Mizzou News

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Graduate health insurance: How other schools did it

RUTH SERVEN, Sep 7, 2015

COLUMBIA — While MU scrambled to address health insurance for graduate student employees after its sudden cancellation, officials at three other universities in the Southeastern Conference smoothly transitioned their coverage without uproar from their student bodies.

An IRS ruling on the Affordable Care Act that took effect July 1 made it illegal for businesses to reimburse or give employees subsidies to buy individual health insurance.

“All schools received the news incredibly late,” said Michelle Massé, dean of Louisiana State University's Graduate School. "I think it was about a week after we realized our health insurance was not in compliance and that there was no work-around that we sent out the first letter and FAQ (describing the situation)."

The IRS classifies graduate student assistants as employees. Although no schools have reported censure from the IRS, by mid-July several schools moved to change their insurance and deflect the financial blow to their students or chose to wait for a final decision from the IRS.

So far, MU is the only university in the SEC to come under fire after changing its insurance coverage. On Aug. 14, an email was sent to graduate student employees saying their coverage would end the next day. Graduate students across campus reacted in outrage and organized an all-day walkout Aug. 26. After pressure from groups, including the newly created Forum on Graduate Rights and Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill, MU gave graduate student employees a one-year reprieve by covering their health insurance in the form of a fellowship.
Soon after officials at Louisiana State realized the health insurance they offered graduate student employees was not in compliance with the IRS ruling, Massé said, they informed students they would not receive a subsidy to offset the cost of health care. Instead, the university decided to funnel the money that would have subsidized insurance back into graduate student assistants’ stipends.

“Our money has gone to raising stipends,” said Massé, who became dean in July. “Each college makes its own decision, but the money must be used to make the stipend level competitive.”

Sid Salter, a spokesman for Mississippi State University, said there are no plans to change the $200 subsidy his school gives graduate student assistants each semester.

"Based on recent developments, Mississippi State University's Graduate School is — like many peer institutions across the country — reviewing our current practices and evaluating our options on these important issues,” Salter said in an email.

David Francko, dean of the Graduate School at the University of Alabama, said his university became aware of the problem with its insurance coverage in mid-July. Since the university had already hired graduate assistants for the 2015-2016 school year with the understanding that the graduate students would have health care, Francko said, they wanted to give students a safety net while they transitioned their coverage.

“In the end, after considerable in-depth discussion, we elected to provide a one-time increase in the Aug. 31, 2015, stipend payment for all GAs and fellowship recipients,” Francko said in an email, “equivalent to the nominal insurance premium we would have paid to the insurance carrier for fall 2015 coverage.”

Francko said that students were notified fewer than 10 days after officials became aware of the health insurance conflict, and administrators personally followed up with students and faculty to explain the changes. Francko said the one-year stopgap measure is as close as the school could get to a one-to-one equivalent of the previous plan. He said he doesn’t think the change will affect Alabama’s recruiting of graduate students.
Across the nation, compensation and benefits for graduate student assistantships vary widely. According to Massé, a part-time doctoral candidate at Louisiana State University makes a minimum of $10,400 per year and receives a full tuition waiver.

Massé said she did not think losing the stipend, which was $700 annually, would affect Louisiana State’s recruiting or retention of graduate students because schools across the country face the same conundrum.

“It’s a nationwide concern. I think it’s great that students at Mizzou are being so proactive with these concerns,” she said. "The thing I’m finding most startling right now is that the IRS ruling isn't being changed. This is a national legislative issue with one rule being used in unintended ways that harm graduate students. Can’t we work together to close that loophole?”

Alysha Baratta studied international studies at MU and decided to pursue a master’s degree in geography at the University of South Carolina after encouragement from an MU professor. She is following the events in Columbia.

“I can’t help but have solidarity for (the graduate students),” Baratta said. “I can’t help but think of what I would do if I got notice that my insurance was being canceled four days before the semester started.”

The University of South Carolina gives graduate student employees $200 per semester toward their health insurance, Baratta said. Health insurance cost her $900 in the fall semester and will cost $1,000 next semester.

Jessica Elfenbein, senior associate dean of graduate studies at the University of South Carolina, said there are no plans to change the policy.

Baratta receives a stipend and a tuition waiver for doing office work. She said she takes out a loan to pay the remainder of her health insurance costs and to pay for fees but feels adequately compensated for her work.
“I do think that the amount I get paid, plus free tuition, is a good deal,” Baratta said. “I don’t feel ripped off. I’m an adult; I’m the one who applied here and made the decision to come here.”

But Baratta said graduate students should not be ignored or go unappreciated.

“We make the university work — it could not work without us,” she said. "That’s why the professors who supported the Mizzou walkout endorsed the graduate students because they know how much we do.”

MU graduate student employees consider unionizing, plan awareness efforts

By MEGAN FAVIGNANO
Saturday, September 5, 2015 at 12:00 am

A student group formed to lobby University of Missouri administrators on behalf of graduate students seeking better benefits decided not to register as an official university student organization, group leaders said.

The recently formed group, the Forum on Graduate Rights, has not decided if it will pursue unionizing graduate student employees, Anahita Zare, a spokeswoman for the group, said Friday. The Forum on Graduate Rights, she added, plans to release an official statement in the next few days on its decision to not register as a student organization and the possibility of forming a union.

Zare said group leaders came to the consensus that graduate students did not want the Forum on Graduate Rights to pursue becoming an official student group.

The Forum on Graduate Rights formed after MU administrators said graduate student employees no longer would receive health insurance subsidies. Administration later rescinded that decision, guaranteeing subsidies for the current school year.
The student group held a march and rally, which attracted an estimated 1,200 people, during the first week of classes at MU. The event’s purpose was to draw attention to graduate student issues — including health insurance subsidies, a decrease in tuition waivers for graduate assistants with 10-hour appointments and graduate student on-campus housing.

During the march and rally, members of the Forum on Graduate Rights collected signatures on a petition to gauge student interest in unionizing. Zare said the committee researching unionizing is still tallying signatures.

Jim Hayden with the Forum on Graduate Rights said the group would need the signatures of more than half of MU’s graduate student employees to start a union.

“We want to see where we’re at, see if unionization is a possibility,” Hayden said last month.

The Forum on Graduate Rights will continue to hold events that aim to advocate for graduate student issues, which the group outlined in a letter to MU administration last month. The student group will also focus on educating others about the roles graduate students have on campus and their concerns.

“It’s one thing to go out to rally and be seen, and it’s another thing to bring understanding,” Zare said of the group’s education efforts.

There will be a graduate student experience open forum from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday in Keller Auditorium in the Geological Sciences Building. Zare said the Forum encourages students to attend.

MU’s Office of Graduate Studies, MU Graduate Professional Council and MU Graduate Student Association are hosting the forum, which was initially set up after the university told students they would not receive health insurance subsidies this school year.

MU Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies Leona Rubin and Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs Tracy Kitchel will discuss graduate student issues and answer questions.

Matt McCune with the Graduate Professional Council, the official student government for MU graduate and professional students, said the forum is an opportunity for students to ask questions about any issue. However, the forum’s discussion will focus on the graduate student employee health insurance subsidy and the change in tuition waivers.
The Forum on Graduate Rights’ steering committee discussed activities it will sponsor this semester at a meeting Thursday. The list included creating a debt-themed Homecoming float and encouraging students to wear red each Wednesday.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Red-shirted MU graduate students claim a place in black-and-gold photo

DANIEL CHRISTIAN, Sep 4, 2015

COLUMBIA — Sarah Senff showed up for a photograph Friday near the Columns wearing a red shirt in a sea of black and gold.

About 60 percent of approximately 200 students in the group portrait were wearing MU colors. The rest, in red, were either MU graduate students or supporters who turned out to back the recent protests.

Senff is a graduate student who joined others at noon to continue the campaign against proposed deductions to their benefits.

The group decided earlier this week to join the celebration of National College Colors Day by wearing crimson T-shirts reading, “Mizzou Graduate Students United.” The group was folded into the crowd without incident.

“The administration always talks about ‘One Mizzou’ and we often don’t feel a part of that,” said Senff, a Ph.D. candidate in history. “We wanted to make ourselves visible as part of ‘One Mizzou.’”

Jean Tartiere, an adjunct theater professor and husband of a graduate student, said he has felt the loss of graduate benefits directly.
The closing of the University Village apartments and a day-care center attached to it left Tartiere and his wife no place to leave their 16-month old daughter, Niamh, while at work, he said.

With no other options, Tartiere said he often brings his daughter to work and teaches class holding her in one arm.

“It’s incredibly hard,” he said. “I’m a movement-based teacher, and it’s hard to move with a 20-pound baby in your arms.”

Also upset about the potential removal of MU-backed health insurance, Tartiere questioned Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s leadership regarding the proposal.

“I don’t think the grad students have been respected by this chancellor,” he said.

Ryan Gavin, the MU social media manager who helped promote the “family photo,” said he had no problem with the graduate students’ red presence.

“We support free speech,” he said. “I just thought it was cool to see everyone together forming a big M on the quad.”

Local colleges, university adapt to undergraduate enrollment trends

By MEGAN FAVIGNANO

As colleges and universities tally enrollment numbers for this fall and continue recruitment efforts for next fall’s freshman class, admissions and enrollment officials are paying attention to a number of enrollment trends.
Among those trends: fewer high school seniors, which has led the University of Missouri to push its out-of-state recruitment efforts.

MU resumed classes this fall with the largest student body in its history — 35,050 students, according to preliminary figures — but a slightly smaller freshman class than last fall with 6,211 freshmen compared to last year’s 6,515.

The size of high school graduating classes in the state has been declining since about 2010, said Barbara Rupp, MU’s interim vice provost for enrollment management. Class sizes aren’t expected to increase significantly until about 2020, she added.

In response to decreasing high school class sizes, Rupp said MU started increasing its out-of-state and international recruitment efforts. Since 2010, the university has hired three more out-of-state admissions representatives, bringing the total out-of-state reps to five. Two of the representatives live in Chicago and one lives in Dallas.

The fourth representative lives in Houston and also visits Los Angeles and San Diego. The fifth representative lives in Denver and also recruits in Minneapolis.

MU does not deny admission to Missouri residents to accept more out-of-state students, Rupp said.

Kevin Palmer, vice president of enrollment and marketing at Columbia College, said Columbia College also hired more undergraduate student recruiters. And the college’s president reached out to every accepted student to say welcome, he added.

“We now have a bigger and better relationships-building process that’s going into effect for recruitment,” Palmer said.

Columbia College, he added, is continuing to evaluate new programs that could help keep enrollment steady given the decreasing size of high school classes. A new scholarship program is one example, Palmer said. The program, added last year, helps match students with scholarships based on their need and academic ability.

Columbia College spokesman Sam Fleury said the college has seen a small decrease in its freshman class size the past couple of years. This year, the main campus in Columbia started the year with 2,172 students in day and evening classes. With high school class sizes expected to increase in just a few years, Palmer said he is confident the college will increase enrollment.
“We’re looking at a multiple-year decline that we know can turn around both with demographics changing in our favor in the near future and increased effort toward recruitment, toward relationship-building, toward finding new markets,” Palmer said.

Rebecca Kline, director of marketing and communications at Stephens College, said the declining high school class sizes affect Stephens differently.

“Even though the number of college students as a whole is declining locally and everywhere, the number of women going to college is rising,” Kline said. “In a way, our pool” of students “is getting bigger even though the number of students as a whole is getting smaller.”

Missouri Department of Higher Education spokeswoman Jessica Duren said the department’s data show an increase in the number of women enrolled at public and private institutions during the past decade.

With that in mind, Stephens has increased its focus on promoting the advantages of women’s colleges as it recruits. Looking at local enrollment, Kline said, is imperative because of another trend Stephens has noticed during the past couple of decades.

“Students don’t want to go as far away as they used to,” Kline said. Adding in-demand programs helps keep enrollment steady.

“We think the growth that we’re just beginning in the health sciences will make for even more increases,” Kline said.

Kline described Stephens College’s enrollment as steady, with about 850 total. She said the incoming freshman classes have grown during the past couple of years but stays at about 250.

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**Hard alcohol no longer allowed at Mizzou fraternity houses**

September 05, 2015 12:45 am  •  By Koran Addo

*Hard liquor is now banned from University of Missouri fraternity houses.*
The policy change was handed down this school year by Mizzou's governing body, the Interfraternity Council.

It means that fraternity members and guests, 21 and over, are free to drink while on fraternity property as long as it's beer or wine. Possessing or drinking hard alcohol is disallowed.

Hard alcohol is defined as anything with an alcohol content greater than 15 percent.

The new policy isn't much of a surprise. Both the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Association, which oversees sororities, were open to the idea as recently as this summer.

The conversation started late last year when Mizzou Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin asked former Greeks working together as part of the university's Fraternity Alumni Consortium to come up with recommendations to improve student safety within Greek organizations, specifically related to sexual assault.

Proposals to drug test students and ban women from fraternity houses during peak party hours provoked a strong backlash from students, while the alcohol restriction was greeted as a level-headed step that wouldn't too much alter Greek life on campus.

The hard alcohol ban will be enforced through random inspections of fraternity houses by third-party auditors.

MU frats to ban hard liquor

BY AP MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH 2015

COLUMBIA — Fraternities at the University of Missouri are planning social events this year without hard liquor.

The Columbia Missourian reports that after months of debate on reducing sexual violence on the university campus, the ban was the only one of several proposals made during the summer that survived.

In August, the university's Interfraternity Council announced hard liquor would be banned at fraternity houses effective immediately. Hard booze is defined as a drink with
more than 15 percent alcohol. The ban also includes grain alcohol. Beer and wine are still allowed at the fraternities.

The IFC says all violations will be passed to the school's Office of Student Conduct for discipline. Fraternities also will be subject to random visits from a security company to ensure the rules are being followed.

University of Missouri fraternities ban hard alcohol

*Move comes among discussion about how to reduce sexual violence*

Published 10:25 AM CDT Sep 06, 2015

COLUMBIA, Mo. — University of Missouri fraternities will not be able to have hard alcohol at social events this year and any violations will be immediately reported to the Office of Student Conduct as the result of a months-long discussion about how to reduce sexual violence on campus.

Shortly before the fall semester began, the university's Interfraternity Council announced hard liquor would be banned at fraternity houses effective immediately. Hard booze is defined as a drink with more than 15 percent alcohol. The ban also includes grain alcohol. Beer and wine are still allowed at the fraternities, The Columbia Missourian reported.

The IFC said all violations will be passed to the school's Office of Student Conduct for discipline. Fraternities also will be subject to random visits from a security company to ensure the rules are...
The ban was enacted after months of research and debate at the IFC and a Chancellor’s Summit on Sexual Assault and Student Safety in Greek Life in June.

IFC spokesman Parker Briden said the ban is designed to create realistic rules, reduce overindulgence of alcohol and help combat sexual misconduct. He said fraternity presidents had a lot of input into the policies, so he believes they will be followed.

In summer, the Missouri Fraternity Alumni Consortium suggested several proposals to reduce sexual violence, including restricting women from fraternity houses from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. on certain days and specific weeks. Besides the alcohol ban, other suggestions were banning fraternities from hosting out-of-town formals and drug testing all in-house members of Greek organizations.

The suggestion to ban women drew quick and angry criticism, including from the Panhellenic Association, an umbrella group for sororities. The Fraternity Alumni Council quickly retracted the proposed curfew on women. So far, the other proposals have gained little traction.

"(The beer-only proposal) was the proposal people agreed with," Briden said. "It was a reasonable step."

Panhellenic Association spokeswoman Carolyn Welter said IFC executive leaders strongly supported banning hard liquor and she believes fraternities will enforce the policy.

Sexual assault has been a major topic at the university in recent years as it has around the country. In 2014, ESPN reported that former University of Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey alleged she had been raped by several football players more than a year before her suicide. The university drew sharp criticism for its handling of the matter. University police said they failed to identify a suspect and closed their investigation, citing "several obstacles" that included the lack of DNA and video evidence, uncooperative witnesses and the difficulty finding firsthand accounts.
1. Saint Louis University has teamed up with Chess Club and Scholastic Center to establish the university's first chess team. A full-time employee of the Chess Center, Alejandro Ramirez, will coach the team.

2. Co-founder of The Cup, Nicole Puyear, is leaving the bakery, leaving business partner, Ericka Frank as the sole owner. The change takes place Sept. 15.

3. University of Missouri fraternity members will no longer be able to consume hard alcohol in fraternity houses due to a change in the Columbia campus's Interfraternity Council policy.

4. American fashion writer and editor, and St. Louis native, Derek Blasberg is taking on a new role with Vanity Fair. The publication announced that Blasberg will be writing features, contributing regularly to VF.com and hosting his own series on VF's video channel.

5. Can you find 66 reasons to love St. Louis? Phillips 66 just launched the '66 Reasons to Love St. Louis' campaign that celebrates the best of St. Louis' eateries, neighborhoods, sports venues and historical contributions.

MU researchers partner with Columbia Public Schools for behavior study

By MEGAN FAVIGNANO
Friday, September 4, 2015 at 2:00 pm

University of Missouri researchers will spend the next four years in Columbia Public Schools classrooms for a project that aims to include students in finding ways to stem their own classroom behavior problems.

Aaron Thompson, MU assistant professor in social work, and his team will follow fifth-grade students who show signs of behavior problems that include getting out of their seat during class, talking back to the teachers and invading classmates’ personal space.

When working with students with behavior problems, Thompson said schools typically use intervention techniques that alter something in the student’s environment in an effort to change behavior. Schools also focus on rewarding the student’s appropriate behavior, he said.
“Those are good strategies,” Thompson said. “But I think sometimes getting kids more directly involved in the intervention process, allowing their perspective to be brought into the process is important.”

Student involvement in intervention techniques is key, Thompson said, adding that it increases self-awareness and motivation.

The researchers have received almost $3.5 million from the U.S. Department of Education over four years to study intervention methods and their outcomes.

Anne Stinson, MU research associate in the School of Social Work, became involved with the project a couple of months ago.

“I think it’s teaching them to look at their behavior in a nonjudgmental way and take a look at it from someone else’s perspective to help them achieve change quicker,” Stinson said.

The intervention involves a training program in which students will learn to identify behavioral challenges they are having in the classroom, find solutions to those problems, set goals and monitor their progress. Participating students will go through nine brief training lessons with their guidance counselors before they set goals for improvement.

Thompson has conducted studies in classrooms before, but not to the scope of the four-year project starting this fall.

Researchers met with Columbia Public Schools guidance counselors Friday to discuss the project. Thompson said guidance counselors will decide if they are interested in testing the research intervention methods in their schools. Thompson said researchers and school employees will identify fifth-graders for the study using a checklist the students complete and will ask parent permission before including any student in the study.

The research will track students’ academics and classroom behaviors.

“Teachers in schools are hungry and ready for something new to help kids who are struggling with behavior,” Stinson said.
Few immigrants at risk of proposed Missouri scholarship ban

Proposed ban on Missouri college scholarship likely would impact few immigrant students

JEFFERSCON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The number of Missouri lawmakers who support a ban on a state scholarship going to immigrants brought illegally to the county could outnumber the impacted students.

At issue is a bill that would block students who are not citizens or permanent residents from getting the A+ Scholarship. The scholarship funds two years of community college for those who meet grade-point average, attendance and community service requirements.

Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed the proposed ban.

The Department of Higher Education estimates 200-300 immigrants without lawful status might enroll in college this year. Fewer likely would be eligible for the scholarship.

That could mean that more lawmakers in the roughly 200-person Legislature want to ban the scholarship than there are immigrants who could be affected.

Extended interview with Mizzou AD Mack Rhoades

POSTED: 01:39 PM CDT Sep 06, 2015

JEFFERSCON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The number of Missouri lawmakers who support a ban on a state scholarship going to immigrants brought illegally to the county could outnumber the impacted students.

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POSTED: 12:01 AM CDT Sep 07, 2015

Watch the story: http://www.abc17news.com/sports/extended-interview-with-mizzou-ad-mack-rhoades/35138528
New Push for Meningitis B Vaccines on College Campuses

Scares across the country prompt administrators to take more pre-emptive measures

By PETER LOFTUS
Sept. 7, 2015 1:58 p.m. ET

As the fall semester gets under way, some U.S. colleges and universities are offering students new vaccines against a bug responsible for recent campus outbreaks of a rare but life-threatening form of meningitis.

Academic institutions are taking a range of approaches, from simply making the shots available at student health centers to anyone who is interested, to holding vaccine clinics on campus that students are required to attend.

Providence College, where two students contracted meningitis last winter, held vaccination clinics the past two weekends. The school required first-year students to attend, though students could opt out of receiving the shots.

“We wanted to immunize students as soon as possible,” partly because of the risk that some students may still be carrying the bug, says Kristine Goodwin, vice president of student affairs at the Rhode Island college.

Two new vaccines, Trumenba and Bexsero, protect against a category of strains of Neisseria meningitidis known as serogroup B. The bacteria, which are spread by contact with saliva or mucus, can cause meningitis, an inflammation of membranes around the brain and spinal cord that can be fatal or cause disabilities. Symptoms include fever, headache and stiff neck. Meningitis is more commonly diagnosed in adolescents and young adults than other age groups.

Older meningitis vaccines that have been routinely given to adolescents in the U.S. for the past decade don't protect patients from the B strains. Those older vaccines, which include Menactra, protect against four other serogroups. Many states require university students to receive them. Until 2014, there were no meningitis B vaccines approved for sale in the U.S.
But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Pfizer’s Trumenba and GlaxoSmithKline’s Bexsero for use in adolescents and young adults. Clinical studies showed the shots triggered immune responses believed to protect against meningitis B in a majority of recipients, as measured by blood tests. But because the rate of meningitis B is low, studies haven’t yet determined whether the shots reduced the rate of infections versus a placebo.

In June, a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory committee said the new MenB vaccines, as they’re known, may be given to provide short-term protection to people ages 16 to 23, and that decisions to vaccinate should be left up to families and doctors.

The CDC committee stopped short of its strongest recommendation—routine vaccination of adolescents, which some experts and patient advocates support—because it wanted more data about the long-term safety and efficacy of the shots. The committee may revisit its recommendation in the future.

The CDC committee also has recommended that high-risk groups get the shots, including those with certain genetic deficiencies or impaired spleen function, as well as people close to an outbreak.

The vaccines aren’t cheap, costing $320 to $345 for complete dosing regimens. (Bexsero is given in two doses at least one month apart, Trumenba in three doses over several months). But most insurers are either already paying for the vaccines or are expected to begin covering them soon, according to the vaccines’ manufacturers and the trade group America’s Health Insurance Plans.

Serogroup B infections have caused more than 20 cases of meningitis at institutions including Providence, the University of Oregon, Princeton University and the University of California, Santa Barbara since 2013, according to the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases. Some of the infected students died.

The prevalence of bacterial meningitis, however, is relatively low, affecting about 500 to 600 Americans a year. About one-third of those cases are caused by serogroup B strains, says Jessica MacNeil, a CDC epidemiologist. The incidence of meningitis has declined since the 1990s.

Providence launched a mass vaccination campaign for students and certain staff after two students were hospitalized with meningitis B in February. More than 90% received the first shot of the three-dose Trumenba series. Neither student died, and no additional cases associated with Providence have been reported.

But throat cultures from a sample of students found that at least one was a carrier of the bug—though not infected. The college decided to vaccinate all first-year students and held a clinic Aug. 30, the day before classes started.

About 750 of 1,040 eligible students were vaccinated, says Kathy Kelleher, director of the student health center. Some didn’t receive the shot because they weren’t sure if they had already gotten one, she says. Most of these students were expected to get the shot at subsequent clinics.
Michael Foss, a Providence freshman from Charlton, Mass., showed up at the Aug. 30 clinic. He initially thought he didn’t need the shot because he had received the older meningitis vaccine. But after texting his mother, he learned he hadn’t gotten the MenB shot and she recommended he get it, he says.

His only complaint: upper-arm soreness. “It hurt to put pressure on it” the night after he got the shot, he says. The shots are associated with more intense soreness than other common vaccines, but studies show that overall side effects are considered tolerable.

The University of Cincinnati didn’t require incoming students to be vaccinated, but it held a series of mobile vaccination clinics around campus in late August. Glenn Egelman, executive director of the university’s health services, says he promoted the vaccine after a handful of meningitis B cases surfaced near campus in the past year.

More than 200 students got vaccinated, a small portion of the overall student body of 44,000. Dr. Egelman says one limitation was students’ mistaken assumption that the older vaccine protected against MenB. Still, the health service used up its initial supply of shots, and plans on holding more clinics in the future.

**Some universities cite the CDC recommendations for taking more limited approaches.** The student health center at the University of Missouri at Columbia doesn’t have the MenB shots in stock, but its doctors will write prescriptions for students that can be filled at a nearby pharmacy, says Susan Even, executive director of the center.

If the CDC had given its strongest recommendation for routine vaccination of adolescents, “it would be much more likely” that universities would be stocking up on the shots, says Dr. Even, who is also chairwoman of a vaccine committee of the American College Health Association.

The University of Pennsylvania’s student health service is making it available to those who are interested, says Giang Nguyen, executive director of the service. He cited the CDC guidelines and noted the risk of meningitis is “quite low.”

Some advocates would like to see wider use of the shots, not just on campuses but for other adolescents and young adults, too. “Why not protect everyone, so that if there is an upturn in disease incidence, we’ve already gotten people protected, we don’t have to do it after the fact?” asks Lynn Bozof, president of the National Meningitis Association, an advocacy group. Ms. Bozof’s 20-year-old son died from meningitis in 1998.

Mark Schleiss, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at the University of Minnesota, says: “I can tell you as a parent, for me it would be a no-brainer to want to get my children immunized against MenB. Because you never know if your child is going to be that one that’s at risk.”
Mo. attorney general candidate calls Kentucky clerk's jailing 'tragic'

Josh Hawley calls for laws to protect officeholders, businesspeople of faith

Published 10:06 AM CDT Sep 07, 2015

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. — A Republican candidate for Missouri attorney general is denouncing the jailing of a Kentucky clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples.

The Southeast Missourian reports that Josh Hawley called Friday for more clearly defined protections for religious people in the public sphere. He said the situation involving Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis was "tragic."

Hawley said in a public statement that if elected, he would issue a legal opinion "protecting county clerks, other local officeholders and businesspeople of faith to the maximum extent possible under Missouri law."
Davis cited religious objections in refusing to license gay marriage.

Hawley is a University of Missouri School of Law associate professor.

**Missouri Attorney General candidate expresses support for jailed Kentucky clerk**

Sunday, September 6, 2015

By Tyler Graef
Southeast Missourian

Candidate for Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley on Friday denounced the jailing of Rowan County clerk Kim Davis of Kentucky and called for more clearly defined protections for religious people in the public sphere.

He called Davis' predicament "tragic," and in a public statement promised if elected, he would issue a legal opinion "protecting county clerks, other local officeholders and businesspeople of faith to the maximum extent possible under Missouri law."

Davis was jailed Thursday for contempt of court after refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, citing religious objections.

"[A recorder of deeds in Missouri] should be able to opt out and designate someone else, a deputy or another official, to issue the license instead," he said during a phone interview. "That would protect their constitutional rights and also allow for that license to be issued."

But part of the reason Davis was jailed was because she not only refused to issue marriage licenses, but forbade her deputies from issuing them as well. Five of six of her deputies told Rowan County attorney Cecil Watkins they wished to grant the licenses but were afraid of Davis. They have begun granting the licenses in her absence.

**Hawley, a constitutional scholar and professor of law at the University of Missouri--Columbia, cited Missouri Revised Statutes 59.330 and 1.302 as the basis of his commitment to clerks such as Davis. The statutes regard the duties of recorders of deeds and individuals' religious freedoms, respectively.**

The first compels recorders of deeds to record "all marriage contracts and certificates of marriage." That would include the marriage certificates of same-sex couples, after the Supreme Court's ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide in June.

Hawley said the two statutes ought to be considered together. The latter, known as the Religious Freedoms Restoration Act, says "a government authority may not restrict a person's free exercise of religion."
In the statute, exercise of religion is defined as "an act or refusal to act that is substantially motivated by religious belief, whether or not the religious exercise is compulsory or central to a larger system of religious belief."

To Hawley, this would include refusal to issue a marriage license on moral grounds.

The statute also states, however, if a governmental authority demonstrates the restriction to the person is "essential to further a compelling government interest, and is not unduly restrictive considering the relevant circumstances," it would be permissible. In this case, forcing a public figure to perform her duties, even though she believes homosexuality to be immoral, would be the "restriction."

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear seemed to acknowledge the issuance of marriage licenses to same-sex couples as a compelling government interest when he ordered all Kentucky county clerks to begin doing so shortly after the Obergefell ruling.

Another governmental authority, District Judge David Bunning, did so when he later gave Davis the same order in August. Neither of these actions fall under the purview of Missouri law, but if a similar situation were to arise in Missouri, a case could be made for either side.

Hawley’s point is, if he were attorney general, he would argue in defense of such conscientious objectors, issuing a legal opinion on the matter. A legal opinion from the attorney general would be influential but not binding, and not everyone agrees with his interpretation.

Fellow candidate for attorney general Jake Zimmerman said such a move would be out of line.

"The attorney general’s job is to enforce the law, not to make it up as you go along," he said. "Marriage equality is the law of the land. If you don't understand that, you shouldn't be running for attorney general."

To some, even the sincerest of convictions shouldn't allow a person to occupy a government position characterized by duties they are unable or unwilling to fulfill.

ACLU of Missouri executive director Jeffrey Mittman said Davis, like any other U.S. citizen, is permitted to attend church where she sees fit, believe homosexuality -- or anything else -- is immoral, and even to petition for laws that reflect her religious beliefs.

But when acting as a public figure, she's obligated to perform the duties of her office, he said. Davis' actions constituted an unacceptable entanglement of church and state authority, Mittman said,

"As a government official, she cannot impose her religious beliefs on others," he said.

Society has taken steps to accommodate the pacifism of Quakers, historically exempting them from conscription, he said.

"We would not have a friend, a Quaker, join the military, but say, 'I want to collect my paycheck and be in the military, but I don't want to participate in war exercises,'" he said. "The accommodation we make is to say that you don't have to be in the military."

The separation of church and state is necessary to protect religious freedoms, not nullify them, he said. Because of this separation, they exist in distinct spheres.
"Have you ever seen a lawsuit filed against the Catholic Church for not allowing women priests? No," Mittman said, adding religions have the authority to set their terms within their spheres of influence.

"Would we [allow] a Catholic mayor, therefore, to say that because he is Catholic, no women could be hired as department heads? Of course not.

"Government doesn't belong in the religion business, and religion doesn't belong in the government business," he said.

Hawley attacks jailing of Kentucky clerk over refusal to issue marriage licenses

By RUDI KELLER
Saturday, September 5, 2015 at 12:00 am Comments (69)

Attorney General candidate Josh Hawley, whose largest single donation so far is from a gay billionaire, wants public officials in Missouri to be able to deny marriage licenses to homosexuals if same-sex marriage violates their religious beliefs, he said in a news release.

Responding to the jailing of Rowan County, Ky., Clerk Kim Davis for contempt of court, Hawley wrote on his Facebook page that her “imprisonment is a tragedy. And wrong.” In his news release, Hawley wrote the “tragic situation makes clear we need new legal protections for people of faith, and we need them now.”

Hawley, a Republican, is an associate professor of law at the University of Missouri. He is a former counsel of The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and founder of the Missouri Liberty Project. Along with allowing public officials to refuse to marry same-sex couples on religious grounds, Hawley proposed protections for businesses that refuse service to same-sex couples and churches that refuse to perform the marriages.

Davis, a Democrat, was jailed Thursday by U.S. District Judge David Bunning. Davis refused to follow an August court order issued by Bunning that she issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. A federal appeals court and the U.S. Supreme Court declined to reverse the order.
Bunning ordered her jailed for contempt of court after she again refused to issue marriage licenses.

“The court cannot condone the willful disobedience of its lawfully issued order,” Bunning said, according to the New York Times. “If you give people the opportunity to choose which orders they follow, that’s what potentially causes problems.”

There are no public officials in Missouri refusing to issue licenses or perform marriages for same-sex couples, said Sherrill Wayland of PROMO, a gay, lesbian and transgender rights group based in St. Louis.

“From everything we have been following from the Supreme Court ruling, once it came into effect, elected officials and public servants are expected to follow the rule of the land,” Wayland said.

Hawley entered the GOP primary for attorney general in July. His only rival for the nomination so far is state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, who began his campaign last year. In the Democratic Party, St. Louis County Assessor Jake Zimmerman is competing with former Cass County Prosecuting Attorney Teresa Hensley for the nomination.

Hawley’s largest single donation so far is $100,000 received Aug. 21 from Peter Thiel, a co-founder of PayPal worth $3.3 billion, according to Forbes magazine. Thiel, who has contributed to dozens of Republicans, has also donated to campaigns opposing same-sex marriage bans and legal battles to overturn state bans.

Thiel could not be reached for reaction to Hawley’s support of Davis.

In his news release, Hawley wrote he would issue an opinion on his first day as attorney general to protect officials who object to issuing marriage licenses based on their religious beliefs. Attorney general’s opinions do not have the force of law but explain how the attorney general interprets state law, Hawley wrote in an email response to Tribune questions.

“They are persuasive authority for a court,” he wrote.

An attorney general’s opinion carries no more weight than the opinion of any other attorney, Schaefer said. If it accurately interprets the law, the courts will agree, he said. If it does not, the courts will reject it.
Without the full facts of the case, Schaefer said he could not say that Bunning was wrong. “I think it is extreme, and I think that judge should have attempted to find a solution,” he said.

There should be no religious exceptions that allow public officials to refuse to do their duties, Zimmerman said in an email.

“The Attorney General’s job is to enforce the law, not to make it up as you go along,” he wrote. “Marriage equality is the law of the land. If you don’t understand that, you shouldn’t be running for Attorney General.”

Hensley could not be reached for comment.

Missouri attorney general candidate pledges to aid officials who oppose same-sex marriage

By JO MANNIES • SEP 4, 2015

Josh Hawley, a Republican candidate for Missouri attorney general, says that if he’s elected next year, he will act to protect county clerks who object to issuing same-sex marriage licenses.

In fact, “on Day One,” Hawley says he’ll issue an opinion allowing county clerks and others – such as recorders of deeds – to avoid issuing such licenses if it violates their religious beliefs.

**Hawley -- on leave from his post as law professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia -- contends that an existing Missouri law, called the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, protects public officials and business owners who have religious objections to same-sex marriage or other matters.**

He says that clerks could allow deputies who don’t object to same-sex marriages to issue such licenses to comply with the U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing same-sex marriage.

In any case, Hawley says it’s wrong to send county clerks to jail for failing to comply with the court’s decision. That’s been the fate of Kim Davis, the clerk in Kentucky who has gone to jail over her refusal to issue same-sex marriage licenses.

He says it’s a “tragedy” that a judge ordered that Davis go to jail. “Bottom line: the marriage issue is one we’re still working through as a society, and no one should go to jail for their religious convictions on it,” he said.
Rival disagrees

Jake Zimmerman, one of the Democratic candidates for attorney general, takes issue with Hawley's views. "The attorney general's job is to enforce the law, not to make it up as you go along," Zimmerman said. "Marriage equality is the law of the land. If you don't understand that, you shouldn't be running for attorney general." So far, Zimmerman is the only one of Hawley's opponents to comment on his stance.

Hawley believes his views are on solid legal footing.

“As attorney general, I will do on Day One what (incumbent Democrat) Chris Koster should have done months ago: issue a legal opinion protecting county clerks, other local office holders and business people of faith to the maximum extent possible under Missouri law,” Hawley said. “And I will fight for all people of faith in court -- all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary.”

Hawley has some experience in arguing in favor of businesses with religious objections to laws or government regulations. He was part of the legal team that successfully helped Hobby Lobby win in a Supreme Court fight over the business' objections to providing insurance coverage for certain types of contraception.

Fitness challenge aims to motivate participants to up their activity

By CAROLINE DOHACK

Sunday, September 6, 2015 at 12:00 am

A health and wellness initiative sponsored by University of Missouri Health Care is challenging Mid-Missourians to step up their fitness game — and then step it up some more.

The 11-week challenge, called Step Up with MU Health Care, starts Tuesday — though would-be participants still can register through midnight Sept. 14 — and runs through Nov. 24. The first week, participants will be challenged to take at least 5,000 steps each day. The challenge then increases by 1,000 steps per day each week so that by the end of the challenge participants are taking a whopping 15,000 steps — about 7 miles — each day.
Whitney Wright, practice manager for MU Health Care’s Mizzou Therapy Services, said the challenge started last year as an internal initiative for MU Health Care employees to help foster a culture of wellness. Now the challenge is open to all Mid-Missourians.

Participants must register as part of a team of three to five, Wright said. Those using activity trackers by Fitbit, Garmin, Fitlinxx and iHealth can program them to sync automatically with the challenge website, but participants also can use pedometers or smartphone apps to track their progress and then manually enter that information on the site.

Teams who meet or surpass their goals — which will be determined by averaging each member’s steps — will be entered into weekly drawings for prizes such as MU football tickets, TVs, gym packages and fitness equipment.

Prizes are nice, but Wright said the challenge structure motivates participants by making them more aware of just how much activity they get in a day.

“It’s kind of a reality check. You quickly learn what you’re actually doing in a day and you start to be really conscious,” Wright said.

**THE MANEATER**

**Multicultural Hour brings together MU students from around the world**

Over 100 countries are represented at MU.

By **Morgan Jenkins** Sept. 4, 2015

Exotic tongues painted the blank, wooden tables at Memorial Union on Sept. 3. Pale noodles drowned in an orange sauce, yellow pizzas gleamed with golden globes of grease and browned wontons sat contentedly next to boxes of fried chicken. Chatter and laughter textured the room.

“I can learn culture (through) food,” said Oraphan Butkatunyoo, visiting scholar and vice president for international programs.
With the assortment of food came an assortment of voices, as international students gathered at 4 p.m. to celebrate the first Multicultural Hour of this year. The event was sponsored on campus by the Asian Affairs Center, the International Center and the Graduate Professional Council.

“We can come here, people from different countries and share our experiences and (learn about) other cultures,” Multicultural Hour coordinator Tzu-Yang Chao said.

The program is intended to help international and domestic students bond. Scholars, faculty and alumni may join in as well. Each Thursday, the program hosts different events at no cost.

“We want our students and folks to see this as a comfortable (place) where they can come and visit and learn about international prospects,” AAC Director Sang Kim said.

The organizations host other events as well, including What’s Special About Your Culture? on Sept. 10 and the Chinese Moon Festival on Sept. 24.

“People are willing to come together and look at their commonalities more than they look at their exceptionalities,” MU graduate Mary Gallegos said.

Centers like the AAC, International Center, and more strive to change this. By using the Multicultural Hour as a gateway, these organizations make MU’s 35,000-plus student body seem smaller and more close-knit. Over 100 countries are represented at the university, Kim said.

MU football fans make tailgating a tradition
By MEGAN FAVIGNANO
Sunday, September 6, 2015 at 12:00 am

Crowds of people in black and gold attire strolled down Tiger Avenue, stopping at tents of tailgaters along the way to the University of Missouri’s Memorial Stadium on Saturday.
The aroma of barbecue was strong as tailgaters on Conley Avenue cooked their pregame lunch and tossed a Frisbee.

Lou and Monica Harris sat under a tent decorated with MU Tigers streamers on Conley Avenue with their son, Noah. The Harrises have brought their son, who is now in high school, tailgating and to MU games since he was 8 weeks old. Before Noah was born, the Harrises went tailgating with other family members before most games.

“It was a family deal,” Monica Harris said. “You get caught up in the excitement.”

Tailgaters enjoyed the popular pregame tradition, lining the route and crowding around Memorial Stadium before the 3 p.m. home opener against Southeast Missouri State.

Lou Harris, a 1983 MU alumnus, said he didn’t tailgate before games when he attended.

“It’s a much bigger deal now than when I was in college,” he said.

The Harris family has season tickets, and Lou Harris said heat doesn’t usually keep the family from tailgating before each game.

Heidi Bonnes, a 2002 alumna, tailgates with her two daughters before three or four games each season and goes home to watch the games.

Bonnes’ daughter, Claire, 3, walked alongside her, carrying a football as the two went from one tent to another on Conley Avenue. Bonnes said her daughters, ages 3 and 9, don’t seem interested in football when it’s on television. But, she added, both of them enjoy tailgating.

Bonnes said she likes the energy of tailgaters. Although Bonnes attended Southeast Missouri State her freshman year of college before transferring to MU, she said there is no doubt she is an MU fan.

“I love the excitement of Mizzou football. I love being around Mizzou alums and fans,” Bonnes said.

Alex Goedeker, Class of 2014, and Corey Donovan, Class of 2015, both tailgated before games when they were enrolled at MU and said they planned to continue the tradition.

“I try to make it out a couple times a year and always the first game,” Goedeker said. “Everyone is ready to do stuff as soon as day breaks.”
The first game, he said, is always exciting and the weather is typically nice. Now that they have graduated, Goedeker and Donovan said tailgating is like a reunion. Saturday was the first time Donovan had been back to campus since graduating in May.

Donovan described the start of the Tigers’ season as the best time of the year. The Harris family shared a similar sentiment, and Monica Harris said she is excited to see this year’s team play.

“Win or lose, we’re there cheering,” she said.

Annual Tomato Festival attracts gardeners, families
By MEGAN FAVIGNANO
Friday, September 4, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The strong scent of tomatoes and salsa wafted through a room at the University of Missouri’s Bradford Research Center on Thursday. Lexi Miller, a senior with the Columbia Area Career Center, placed marble-size pineapple tomatillos into small plastic cups.

“I didn’t know you could have a fruity tomato,” Miller said.

The career center was one of about 15 local groups that handed out samples during the 11th annual Tomato Festival at the Bradford Research Center on Rangeline Road. The career center allowed two students to create their own samples for the festival.

Miller served a deconstructed bruschetta that included the tomatillos, basil, mozzarella and a honey-balsamic reduction. She had not tried the pineapple tomatillos until she started planning her dish for the festival.

Festival-goers also could buy tomatoes, taste wines, attend presentations on gardening, sample unique milk flavors and try 250 varieties of tomatoes, peppers and tomatillos.

The chance to taste so many types of tomatoes drew six members of the Boonslick Master Gardeners to hold their monthly meeting at the festival.
Most of the members had not attended the festival before. Mary Jenkins and Zoë Tucker said they went to help decide what tomato varieties to plant next growing season. The two women weaved between rows of tables full of tomato samples beneath a large white tent, noting their tomato preferences.

“All winter long,” gardeners “look at their seed catalogs and dream of what their garden will look like,” Tucker said.

Tucker and Jenkins said they have some tomato varieties they grow every year but that they also try a new type each season. Tucker grew heirloom tomatoes for the first time this year, adding that they require close attention.

“You have to really take care of them, but they’re good,” Tucker said.

Jenkins grew more than 100 tomato plants this year and canned a significant amount of her harvest. “It’s hard work, but it’s rewarding,” Jenkins said of the canning process.

A kids’ corner at the festival included coloring, large tires filled with soybeans in which children could play, and a varied assortment of flavored milk.

As 6-year-old Shelby Eagon sampled various flavors of milk, her mom, Sarah Eagon, said, “You’ve got a milk lover right here.”

Shelby tried all but one flavor of milk — coffee — and said her favorites included cotton candy and banana. Although she enjoyed the activities in the kids’ corner, Shelby said she liked trying different kinds of tomatoes because it reminded her of her grandmother’s garden.

“There’s tomatoes in the garden at Grandma’s house,” Shelby said with excitement.

Miller credits her grandmother for having a similar influence. She said her grandmother gave her a passion for cooking and a desire to attend culinary school after high school. Miller said she grew up cooking with her grandmother, mainly making desserts.

“We always made Christmas sugar cookies,” Miller recalled.
Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are a concern for the health and well-being of both humans and farm animals.

SOUTH AFRICA — Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are a concern for the health and well-being of both humans and farm animals.

One of the most common and costly diseases faced by the dairy industry is bovine mastitis, a potentially fatal bacterial inflammation of the mammary gland. Widespread use of antibiotics to treat the disease is often blamed for generating antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

However, researchers investigating staphylococcal populations responsible for causing mastitis in dairy cows in South Africa found that humans carried more antibiotic-resistant staphylococci than the farm animals with which they worked. The research is published in the Journal of Dairy Science.

Animal agriculture is often blamed for generating antibiotic-resistant bacteria through the “widespread” use of antibiotics.

“South Africa has one of the highest HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis rates in the world, and the human health risk to immune-compromised individuals is therefore that much greater,” said lead investigator Tracy Schmidt, a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Medical Microbiology, University of Pretoria, and a veterinary researcher at the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in South Africa in a press release. “The rise of livestock-associated methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus and reported cases of bacterial transmission between dairy cows and humans has raised concerns from both the agriculture/veterinary sector and public health officials. The lack of data about the occurrence of LA-MRSA in South Africa and the need to investigate possible reservoirs were part of the motivation for this work.”
Staphylococcus aureus is a contagious udder pathogen that readily spreads between cows at milking. The main source is milk from infected quarters, with milking machine teat liners playing a significant role in the transmission of the bacteria among cows and mammary quarters. Infected cows need to be promptly identified and appropriate control measures need to be taken to curb bacterial transmission among cows.

Also of great importance is the fact that CNS often exhibit extensive resistance to antimicrobials and may serve as a reservoir of resistance genes that can transfer and supplement the genome of more pathogenic bacteria like Staphylococcus aureus.

This research in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa investigated the diversity of Staphylococcus populations responsible for IMI in dairy cows and assessed the susceptibility of different species to antimicrobials commonly used in the veterinary field as well as human medicine. At the same time, individuals working in close contact with the animals were sampled and the diversity and susceptibility profiles of staphylococcal isolates determined and compared with isolates of animal origin.

With respect to staphylococcal diversity the results showed the clear predominance of Staphylococcus chromogenes among the CNS causing IMI, while Staphylococcus epidermidis was the isolate most commonly recovered from the human specimens.

The study found a relatively low occurrence of antimicrobial resistance among the bovine staphylococci.

“This is encouraging as it indicates the responsible usage of antimicrobials within local dairies and provides our veterinary practitioners and animal owners valuable information going forward with respect to the treatment of infected animals,” said Schmidt.

None of the staphylococcal isolates of bovine origin were found to be resistant to methicillin. The results indicate the low potential health risk posed to close contact workers and milk consumers through exposure to antibiotic-resistant staphylococci originating from milk.

“As an industry we are making great strides to reduce the use of blanket treatment of farm animals with antibiotics and the notion that antibiotic-resistant bacteria are moving from farm animals to humans has been debunked many times,” said Matt Lucy, Ph.D., professor of animal science at the University of Missouri and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Dairy Science. “What the authors found is that the humans working with farm animals carry far more antibiotic-resistant staphylococci that the farm animals they work with. The risk, therefore, is the transfer from humans to farm animals and not from farm animals to humans as is often suggested.”
What to Do When the Outrage Is Aimed at Your Campus

By Beth McMurtrie

NO MENTION

The email arrived two days after a gunman killed a dozen people at the Washington Navy Yard.

A reporter at Campus Reform, a conservative website, was asking the University of Kansas for reaction to a tweet by one of its professors. "The blood is on the hands of the #NRA. Next time let it be YOUR sons and daughters," the tweet had said.

The university issued a statement, and the story was posted the next day. "Journalism professor says he hopes for murder of NRA members’ children," the headline read. Once the National Rifle Association picked up the story, everything else at the university seemed to stop.

The telephones in public affairs rang off the hook. So did those in the chancellor’s office. Tweet after tweet slammed the professor, with many calling for him to be fired. The university’s Facebook page filled with angry comments. Emails poured in.

"We had talking points," recalls Timothy C. Caboni, vice chancellor for public affairs. "But the majority of callers were so irate there wasn’t an opportunity to give a response."

That September, two years ago, the University of Kansas experienced just how quickly a single tweet could consume an institution and push it into the center of a social-media firestorm. Within about 24 hours, Mr. Caboni estimates, the university received more than 1,000 messages through calls, emails, and other communication.

How should or shouldn’t a college respond? How can an institution best monitor the extemporaneous speech and potentially incriminating videos its professors and
students are posting on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Yik Yak, and other platforms?

And how might administrators and communications officers prepare for the day, which seems increasingly inevitable, that they are on the front lines of one of those controversies?

*Ignore at Your Peril*

How deftly colleges respond can have a major effect on how quickly storms dissipate. Crisis-management consultants say there often remains a gulf between the way top administrators think and react and the way their social-media staff does, with the first group being more likely to want to hunker down.

"Oftentimes among presidents their first attitude is, let’s just ignore this, maybe it’ll go away," says Mark R. Weaver, head of Communications Counsel, a consulting firm. But it may not, at least not without inflicting some reputational damage.

At Kansas, communications officials engaged as soon as the story about the tweet, which was composed by David W. Guth, an associate professor of journalism, gained traction. They answered every phone call. They let people yell. They asked other departments on the campus to forward emails, with the idea that the communications staff would respond to those messages, too, although maybe not on the same day. They tweeted out a follow-up statement.

Equally important, says Mr. Caboni, they didn’t try to clean up comments on the university’s Facebook page. "The last thing we needed was a second crisis by scrubbing our social-media accounts," he says.

The university also had two teams working. One was made of communications experts, who hashed out a variety of possible responses. The other, a group of senior administrators — including the chancellor, the provost, the journalism-school dean, and Mr. Caboni — discussed the options presented by the communications experts.

The day after the Campus Reform article came out, things had gotten so out of hand (the professor and others had received threats) that the university decided it had to make an immediate decision about Mr. Guth. They put the professor on temporary leave with pay.

While university officials still had an enormous amount of work to do, including engaging in deeper conversations with the faculty, trustees, alumni, and legislators,
making a fast decision about Mr. Guth "gave us an opportunity to regain control over timing," says Mr. Caboni.

By that night, hours after they had put the professor on leave, the worst of the social-media storm was over.

Be Prepared

Kansas’ experience was unusual in its intensity, but it illustrates the importance of being prepared, say crisis experts. While colleges shouldn’t respond to every angry tweet or Facebook post, they should be able to quickly react when a problem escalates.

To do so, college officials must first monitor what people normally talk about, says Nick Alexopulos, associate director of media relations and social media at Loyola University Maryland. He uses social-media monitoring software that tracks relevant key words like the university’s name as well as hashtags, geotags, and university–related social-media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms. That helps him respond to complaints directly when he sees them, and quickly spot the point at which small problems become big ones.

Two years ago, his office noticed that several students were announcing on social media that the campus was going to close because of a handful of reported mumps cases. The university quickly got the rumor under control by preparing a statement that explained what was going on and clarified that the campus would remain open, and by releasing it on social media.

Second, crisis experts say, colleges should have a triage plan. Communications-staff members and senior administrators should work out in advance who does what when something flares on social media. Teresa Valerio Parrot, head of TVP Communications, tells presidents they should get to know their social-media staff now, so that responses in times of crisis aren’t delayed by "layers of hierarchy."

Even the best-thought-out plan won’t be able to change the conversation effectively if it comes too late, she says.

Third, the experts urge, enlist allies. Social media can magnify criticism through retweets and reposts. Trustees, alumni, professors, and students can help provide balance by offering support and countering rumors, provided the college gives them information to work with. Colleges should reach out directly to their allies in the midst of a crisis, say communications experts.
Temple University took that approach last summer after a Jewish student was hit by another student during an argument over Israeli-Palestinian issues at Temple Fest, an annual welcome-to-campus event.

Within hours the incident was reported on by TruthRevolt, a conservative website. Soon, rumors and allegations began to fly, suggesting that Temple was an anti-Semitic campus; that the student union, which displays flags from other countries, had refused to show the Israeli flag (it hadn’t); that the president had deliberately scheduled a meeting with concerned Jewish students to conflict with a planned rally (he hadn’t). Local reporters began calling, wanting to come for the second day of Temple Fest. The campus received dozens of phone calls and tweets from concerned community members, parents, alumni and others, says Ray Betzner, associate vice president for executive communications. His office even heard from news outlets in Israel.

In response, Temple invited the local press for the second day of Temple Fest, and officials at the university’s news center put together a Q&A web page, which they updated regularly when they got new information or needed to answer a new rumor. Mr. Betzner says it was important to release information quickly, even if it was just to say that the university was looking into the incident. “We tried to be as transparent as we could,” he says.

The university was able to move strategically, enlist supporters, and help shut down rumors, Mr. Betzner says, because administrators had worked through various options in advance. “When the bad stuff starts,” he says, “is not when you can begin thinking about your social-media presence and your action in those channels.”