MU selects interim business school dean

By Megan Favignano

Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Steve Ferris, University of Missouri senior associate dean and professor of finance, will become interim dean of the Trulaske College of Business starting Aug. 22.

Ferris will replace Joan Gabel, who is leaving MU to become the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina. Gabel’s last day is Aug. 21. Ferris has worked at the university for 22 years — serving in multiple leadership roles in the business school — and will lead the college while MU searches for a new dean.

Ferris said stepping up into the interim dean role was a logical choice. As senior associate dean, he has worked directly under Gabel and knows the school, its faculty and staff and its current projects well, he said.

Many of Ferris’ colleagues nominated him to fill the role, according to a letter Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Garnett Stokes sent to faculty and staff Monday. In her email, Stokes said the business school needs a leader as projects move forward.

“I am delighted that Dr. Ferris has agreed to serve MU in this important leadership role, especially during a time when we are working on a major expansion project — the Applied Learning Center — at the Trulaske College of Business,” Stokes wrote.
Missouri’s athletic director has been on the job for three months and has plenty on his plate, including a big decision on how MU will proceed with its next wave of facilities. On Monday, Rhoades met with Tribune sports reporters for an interview.

Q: In May, you mentioned you hoped to get a five-year facility plan in place fairly soon. Where does that stand?

A: It’s probably at the 50,000-foot level. We need to fill in the details and really engage a master planner. That meeting has been scheduled, but we haven’t sat down with a master planner yet to take a look at really all of our facilities.

We’re going to do something here in the future with our head coaches where we’re going to have them present to us what their facility needs are or what they think their facility needs are. We’re certainly going to message it that it doesn’t mean everybody will get everything, but we’ll certainly work in terms of priority and then maybe how we combine some of the projects.

Football, whatever that facility becomes, certainly in terms of head coach’s offices, individual meeting rooms, all of our student-athlete well-being areas, sport performance, sport medicine, locker room, team lounge, all of those areas, that’s the first step and the major priority. Where we put that facility, that’s where we really need to bring in the master planner and have us take a look at some different options. We’re hoping to do that. The meeting is scheduled I think in the month of August.

Q: When Mike Alden was still here, it was full steam ahead for the football facility to be a south end zone location. What’s your trepidation about locating it there, if there is any trepidation?

A: I don’t know that there’s trepidation. When you do these projects, you get one time to do it right. We just want to make sure that we’ve explored all the different possibilities. This facility, whatever we end up doing, really needs to leap us ahead of the competition. We’ve got to do this so it just doesn’t catch us up but that it leaps us ahead for it to be a project we can really be proud of. I think since we’ve last talked we certainly know what’s out there and the level and type of finish we want to accomplish and the type of spaces and the square footage of all those spaces. I think if we’re not there, we’re close to being there. Now, where do we put this?

Q: What are the elements of that facility that would leap you ahead?

A: I just think it’s wow factor, maybe some things that anticipate the future and what may be down the road, whether it’s virtual-reality stuff, recruiting rooms, those type of elements. Facilities — and everybody knows this — are huge in terms of recruiting. And then we can never lose focus that, yes, the facility is about helping us recruit, but for me, the most important thing is developing the student-athletes that we have here, making sure that we’re getting them better. When you think about our football program, that’s been one of the cornerstones of its success.

Q: Gary Pinkel has always mentioned it as a south end zone project. Has he been open to exploring other sites?
A: Yeah. He knows that we’re going to take a look. You’d have to ask him, but I think his preference would be the (south end zone of the) stadium, but we’ve had conversations.

Q: Is there a price tag that would be reasonable or within your budget for that facility?

A: I wish. In our mind, we probably think this is somewhere between a $50 million and $70 million project. … It’s going to be something, if we do it right, that will be along those lines.

Q: How much longer will the Hearnes Center be around, and if it does go, what are the plans to replace it?

A: It certainly goes on the priority list for us to move out of that facility. Part of what dictates timing on all of this is: Can we raise money? Can we raise money to first handle the football project? And then what’s second on this list? Or maybe it becomes something we do along with the football stadium project if we can raise the money at the same time. So a lot of that will dictate timing of it.

The Hearnes Center has been a great facility, but again, back to recruiting, and even more importantly, fan experience, when you think about hosting wrestling and volleyball and gymnastics, I just think we need to build a smaller type, more intimate arena. We’ll need to figure out what we’ll do with indoor track, whether or not we accommodate it there or we move it somewhere else.

Q: Talking about the Hearnes, do you have to have the future home already constructed before you tear it down? You’ve got three teams using that as a competition venue, in wrestling, gymnastics and volleyball.

A: Yeah, probably. I just don’t know if there would be any off-site venue that could take care of those three. More than likely, you’re going to have to build it first.

Q: Wrestling loves its fourth-floor facility at the Hearnes and obviously is one of the more successful programs. Have there been talks with Brian Smith about any negative impact of them leaving?

A: Nothing specific at this point in time. Brian is aware of the vision for a newer, more intimate arena.

Q: What do you see as the growth potential for fundraising to cover all these costs?

A: I do think we have the potential. After 90 days, it’s hard for me to predict how much potential. First and foremost, we’ve got to be able to create that vision. That’s what we’re in the process of doing and then going out and talking to the key stakeholders about our vision.

Q: What is (deputy athletic director) Wren Baker’s role in that? How do you plan to use his skills?
A: Wren has a big role in terms of the external units in our department. When you think about the external units, you think of revenue generation and communications.

He’ll have a role in ticket sales. You’ve heard me talk about that and putting together some sort of outbound sales program. That takes probably nine months to put together. Wren’s currently doing that. We’ve got to increase the number of season tickets we sell in football, men’s basketball, women’s basketball and absolutely generate more revenue in those areas.

The fundraising piece — make sure we have the right structure in terms of staffing and process. We’re going through that right now. He’ll oversee that directly. He’ll be involved in fundraising, as well. He’ll be out visiting with people, as I will and as will several others. Wren will continue to oversee Missouri Sports Properties and that area.

**Q: How do you help generate interest in your men’s basketball program this season?**

A: We have to have a product out on the floor that’s competing every game, win or lose. Our kids have to play harder, tougher than their opponent. That’s where it has to start in terms of the culture. I think Kim is in the process of doing that. When you think about the makeup of your team and the makeup of your student-athletes, it takes certain student-athletes that buy into that and are going to play hard and give every ounce of effort every time they step onto the floor.

**Q: There have been basketball staff changes, including the hiring of Steve Shields as a special assistant to Kim Anderson. Did you play a role in adding that position, and what does he add?**

A: He’s a guy that, in the basketball world, is really well-respected in terms of his ability to coach and connect with student-athletes, the X’s and O’s piece, all of it. I think he’ll have a really big impact. I think it will be good for Kim to have somebody that’s been a head coach and been successful at the Division I level, that’s been through some battles, somebody, just an ear to bounce ideas off of. Steve can certainly bring a lot of suggestions to the table, as well. Obviously, I think it’s going to help our program.

**Q: Was the addition of Shields a response to Kim Anderson’s staff lacking experience?**

A: I’m not going to say that I’d use the word “lacking,” but certainly Kim and I sat down and talked about his staff and just perception and where we need to head. Again, I’ve not seen him coach one game yet. I’ve not seen them manage one practice. I’ll form, certainly, my own opinions as we progress through the year. At the end of the day, I’ve got great confidence in Kim and who he’s going to put together on his staff and how he puts his program together.”

**Q: What was your thinking on keeping baseball Coach Tim Jamieson and staying the course there?**

A: One, I like Tim a lot. He’s a good person. I think Tim strives to do the right things, not just some of the time but all the time. When you look at the baseball program — and I know this is a big part — but take out wins and losses. When you look at the rest of the program in terms of
how our student-athletes do in the classroom, the discipline of the program, how they interact in the community, they do all of those things terrifically well. They really do.

Now, we’ve got to start winning baseball games. I think the program this year took some steps in that direction. We were the first team out, I think it was, in terms of the NCAA Tournament. The program improved. I just felt like Tim earned that right to continue on and maybe build upon some of the forward movement this year and then, also, making a commitment to help him with some additional resources, whether it’s in the way they travel or some more money in terms of hiring an assistant coach, etc. I think he earned that.

Q: By percentage, the difference in budgets between the Missouri baseball program and the top schools in the SEC is probably bigger than any other sport. Missouri hasn’t had good attendance, even when Max Scherzer was pitching. For whatever reason, baseball just doesn’t seem to mean as much to Missouri fans as most other SEC schools. Given that, is it a good investment to try to keep up with the other SEC schools in spending on baseball?

A: My first question was probably, because of where we’re located geographically, how good can we be? What’s reality in a league that’s obviously, I think, the best in the country and has a lot of warm-weather-climate schools. They’re all warm-weather, really, other than us. Can we be competitive? I certainly talked to a lot of different people, and when I say “a lot of different people,” people in college baseball across the country. We can be successful here.

Are we going to have a budget like maybe LSU has? No, but our football program doesn’t have a budget like, probably, Alabama has. I do think we can be extremely successful. My vision for the program is we build a baseball program where every season we’re going to the postseason. If we can do that, we can get fans excited. I really believe that. It’s not going to happen overnight, but I think we can do that.

When we’re talking about facilities, I think that’s one of the biggest questions with baseball is, what do we do with that stadium? Is it worth — I’m going to throw out a number — putting $10 million, $12 million, $15 million into that stadium or is it better (to say), “Hey, guess what? We’re going to start all over. We’re going to do what we’re doing with softball. And maybe we put it somewhere else.” When we’re talking about the master planning, that’ll be something we discuss and spend a lot of time on.”

Q: Missouri recently sank quite a bit of money into Taylor Stadium’s locker rooms and offices. Will that affect your decision on whether to build a new stadium?

A: Sure it does. That’ll be one of the variables, saying, “OK, we just put X amount of dollars there. Is it really the right thing to do to just tear that all down and start over?”

Q: It’s hard to determine why someone isn’t coming to a baseball game, but do you think it has to do with people not wanting to walk up a hill or sit on metal bleachers?

A: I’ve heard all of them. It’s sitting on the hill. It’s windy. At the end of the day — and this is where it’s hard with college athletics because it’s about more than just winning — if you’re
winning, I believe your fans are going to come. I think we can do some things that help us so that fans do come on out to the baseball stadium. We’ve got to get to where baseball’s winning consistently.

Q: Does the fact that softball draws well in a bad facility in roughly the same geographic location lead you to believe it is possible to draw well for baseball at its current site?

A: Absolutely. And I’m glad you brought it up because I think softball’s a good example. That’s a program that is winning and goes to the postseason on a regular basis. And we’ve got a pretty healthy fanbase.

Q: Did the fact you were so new and Coach Jamieson has been here so long affect your decision to keep him?

A: It was one of the variables. How much do I really know about the program? I think you can look at, that early in the tenure, it could’ve had mixed messages. It could’ve been the message of, “We’re not messing around. We need to be going to the NCAAs right now.” But I didn’t think that was fair.

At the end of the day, as mentioned, I think Tim earned that. I would’ve had, probably, a completely different feeling if I would’ve looked back at this year and — assuming no injuries — that the program was getting worse and we didn’t win as many, didn’t have as many good players and our recruiting class coming in wasn’t great. But when you look at wins and how we competed and first-team-out, or second-team-out (of the NCAA Tournament) and looking at the recruiting class, all of those things are positive signs.

Q: Are you satisfied with the way the true cost of attendance is being calculated and applied?

A: That’s a hard question to answer, because, at the end of the day, it’s each campus that determines that cost of attendance, every institution’s financial aid office. Athletics has nothing to do with it. What seems to be the real issue and where all the conversation is is about the miscellaneous expenses. What I would say is that, just looking to the future — and I think the SEC is really doing a great job in trying to do this with all of us, our member institutions — at least trying to have some transparency and some consistency as to how the institution handles the miscellaneous expense area. I think, like anything else, it’s a work in progress. It’s something new.

I would probably guess there would be some tweaks to it in the future. At the end of the day, it’s supposed to be tailored to what that cost of living is in that city, at that institution. Theoretically then, is a student-athlete getting $5,000 at a certain institution in a certain city getting more money than what a student-athlete at the University of Missouri is getting, their $4,290? Theoretically, no, if it’s really based on cost of living.
Q: Do you feel like the coaches on campus have an adequate understanding of where these figures come from, or are they just kind of in the woods? If they see Tennessee giving out $5,700 a year, are they saying, “Why can’t Missouri do that?”

A: I think our coaches do. I think we’ve taken the time to explain it, so I think they understand it. I’m not going to say there’s not any skepticism in terms of maybe how some other schools are arriving at their figures, but I think they have a good understanding in terms of at least how we do it and how it’s applied.”

Q: When I asked (women’s basketball Coach) Robin Pingeton in April when she expected to get a contract extension, she said she hoped sometime within 2015. Has there been any discussions with her about that?

A: We’re in the process of finalizing a new contract for her.

Q: When you’re looking at incoming recruits in football and men’s basketball, especially, but across all sports, how much oversight does the athletic department have on background checks, looking into character, before they get here? How much of that is left up to the individual sports?

A: I don’t know how it’s been done in the past, but each one of our sport’s program administrators will certainly have some oversight. So, for example, let’s take football. I’ll, with Coach Pinkel, get an overview in terms of where they are academically and what’s their academic readiness in terms of college. And then talk about character and issues and certainly things that have happened in a prospective student-athlete’s past.

Do I believe in second chances? Heck, yeah. Absolutely. But, I think beyond that, you’ve got to really think hard about it. It’s hard to put together, I think, a winning program where you have a bunch of student-athletes that you’re spending so much time dealing with off-the-field issues. I think it’s disruptive for the athletic department. I think it’s disruptive for team chemistry.

Q: How have you been spending your last 90 days?

A: Meeting with individual staff members or finishing up the process of Phase I in reorganization that we’ll announce and talk about right around the first of September; hiring staff — there’s some key individuals that will join us in the next couple of weeks; obviously getting to know our head coaches; trying to meet with some of the teams.

That’s been a little bit difficult over the summer, but I was able to meet with three teams before the semester ended, and I’ve already met with one this semester. Meeting with donors and key stakeholders and people, certainly, across campus, and then people like city officials. So just a lot of listening, a lot of meeting people and then really trying to put our organization together.
Professor seeks to prevent release of emails in AG race

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Republican attorney general candidate Josh Hawley in June warned the University of Missouri that it “may want to think very hard” before releasing his emails and other records being sought under the state Sunshine Law.

Hawley, an associate professor of law since 2011, entered the race for the 2016 GOP nomination in late July, culminating months of travel around the state seeking support at local Republican gatherings. On May 28, former state Rep. Kevin Elmer, R-Nixa, sent a request seeking Hawley’s emails, documents created on his university computer and internal correspondence about his tenure status and the attorney general’s race.

Elmer supports state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, to be the GOP nominee for attorney general but said his request was not made on Schaefer’s behalf. The email discussion of Hawley’s records, including UM General Counsel Steve Owen, UM counsel Paul Maguffee and Law School Dean Gary Myers, was obtained Monday by the Tribune through a Sunshine Law request.

The university informed Hawley of Elmer’s request and, on June 16, sent Hawley a draft response. Hawley replied with arguments that disclosure would violate his academic freedom. Hawley wrote that only administrative records of the university are covered by the law.

The next day, Hawley expanded on his arguments, citing several court cases. He again asserted academic freedom, adding copyright, intellectual property and legal privilege to the reasons the request should be denied. Given those concerns, he wrote, “it seems to me that the University may want to think very hard before turning over materials from individual faculty not related to University administration or governance.”

Hawley’s interpretation was wrong, Maguffee wrote. The entire university is subject to the law and, when requested, must produce all public records in its possession, not just records produced by the university for administrative or other purposes.
“While we respect the analysis you have presented, we ultimately are more persuaded by the interpretation that the University has followed in the past, by which we consider that the records requested by Mr. Elmer generally are covered by the Sunshine Law,” Maguffee wrote on July 9.

Elmer, an attorney, said Tuesday that he has not seen the emails. He has paid almost $5,000 to the university to obtain the records and while a few have been delivered, he said, he is waiting for the bulk of his request.

“I am just kind of waiting,” Elmer said. “I hate to turn this into a brawl in the media. My fight is not with Josh Hawley over the documents, it is with the university.”

In an email, Hawley said his arguments against disclosure were written after Myers requested he provide a legal opinion. If the university decides otherwise, Hawley wrote he is “happy to comply with the university counsel’s opinion.”

Elmer’s Sunshine request is evidence “I have deeply worried the Jeff City power brokers, and they are furiously trying everything they can to stop me,” Hawley wrote.

A conservative group called the Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust has requested records it contends will show whether Schaefer attempted to influence the university’s decision to grant Hawley an unpaid leave to run.

Neither group has received the documents but could this week, UM system spokesman John Fougere wrote in an email on Friday.

Schaefer on Tuesday said he had not seen Hawley’s arguments against disclosure. Schaefer, who has sponsored legislation to broaden the Sunshine Law, said he is disappointed by Hawley’s reluctance to open his emails to inspection.

“The attorney general is the chief enforcer of the Sunshine Law in the state of Missouri and, if that is the case, that is trouble,” Schaefer said.

The issues raised by Hawley’s opinion are important considerations, Myers wrote on June 16. Myers could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Turning over Hawley’s correspondence and documents “will set a precedent deeply harmful to academic freedom,” Myers wrote. In addition, Myers wrote that turning over documents regarding whether to grant tenure to Hawley “threatens the integrity of the University’s tenure procedures.”
New MU app aims to help patients with depression

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=30023&zone=2,5&categories=2,5

COLUMBIA - Patients suffering from depression can now track their daily moods with a new app created by a team from the University of Missouri.

The app is called MoodTrek, and it works like an electronic diary for patients with depression, which is how MU assistant psychiatry professor Ganesh Gopalakrishna, M.D., thought of the idea three years ago.

"I had a patient who was battling with depression and would write in a mood diary between our sessions," Gopalakrishna said. "His diary was really useful to me to understand how his progress was between two clinical visits."

Gopalakrishna along with the University of Missouri, Missouri University of Science and Technology and the Tiger Institute for Health developed the app in order to allow patients to log their moods and symptoms and share their progress with their doctors.

Most of the time patients visit their psychiatrists and psychologists every two to three months, which can make it difficult for the patients to recall how they were feeling during that period of time.

Gopalakrishna said patients tend to forget what their moods were like in weeks past.

"Most of the people have their cell phone or smart phone within their arms reach at any given time of the day," Gopalakrishna said. "I think making this available on the patients cell phone will make it create an ease of access. Instead of people carrying around a journal or a notebook it is much easier for someone to carry around a cell phone because it's part of everyone's life now."
The app contains five mood options a patient can choose for the day. Patients can also make a journal entry with the app, enter the amount of sleep they get, and sync it to their Fitbit if they have one.

MoodTrek is free and available for Android devices. MU plans to bring the app to Apple devices in the future.

MU Closes Deal With Stephens for Radio Station

Watch story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=814c74d1-05c3-42f4-b067-e9616272bc17

After three-word budget bill change, Missouri DACA students hit with higher tuition

By ÁINE O'CONNOR - AUGUST 11, 2015

Listen: http://cpa.ds.npr.org/kwmu/audio/2015/08/081115bweb_0.mp3
"St. Louis on the Air" discusses recent tuition hikes for Missouri's DACA students.

NO MU MENTION
A small but critical addition to a Missouri budget bill may keep the children of undocumented immigrants from attending state public universities by raising their tuition to the amounts international students pay. Now, those students are fighting the law by asking Governor Jay Nixon for help.

New language in the bill affects ‘Dreamers,’ who are covered under the federal government’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The program allows undocumented individuals who came to the country as children to stay in the United States so long as they meet certain requirements. Missouri’s bill changes the state legal status of DACA students, which may restrict universities’ abilities to offer them in-state tuition or scholarships.

State Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, who sponsored the bill, said that it was meant to clarify state funding policies for universities. The DACA program complicated the process, he said, by labeling its students ‘lawfully present’ when federal lawful presence is not the same thing as lawful status in the state. The bill changes ‘lawfully present’ to ‘unlawful immigration status.’

“Potentially, the illegal students were being charged a more favorable rate than other in-state students from Missouri, that are Missouri citizens,” Fitzpatrick said.

He was particularly concerned with Missouri’s A+ Scholarships, which had no qualification that students be U.S. citizens. “There are a lot of citizen-students who don’t have access to [these] scholarships,” Fitzpatrick said, including private-school students and homeschooled students.

Relative access is not the point, said Vanessa Crawford-Aragón, executive director of the Missouri Immigrant & Refugee Advocates. “Right now, we’re talking about dozens of students across the state who are trying to figure out if they’re going to be able to start school next week.”

DACA students are counting on lower tuition rates that they are eligible for, she says, because they went to Missouri high schools, were accepted into the universities, and their parents work and pay taxes to the state.

Karissa Anderson, president of the Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, agreed. “No matter the views on immigration reform…the timing and the method in which it’s has been enacted is just wrong,” she said. “For the students, it’s inhumane; the colleges are confused, the students are confused; I mean, school starts in two weeks, and people are scrambling, and students don’t know what to do.”

Fitzpatrick said that the bill should not be so confusing for universities, as they had come to the legislature for guidance on how to fund undocumented students before. He alleged that colleges and universities had not made it clear that they were already giving DACA students preference on tuition. “If the colleges and universities had come to me and said, ‘look, we already have some of these students in here’…I would have
accommodated those students with the language. But I was never made aware of that by any of the higher education institutions."

He emphasized that universities can still charge DACA students in-state tuition; they just cannot use state funding to do so. “The budget bill does not prohibit in-state tuition. It just prohibits the dollars that we appropriated from being spent with the university who supplies in-state tuition to those students.”

Still, the way in which this language has been worked into the legislative process has come under criticism.

“To be sure, our organization has opposed changes to the way students are qualified for in-state tuition in standalone statutory bills, and will continue to oppose that,” Crawford-Aragón said. “But this language was actually put through the budgetary process because they couldn’t pass the bill through the regular legislative process.” In this way, she said, the bill is an “end-run” on normal legislative procedure.

Naomi Carranza, an incoming freshman at St. Louis Community College-Meramec, expressed frustration that the change of language has raised her tuition cost. “I’ve been working since I was 16 and I’ve been saving up since I was 16, when I first got my DACA status,” she said. “I’m trying to move forward, and everyone wants to keep me going backwards.”

Anderson noted that Carranza’s experience is not unique. “The students, they’ve done what they were supposed to do. They went through school, they got the grades, they put forth the effort, they’re ambitious—and they deserve the same opportunity for access [to] higher education as the rest of us.”

“Like I said, I’ve worked hard,” Carranza said—and so have her fellow DACA students. “We love to study. We want to move forward. We want to be someone in life. And for us to be able to do that, we want to go to college.”

Fitzpatrick framed the bill as concerned with proper resource distribution, not as punishment for DACA students, but he did note that the bill was sponsored with an eye to the future of immigration in Missouri. “I think the more we project that we’re going to provide benefits, whether it be in-state tuition or scholarships or any other benefit, for students who came here or remain here illegally, I think that that’s just going to worsen the illegal immigration problem that we have.”
More Colleges Add 'Confidential Advisers' for Students Reporting Sexual Assault

By Sarah Brown

The requirement that college employees report campus sexual assaults is designed with an important goal in mind: to ensure that no incident gets swept under the rug.

If a student is assaulted on a Friday night and immediately informs a resident adviser or faculty member, that employee must notify the college’s Title IX coordinator as soon as possible. The coordinator then must investigate the student’s claims, as required by Title IX, the federal gender-equity law.

One consequence of such a process, however, is that if students want to keep a sexual assault confidential, at least initially, it’s not always clear whom they can go to on the campus for help. That’s where a confidential adviser can step in, says Jill Dunlap, director of the Advocate Office for Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Sexual Misconduct at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Some institutions for years have had on-campus advisers or advocates, like Ms. Dunlap, who deal primarily with sexual-violence cases. Other colleges have recently hired or are searching for such staff members.

At least four states have considered legislation in the past 15 months requiring their colleges to designate confidential advisers for sexual violence; it became law in Connecticut, and in Illinois a bill is awaiting the signature of Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican. And proposed federal legislation known as the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which featured prominently in a U.S. Senate hearing on sexual assault last month, would require every college to have such an adviser.

Under the bill, the advisers would inform victims of sexual assault about their reporting options, make accommodations such as class-schedule changes, and support them through the campus-judicial or criminal-justice process, without triggering an investigation right away.

However, there are conflict-of-interest questions and legal issues at stake, some experts say. If the adviser is employed by a college, can he or she objectively counsel...
an alleged victim if those duties diverge from the interests of the institution? And what happens to confidentiality if an adviser is subpoenaed as part of a criminal investigation?

The debate has drawn attention to the often-murky subject of confidentiality and campus sexual assault. College officials have to balance victims’ desire to retain control over their own cases while complying with federal law and keeping campuses safe, a duty that could warrant removing a perpetrator from a campus quickly and overriding a victim’s request for privacy.

Robb Jones, general counsel for claims management at United Educators, a risk-management and insurance firm that works with colleges, calls confidentiality "one of the most controversial and difficult concepts" in Title IX compliance.

Increasing Reports
If colleges aim to embrace a victim-centered approach, students should have a choice of when and how to get campus officials or local police forces involved, says Holly Rider-Milkovich, director of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Ms. Rider-Milkovich says she and the other full-time confidential advocates at Michigan work outside of the Title IX process to bridge that gap and provide victims with immediate care and information.

"Sometimes it doesn’t matter if you have 15 amazing services if the process of accessing those services is overwhelming or unclear for survivors," she says.

Confidential advisers generally receive the same training as community-based sexual-assault advocates, and they must also become educated on college-specific regulations like Title IX and the Clery Act. Recent job postings for full-time advocate positions indicate that colleges are looking for candidates with advanced degrees in psychology, social work, or similar fields.

The University of California has at least one adviser on every campus. At the Santa Barbara campus, which has five, staffing levels have increased in recent years. Ms. Dunlap says she and her colleagues can help with academic arrangements or dormitory changes, and they can support a victim through a campus or criminal investigation if the student decides to pursue that route.

Angela Fleischer, student-services case manager and confidential advocate at Southern Oregon University, says having an advocate on the campus "is so much more than a phone call or a referral to an address," which can be the case with colleges’ counseling services. "It’s someone saying, I actually know these detectives, and I can actually call them for you," she says.
A central goal of a confidential adviser, some experts note, is increasing the number of students who come forward about their assaults. Southern Oregon’s approach has worked, Ms. Fleischer says.

Since the confidential-advising program opened last fall, the number of students reporting sexual assaults has increased substantially. She estimates that more than three-quarters of cases that involve a crime and make use of confidential advising eventually have interaction with law enforcement. And Ms. Dunlap, of Santa Barbara, says that since her office increased to its current size, there has been nearly a threefold increase in the number of students seeking services.

The role of confidential adviser is becoming more professionalized, she adds. She is working with L.B. Klein, a former confidential advocate at Emory University who now works as an independent consultant on gender-based violence issues, to form the Campus Advocates and Prevention Professionals Association, which will start officially this month.

She hopes the group will help advocates share expertise and offer advice on proposed legislation, as well as come up with uniform training standards for campus advisers.

Conflicts of Interest
But as more colleges hire such advisers, a spotlight is being cast on the limitations of confidentiality and sexual assault.

Confidential advisers’ duties, like helping a student move to a new dorm, could put them in a position where they are interacting with colleagues who are required to report an incident, potentially compromising the confidentiality of students' information.

And some states don’t protect the legal privilege of sexual-assault advocates, which leaves them vulnerable to being subpoenaed if a student pursues a criminal investigation, says Ms. Klein. That issue might surface more often in the future because lawyers for accused students are becoming increasingly aggressive, adds Mr. Jones, of United Educators.

Dealing with the landscape of confidentiality and sexual assault requires a nuanced approach, he says. Simply hiring an adviser for every campus, as the Campus Accountability and Safety Act would do, he says, "is likely to cause more confusion and conflicts."

Additionally, some sexual-assault experts aren’t sure that a college-employed confidential adviser can give students unbiased support.

"You can’t have someone who works for the school say they represent the interests of the survivor because they don’t," says Laura L. Dunn, executive director of SurvJustice, an anti-sexual-violence group.
Dana Bolger, co-director of Know Your IX, a student-led prevention-advocacy group, says that while she was a student at Amherst College, the victim advocate on the campus was assigned other duties that made some students reluctant to trust her as a confidential resource.

Particularly for campus or legal proceedings, Ms. Dunn prefers the approach formalized by the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. It gives students the right to choose a third-party adviser, such as a counselor or a lawyer.

Ms. Dunlap, of Santa Barbara, emphasizes that she and her staff are committed to serving victims’ interests. She points out that many off-campus advocates aren’t trained to handle the complexities of a campus-based Title IX investigation.

She also says she is well aware of the challenges of confidentiality. When she makes a class-change request for a student who wants to keep an incident confidential, she says, "we can leave things as vague as, they’re working with our office," ensuring that a faculty member won’t have enough information to feel compelled to report.

Ms. Fleischer, of Southern Oregon, notes that even when she is speaking with students in confidence, she gives them a detailed written explanation about the limitations of that confidentiality.

The bottom line, Ms. Bolger says, is that while confidential advising on sexual violence might look different at large public universities versus small private institutions, it should be a priority for colleges.

Still, Mr. Jones says, there will ultimately be instances when college officials must override confidentiality to get a dangerous person, such as a repeat sexual offender, off the campus.

"Confidentiality and empowering survivors is important," he says. "But an equally important issue is bringing predators to justice. You have to reconcile these competing interests in some way."
More Money ... If You Can Play Ball

August 12, 2015

By
Jake New

NO MU MENTION

Some colleges and universities that play big-time intercollegiate sports are sharply increasing the federally defined cost of attendance for students at their institutions this year -- letting them provide several thousand more dollars in stipends for scholarship athletes, but resulting in little if any additional funds for other students.

The maneuvering is an outgrowth of the January vote by the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s five wealthiest sports conferences to increase the value of athletic scholarships to include the full cost of attendance. Athletes receiving a full scholarship to play on a college team can now also receive a stipend to cover the difference between that scholarship and the various other expenses that accompany being a college student, such as paying for food, laundry and travel.

This summer, some institutions adjusted their cost of attendance figures just as those estimates suddenly became useful as a recruiting tool. And financial aid analysts are worried that athletics departments are now improperly influencing those numbers to the benefit of revenue sport athletes, but the detriment of other students.

“It’s suspicious,” said Ellen Frishberg, a former college financial aid director and president of Executive Function, a higher education consulting firm. “Since you have to present the cost of attendance as the same to everyone, increasing it inflates the budgets for the entire population. That creates more financial need, which creates more loan eligibility, which could mean more debt for students, which is a very negative thing. They’re creating a huge amount of unmet need and funding it for some people and not for others.”

What colleges list as full cost of attendance is important, as it defines the limits of a student’s available financial aid and figures significantly into determinations of how
much aid a Pell Grant recipient is due and how much in federal loans a student is able to borrow.

The federal government provides guidance and tracks these figures, but allows college financial aid officers to determine what an appropriate estimate is for their institution, though colleges must justify those amounts in some way. The large variance among institutions -- owing to factors such as cost of living being different from one city or state to the next, for example -- has been mostly uncontroversial. That's changed now that cost of attendance has become part of the intercollegiate athletics arms race.

The decision to offer full cost-of-attendance stipends was an attempt by the NCAA's members to address rising criticism that colleges aren't doing enough to help the students, many from low-income backgrounds, who help some institutions bring in millions of dollars in ticket sales and television contracts. It didn't take long for coaches and athletic directors to see the recruiting possibilities the change in financial aid could offer.

Earlier this year, Nick Saban, head football coach at the University of Alabama, said he was concerned about the large discrepancies that existed between individual colleges' full cost-of-attendance numbers. Alabama’s full cost of attendance last year put the university in the middle of the Southeastern Conference, allowing athletes there to receive an annual stipend of $3,463. Auburn University’s stipend, meanwhile, topped $5,000 per year. (Auburn's cost of attendance did not increase this year, but the amounts that make up the stipend increased by 108 percent in 2014.)

During the conference’s spring meetings in May, Saban called foul.

“You can't create a system that really can almost promote fraud,” Saban said. “Even in the NFL, they have a salary cap. When we don't have a cap that makes it equal for everybody, it really goes against everything we've tried to do in the NCAA that we've tried to do for parity.”

As it turns out, Saban didn’t have much to worry about. Soon after his comments, the University of Alabama increased its cost-of-attendance estimate, and with it the amount Saban’s players could receive as a stipend. Deborah Lane, a spokeswoman for the university, said the cost of attendance was estimated “using the same methods [the university] has always used,” though the increase was much higher than normal.

Alabama is now offering one of the largest stipends in college football: $5,386 each year to out-of-state athletes and $4,172 to in-state athletes.

Getting ‘Creative’ With Numbers

The push to give athletes a stipend to cover the full cost of attendance has been taking place for decades, but in recent years the concept has found stronger support. In 2003, the NCAA began allowing athletes to receive aid through Pell Grants and need-based scholarships. Five years later, the NCAA settled a lawsuit over the association’s practice of capping scholarship amounts. The settlement cost the NCAA $228 million.
In 2011, the NCAA’s Division I Board of Directors voted to adopt a $2,000 stipend that would cover an athlete’s full cost of attendance, but 125 Division I institutions then voted to override the decision, scuttling the increase.

By 2014, the NCAA continued to face a number of lawsuits over the issue, and pressure -- including from the U.S. Senate -- was building to find a way close the financial aid gap. Recent court rulings have added additional pressure by bolstering the idea that the NCAA violates federal antitrust law by capping scholarship amounts. Last August, the Division I Board of Directors voted to restructure how its members govern themselves, granting a greater level of autonomy to the five wealthiest conferences. The Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific 12 and Southeastern Conferences could now make their own rules concerning a number of issues, and full cost of attendance was at the top of their list.

In January, the conferences voted to approve the stipends. All but one of the 65 institutions voted in favor of the change.

The NCAA estimated at the time that the stipends would increase aid amounts by about $2,500 per athlete, or about $30 million a year across all programs. It soon became clear the NCAA’s estimates fell short at many institutions, including most of the SEC and about half of the Big Ten.

So far, the stipends are mostly going to full-scholarship football, men’s basketball and women’s basketball players, with some other female athletes receiving them to ensure colleges aren’t running afoul of Title IX considerations. In July, the NCAA announced that it would distribute $18.9 million across Division I, or about $55,000 per institution, to help colleges pay for the stipends. An NCAA spokeswoman this week referred all questions regarding the increases to individual institutions.

Some coaches who are fortunate enough to work at colleges that already listed higher full-cost-of-attendance amounts have not been coy about what those larger stipends could mean for recruiting. James Franklin, head football coach at Pennsylvania State University, now touts the fact that the university has one of the highest costs of attendance in the country.

“It’s something I’m going to be able to use in recruiting,” Franklin said during a “coaches caravan” stop in New York in May, according to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. “No different than when I put up the graduation rates of Penn State and every other school in the conference and then the graduation rates of Penn State and all the other schools I think we compete against nationally. I’m also able to do the same thing now with cost of attendance.”

While university officials are careful to frame any increases in cost of attendance as strictly a financial aid decision, football coaches have been less cautious in describing the larger stipends. “We’ve been very creative in getting our number to a good spot,” Mark Richt, head football coach at the University of Georgia, said to a crowd during UGA Day. In July, Richt told the Macon Telegraph that there were “some things that
can be done in a creative way that is well within the rules that can get us in pretty good shape on that front."

David Ridpath, professor of sports administration at Ohio University and president-elect of the Drake Group, said while colleges may be getting creative at the behest of coaches, Richt is likely correct in saying that no rules are being broken.

"I'm not going to say that it's nefarious or even unethical, but it obviously looks a little fishy," Ridpath said. "I think these numbers could have even been adjusted before, but colleges didn't, because they were trying to keep the sticker price lower. There wasn't really a reason or benefit to doing that. Now from an athletics perspective, there is a benefit. Though I think that the benefits are overblown."

‘A Tug-of-War’

Like Alabama’s Saban, Richt earlier expressed alarm over the danger of his institution offering stipends that were so much lower than those at institutions like Auburn, only to have the expected amounts increase before the start of the season. Last month, Georgia adjusted its cost-of-attendance figures, and the size of the gap that could be addressed by the stipend increased from $1,798 to $3,221 for in-state students and $3,743 for out-of-state students.

A Georgia spokeswoman said the university does not offer any academic scholarships for nonathletes that cover full cost of attendance, and financial aid experts interviewed for this story said that the cost categories that are increasing -- transportation and miscellaneous expenses -- are not typically covered by full-ride academic scholarships at many institutions.

How such a change would affect nonathlete students is not entirely clear, said Mark Kantrowitz, a leading financial aid expert, but it's not likely that they will benefit from the arrangement. Kantrowitz, senior vice president and publisher at Edvisors, said the stipends “certainly act as a recruiting tool,” and if colleges are artificially inflating cost of attendance figures to make those stipends larger, then nonathletes could shoulder the extra costs.

“If the overall aid a school’s offering went up the same as a cost-of-attendance increase, then colleges are involving their financial aid in a recruiting shenanigan,” he said. “If the amount of grants and aid hasn’t gone up, then schools are putting more burden on nonathletes. Either way, you’ve got a basis for criticism. In some cases that financial aid will be Pell Grants, in which case the student doesn’t really care. But in other cases it may be loans, and that affects the affordability of the school and the debt students accrue.”

Georgia officials said its increase was a result of financial aid officers taking an overdue look at whether the numbers in those two categories were up-to-date and finding that they weren’t. The transportation cost was figured by calculating the expense of four trips each semester to Warner Robins, a centrally located city in
Georgia, for in-state students, and four round-trip flights to Chicago for out-of-state students. The miscellaneous expenses are based on the 2013 Consumer Expenditure Survey published by the U.S. Department of Labor, which includes estimated costs for clothing, laundry, cleaning supplies, entertainment and cell phone bills.

Janis Gleason, a spokeswoman for the university, declined to comment on the timing of the increase, but said that the “numbers are accurate and reflect the expenses incurred by our students.”

The increase at Alabama was also confined to the travel and miscellaneous categories of the cost-of-attendance budget, as was most of a $2,000 increase at Rutgers University, which is offering stipends between $4,100 and $4,900. Last year’s full cost-of-attendance estimates at Rutgers, according to the U.S. Department of Education, would have resulted in stipends of about $2,100. Vanderbilt University is offering an athletic stipend of $2,780. For nonathletes at Vanderbilt, travel and miscellaneous expenses aren’t listed as a budgeting consideration because, as the university states, the amount “varies.”

Karen McCarthy, a policy analyst for the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said that it’s not uncommon for cost of attendance to fluctuate from year to year, but it is unusual to see such sudden and sizable increases in expense categories like travel. McCarthy said it’s possible that the recently increased interest in cost of attendance has simply prompted institutions to re-examine those estimates.

NASFAA is worried about the stipends being used as a recruiting tool, however, McCarthy said, and whether that is influencing financial aid decisions.

“We do have concerns about pressure from athletics on financial aid and the cost of attendance,” she said. “Ultimately, the responsibility for determining this is with the financial aid office, and there’s already pressure there to keep the numbers down to limit borrowing and to make sure students aren’t turned off by costs appearing too expensive. Now that this change has come through, coaches want to get in on those conversations as well.”

Mark Nagel, professor of sports and entertainment management at the University of South Carolina, said that unless the stipends become standardized in some way, full cost-of-attendance numbers could rise at other colleges.

“It could be a fascinating battle,” Nagel said. “For years most universities tried to keep their costs of attendance low, so they can say, ‘hey, we’re more affordable.’ Well, now you have the opposite, where you have the athletic department wanting the full cost of attendance to be as high as possible. It’s an interesting tug-of-war that’s really only just beginning.”
After more than two years of anxiety over how the Obama administration planned to judge their institutions, many college and university leaders exhaled deeply earlier this summer when federal officials dropped their plan to create a college ratings system.

Many colleges and universities were fiercely opposed to the ratings plan. And it had become among the most contentious fights between colleges and the Obama administration.

Now, as the Education Department gets ready to unveil, in the coming weeks, its ratings replacement -- an online college comparison tool -- the project is hardly registering as a blip on the radar screen of many college leaders.

At the same time, some advocacy groups and public university leaders are pressing the department to include certain information in the new consumer tool -- even if the new website won’t tell consumers whether a certain college’s performance is good, bad or middling, as the administration once proposed.

With the stakes so much lower for colleges, though, the lobbying against new federal accountability tools has largely dissipated. Some of the most vocal critics of the ratings plan have turned down their rhetoric when it comes to the replacement consumer tool.

“This has not been a front-burner issue for most college and university leaders,” said Terry Hartle, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education, which praised the administration’s retreat on ratings this summer.

“The simple matter is that giving … accurate and meaningful information to students and families is a good and meaningful thing to do,” he said. “If they find a way to
package and deliver it to students in a way that helps them make an informed choice about postsecondary options, it will be an important step forward.”

The association representing private colleges in Washington, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, was perhaps the most vociferous ratings opponent.

A spokesman, Pete Boyle, said last week that the group had not discussed how the Education Department should structure its new consumer tool, aside from asking officials to be sure to present graduation rates in four-, five- and six-year periods.

“When students and families are considering a higher education investment, they should have a picture of how long it takes most students to complete at a given institution,” Boyle said in an email.

Private college presidents had previously said they weren’t opposed to the government putting out more data on their institutions -- but they objected to the government assigning it meaning or judgment.

After dropping the college ratings proposal, which the Obama administration had billed as a way to hold colleges more accountable for the federal funds they use, Education Secretary Arne Duncan earlier this month outlined a series of other ideas on accountability -- most of which would require congressional action.

Duncan briefly described the new consumer tool as a way to provide students and families with “comparative information on outcomes and college value.”

It’s not clear which data the department will ultimately publish about colleges when it unveils the new consumer tool in the coming weeks. But the department is choosing from among the same data points that were floated for the ratings system, an official said.

The Education Department is limited by what data it already collects from colleges, which are already available in large part online. But the department has, over the past several years as part of the ratings project, explored ways to pair existing data sources to create new data points about a college -- like, for example, combining its database of student loan recipients with earnings data collected by the Social Security Administration.

Department officials have also indicated that they’re willing to turn to nonfederal sources of data. For example, the department has recently purchased data from the National Student Clearinghouse to calculate graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients. A procurement document about that transaction stated that the department would use that information in the ratings system, but department officials cautioned earlier this year that the document did not actually reflect any final decision about what data it planned to use.
Advocates for low-income students have long pushed for the Education Department to publish the graduation rate of Pell Grant recipients at each college. Congress has also requested that the department make such data available, but the department until recently had no way to track whether the students to whom it provides Pell Grants end up graduating.

Another possible source of data for the consumer information tool is the Student Achievement Measure, a joint project of several higher education associations. The project, led by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, relies on college-submitted data to create more robust completion rates than those of the federal government, which captures data only for the minority of students who are attending college for the very first time and are enrolled full-time.

Education Department officials indicated in December that they were considering incorporating the Student Achievement Measure data into the ratings system.

Whereas some private college presidents might view the collapse of the ratings system as a victory, some public university leaders are seeing the new consumer tool as just one step in the feds’ doing more on college accountability.

Jeff Lieberson, spokesman for the land-grant university group, said that in addition to urging the Education Department to use the SAM data in its consumer tool, the association also plans to continue its push to raise the federal performance standards of colleges that receive federal student aid.

Although APLU did not support the Obama administration’s ratings system directly, it proposed an alternative rating system under which the federal government would judge colleges based on certain metrics, including loan repayment rate and levels of employment among graduates.

F. King Alexander, president of Louisiana State University, said in an interview earlier this month that he supported the new consumer tool but said that the federal government needs to do far more to hold colleges and universities accountable for outcomes.

“I was disappointed in the retreat” on college ratings, Alexander said. “I don’t think they’ve fully retreated. Maybe this college scorecard can get at some of the kind of accountability we should all be working to provide for our parents and students.”

Aside from public universities, other groups have also been weighing in on what they want to see in the new consumer information tool.

Consumer advocates are pushing the Education Department to flag colleges that are under investigation or that have been sued by state regulators.

“Students deserve to know when a college’s practices are under heightened scrutiny from federal and state regulators, just as investors in publicly traded for-profit colleges
are required to be notified of such events,” a coalition of groups, led by the Institute for College Access and Success, wrote in a letter last month.

Aside from the data points, though, a remaining question for the consumer tool is whether students will actually use it.

Federal government websites haven’t historically been the go-to source of information for many low-income students considering college, according to Kim Cook, executive director of the National College Access Network.

“There’s a wealth of information, but it’s not very user-friendly,” she said of the federal government’s current tools, like College Navigator and the College Scorecard. “We can surmount that problem, and I think the department has given serious thought to this.”

“You need a good product and you need to market it well,” she said.

Educational equity is fundamental to community's success

August 12, 2015

NO MENTION

The editorial “A study in black and white” (Aug. 6) is spot on, noting St. Louis has one of the highest racial-economic disparities of any metropolitan area in the country. East-West Gateway Coordinating Council’s Where We Stand report confirms we have much work to do to create equity in our community.

While the editorial noted “St. Louis does better in education attainment” by ranking 14th in the country on the ratio of whites to blacks with a bachelor degree or higher, our community must not underestimate the stark disparities. Our region stands at 43 percent of adults with an associate or bachelor degree, but only at 26 percent among African-American residents. Gaps in educational attainment by race and socioeconomic class must be addressed through collective efforts to support all students in their pursuit of a post-secondary degree. We applaud East-West Gateway Coordinating Council for highlighting this significant disparity.

There are bright spots to celebrate. The University of Missouri-St. Louis just graduated the largest class in its 52-year history, including a record number of African-American students. St. Louis Graduates’ High School to College Center worked with more students than ever to successfully transition from high school graduate to enrolled college student this summer; the majority of the 232 students were African-American.
Educational equity is a moral imperative. Educational equity is an economic imperative. Educational equity is fundamental to the success and vitality of our community, and each of its citizens.

*Alan Byrd Jr. and Allison M. Williams • St. Louis
Co-chairs, St. Louis Graduates*