students to these courses,” Smith said. “Otherwise students would have to notice that (the class) was offered, and not many students do that.”

Smith had planned on teaching students in his class about the philosophy and political ideology at the core of the Zionist movement, which arose in the 1900s in response to anti-Semitism. Part of the core beliefs of Zionism is that the natural homeland of the Jewish people is the current-day state of Israel, which was once part of Palestine.

Smith said the course would not have delved into the history of Israel as much as it would focus on the ideas of Zionism, but, he added, “You can’t separate the two.” Key documents about Zionism and its creation were to be examined as well as two books, one written by a pro-Zionist and one by an anti-Zionist.

But the syllabus was not the reason this course was opposed by student and community groups. The class was also criticized because of Smith’s academic background and his personal beliefs. Smith said he is an anti-Zionist.

MU senior Chantelle Moghadam, president and co-founder of Students Supporting Israel at MU, said the group was against the class because the motives behind it were questionable. The group started a letter-writing campaign to Honors College Director Nancy West in hopes of getting the class canceled.

“Students Supporting Israel was against this class taking place at Mizzou because we were sure that ‘Perspectives on Zionism’ was simply going to be a front for Dr. George Smith to spew anti-Israel propaganda,” Moghadam said in an email.
Moghadam also cited how his degree and area of profession do not correlate with Smith teaching the course.

“He is a biology professor who holds no degree in International Relations, Middle Eastern Studies or any other related subject,” she said.

This had been examined by the Honors College’s curriculum committee, though, before they approved the course. The committee meets with professors who are proposing courses and asks them questions about the subject and their syllabus. After the meeting, the committee either approves or rejects the proposed course.

“Although George Smith is a biologist by profession, he has been studying the Israel/Palestine conflict, and Zionism in general, intensely for a dozen years (and less intensely for a decade before that),” West wrote in an email conversation with Provost Garnett Stokes. “He is very familiar with the standard secondary sources in English, especially from Jewish sources and to a somewhat lesser extent from Arab sources.”

Smith said the committee did question his qualifications for teaching the class because of his activism, as well.

“To his credit, Dr. Smith didn’t deny that activism can be seen as a disqualification,” West wrote to Stokes. “As he expressed it, teachers who use their power over students to proselytize for a particular political, religious or other viewpoint are abusing obvious standards of academic integrity. We are absolutely confident that Dr. Smith is not that sort of dishonest teacher.”

Smith said he would have looked for diversity in students’ viewpoints to create more discussion and maybe even arguments between him and his students.

“If I had recruited, I would have tried to recruit about the same number of students that were anti- and pro-Zionist, and it wouldn’t be a debate, but an intellectual study about the issues that currently form the concepts of the Zionist movement,” he said. “It would be useful to have people on both sides.”

Smith said he might propose the class again for the fall 2016 semester. If he does, he would have to go through the application process again, including the meeting with the Honors College curriculum committee.
RSVP Center and The Maneater switch offices over summer

With increasing Title IX funding, the RSVP Center needed more space to accommodate their three new staff members.

After the end of the Spring 2015 semester, The Maneater and the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center switched places in the lower level of the Student Center, the first switch in the building since 2010.

The switch took place to accommodate the RSVP Center’s expansion as three new staff members have been hired due to an increase in Title IX funds, Director of Student Life Mark Lucas said, who coordinated the switch. Funding was provided by the UM System with matching funds from the four campuses to expand Title IX.

It was after much deliberation that he decided to have the two organizations swap offices. The Maneater moved down the hall to room G210, and RSVP now occupies the more spacious room G216.

The RSVP Center, which provides educational programs and services to students in an effort to decrease the prevalence of sexual violence on campus, will now have more space to expand their operations as they bring on new full-time staff members. The new staff members will fill two new roles as advocates and educators at the RSVP Center, said Lucas.

Previously an MSA/GPC auxiliary, the RSVP Center became a part of the Department of Student Life in 2014. Now working on expanding their operations with the larger space, the RSVP Center plans to house all of their staff as well as their student groups and organizations in the same location.

“Educational programming, group meetings, advocacy meetings and prevention activities will all be held in the new RSVP Center comfortably and more privately than in our previous location,” RSVP Center Coordinator Danica Wolf said.

Due to the confidential nature of the work that the RSVP Center often conducts, Lucas made sure the RSVP Center would be able to stay in the same office suite as they grow, rather than be spread throughout campus.

“I took the approach that I wanted to put The Maneater in a position where they could remain successful, enhance their operations, and I used the same approach with RSVP,” Lucas said. “There were only so many moves I could make, and I think this is one I’m OK with.”
Although in a smaller location than their previous office, The Maneater adviser Becky Diehl said she looks forward to the fact that their new office will be more visible and inviting to those who walk by. The Maneater began their transition into the new space at the end of the semester and finished before Summer Welcome sessions for incoming students began in June. They are still waiting on a few more pieces of furniture to complete the move.

“It has been great to show our new office space to all the new freshmen and parents during Summer Welcome,” Diehl said. “Right now we are excited to start the new year off in our new space.”

The RSVP Center hopes to be fully settled in before classes start in August.

Lucas said this is the first office switch to take place inside the Student Center, which opened in 2010. However, this isn’t the first time that office changes have been made for either organization on campus. In the 23 years that Diehl has worked at the paper, The Maneater has moved five times.

“The moves have been easy but expensive for both,” Lucas said.

There is no final total on the cost of the move for the two offices as purchasing furniture and painting still needs to be completed.

He said the switch would have ideally been a “win-win” situation, but instead turned out to be a “win-acceptable” situation. Still, he is confident the switch will work in favor of both organizations.

“I don’t think it’s a better situation for The Maneater, but having been down there just a few days ago, it’s actually pretty nice and I think it’s going to be just fine for them,” Lucas said.

July 9, 2015

**Many Title IX Coordinators Are New to the Job and Juggling Many Duties**

By Sarah Brown

**NO MU MENTION**

Ask colleges’ Title IX coordinators today about their responsibilities, and you’ll hear a long list. They’ll talk about sexual-assault prevention, investigations, and educational programming. Or the sometimes
dizzying complexities of the federal gender-equity law called Title IX, which are prompting more colleges to devote whole offices to compliance.

The Association of Title IX Administrators, known as Atixa, on Thursday released the results of a survey of coordinators and other Title IX officials at more than 400 institutions, examining coordinators’ duties at a time when colleges face pressure on all sides to improve their handling of sexual-assault cases. The job used to be a responsibility handed over to various administrators without much fanfare. Earlier this year, however, the Education Department reminded colleges that they are required to designate a Title IX coordinator, and many in that role say the job calls for full-time commitments.

But just 10 percent of the coordinators surveyed by Atixa said they had no other major responsibilities. Almost 40 percent of coordinators surveyed said they had been on the job for less than a year. Half of the survey’s respondents said their colleges had no specific budget devoted to Title IX. About half of the coordinators who split their time between Title IX and other duties said they did not receive a stipend for their Title IX work.

Brett A. Sokolow leads the Ncherm Group, the law and consulting firm formerly known as the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, which helped create Atixa, though they are independent organizations. He said the number of full-time positions would probably increase as the role of Title IX coordinator becomes more professionalized. That trend could mean more lawyers’ being recruited for the role, and it could also come with a price: 40 percent of full-time coordinators command salaries in excess of $100,000, according to the survey.

Still, Mr. Sokolow said, institutions are becoming aware that there’s an immediate need to invest in Title IX compliance. The law, he said, "costs far more to ignore than to comply with," citing the more than 100 colleges that the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights is investigating for potential violations of Title IX. The Chronicle spoke to several Title IX coordinators about the survey’s findings and their job responsibilities.

Belinda M. Guthrie, Title IX coordinator at Santa Clara University, in California

Ms. Guthrie said the survey results show that institutions are devoting more resources toward Title IX efforts, but some colleges are still struggling to keep up with the "frantic pace" of the evolving conversation around Title IX.

At Santa Clara, a midsize university, Ms. Guthrie is a full-time coordinator who has been in the role since October. She has a budget for Title IX, allowing her to lead extensive programming and training efforts, and she’s in the process of hiring a full-time investigator. She thinks that on many campuses the coordinator role will increasingly become a full-time job.

She doesn’t believe a law degree is necessary, though. She didn’t go to law school, but she has more than a dozen years of experience in compliance work at colleges.
Being a lawyer, she said, doesn’t mean you’re adept at “navigating the nuances of higher education.” The Title IX role requires working with students, faculty, and staff as much as interpreting the law and conducting investigations, she said, and an effective coordinator "has to have both the science and the art down."

Dawn B. Floyd, Title IX coordinator at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Ms. Floyd thought the number of full-time coordinators would be higher, given how many job postings she’s seen for Title IX positions at colleges.

She was brought to the Charlotte campus as the first full-time coordinator a year ago. Her office includes a full-time investigator and an administrative assistant, and Charlotte has also hired a staff member who handles compliance with the Violence Against Women Act and who specializes in preventing interpersonal violence. She considers such a team "the minimum for big schools."

Ms. Floyd has a law degree, a background that she said had been "crucial" for her understanding of Title IX. Such expertise can be learned without law school, she said, but "a lawyer is a good choice if you have the funding."

She, too, expects to see more campuses hire professional coordinators. The UNC system’s administration, she said, "is supportive of everybody moving toward having a full-time coordinator," including the smaller campuses.

Adrienne S. Maslin, dean of students and Title IX coordinator at Middlesex Community College, in Connecticut

Ms. Maslin said she wasn’t surprised that the percentage of full-timers was small, given the budget cuts that have squeezed most public institutions and the financial challenges that face some private colleges.

Her Title IX role adds to her other duties. She said she spends about 15 percent of her time on compliance during much of the academic year, devoting more time in the summer and at the beginning of each semester.

The number of Title IX-related complaints at her institution is small, she said, largely because the college isn’t residential and doesn’t have athletics programs or Greek life. She said Middlesex doesn’t have a specific budget for Title IX, though she provides training for faculty, staff, and students.

But she said it has never bothered her that she doesn’t receive a stipend for the work. "As a dean, I just feel that it’s my responsibility when it’s something that doesn’t seem to fit into any other category neatly," she said.

Lisa Miller, director of human resources and Title IX coordinator at Molloy College, in New York
Ms. Miller has served as Title IX coordinator for eight years, giving her an acute perspective on how much campus compliance has changed. Title IX work at Molloy, a small college, now takes up about 30 to 40 percent of her time.

She is not paid a stipend, and she knows of several human-resources administrators at private colleges who are in a similar situation.

"When we took on the role, nobody expected it to become what it has become," she said. It’s not something most colleges have budgeted for, she said.

Still, Molloy has a Title IX budget, and Ms. Miller has discussed the possibility of a stipend with the college’s leaders. She said they were committed to investing in training and education efforts for the campus.

**Eric A. Kidwell, director of the library and Title IX coordinator at Huntingdon College, in Alabama**

Mr. Kidwell’s path to becoming a Title IX official at Huntingdon, a small college in Montgomery, is a bit unusual: He’s the head librarian.

He said he probably had been asked to serve as coordinator because of his 28-year tenure at Huntingdon. But his background is valuable, he said, because Title IX has a significant effect on colleges’ libraries, given how many students they employ. For example, when student library workers are on the clock, they are considered mandatory reporters, meaning they must report to college officials any Title IX violations they may encounter.

Mr. Kidwell is a part-time coordinator, and he said Title IX is taking up about 90 percent of his time right now, though that number can drop as low as 10 percent during the academic year. He receives a stipend for his extra work, but he called himself "one of the lucky ones."

Small colleges like Mr. Kidwell’s might not need a full-time person at the moment, he said, but colleges should offer stipends if they want to take Title IX compliance seriously. "You’re expecting people at your institution to keep your feet out of the fire," he said, "and you’re not willing to compensate them for this?"
Graduate students employed by the University of Washington don’t have to put up with workplace microaggressions. It says so right in their union’s contract.

Under the terms of a new collective-bargaining agreement between the public university’s administration and its graduate researchers and teaching assistants, such employees’ work environments should "be free from everyday exchanges — including words and actions" that denigrate or exclude them as members of some group or class. If they encounter subtle racism or sexism on the job, they can file a grievance potentially leading to third-party arbitration.

"We are paving the way for unions at other institutions, whether they are academic or not, to include this sort of language in their contract as a form of buttressing their harassment protection," says Elizabeth Scarbrough, a doctoral student who helped negotiate the contract as a union trustee. Her union local drafted the microaggression provision, she says, partly in response to members’ concerns that work was being distributed to them unevenly as a result of gender bias.

Although Washington stands apart in adopting such contract language, it is hardly the only higher-education institution to have taken steps to protect students and employees from subtle, and often unintentional, forms of discrimination. The University of California, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point include discussions of microaggressions as part of their faculty-training efforts. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign plans not only to provide faculty and staff members with such training, but to discuss microaggressions as part of a course required of incoming freshmen.

Elsewhere, Ithaca College’s administration is working with its student government to develop an online system that will allow students to anonymously report microaggressions so the college can track the type and frequency of such incidents.

Recently, however, such efforts have come under fire as threats to free speech on campuses, partly because the term "microaggression" is being applied not just to obviously offensive or insensitive behavior but to statements many regard as expressing legitimate viewpoints.
Any characterization of the United States as "a melting pot," for example, is classified in widely used training materials as a microaggression signaling a refusal to acknowledge the role that race plays in American society. The same goes for saying "Everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough" or "I believe the most qualified person should get the job." Colleges are accused of "environmental microaggressions" if all of their buildings are named for white, heterosexual, upper-class men.

Among those sounding alarms, Eugene Volokh, a law professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, last month accused his institution in a blog post of using the concept of microaggression to try to exclude ideas from the classroom. "I'm happy to say that I'm just going to keep on microaggressing," he wrote. Thomas Sowell, a syndicated columnist and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, has characterized efforts to stop microaggressions as "micro-totalitarianism." "It is becoming almost too easy to say the wrong thing on campus," says Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a free-speech advocacy group known as FIRE. "If we create too many rules about how we talk to each other," he says, "it becomes difficult to talk at all."

Repeat Offenses
Chester M. Pierce, a professor of education and psychiatry at Harvard's medical school, coined the term "microaggression" in 1970 to describe the subtle slights and insults that black people regularly experience at the hands of people who do not see themselves as racist.

Concern about microaggressions did not become widespread in higher education, however, until American Psychologist published a 2007 article providing a detailed taxonomy of different types of racial microaggressions, which it described as psychologically destructive. The article’s lead author, Derald Wing Sue, a professor of psychology and education at Columbia University’s Teachers College, went on to apply the same taxonomy to bias based on gender and sexual orientation in a 2010 book, Microaggressions in Everyday Life.

Such writings provided the template for many of the materials that colleges are using to raise awareness of microaggressions among their faculty and staff members. They have also helped make the study of microaggressions a hot topic among education researchers — the American Educational Research Association’s latest annual conference featured 16 sessions dealing with the subject. In an interview last week, Mr. Sue said he had given presentations about microaggressions at more than 30 colleges in the past two years.

Mr. Sue says research is showing that some of the worst perpetrators of microaggressions are well-intentioned faculty members who do not realize how their statements or actions hurt students and undermine academic achievement. He says colleges need to become more aware of microaggressions if they hope to maintain safe environments for their increasingly diverse work forces and student bodies.

Mr. Sue’s interest in microaggression stems partly from his personal experience as a Chinese-American who often has been treated as a foreigner, despite being born here. He characterizes his work as driven by a desire to help people who suffer psychological damage from repeatedly putting up with slights and snubs that might look harmless in isolation. He is unapologetic about treating as microaggressions many commonly held views — that we live in a meritocracy, for example — because he believes they truly hurt many people who hear them.
"We are all victimized in this society, and inherit the racial biases of our ancestors," he says, adding that he sees awareness of our biases as the only way to get past them. Although he holds that the perpetrators of serious microaggressions "should be called out," he says, "my whole focus is on educating people." In his training sessions, he says, he seeks to provide a setting where people can discuss microaggressions "without being punished or blamed."

**Student Concerns**

Perceptions of microaggression were found to be common among the nearly 5,000 minority students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who responded to a recent online survey conducted by faculty members and students. More than half of the respondents said they had been the victim of racial stereotypes in the classroom. Well over a third said they felt uncomfortable on the campus because of their race.

In an email this week, Menah Pratt-Clarke, Urbana-Champaign’s associate provost for diversity, said administrators there had responded to the survey’s findings by requiring every entering freshman this fall to take a 30-minute online lesson on diversity with a segment on microaggression. Administrators are also providing additional training on microaggression to faculty and staff members, and are working with the Academic Senate to make a class on ethnic and racial minorities in the United States a general-education requirement.

At other colleges, students have embarked on campaigns to pressure their institutions to take similar measures. Among such efforts, students have created Facebook pages documenting microaggressions at Binghamton University, Brown University, Wellesley College, and Yale University. At Fordham University, students held signs repeating or recounting microaggressions as part of a student’s digital photo project. Microaggressions were cited as a major concern by students who staged a sit-in at Colgate University’s admissions office last fall.

Ithaca College’s student-government association embarked on a campuswide campaign against microaggressions last spring, a year after hosting a town-hall meeting on the subject. In March it passed a resolution that created a panel to work with administrators to establish an anonymous, online microaggression-reporting system to track the demographics of victims and perpetrators.

Kyle D. James, a rising senior who is the student government’s vice president for academics, says the effort is still in the planning stages and faces challenges, such as developing mechanisms to ensure that authorities get the details of incidents that amount to violations of the law.

**Fears of a Chilling Effect**

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education has sounded alarms about the Ithaca effort, saying the proposed reporting system lacks a clear definition of a microaggression — creating the potential for unjust accusations — and threatens to chill speech. The student government has responded by saying its efforts have been misrepresented and the concerns raised are overblown.

FIRE also is predicting legal challenges to the University of Washington’s new contract with its graduate-student union, an affiliate of the United Auto Workers that represents more than 4,000 academic employees on the university’s three campuses. By agreeing to such a provision, the university has "set itself on a collision course with the First Amendment," says Will Creeley, FIRE’s vice president for legal and public advocacy.
The university’s administration declined to respond to requests for comment. Officials of the union local argue that the validity of microaggression complaints should be reliably sorted out by a grievance process built into the contract.

William A. Herbert, executive director of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions, says he sees the Washington contract provision on microaggressions as unique but similar to language in other contracts prohibiting harassment, discrimination, and bullying.

Free-speech concerns also have been raised in connection with faculty-training efforts at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point and at the University of California, a key battleground in the nation’s affirmative-action debate, which includes the statement "Affirmative action is racist" on its list of microaggressions.

Both institutions have responded by saying critics have exaggerated the scope of their training efforts — Stevens Point’s is a single workshop for new faculty members; the University of California’s, a voluntary seminar for deans and academic department heads. Both universities have also said they have no desire to limit speech, an assertion being treated with skepticism by critics who say such training on microaggression is sure to leave untenured faculty members fearful of crossing a line.

Greg Summers, the provost of Stevens Point, lamented in a recent interview that "microaggression" is a term that "clearly does not translate well to a popular audience." He said, "There are much less jargony ways we could talk about these issues that make it clear we are not policing speech."

July 8, 2015

Democrats Unveil Bill to Help Realize Obama's Free-College Proposal

By Colleen Murphy

A team of congressional Democrats on Wednesday introduced a bill that would make community college free for two years and help cover the costs of a four-year degree at minority-serving institutions, pushing forward the free-college proposal that President Obama unveiled in January.

But with a $90-billion price tag over 10 years for the federal government, the measure is about $30 billion more expensive than Mr. Obama’s proposal, and so far it does not have the backing of any Republican lawmakers.
Still, its sponsors called it a crucial step toward defraying costs and ensuring college access for low-income, minority, and first-generation students who would otherwise take out large loans to finance their educations.

"We know that education is extremely important. We know that it’s important to our ability to compete on an international basis and a global economy," said Rep. Robert C. Scott of Virginia, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives’ education committee, at a news conference on Wednesday.

About 60 representatives and 10 senators sponsored the measure, which is known as the America’s College Promise Act of 2015. They said it could benefit as many as nine million students, saving a full-time student about $3,800 in tuition each year. It would also make credits transferable between community colleges and four-year institutions or occupational training programs.

Students at minority-serving institutions could use Pell Grants to help cover their remaining living expenses and other costs of attendance, Mr. Scott said.

States would have to agree to certain reforms to participate in the program, he added, and students would have to "maintain satisfactory academic progress." States would pay for about 25 percent of the program’s costs, Mr. Scott said.

The secretary of education, Arne Duncan, said in a conference call on Wednesday that the bill would "require everyone to step up, have skin in the game, and do their part."

"This legislation represents a huge step forward and builds on the momentum we’re seeing to reduce the cost of college and expand college affordability," he said.

Rep. G.K. Butterfield, Democrat of North Carolina and chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said at the news conference on Wednesday that the bill would be a boon to historically black institutions.

"We must fight to support HBCUs before the rug is pulled from under them," he said.

The bill’s introduction also comes as several Democratic presidential candidates have spoken in support of a debt-free higher education. Martin J. O’Malley, a former governor of Maryland, introduced a debt-free-college plan this week. Sen. Bernard Sanders of Vermont proposed making four-year public colleges free for all students, at a cost of about $70 billion.

Rep. Linda T. Sanchez, chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said that as one of seven children born to immigrant parents, she knew that education was always a top priority in her family, because her parents recognized it as key to their eventual success. But Ms. Sanchez, Democrat of California, said at the news conference that college "wasn’t always an easy path," as she took on large loans and continued to pay them off years after graduation.

"Many Latino and first-generation students simply are priced out of a four-year education," she said. "I owe my success to education, there’s no doubt about that. Let’s give our students the tools they need."
The Best Pricing Model: Transparency

July 9, 2015

By
W. Kent Barnds

NO MU MENTION

For today’s enrollment manager, it’s nearly impossible to go a week without someone forwarding an article about another college trying a new way to describe the difference between its listed sticker price, the actual cost of attendance and the institution’s discount rate. The current funding model for higher education is broken and we can only blame ourselves for creating a norm of bargain basement pricing for those families in the know, opaque business models and unexplained annual increases based more on competitors’ current price tag rather than our actual campus needs. We continue to play a game of chicken as we wait for a so-called peer to do what we need to do.

On my own campus, we’ve been discussing this issue for several years and have yet to figure out what, if any, changes we should make, but we do know that honesty is a safe bet.

Gimmicks like so-called tuition resets and freezes, as well as “inflation +” models, are our industry’s desperate attempts to respond to critics and to try to appease the price police, when perhaps we should be discussing why we cost so much instead. These efforts are often undertaken in response to the chorus of calls for affordability, but they seldom illustrate for whom the experience will be more affordable.

Neither these efforts nor simply sticking with the status quo are acceptable over the long term -- families deserve additional information before they pay tuition or incur debt to cover campus costs. But any change has a substantial impact and cannot create spiraling financial scenarios for our campuses, either.

There are significant risks involved in changing how we discuss pricing, cost and value. Private colleges, as tuition-dependent institutions, are hesitant to try something new, especially if all of our peers stick with the currently murky language and approaches to cost and price.
As an industry, we need to work at getting it right for our students, which includes lowering actual costs for students and maintaining sufficient revenue to deliver on our mission. Meanwhile, we are muddling through how we describe our costs, often with too many apologies, and witnessing the shuttering of campuses across the country that didn’t find the right programmatic offerings, words or approaches to make themselves institutions of choice for students.

As best I can tell, there are no clear or easy solutions, but there are a few key elements we need to stress in future rhetoric and approaches:

**A clear rationale for a new model.** Families would benefit from an honest conversation with college leaders about why unfunded tuition discounting cannot continue at the current rate and why discounting has a negative impact on a college’s short- and long-term finances and bond rating. Further, colleges need to clearly describe their business model to their campus constituents, students and parents of current students and delineate how the annual operation is funded. Finally, leaders need to acknowledge that percentage increases in tuition costs cannot continue in perpetuity. At some point we will price ourselves out of the market and into bankruptcy.

**Genuine reductions in cost to students.** In too many cases, a clear illustration of exactly what has changed and how much less a student will pay is missing entirely from the launch of a new plan. Some institutions reference averages or scenarios for the financially neediest students while ignoring the middle class. Seldom is there a clear statement that all students will pay at least $XXXX less to attend the next year. I realize this is pretty tricky -- saying that the education offered is less expensive than the previous year -- but this is exactly what’s missing and why many of the efforts so far seem to miss the mark. Without a clear explanation to students and families of the financial benefits of a new model, colleges remain vulnerable to criticism that a new model really doesn’t change the cost of attendance to the student (a criticism that is fair in many cases). Colleges need to clearly articulate whether or not students will benefit.

**Substantive changes to the business model and how we operate as institutions.** One of the reasons many newly introduced models for calculating costs and how they are applied are viewed as gimmicky is because there is no clear explanation of what (if anything) has changed. Will changes in pricing result in a reduction of departments or student services? Is the college dependent on increasing the size of the student body to make up for lost revenue? Has the college become more efficient? Will the college open a new line of business to generate more revenue? How things will change is the key unanswered question, and our public is smart enough to want to know what changes -- and theoretically reductions -- will occur before they commit.

**Sufficient marketing of any new model.** While I’ve seen some clever YouTube videos and good press releases, strong marketing of a new model seems pretty limited. Some colleges don’t want to be seen “wasting money” on marketing when trying to prove to the world that they care about reducing costs to students. Additionally, many colleges view new models as highly risky, and they don’t want the hangover of a marketing rollout if it doesn’t work. However, the lack of a confident marketing plan results in most of these efforts being viewed as isolated, gimmicky or done with an ulterior motive, like lowering the price to attract more students because there is excess capacity to educate and house them on campus. An aggressive and comprehensive public relations and marketing campaign would have great benefit to a college if it really does want to transform the model and be a market leader.
Clear connection between price and return. Although there have been recent efforts to describe the return on investment of a college degree, historically speaking, connecting price with results and service has been inadequate at best and incredibly opaque at worst. There are so many questions to consider: What goes into a “comprehensive fee”? How does what a student pays for, and gets, differ from year to year in order to justify an increase or not? Are the services students receive as first-year students more comprehensive than as seniors? Should having a full-time faculty member as an adviser add value and cost? Colleges must do a better job connecting the price of attendance with what a student receives from year to year.

Even if a college committed to addressing these missing pieces, could it transform how we calculate cost of attendance for the student and the institution? I don’t know for certain. But a college that starts out willing to change the business model, reduce the actual price (and cost) for students, clearly describe what a student gets for what he or she pays, and aggressively market a new cost/price model -- that college would get attention. And that would be one of those articles forwarded to me that I would be interested to read.

Gates Backs FAFSA Overhaul

July 9, 2015

By
Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is throwing its support behind efforts to redesign the federal government’s student aid application process to make it easier for students to get loans and grants for college.

In a white paper published Wednesday, the foundation called for reducing and streamlining questions on the application form, known as the FAFSA, and allowing families to apply for aid earlier during the college process.
The proposal is the foundation’s first since announcing earlier this year that it plans to play a more active role in higher education policy debates. Over the past several years, the foundation has also sponsored a wide range of research on ways to redesign different aspects of how, when and in what form students receive financial aid from the federal government.

In pressing for FAFSA simplification now, the foundation joins a number of other groups and policy makers in Washington who are eyeing changes to how students access federal student aid. Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the Republican who chairs the Senate education committee, has called for reducing the 108-question FAFSA to a two-question document. And the Obama administration said earlier this year it’s working on its own effort to eliminate questions on the form. Efforts to simplify the FAFSA are not new, but calls to eliminate large numbers of questions on the form have been met with pushback from some colleges and states, who worry that they won’t have enough information to judge a student’s financial needs. The Gates paper strikes somewhat of a middle ground by leaving in some questions important to state grant programs and eliminating some of the administrative burden colleges face in having to verify students’ information.

Dan Greenstein, the foundation’s director of education and postsecondary success, said he sees simplifying the FAFSA form and easing the financial aid process as important to the foundation’s overarching goal of boosting degree completion, especially for low-income and first-generation students.

“We’re launching this into an environment in which there’s bipartisan consensus that this is achievable. There is a lot of energy on all sides,” he said. “Our goal is to really nudge the conversation along.” The foundation’s paper echoes oft-repeated concerns about how the federal government currently requires students to apply for loans and grants: it’s complex, redundant and poorly timed. The paper calls for simplifying the FAFSA by sorting students into two different groups based on the complexity of their financial circumstances.

The majority of students, roughly 75 percent, whose families have simple financial situations -- meaning they don’t have assets beyond a home, retirement account or small business -- would complete a form with very few questions. Students with more complex circumstances would face more questions but fewer than the current form.

All students should be able to input more data into the FAFSA directly from the Internal Revenue Service, the foundation said. That would both improve the accuracy of data and reduce the burden on families.

The foundation also called for allowing students to fill out the FAFSA using income data from two years earlier instead of the immediately previous year. That switch to what is often referred to as prior-prior year data would help families be able to apply for aid earlier in the financial aid process. Greenstein said the foundation is working on a cost analysis of its simplification proposal to be released later this year.