Mizzou News

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Missouri abortion licensing law splits GOP, health officials

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Republican senators and the Missouri health department director debated Tuesday whether a Columbia Planned Parenthood met state requirements needed to perform abortions, an issue that has led to questions about whether the agency properly granted the clinic a license in July.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican running for attorney general who is chairman of a committee investigating abortion practices in the state, says the clinic failed to meet requirements. Citing the same state laws, Department of Health and Senior Services Director Gail Vasterling argued the opposite.

The dispute is over a Missouri law that requires physicians performing surgeries to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals, or the facility itself to have a similar agreement, in order for a clinic to be licensed as what's called an "ambulatory surgical center." Clinics offering abortions need such a license.

The doctor providing abortions at the Planned Parenthood does not have such admitting privileges. But the clinic, Vasterling said, doesn't provide surgical abortions. She said that means admitting privileges were not needed and the health department could grant a license allowing the clinic to perform medical abortions.

"They comply," with state law, Vasterling told the Senate committee, "because they don't perform surgeries."

Republicans on the Senate committee argued state law mandates abortion clinics to have surgical admitting privileges, even if only medical abortions are performed.

"They clearly don't" have the needed privileges, Schaefer said. Republican Sen. Bob Onder, of Lake St. Louis, told Vasterling that she's "playing games with this statute."

Schaefer and other lawmakers at the hearing also raised concerns about emails that show an assistant professor at the University of Missouri, who also works for Planned Parenthood, and other university employees communicated with the Columbia doctor performing abortions on how to retain needed privileges at University Hospital.
Schafer said the emails violated state law, which says that public employees in their official capacity cannot "encourage or counsel a woman to have an abortion not necessary to save her life" and that taxpayer money can't be used for that, either.

"It appears to me that the university is in the abortion business," Schaefer said.

University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin told committee members that federal law prevents the university from denying hospital privileges to qualified doctors because they perform lawful abortions.

He also said several staff members who corresponded with the Columbia doctor primarily connected the physician with paperwork. Other officials were responsible for granting approval for privileges, he said.

How the dispute over privileges will be settled is unclear. Schaefer said it's the Legislature's responsibility to ensure state agencies and other entities funded with taxpayer money are complying with Missouri law.

Schaefer also is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and has influence over the health department and university's funding.

GOP lawmakers question Planned Parenthood abortion doctor's hospital privileges

By Alex Stuckey

JEFFERSON CITY • Republican state Sen. Bob Onder said Tuesday he was disappointed by the “bogus” privileges granted by University of Missouri Health Care to the doctor performing medical abortions at the Columbia, Mo., Planned Parenthood facility.

Other Republicans on a committee investigating Planned Parenthood agreed, asserting that the state or the university may have violated state law.

“I do not believe this permit was issued legally,” Onder, of Lake Saint Louis, said. “I think a lot of games were played here by the Department (of Health and Senior Services) and maybe the University (of Missouri).”

The Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life was created to investigate Planned Parenthood after controversial videos were released alleging the organization participated in the sale of fetal body parts. One video specifically mentions St. Louis as a potential location to obtain fetal tissue.

The committee also is examining the department’s approval of a license in July allowing the Columbia Planned Parenthood facility to resume its abortion services after a three-year lapse in that service.
Among other requirements for a facility to be licensed to perform surgical abortions, the doctor performing those abortions must have surgical privileges at a local hospital in case of emergency.

But department director Gail Vasterling said the Columbia facility only is performing medical abortions at this time so those privileges weren’t needed. A medical abortion uses two medicines that can end a pregnancy up to nine weeks after a woman’s last period. The St. Louis facility remains the only center in Missouri that performs surgical abortions.

Instead, the doctor, Colleen McNicholas, of St. Louis, was provided “refer and follow” privileges at University of Missouri Health Care, which means she can refer her patients to the hospital and check their medical record after they’re admitted, said R. Bowen Loftin, University of Missouri chancellor.

“She cannot do anything in the hospital but come in the door,” Loftin said. Only three other doctors have this type of privileges at University of Missouri Health Care, he added.

Should McNicholas or any other doctor at the Columbia Planned Parenthood begin performing surgical abortions, they would need surgical privileges at a local hospital or the facility would need a written agreement with a hospital. Planned Parenthood has expressed a desire to begin surgical abortions there in early 2016.

Vasterling said Planned Parenthood has agreed to come back to the department prior to performing surgical abortions to demonstrate that it meets the requirements.

Several committee members said they believe the hospital privileges granted to McNicholas do not meet the requirements under state law. After reading through emails exchanged between university employees and McNicholas, they also said they believe university officials actively recruited McNicholas to resume abortions in Columbia and shepherded her application for privileges through the process.

“It appears the university is in the abortion business,” Schaefer said.

Schaefer said the committee will continue to meet on the issue and he plans to seek public testimony soon. Members intend to issue a report to the full Senate this year.

Editor's note: This replaces an earlier version that incorrectly stated when the hearing was held in the first paragraph. It was Tuesday.
MU chancellor promises to review privileges for Planned Parenthood doctor

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, August 25, 2015 at 9:37 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — An assistant professor of nursing with dual roles at Planned Parenthood and the University of Missouri became fuel for the grill lit Tuesday by state Sen. Kurt Schaefer and other anti-abortion Republicans under Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Before he finished giving sworn testimony, Loftin told the Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life that an investigation was already underway, focusing on the assistant professor’s email signature and MU Health Care’s process of granting clinical privileges to doctors. The university on Monday cancelled agreements between the medical and nursing schools and the Columbia Planned Parenthood clinic, leaving an agreement between the clinic and the School of Social Work in place.

The state Department of Health and Senior Services on July 15 granted a license for medication-induced abortions at the Columbia clinic operated by a health care affiliate of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. Department Director Gail Vasterling testified before Loftin, telling the committee that the license does not allow for surgical abortions.

The university is investigating the process used to grant “refer and follow” privileges to Colleen McNicholas, the St. Louis doctor on faculty at Washington University who is performing the abortions, Loftin said.

“We are in the process right now of reviewing everything around this physician,” Loftin said. “I will take a few more days before we take any action on it.”

As he began the hearing, Schaefer, R-Columbia and chairman of the committee, focused on the role of Kristin Metcalf-Wilson.

Metcalf-Wilson is an assistant teaching professor in the Sinclair School of Nursing. Metcalf-Wilson is a doctor of nursing practice, board certified as a women’s health nurse practitioner. She is also lead nurse practitioner for Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri. In her email signature, she identifies herself with both roles.
After sifting through almost 600 pages of emails and other documents provided by MU about its process, Schaefer found an Aug. 6, 2014, email McNicholas sent to Metcalf-Wilson’s university account. In the email, McNicholas wrote it was “exciting that you have some commitment and forward progress in restoring your services in Columbia.”

The two had exchanged emails earlier in the day arranging to meet while they were together at a conference in Orlando, Fla.

The emails show Metcalf-Wilson was “recruiting” McNicholas “to come to Columbia through the University of Missouri,” Schaefer said.

The way Metcalf-Wilson signs her emails, which is the same on emails from her university and Planned Parenthood account, is being reviewed, Loftin said.

“We will certainly look carefully at how she used her university email,” Loftin said. “We don’t want to confuse others by conflating their position at the university with any organization. I have already asked to have that looked into by the appropriate folks at the University of Missouri.”

After reading from other documents about the process of granting privileges to McNicholas, Schaefer asked Loftin: “Why is it acceptable for a publicly funded institution like the University of Missouri to be engaged in this activity?”

The hospital has an open policy for granting privileges to physicians working in the community, Loftin told Schaefer. “The issue for us is basically we have a lot of federal dollars coming into the university for medical services,” he said.

The legal obligations on the university to care for anyone who arrives needing emergency care, as well as other legal obligations, would be violated by making exceptions based on the kind of medicine the physician practiced, Loftin said. A violation would put $150 million of federal health care funds in jeopardy, he said.

All seven Republican members of the committee were on hand, including Sen. Will Kraus, R-Independence, and Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, who like Schaefer are candidates for statewide office. Schaefer wants to be attorney general, Kraus is running for secretary of state and Schmitt is seeking to be state treasurer. The two Democratic members, Sens. Jill Schupp of Creve Coeur and Maria Chappelle-Nadal of University City, attended portions of the hearing via telephone.

Loftin’s reasons why the university granted privileges to McNicholas didn’t alter the views of several committee members that the license granted to the Columbia clinic violates state law.

“This appearing to bend over backwards on the part of the university to accommodate an abortion clinic in Columbia when the law is clear, I think is egregious,” said Sen. Bob Onder, R-Lake St. Louis.

“No one who were in the emails appear to be people with decision-making” authority, Loftin said.
Onder was not convinced. “It is clear that some people worked real hard to skirt the clear meaning of the law to get the abortions going and kill babies in Columbia,” he said.

State Senate Hearing Discusses MU’s Role in Restarting Abortions in Columbia

Watch story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=2ef56a3c-1661-49e0-93fc-d47a484c4883

State Senate Grills DHSS, MU about Planned Parenthood

Today's Talk: Senate committee questions DHSS about abortion law

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=30207&zone=5&categories=5

JEFFERSON CITY - The Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life met at the State Capitol Tuesday to talk with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services about the state's law regarding abortion clinics.

Chairman of the committee Sen. Kurt Schaefer and other senators said they don't think the Columbia Planned Parenthood is properly licensed, but employees of the Department of Health and Senior Services said they do. The senators said they don't think the DHSS understands the abortion law.

Schaefer questioned MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin about University Hospital's role in bringing the doctor who will be giving abortion services to Columbia's Planned Parenthood. Schaefer said this is concerning because state dollars can't be used for abortions.

The committee members said the DHSS needs to reveal what hospital the Columbia clinic sends patients to when they have complications with medication abortions.

Schaefer sent a letter to University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin last Monday in which he raised concerns that a University of Missouri Health Care physician may have an agreement with Planned Parenthood to perform surgical abortions at the clinic in Columbia.

Schaefer accuses MU of using taxpayer money to pay for surgical abortions. Planned Parenthood said it only performs medication abortions unless it fails and a woman needs to undergo a surgical abortion. Planned Parenthood said Schaefer is just using this as a platform to push his pro-life agenda.
Mizzou graduate students set to rally

By Koran Addo

Dozens and possibly hundreds of University of Missouri’s student teachers are scheduled to walk out of class Wednesday in protest of what they describe as years of seeing their benefits eroding.

Schools typically lure promising graduate students with benefit packages which include free health care, affordable housing and low-cost child care.

In recent years, graduate students at Mizzou have complained of these benefits disappearing a little bit each year.

Wednesday's noon rally at the columns was originally planned as a protest where student teachers from across the campus were planning to walk out of their classes. It was organized by the Forum for Graduate Rights.

The group formed in response to the university's abrupt decision earlier this month to stop paying for their health care.

The university's administration backtracked late last week, announcing that students will continue to receive their health care subsidies.

In response, students have softened their approach and re-branded the walkout as a rally.

Mizzou graduate student Anahita Zare said the rally is about increasing student teachers' visibility on campus and raising awareness of the issues that impact their work.

MU departments prepare for graduate student walkout

RUTH SERVEN, SARAH WYNN, BROOKE KOTTMANN, JINGRU ZHANG, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Multiple MU departments and professors have canceled classes in preparation for a noon rally and all-day walkout Wednesday that will focus on graduate student rights.
Lois Huneycutt, director of graduate studies in the Department of History, said she is canceling her Early Middles Ages class so she can participate in and speak at the rally.

She said no one will be substituting for her in class, but she will post the material online so students can remain on track.

"I’m canceling my class," Huneycutt said. "I’m giving my students an hour-long interactive PowerPoint, and we will talk about it on Friday."

The hour-long rally will be held at the MU Columns at noon, according to a statement released by the Forum on Graduate Rights. Speakers will attend the rally but the details and the roster are still in flux.

The all-day walkout was organized in response to an email sent on Aug. 14 announcing the immediate suspension of insurance subsidies for MU graduate student employees. Graduate student employees are current students who hold teaching and research assistantships, and receive benefits and compensation.

On Friday, MU reversed its decision when Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced the university will continue to pay for health insurance this semester for eligible graduate students.

While the Forum on Graduate Rights celebrated this decision, the group is planning the walkout and rally to highlight the need for a permanent reinstatement of the insurance subsidies, according to a statement from the forum. The group is also calling for the university to return on-campus childcare, provide a living wage, provide full tuition waivers and provide access to affordable university-sponsored housing.

There is no university policy about how many classes a professor can cancel in one academic semester, MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email. "This is, most likely, determined on a case-by-case at the school, college or department level."
Tom Quinn, the director of graduate education for the Department of Biochemistry, said instructors are responsible for holding their classes. He said his department supports their graduate students and wants them "to get their healthcare issues settled permanently."

Professor Dongchu Sun, chair of the Department of Statistics, said the department will not punish any graduate student or graduate assistant who participates in the walkout.

"Graduate students have their own rights," Sun said. "Faculty members can understand all that and are prepared for the graduate walkout."

Lynda Kraxberger, associate dean of undergraduate studies of the School of Journalism, said in an email sent Tuesday to students and faculty of the School of Journalism that all journalism labs and classes will be held as usual.

Anahita Zare, a fourth-year doctoral student in the Department of Chemistry, is the chair of the Forum on Graduate Right’s outreach committee that organized the rally and the walkout.

"The message from the outreach committee is that we want this to be a peaceful and respectful gathering," Zare said. "There is a lot of frustration and there are a lot of issues and people are very upset, but I want to navigate these issues respectfully."

Zare said the committee is trying to limit the use of "walkout," preferring the term "celebration," as a way to dispel negative reactions to the event. With the rally, students hope to bring to light issues that graduate assistants face in addition to insurance subsidies, such as lack of on-campus childcare and low pay, she said.

"Graduate students teach many courses that every MU student takes, like English, chemistry and physics," Zare said. "As such an important group of students to the university, it's important that (graduate student’s) living situations be livable and adequate."

Zare will teach a chemistry lab this fall, but her classes haven't started yet. She said she has not been in contact with the undergraduates in that class, but she hopes they will attend the rally and
support the graduate students. She also said the Department of Chemistry has stated support for any graduate student who participates in events Wednesday.

"I'm one of the more fortunate students, but 50 percent of my paycheck still goes to healthcare," Zare said. "And just because I don't have a child, or because I have enough of a stipend to handle my living situation, doesn't mean I don't care."

**MU Grad Students Set to Walk Out of Class**

Watch story: [http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=e8d0c9f5-a4c9-4362-aad4-daa1832fa46b](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=e8d0c9f5-a4c9-4362-aad4-daa1832fa46b)

**Letter to the Editor: Grad students have reason to walk out**

Tuesday, August 25, 2015 at 2:00 pm

**Editor, the Tribune:** Graduate students at the University of Missouri recently learned that their university health insurance coverage subsidy is in jeopardy. A Forum on Graduate Rights (FGR) was formed to respond to this development.

As a recently retired professor at the university, I want graduate students to know that I fully support FGR’s actions, including the possibility of a refusal to teach classes until this problem is adequately addressed.

I especially want the people of Missouri to understand that graduate students at our university do the bulk of the teaching; they are overworked and underpaid. Their efforts to improve their
situation is commendable because they are meant not only to defend themselves but to defend
the well-being of anyone with a connection to Mizzou: students, employees, professors, parents
of students, coaches, players and spectators.

For the benefit of everyone, we cannot allow the mistreatment of our teachers.

Michael Ugarte

1505 Windsor St.

Why the words ‘pink eye’ make parents panic

The same terms can mean very different things to physicians and to parents—especially when it
comes to discussing “pink eye.”

At least 2 million children with conjunctivitis, or “pink eye,” visit a health care provider each
year. Those visits can be quite confusing for parents as they communicate their child’s symptoms
with pediatricians, especially since not all visits will require antibiotics as treatment.

The study, by Laura Scherer, assistant professor of psychological sciences at the University
of Missouri, finds that the “pink eye” label, when applied to eye symptoms, can mislead
parents into wanting antibiotics, even after being informed that the antibiotics are
unnecessary.

“When it comes to communication between doctors and patients, words matter,” Scherer says.
“Likewise, our beliefs matter. Many parents believe that ‘pink eye’ is a serious infection that
requires antibiotics. But for pediatricians, the words ‘pink eye’ could mean a bacterial infection,
viral infection, or even just redness due to allergy.

“If doctors use a label that leads parents to believe that the symptoms require medication, then
parents are likely to demand it. Our study showed that these labels may cause parents to want
medication even when the doctor tries to later communicate that medications aren’t necessary.”
‘Eye infection’ vs. ‘pink eye’

For the study, Scherer and her colleagues at the University of Michigan asked 159 parents to read short vignettes that described a two-year-old child who developed a red eye following mild cold symptoms. The symptoms described were suggestive of viral conjunctivitis: watery discharge and eye redness confined to the eyeball and small part of the eyelid. In this situation, antibiotics would likely have little to no value.

In the vignette narrative, parents were then presented with randomized scenarios. In one version, the physician affirmed the “pink eye” diagnosis, in another, the physician simply called the symptoms an “eye infection.” Researchers found that parents who received the “eye infection” label only wanted antibiotics when they believed that antibiotics would be effective. However, parents who were given the “pink eye” label wanted antibiotics regardless of whether they were told that antibiotics were ineffective or not.

“Physicians may not realize that the words they use have different connotations to them than they do to patients,” Scherer says. “This kind of miscommunication can potentially lead to overuse of antibiotics, which is causing increased antibiotic resistance.

“Past studies of primary care physicians have found that they prescribe antibiotics in 70 to 90 percent of eye infection cases, far exceeding the proportion of actual bacterial cases.

“Our study suggests that the words ‘pink eye’ makes parents believe the infection to be more contagious and to want medication even when it isn’t necessary.”

Speaking carefully

Scherer advises that physicians can overcome this communication divide by understanding the effect the term “pink eye” has on parents’ expectations for treatment. Likewise, parents should ask clarifying questions if the treatment options presented to them conflict with their expectations, Scherer says.

“As soon as parents hear the words ‘pink eye,’ their minds fill with fear and they think ‘my child needs antibiotics,’” says senior author Beth Tarini, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Michigan’s C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital and a researcher at the Child Health Evaluation and Research Unit. “As pediatricians, we need to recognize the impact that our words have on parents and how it affects their thinking about treatments that may be unnecessary.”

The study appears in Clinical Pediatrics. Funding came from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development.
Ellis Library to open 24-hour study space

The announcement kicks off a semester in which a library student fee will be much discussed.

It’s closing hour at the Ellis Library. With trembling fingers, this is where many groggy students have confronted their trek home.

Ellis Library is a sanctuary for dedicated students, but the inconvenience of packing up at closing time and switching locations isn’t ideal. However, starting this fall, the library will accommodate even the most nocturnal college student.

**Beginning Sept. 8, Ellis Library plans to unveil a new 24-hour study space.** The space will be called “24/5” because the library will continue to close at midnight Friday and Saturday. Previously, the administration planned to allow the Missouri Students Association to vote on a new student fee before the 24-hour study space opened.

This fee, which would begin at $5 per credit hour and gradually increase to $15 per credit hour, would allow for larger and more expensive improvements. Since the library serves the entire campus and the fee applies to all students, it must be approved by student referendum.

“This was something we could do to really meet the needs of students and demonstrate how much we hear them, and how much we want to work with them,” MU Library Associate Director Ann Riley said. “We know they live in a 24-hour environment, and we look forward to them coming and being studious.”

The first and second floors of Ellis will be open overnight and the Bookmark Cafe will close at its usual time. Riley is currently working to install a new coffee and vending machine downstairs for the overnight hours. The cost of the 24-hour space this fall is estimated to be approximately $50,000, Director of Advancement Matt Gaunt said.

“Librarians by their very nature want to help people, that’s why they get into it,” he said. “This fee is really about being more responsive to our users. We’re committed to this 24-hour space, fee or not, and we’re going to do everything we can to be responsive.”

According to the Association of American Universities Public Libraries data, MU Libraries spends $607.03 per full-time student, while Kansas University Spends $975.54 and the University of Florida spends $1,157.63 per student, about 50% more than MU.

While Riley and Gaunt aim for this vote to be a grassroots student movement, students themselves have a variety of opinions.
“I think it’s a great idea,” junior Kelley Aubuchon said. “Especially because it’s quieter here, and students have late evening classes. I think it will be worth the fee.’

Sophomore Anthony Blocker would also be content with the change, though he may not use the space, he said.

“I would rather have the Rec (open) 24 hours,” Blocker said. “If I have to type a paper at 3 a.m., I’ll probably be in my bed. But I think people will definitely utilize the library.”

Others don’t believe that the study space will sustain itself past this semester, unless the fee passes. Others take issue with the fee altogether.

Sophomore Romanus Hutchins doesn’t agree with the mindset behind the fee.

“It’s hypocritical for an institution to charge you for studying overnight,” Hutchins said. “I can just study in my room.”

August 26, 2015

How One University Uses New-Student Orientation to Talk About Sexual Assault

By Sarah Brown

Richmond, Va.

NO MENTION

A young woman sways under flashing strobe lights and thumping music, her eyes bloodshot, clearly intoxicated. A man, about the same age, begins dancing with her and kissing her. She weakly tries to push him away. Eventually, he leads her to her apartment, pulls her into her bedroom, and shuts the door. He begins taking her clothes off, and the scene ends.

The scenario leading up to a rape occurs during a short film that was shown to University of Richmond freshmen and transfer students on Friday night during orientation for new students. The session focused on bystander intervention, training students on how to step in when they see signs of a potential assault. In the video, friends and witnesses look concerned when they see the young man and woman interacting, but they take no action.

Earlier that day, as new Richmond students trekked across the private university’s 350-acre wooded campus in their orientation groups, they were bubbly and excited. They chatted with one another about
fall courses, about their roommates, and, of course, about parties. They called out the names of friends in other groups and waved as they walked by.

Starting with the bystander-intervention training, however, new students spend three to four hours over several days engaging with the difficult topic of campus sexual assault. At Richmond, there are three mandatory programs devoted to sexual-assault education at orientation, and the topic factors into discussions at other events for incoming students.

At many colleges, orientation, which often takes place over the summer or just before fall classes begin, serves as students’ introduction to the issues of sexual assault and consent. Those topics have become major priorities for colleges as public attention on their handling of sexual-assault cases has intensified. Richmond is one of dozens of colleges where sexual-violence complaints are under investigation for possible violations of the federal gender-equity law known as Title IX.

The risk of assault is especially high for new students during the beginning of the fall semester, so addressing the issue at orientation is important, college officials say. But doing so brings challenges for colleges: They must try to teach students about one of the most closely watched areas of higher education, in a couple of hours, at a time when distractions and other worries abound. And designing such a curriculum isn’t easy; students arrive on campus with vastly different experiences with sex and relationships.

Administrators nationwide say it is important to strike a balance between keeping orientation positive and fun, while making sure students understand the real danger of sexual violence and know how to keep themselves and their peers safe. The hope, they say, is that including discussions of sexual-assault prevention at orientation will inspire students to set in motion cultural change on campuses.

Inspired by the Training

New students’ schedules are packed here on Friday; mandatory events and discussions don’t end until nearly 11 p.m. The bystander-intervention program is one of the last items on their agenda.

About 400 students — half of the incoming class — are in the room at once. Most of the session is led by other students, which is one way the training has evolved since its debut in 2011, says Kerry Albright Fankhauser, interim dean of Westhampton College, the university’s college for undergraduate women. "Before, it was a lot of talking heads," she says.

Alexandra Abreu, a junior, is one of the students leading the training. She is part of "Spiders for Spiders," a movement begun last fall by Richmond students that seeks to educate students about sexual violence.

"I think it’s good to have a mix" of students and administrators speaking about sexual assault, Ms. Abreu says. "When you’re at a party, the dean is not going to be there." But, she says, if a student wants to report an incident, it is comforting to know that Richmond’s staff members "are there for you as well." The half-dozen student leaders include both men and women.

The 75-minute event starts with a video; popular songs play in the background as students hold handwritten signs of support for sexual-assault survivors, interspersed with some of the more widely publicized statistics on the issue.

New students are asked whether they know someone who has experienced sexual violence; most of them raise their hands. But when asked if they would know how to prevent such an incident, only a handful of students keep their hands up. Much of the program consists of student leaders offering
strategies for intervening when they see a drunken friend trying to push away from someone or being led upstairs at a fraternity house.

The new students look weary from the long day, but almost no one pulls out their phones. They applaud at the end of each video. They laugh at one of the student leaders’ ideas for creating a distraction at parties: "Start a conga line!"

Most of the sexual-assault statistics were already familiar to Emily Churchill, a freshman from Lancaster, Pa., who says she has mostly educated herself on the issue. She attended a private high school, where sex was brought up during health classes, she says, but "not quite like this."

Still, she describes Richmond’s bystander training as "inspiring," and she plans to get involved in the university's sexual-assault awareness movement. The session has reminded her, she says, "that you can step in and prevent sexual violence from happening without being the party police."

Meghan Scharnagl, of Freehold, N.J., says she has had minimal sexual-assault education before now, and "usually you don’t really talk about what to do" to avert such an incident.

Her friend, Jane Irving, agrees, noting that she and other students would have benefited from bystander training during their high school years. Ms. Irving, of Cambridge, Mass., has talked about the risks surrounding sexual assault with her parents, though not in detail. "My dad is always like, Watch out for the frat guys," she says with a laugh.

Si Thu Tun is at an even greater disadvantage: He has barely discussed sex before, let alone sexual violence. He is an international student from Burma, which he calls "a very religious, closed-minded society."

Mr. Tun is transferring to Richmond after two years at nearby Lynchburg College, which, he says, offered some education on sexual assault but not as much as Richmond. He says he felt uncomfortable during parts of Friday’s session, though it was helpful over all.

"When I was thinking about orientation, I was thinking about a detailed college tour, how to sign up for classes. I wasn’t thinking about an educational program on sexual assault," he says.

Jay Davis, on the other hand, says he went into the program thinking that he had already learned about the issue in high school. But Mr. Davis, a freshman from Springfield, Va., says the session taught him, among other lessons, that "consent is a really powerful thing."

Mr. Davis, like several new Richmond students, has kept up with the controversy generated by an article in Rolling Stone magazine that detailed an alleged gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity house, which surfaced while he and his peers were applying to college. The magazine retracted the story after it collapsed under scrutiny from the news media.

But Mr. Davis says the issue at the article’s core is still important to keep in mind, because sexual assault is happening on many campuses. The bystander session reminded him of his responsibility to help stop such incidents, he says.

Ms. Albright Fankhauser says she hasn’t heard of many colleges of Richmond’s size that include as much orientation programming on sexual assault. The bystander-intervention session reinforces the lessons of an online sexual-violence education program, called Haven, that students are required to complete before arriving on campus, she says.
In addition to the bystander training, orientation events include a performance involving monologues written by Richmond students who have experienced sexual violence. The new students discuss what they see in groups of about 20. They also receive a 30- to 40-minute training about Title IX and associated resources on campus.

Ms. Albright Fankhauser says students’ education on sexual-assault prevention will continue throughout the fall and spring. Students’ engagement with the issue has risen in recent years, she says.

It can be difficult to measure how well orientation sessions on sexual assault really educate students. But Ms. Abreu, one of Richmond’s student leaders, says she hopes the university’s efforts will solidify an expectation that students will learn about these issues and discuss them regularly.

Talking about sexual violence at orientation can be awkward at first, she says, but by the end of the program, "people become more comfortable with it. They’re able to share, This made me feel this way."

A Glance at 3 Other Colleges’ Efforts

Here’s a look at what several other campuses are doing to introduce new students to sexual-assault issues.

The Johns Hopkins University. Hopkins covers the subject at new-student orientation just before classes begin and throughout students’ first year. At this year’s orientation, Tim Mousseau, an anti-sexual-assault activist, was scheduled to give a two-part presentation on sexual violence, with both sessions mandatory for new students. Starting this fall, the university will also require all new students to go through bystander-intervention training during their first year. “It’s important to engage students in conversations on community responsibility right off the bat,” says Justin Beauchamp, the university’s coordinator of orientation and first-year experience.

American University. American’s efforts include programs at new-student orientation over the summer, and during the week when students first arrive on campus. The students are required to complete an online program called “Think About It” over the summer. At orientation, administrators give a presentation that touches on consent, alcohol use, and bystander intervention. American is also trying out a new and voluntary training program during Welcome Week, called Empower AU, and Sara Yzaguirre, coordinator for victim-advocacy services, says the university is hoping to train about 2,000 students this year. Ms. Yzaguirre says she hopes these efforts can “plant the seed” for broader change.

Rutgers University. At orientation, students watch a performance that dramatizes a typical college party and a situation that leads to a sexual assault. Student actors play characters including a victim, a perpetrator, and an inactive bystander; the program intentionally includes profanity and derogatory language. Afterward, new students ask questions of the student actors both in and out of character. “We get the audience to challenge a perpetrator and call them out on not listening to the fact that they didn’t have any consent,” says Brady Root, prevention-education coordinator for the university’s Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance. Students then have a discussion within their orientation groups. The student actors, known collectively as SCREAM Theater, perform regularly on campus throughout the year.
August 26, 2015

**Conversation About Sexual Violence Is Often a New One for College Freshmen**

By Mary Ellen McIntire

**NO MU MENTION**

Students arriving on college campuses this month will be brought into several conversations about sex, consent, and sexual assault. For many, it will be the first time they discuss such topics in a formal way.

While sexual assault and how to combat it has become a focus of discussion on college campuses, that's not the case in secondary schools. Yet high-profile rape cases, like the St. Paul’s School trial, illustrate that sexual violence is a reality that many students deal with before they reach a college campus.

In general, high schools are hesitant to talk about sexuality, several experts say. Sex-education classes look different across the country and at different types of schools, but high schools typically shy away from discussions of sexual assault.

But once students arrive at college, they are overwhelmed with information about healthy relationships and sexual assault, while also often living away from home for the first time. And while most students have a solid understanding that "no means no," the nuances of sexual consent are more difficult for young adults to navigate, said C.J. Pascoe, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Oregon.

"These kids are coming out of their high schools not really understanding these more complicated dynamics that occur around issues of masculinity and femininity," she said. "They don’t know how to talk about the gray areas, and we haven’t given them a language to talk about those gray areas."

That presents a challenge for college educators trying to teach students about healthy relationships and sexual-assault prevention. Ms. Pascoe, who teaches sexuality classes, said many of her students haven’t had basic sex-ed classes before taking her course, so she needs to review those topics before moving on to more mature topics.

**How One University Uses New-Student Orientation to Talk About Sexual Assault**

Adults "think that anything about sex and sexuality is too dangerous for young people to talk about," she said. "Instead of teaching high-school students about sex, consent, and assault, we go silent."

**Sexual Activity Precedes Education**
While students might not be learning about consent and sexual assault before they reach college, they’re often still sexually active, or could be involved in or witness to sexual violence, said Elizabeth A. Armstrong, a professor of sociology at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

More college educators are thinking about how to introduce more of this type of education at the K-12 level and whether questions about sexual-violence histories should be built in to the admissions process.

When students arrive at a college, they may already have a set of beliefs or thoughts around appropriate sexual behaviors. There’s a learning curve, said Laura Palumbo, communications director at the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. For many prevention educators, she adds, "it feels like swimming against a very strong current."

Jane Stapleton, co-director of the Prevention Innovations Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, said she encourages prevention educators to assess how much their students already know. More colleges around the country have been conducting campus-climate surveys, which can help officials identify when to offer risk and prevention trainings.

And often the communities that students are in during high school "normalizes" a culture of sexual violence, which poses an extra challenge for colleges, she said.

"Students who are leaving schools like St. Paul’s or other public high schools are existing in that same culture," she said. "We’re saying to them, ‘That behavior is not acceptable.’"

But those who are perpetrators of sexual assault in high school aren’t necessarily the same as those in college. Research released last month showed that the majority of men who sexually assaulted someone before college did not also do so when in college.

Kevin Swartout, an assistant professor of psychology and public health at Georgia State University who led that research, said that could be because young men experience their highest levels of "hostile masculinity" at different ages.

**Dramatizing Real-Life Experiences**

Like many institutions, Vassar College uses skits to portray real-life situations. An outside group performs skits based on monologues that college students have written about their own experiences.

Through those performances — along with bystander-intervention trainings that reference specific parties or dorms on campus, an online course, and peer-to-peer discussions — officials hope to make the risk of sexual assault on the campus seem possible, and preventable, to students. But many students have already been victimized before arriving on campus, said Charlotte Strauss Swanson, coordinator of sexual-assault and violence prevention at Vassar.

On larger campuses, like the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the range of experiences and values that students bring to college is broad.

"We try to gauge our programing so that students are able to see their own experience and their own values and beliefs within the kind of work that we do," said Holly Rider-Milkovich, director of the university’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center. That means not using gender-specific language, and acknowledging that some students haven’t engaged in sexual activity, while others have.
The department also leads training sessions where students can practice giving and receiving consent, she said. While many students understand the concept, most are less confident in practice, Ms. Rider-Milkovich said.

And there’s a focus on discussing consent in a broader way, and not just when having sex.

"We validate that students are making a variety of choices based on their values across the spectrum of decisions," Ms. Rider-Milkovich said. "All of those choices are valid choices when they are respectful."

Big 12 supports prohibiting transfers for violence issues

Aug. 26, 2015 • By RALPH D. RUSSO

Big 12 Conference athletic directors are unanimously backing a proposal that would prohibit schools from accepting transfers who were disciplined for violent acts at their previous schools.

In a text to The Associated Press, Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby said Tuesday that conference ADs meeting in New Orleans "supported a policy draft similar to that of the (Southeastern Conference)." Bowlsby said the draft would still need to be refined and submitted to a joint council of faculty athletic representatives and athletic directors for approval.

The SEC earlier this year passed a rule preventing schools from accepting transfers who have been dismissed from another team for "serious misconduct," defined as sexual assault, domestic violence or other forms of sexual violence. The rule applies to university or athletics department discipline and does not take into account whether a legal case has been made or pending.

SEC officials were prompted to act after Alabama accepted transfer defensive lineman Jonathan Taylor, who was dismissed by Georgia last year after he was arrested for domestic violence. Taylor was arrested again for domestic violence earlier this year, and then dismissed by Alabama. The accuser in that case later recanted and the case was dropped.

Just in the past week, Baylor coach Art Briles has come under scrutiny for allowing a player who was convicted of sexual assault last week to transfer to the school in 2013 after he was dismissed from Boise State for disciplinary issues.

Sam Ukwuachu, who played defensive end for Boise State as a freshman in 2012 and transferred to Baylor after being dismissed from the Broncos, was sentenced last week to six months in jail and 10 years of probation for assaulting a Baylor women's soccer player. At his trial, his former girlfriend at Boise State testified he hit and choked her.

Ukwuachu, 22, was never charged or arrested for assaulting his girlfriend at Boise State. It is unclear if Broncos coaches knew about those allegations. Boise State did not at the time specify why Ukwuachu was dismissed.
Briles said he spoke with then-Boise State coach Chris Petersen, now with Washington, about Ukwuachu's troubles but was never told specifically about acts of violence toward women. Petersen last week said he "thoroughly apprised Coach Briles of the circumstances surrounding Sam's disciplinary record and dismissal."

On Tuesday in Seattle, Petersen declined to expand on that statement.

"I really appreciate that question because I think it's an important one, but I don't have anything more to add than what my statement was," Petersen said. 

Later Tuesday, Boise State released a statement saying allegations by Ukwuachu's girlfriend that he assaulted her when they were students there were never reported to school officials.

"The incidents and factors that contributed to Sam Ukwuachu's dismissal from the Boise State football team had nothing to do with accusations of any sexual assaults or with accusations that he physically assaulted any women," Boise State said. "However, federal laws protecting privacy prohibit Boise State from releasing information about what did result in his dismissal from the Boise State University football team.

"Boise State University never received any reports nor had any knowledge of Sam Ukwuachu being involved in any accusations of sexual assault before or during his time at Boise State."

Ukwuachu never played for Baylor. He sat out the 2013 season as required by NCAA rules and then was suspended from the team in 2014 after being accused of sexual assault. University police investigated the allegations but declined to go forward with the case. Prosecutors in Waco, Texas, have been critical of the school's handling of the case.