COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Leona Rubin grapples with frustration, funding options at open forum on MU graduate rights

EMMA VANDELINDER, 9 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — No one stood more front and center at the open forum on graduate rights than Leona Rubin, who faced a frustrated crowd with numerous questions and comments.

The same concerns about transparency, budgetary action and accountability that were asked by students, faculty and staff at MU over the last three weeks, since the withdrawal of health insurance on Aug. 15, were asked again at the forum.

Rubin, who is the associate vice chancellor for graduate studies, now focused her answers on two things: a lack of budgetary options for graduate student employee health insurance and the future use of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s Graduate Student Insurance Task Force, which formed in mid-August and will deliver a report to Loftin in October. Rubin also pointed to the Graduate Student Experience Task Force, which was formed last spring, as a way the university is seeking to address graduate rights in general.

“There is a task force that is looking at this,” Rubin said of the Graduate Student Insurance Task Force. “And I’m sure that task force is going to be interested in how other institutions … fund graduate student health insurance.”

When asked how likely it was that, in a year's time, graduate student employees would have health insurance, Rubin said she had “no way to predict that.”

The Graduate Student Insurance Task Force will report to the chancellor in October about their findings.
“We have no way of knowing what the IRS is going to,” she said. “...We have no way of knowing what the chancellor or the task force on health insurance is going to do. I don’t actually know, I’m not on the task force. I’m hoping they come up with a viable alternative if this decision holds.”

The same crowd member asked if there was a chance that the university will eventually cut health insurance all together, because of budgetary cut backs. Rubin again had no answer.

“I don’t have a crystal ball, but I will tell you this — it’s not about saving money. It’s about not spending money that you don’t have,” Rubin said. “There just isn’t any extra money coming in. So anything that we do, has to take away from someplace else. And that’s just going to be the reality of it for several years.”

Frustration among crowd members grew with Rubin’s comments.

A solution of reapportionment of funds, starting with Loftin’s high salary, was proposed by a student at the forum. “The amount that Loftin makes...is ridiculous when you have grad students without health insurance,” said one audience member.

“Loftin’s salary wouldn’t put a dent in what you need,” Rubin said. “I am always open to ideas about where you think that money should come from. If you think we should fire Chancellor Loftin and take his salary, it won’t make up very much of your stipend.”

Less than an hour after the forum started, Rachel Bauer, the event’s moderator and the vice president of the Graduate Professional Council, had to interrupt crowd members who were yelling across the auditorium and remind them to be respectful.

One person from the audience asked about the university’s prioritization of graduate rights in the MU Strategic Operating Plan, a yearly plan that outlines the university's goals. Rubin said the issue was ranked close to the top.
“(Graduate education is) pretty high up on the strategic operating plan,” she said. “Right up there with hiring new faculty.”

But when pressed by a crowd member, who reminded her that the operating plan does not rank goals, Rubin back-tracked.

“In my view, the very fact that it’s on that list is a step in the right direction, because it wasn’t on that list before,” she said

Kristofferson Culmer, Forum on Graduate Rights steering committee chairman, said that saying something was a priority was not enough.

“It’s frustrating for a grad student to hear, ‘Yes, this is a priority,’ but then on the other hand, asking the students where are we going to find the resources from,” Culmer said. “…It’s not our responsibility to look through the budget to find the resources that we need. Our responsibility as parts of the community (is) to let you know what our needs are, and if you find them a priority, then you will find the resources to make those happen.”

Tracy Kitchel, assistant vice provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, and Earnest Perry, associate professor in the Missouri School of Journalism, attended the forum with Rubin, but were not as vocal in addressing the concerns of graduate student employees. Members of the Forum on Graduate Rights were also present with fliers, but only two representatives asked questions.

The student experience task force will start meeting every two weeks to address the graduate rights issues, Kitchel said.

Tuesday night's forum — hosted by the Graduate Professional Council, an MU governmental body representing graduate rights, the Graduate Student Association, an advocacy group also promoting graduate interest, and the Office of Graduate Studies — continued into the second hour with commentary about other graduate rights issues, such as affordable housing, tuition waivers and child care.
Members in the crowd stood in line waiting their turn to tell their personal struggles as graduate students and graduate student employees. One graduate student said his wife was making less than two-thirds of the stipend she was promised. A graduate student and mother of three explained how she was spending more than she could afford on child care, and with no support from the university or the state.

Many members of the audience addressed the fact that a lack of insurance coverage, partial tuition waivers and low stipends would be deterrents for graduate students looking at possible enrollment at the university.

“If there’s ever been in a point in Mizzou’s recent history where people are paying attention to graduate education, it’s now,” Kitchel said. “And it’s essential that we take advantage of the situation that is at hand.”

The Forum on Graduate Rights released a statement on Monday that they would not become an official student organization. The forum will hold an election for graduate student employees to participate in the conversation about its unionization and collective bargaining.

“We believe that the final decision whether to unionize rests with the democratic will of the University of Missouri’s graduate student workers, to be informed by a process of outreach, education, and deliberation,” the statement said.

Graduate students express concerns at open forum

When the forum ended, students collected signatures in support of unionization.


On Tuesday night, MU graduate students expressed a myriad of concerns.
Administrators, journalists and numerous disgruntled students gathered Tuesday night in the Geological Sciences Building for the Forum on the Graduate Student Experience. Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies Leona Rubin fielded questions, but one key player was missing.

Nowhere in the crowd could a cheerful-looking man in a suit and bowtie be found. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was not present. Instead, he was away at a retreat with the UM Board of Curators.

Tuesday’s forum was the latest episode in a dispute between graduate students and administrators that began in mid-August. The trouble began when administration withdrew the graduate student health care subsidy just 13 hours before the scheduled renewal date.

In response to this perceived slight, graduate students banded together and created the Forum on Graduate Student Rights, which published a list of seven demands of administration Aug. 19. Administrators did not provide an adequate plan of action regarding the demands, which begat a graduate student walk out Aug. 24.

Connor Lewis, a doctoral history student, is on the steering committee for the Forum on Graduate Rights and is also involved with the Coalition of Graduate Workers. He was not satisfied with Loftin’s reasoning for being absent.

“This forum has been planned for weeks and Chancellor Loftin couldn’t be here,” Lewis said. “And they knew that they don’t plan a retreat overnight, so clearly they could have made a time for Chancellor Loftin to be available and they chose not to. And, frankly, I think that Chancellor Loftin has spent the entire time ducking his responsibility in this whole debacle.”

Even without Loftin in the room, the recent cuts to graduate health insurance provided plenty of tension. At one point, the questions Rubin faced were so confrontational that the moderator had to warn the graduate students to calm their tone.

“The biggest thing I took away is that the administration is still not ready to listen to us,” third-year English doctoral student Jim Hayden said.

The graduate students’ concerns did not end with insurance. Halfway into the two-hour forum, the students were given the chance to offer advice for how to better their experience. They had plenty of advice to give, listing off a variety of issues.

The students discussed housing concerns, contract problems, trust issues and student debt, among other problems. After nearly every comment, the crowd clapped for the speaker.

After the forum, Lewis approached exiting graduate students and collected signatures for the Coalition of Graduate Workers.

“We’re launching a drive to unionize graduate employees at the University of Missouri,” he said.

Though he did appreciate Rubin’s willingness to answer questions, Lewis’ feelings did not change after the forum.
“Frankly, I think my biggest take away was the fact that the university isn’t really offering answers,” Lewis said. “They’re expecting us to come up with the solutions on our own when this is something they should be working on.”

**Attack at bar leaves MU student with brain damage**


Columbia — The parents of an MU student said Tuesday a weekend assault has left their son with serious brain damage.

Columbia police say an officer was on patrol near Bengal's Bar and Grill just before 1 a.m. Sunday when someone flagged the officer down. The officer found a 20 year old MU student on the ground with blood coming out of his ear.

KRCG 13 contacted the family of the injured student. The family declined to speak on camera but allowed KRCG 13 to use the student's first name, Mark. His mother said Mark suffered damage to the parts of his brain that control cognitive functions and speech. She said Mark was in stable condition as of Tuesday, but he will need occupational therapy before he can resume his collegiate studies.

Police spokesperson Latisha Stroer said Bengal's provided officers with surveillance video of what happened. In the video, Stroer said someone shoves Mark twice from behind. When Mark turns around, the suspect punches Mark in the face, and Mark falls to the floor. Mark's mother called the video's images "disturbing" and "disgusting."

Stroer said several witnesses were shown the video and identified Austin Lewis as the suspect. Lewis turned himself in at Columbia police headquarters on Sunday afternoon, where officers arrested him on suspicion of second-degree assault. Lewis was released after posting a $4,500 bond.
Mark's mother said she is grateful to Bengals for all the help and support it has given the family. She said the family has hired a lawyer and is "pursuing everything we can legally."

Columbia man suspected of assault at downtown bar

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 11:16 am

Police arrested a 22-year-old University of Missouri student accused of assaulting a fellow patron Sunday at Bengals Bar and Grill.

Austin S. Lewis faces a charge of second-degree assault for allegedly knocking a 20-year-old man unconscious inside the bar, Columbia police Officer Latisha Stroer said.

Officers responded to the downtown bar about 12:46 a.m. Sunday in reference to an unconscious subject. The officer said the man was lying on the floor and was bleeding from his ear. The assault victim was taken to a local hospital for treatment, Stroer said.

Employees showed police surveillance video that showed a white man in a turquoise shirt standing behind the assault victim. The man in the turquoise shirt shoved the victim twice and, when the victim turned around, punched him in the face.

Witnesses identified the man in the turquoise shirt as Lewis, whom police arrested about 2 p.m. Sunday at 600 E. Walnut St. Lewis was taken to the Boone County Jail but was released after posting a $4,500 bond.

Lewis is listed in the university’s directory as a junior studying business administration.
Olmstead replaces Struble as new LGBTQ Resource Coordinator

The center will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year.

Sean Olmstead came to MU this summer as the new LGBTQ Resource Center coordinator just in time for its 20th anniversary.

“For the LGBTQ student population, those students often see this place as a place of self-preservation or where we can put down our guard sometimes,” Olmstead said. “For other students, we serve them by helping to educate them about sexual orientation and gender identity.”

Olmstead said he plans to make the LGBTQ Resource Center a by-the-students, for-the-students organization.

Because of former coordinator Struby Struble’s legacy, Olmstead said he sees the major act he has to follow.

“It’s intimidating because it sets a really high expectation, but that helps drive me to want to do great things,” Olmstead said. “She has done a fantastic job of sustaining and growing what the LGBTQ Resource Center does.”

Theresa Eultgen, The Women’s Center coordinator, has been working with Olmstead over the summer in resource sharing and support.

“He’s got a really well-rounded vision on being inclusive and empowering students to be the best version of themselves,” Eultgen said. “We have a lot of good positive reinforcement regarding communication because we do a lot of similar thing so it’s nice to have that partnership.”

Olmstead is also planning a lot of events to celebrate the center’s 20th anniversary.

Eultgen said she will work with Olmstead to plan Queer Monologues, which is held in the spring.

“Queer Monologues is a really fun interactive program for everybody who participates,” Eultgen said. “What’s so beautiful is that it’s all stories from MU’s campus so it will be his first one so I’m excited for him to come on this year.”
The center is planning other events including with the Proud Tigers Mentorship program, which the center calls “an all-inclusive mentoring program providing support, guidance, and resources to minoritized students at Mizzou.” There is also the Queer Fall Fling, an open house for the center and a score of LGBTQ organizations to join.

Although school hasn’t been in session for long, Olmstead said he is already noticing things about the MU community.

“I love how students speak their mind and are critical of the world around them,” Olmstead said. “That makes my job harder and easier because I know that I’m being held to a high standard for students, but also I know that the work we’ll be doing will be important.”

MU organizations allow for political education and involvement

Students can utilize resources on campus to learn about and get involved with local, state and national politics.

Whether students are new to politics or have experience and wish to get more involved while in college, MU offers multiple resources for students to utilize, between partisan and nonpartisan organizations and internships.

Mizzou College Democrats President Nick Benham sees his organization as a resource for connecting students with the ideas and principles of the Democratic Party.

“I feel that college students are vitally underrepresented and that (students’) views aren’t as realized as they should be in politics,” Benham said. “And I feel like we play a role in fighting back against that, in equipping young, progressive, awesome people with the knowledge and the tools and the connections they need to go out and make a difference in Missouri politics and wider politics.”

The Mizzou College Republicans stand to educate students about the Republican Party and politics in general, president and MU sophomore Skyler Roundtree said.

“I want to let people know that the decisions government and government officials make directly affect our future and the decisions they’re making are going to directly affect us and our kids,” Roundtree said.
Both the College Democrats and Republicans offer opportunities for students to intern for politicians at the local, state and national level. Both organizations also often host local and state politicians to speak at their events and meetings.

A newer group on campus, the MU Socialists, classify themselves as an “umbrella leftist group who care about social activism” and equality for all.

“We just are generally comprised of leftist people who are very involved in leftist politics, with a very activism-centered social justice organization on campus,” organizing member and MU senior Jenny Herman said.

All three groups, while partisan, are open to students of any political affiliation or background. They said they especially care about students educating themselves, no matter their viewpoint.

“We want open-minded people; it doesn’t matter if you see yourself as independent or Democratic or whatever – we just want to get open-minded people to talk about our issues,” Roundtree said.

MU also houses nonpartisan organizations, such as the Associated Students of the University of Missouri. ASUM is a University of Missouri system lobbyist organization that lobbies the state legislature every session and offers an internship program for students that allows them to directly interact with state legislators and lobby for issues that impact students.

“You’re actually meeting with upwards of 20 legislators and trying to convince them to support things that students care about,” said Steven Chaffin, ASUM Legislative Director and former intern.

The Civic Leaders Internship Program also offers an internship for students looking to get involved with politics. CLIP allows students to earn academic credit while working either part-time or full-time as a legislative intern at the state capital, according to their website.

Former ASUM president Ben Levin said that CLIP is a unique opportunity.

“People generally do it their junior or their senior year in the spring semester, so it’s definitely something I would recommend,” Levin said. “Just (be on the) lookout for the applications. It’s definitely something worth doing.”

Tigers Advocating for Political Participation is a non-partisan organization housed under ASUM that works toward raising awareness about various political issues and starting campus conversations by hosting events about different political topics.

“Sometimes we have professors who come speak or experts in a certain topic come speak and that’s a kind of view of a certain topic that you’re not just going to get from the news,” TAPP president and MU senior Helen Bass said.
Chaffin said students who are in the process of developing their political views should research and consider all points of views, but encouraged students to not think too much about labels.

“Do your homework,” Chaffin said. “Do your research. Read from a variety of sources. Don’t pigeonhole yourself in terms of partisanship. Develop your views and then develop your partisanship.”

Benham said he encourages students to get involved.

“It can sound all technical and bureaucratic, but at its most fundamental, politics is a chance for everybody to make their voice heard, to gain some influence, to get what you want out of society,” Benham said.

Herman said reading is key to understanding politics and forming an educated opinion.

“Read different news sources, from political ideologies from different countries,” Herman said. “Get as least of a biased view as you can. Don’t really take anything for granted.”

The Mizzou College Democrats meets Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. in Strickland 209. The Mizzou College Republicans meet Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in Strickland 114. The MU Socialists hold their meetings on Mondays at 7 p.m., starting September 14, in a location to be determined. TAPP will hold their first event September 10 at 6 p.m. in Strickland 117. Students should check the organizations’ Facebook and Twitter pages to stay updated about details of meetings and events.

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2 high school players allege ref made racial slur before hit

Sept. 9, 2015 • THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — Two Texas football players accused of intentionally ramming into a referee during a high school game allege the referee directed racial slurs at them, school district officials said Tuesday.

The district, which previously suspended the two players, has placed an assistant coach on paid leave while it investigates allegations that he suggested there should be retaliation against the referee for missed calls, Northside Independent School District Superintendent Brian T. Woods said at a news conference.
The two suspended John Jay High School students, whose names aren't being released, will go through a disciplinary hearing and the incident will be treated as an assault on a school official, according to the school district.

"The incident is shameful and in no way reflects who Northside ISD and Jay High School are," Woods said.

The district, which has 105,000 students, is in the process of filing a complaint about the racial slur allegation with the Texas Association of Sports Officials, Woods said.

Michael Fitch, the association's executive director, didn't immediately return a call seeking comment on Tuesday. The name of the referee has not been made public.

Video from Friday's game between John Jay High School and Marble Falls High School showed the referee watching a play, and his head snapping back when he is leveled from behind. The other player then dove on top of him. The game took place in Marble Falls, located about 90 miles north of San Antonio.

Northside school district officials said that during the game, the suspended players "were feeling lots of frustration by what they perceived to be missed or wrong calls by the refs." The players also alleged the referee directed racial slurs at them.

**The students allege that assistant coach Mack Breed, 29, said "that guy needs to pay for cheating us" or words to that effect, according to the district. Breed played football at the University of Missouri from 2004-2008.**

"The alleged comments by the coach are in no way a reflection of the John Jay coaching staff whatsoever. If that did happen, he let the emotions get the best of him," said Northside school district athletic director Stan Laing.

Breed didn't immediately respond to a voicemail message left Tuesday by The Associated Press.

Woods said if a racial slur was directed at the two players, the protocol should have been to let the lead official at the game know about it.

"We're obligated to use this as a teachable moment ... As educators, we've got to take this opportunity to teach our young people two wrongs don't make a right," Laing said.

The University Interscholastic League, which governs primary and high school sports and is working with the school district and officials on the investigation, said in a statement Tuesday that it supports the initial disciplinary measures taken by the Northside school district.

"Interactions between coaches, students and officials should always be respectful and an official's safety should never be compromised during a competition," the UIL said.

The Marble Falls police department, which is investigating the hit on the referee, will take at least a week to complete its probe, said Sgt. Tom Dillard.

Dillard said if charges are filed, it could be for misdemeanor assault, but that wasn't "chiseled into stone."
When it comes to behavior, legislators aren't expected to change when they return to Jeff City

By JO MANNIES & MARSHALL GRIFFIN • SEPT. 9, 2015

NO Mu MENTION

At least at J. Pfenny's sports bar, it'll be business as usual next week when legislators return to the Missouri capital for their annual veto session. They'll also be gathering for the first time since the furor over sexual misconduct allegations involving interns sent two top state legislators packing.

The alcohol will be flowing as several lawmakers, or hopefuls, hold simultaneous fundraisers at the popular watering hole, situated just a couple blocks from the Capitol building.

“Pretty much, it’s going to pack the place,” said bar manager Jay Cheshire.

The events are slated for the eve of the session, when legislators will consider whether to try to override Gov. Jay Nixon’s vetoes of several bills approved during the regular five-month session that ended in May.

The lawmakers also are expected to discuss how to address the sexual misconduct episodes, which put the spotlight on an atmosphere that some say encourages inappropriate behavior.

Sean Nicholson, executive director of Progress Missouri – a Democratic-leaning activist group – recalls someone else’s description of the General Assembly’s ambience that he says rings true:

“It’s like freshman year in college: lots of free booze, lots of 19-year-old girls, and nobody’s done their homework.”

New House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, has made a point since his surprise swearing-in last May of emphasizing his quest to revamp that poor image – and curtail the embarrassing activities – that led to the resignation of Speaker John Diehl during the final days of the session.

“We have a responsibility as stewards of the institution right now to try to make it better,” he said during an appearance this summer on St. Louis Public Radio’s “Politically Speaking” podcast.
But others are pessimistic that legislative leaders will follow through. “I’m still waiting for some concrete proposals from leadership,” said Rep. Stacey Newman, D-Richmond Heights.

Newman is particularly concerned that legislators may choose to avoid the broader issues – notably, the treatment of women in state government – that have become entwined in the controversy over college-age interns.

**Controversy lingers over demise of Diehl, LeVota**

Diehl, R-Town and Country, stepped down last May after his sexually suggestive text messages with a college-age intern became public. A few weeks later, state Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Independence, also resigned after two interns accused him of unwanted sexual advances, some of them via text messages.

One of those interns was Lacy Hembree, a senior majoring in political science at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, Mo. She’s now working with Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., on creating some sort of advocacy system in the state Capitol to offer advice and counsel to interns.

Hembree said in an interview that several other interns had been involved with lawmakers, or fending off their advances, during her brief tenure in the state Capitol last spring.

Diehl wasn’t the first Missouri House speaker to leave amid controversy over his personal behavior. In fact, most of the speakers over the last 25 years have attracted unwanted attention – and in a couple cases, legal troubles.

But in Diehl’s case, the spotlight was particularly bright, in part because of the publicity over his text messages – a technology that wasn’t around a few years ago. Diehl had to back away from denying any such communications with the intern because of screen shots.

Steve Tilley, a Republican from Perryville, is a former House speaker who’s now a prominent lobbyist. He resigned from his post a few months early and dropped a strong bid for lieutenant governor, because of marital problems.

Tilley wasn’t accused of inappropriate public behavior. But he said he has witnessed in recent years the impact of social media, like Twitter and Facebook, where people’s once-private thoughts and actions may gain a public audience.

“In social media, it’s the Wild Wild West,” Tilley observed.

**Jefferson City: A ‘company’ town**

New Jefferson City Mayor Carrie Tergin, who operates a Hallmark gift shop within a block of the Capitol, is aware of the controversies and some of the disparaging talk about the state capital.
While critical of any inappropriate actions, Tergin rejects any characterizations of Jefferson City as a “party” town.

“Overall, we’re a very calm community, very level-headed,” she says of the mid-size city. But she acknowledges that Jefferson City’s fortunes are closely tied to those of the state government, which occupies several blocks in the middle of downtown.

“It’s a big part of our economy,” she said.

A look at the city’s sales-tax revenue, for example, shows that some of its most profitable months include the time when the General Assembly is in session.

In fact, Jefferson City is a company town – the “company” being Missouri state government.

With a population of about 43,000, Jefferson City was created along the banks of the Missouri River – at the heart of Missouri’s then-frontier – in 1821, when its namesake, Thomas Jefferson, was still alive.

The new capital was set up on a midpoint in the river between St. Louis and Kansas City, but it’s not on Missouri’s main interstate thoroughfares. One of the biggest state highways, U.S. 54, treats the state capital as a pass-through on the way to the tourist mecca of the Lake of the Ozarks.

A.J. Bockelman, longtime head of PROMO, the state’s biggest gay-rights group, says Jefferson City’s location is a key reason for its unusual environment.

“Jefferson City is its own island,” he said. “Outside of the role of government, few would visit there intentionally. The isolated nature of the town itself fosters a sense of ‘what happens in Jefferson City stays in Jefferson City.’”

He added, “Compound that along with the illusion of power and the stress of the (governmental) positions, you have a recipe for disaster.”

Bill Fix, a former aide to Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, a Republican, speculates that some of the misbehavior seen in the state capital is “a function of folks being away from home and feeling like they have freedom to do things they otherwise wouldn’t if they were home.”

He compares the mindset as “similar to the ‘road life’ in other professions like musicians, pro athletes and pro wrestling. People away from their home environment look for other ways to entertain themselves, and too often that means alcohol, drugs and promiscuity.”

**Dispute over reasons for sexual harassment**

Jack Cardetti, a consultant and former Democratic aide, suspects that legislative term limits – in place since 1993 – are partially to blame. He suggests that lawmakers planning a career in the General Assembly, as opposed to the eight-year limit, might be more careful about their behavior.
But McCaskill points to her days as a college intern in the state Capitol more than 40 years ago, where she also was the target of sexual harassment. She maintains that the state capital's problem is that little has changed.

State Rep. Newman, for example, says she’s still referred to as “little lady” during some committee meetings.

Consultant Brittany Burke believes that there’s obvious gender bias in the state Capitol that needs to be addressed. Burke was in the news a few months ago when she reported a sexual assault to police.

Burke, a former aide to Gov. Jay Nixon, said she was stunned when she began her consultant business and learned that male consultants and lobbyists often were paid far more than their female counterparts.

State Rep. Cloria Brown, a Republican from south St. Louis County, is a former business executive. She says she’s seen and experienced none of the misbehavior that some have cited. But she adds that Diehl’s actions wouldn’t be tolerated in the private sector.

As it stands, the General Assembly is expecting a report from a panel set up by Richardson to make suggestions on how best to improve the environment for interns. But Newman fears the suggestions won’t go far enough.

“Many of us were quite alarmed when the idea was to address interns’ dress code, which has nothing to do with the harassment of anyone, not just interns, but any woman that’s in that Capitol.”

So far, legislative leaders are saying little.

Meanwhile, Allen Tatman, the owner of Paddy Malone’s Pub in Jefferson City – also within walking distance of the Missouri Capitol – blames any problems on a few arrogant legislators.

Some, he said, “come to Jefferson City and … they think that we should bow on bended knees to them because they’re elected officials.”

But for all the attention on misbehavior now, Tatman said with a chuckle, “I don’t see as much of that as we used to.”
Bystander Intervention: Not Just for Sexual Assault

By Katherine Mangan

Austin, Tex.

NO MU MENTION

Bystander intervention is a hot topic at campus orientation sessions this fall as colleges struggle to come up with new ways to prevent sexual assaults. But the University of Texas system is taking that idea much further by urging students to step in to try to stave off suicide, binge drinking, hazing, hate speech, and even offensive language and academic dishonesty.

Texas regents allocated $1.4 million last year to support the three-year bystander-intervention initiative across the system’s eight academic campuses. Each campus is developing its own targeted interventions, which it will share with the others.

All define bystander intervention as "recognizing a potentially harmful situation or interaction and choosing to respond in a way that could positively influence the outcome," All prescribe the same three steps: Recognize the harm, choose to respond, and take action.

"We want to change the culture to one where we look out for each other and don’t stand by watching things happen," says Chris Brownson, associate vice president for student affairs at the system’s flagship campus, in Austin.

"This is an umbrella initiative to infuse all of our programs with one common language and one common set of action steps," says Mr. Brownson, who is leading the project for the system.

The flagship campus’s program, BeVocal, distributes its messages through social media, posters, student plays, and presentations. Laminated flip cards in campus centers give step-by-step guidelines on how to recognize and respond to a variety of
troubling scenarios, from a student who’s passed out, drunk, to one who’s making a joke about rape. Training bystanders to step in has been the focus of recent violence-prevention efforts on campuses nationwide, including the University of New Hampshire, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Carnegie Mellon University, where students can play an interactive game presented in the form of a graphic novel.

The student-run Green Team at Dartmouth College is taking on excessive drinking and sexual assault by watching out for students at fraternity parties.

Such programs have enjoyed renewed attention since the White House’s It’s On Us effort put the spotlight on them.

Few programs tackle as many issues as Texas is taking on. One that takes a similar, sweeping approach is Indiana University at Bloomington’s Culture of Care, a student-led, staff-supported initiative that encourages students to watch out for one another, whether the problem is sexual misconduct, drug abuse, or depression.

Freshman and Greek-life orientations at the University of Texas at Tyler included scenarios in which actors exhibited a number of troubling behaviors that could easily be overlooked in the chaotic and stressful first semester away from home.

Using the three-step approach of recognizing the harm, choosing to respond, and taking action, the students discussed how they might step in.

"It could be something like they stopped going to class or stopped interacting with other people and didn’t want to come out of their room," says Kim Harvey-Livingston, director of student services. "They might be sleeping all the time or not sleeping."

If someone says, "I don’t want to be here anymore. I’m done," that could mean anything from the person is homesick to sick of his class or contemplating suicide, she says.

Confronted with such a statement, a roommate might mention that a lot of people who are sad or depressed have thoughts of hurting themselves and ask whether he had ever thought about that.

He could then hand the student the numbers for campus counseling services.
Actions might be direct, like asking a potentially suicidal person if she’s considering hurting herself, or indirect, like calling the campus police or a crisis-response team.

"Whether it’s about violence or depression or suicide or alcohol," Ms. Harvey-Livingston says, "this is about recognizing that there’s a problem and choosing to act."

September 9, 2015
by Goldie Blumenstyk

President Obama to Announce a New ‘College Promise’ Campaign

The movements for free community college and other tuition- and debt-free college programs will get a renewed push on Wednesday when President Obama returns to Macomb Community College, in Michigan — along with Jill Biden, the wife of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and a longtime community-college professor — to announce a wide-ranging new effort called the College Promise campaign.

Notably, with many observers now questioning whether Mr. Obama has the political support to get his own free-community-college proposal enacted before he leaves office, the new campaign will promote not only the administration’s America’s College Promise but also a variety of state and local efforts.

While details of the campaign will be made public later on Wednesday, parties familiar with it said it would include activities to encourage grass-roots organizing of students through an organization called Heads Up America. An advertising agency working with Heads Up America will produce public-service announcements featuring students, community-college alumni, and celebrities.

The College Promise campaign will be chaired by Ms. Biden, with Jim Geringer, a former Republican governor of Wyoming, as co-chair. Martha J. Kanter, a former top Education Department official in the Obama administration and a former community-college president, will direct the campaign. The campaign will also have a National Advisory Board that will include the president of the Association of Community College Trustees, J. Noah Brown, and the president of the American Association of Community Colleges, Walter G. Bumphus.
Mr. Obama will also announce $175 million in new “American Apprenticeship Grants,” including some to colleges, to help train and hire more than 34,000 new apprentices over the next five years in high-growth and high-tech industries, as well as in the construction, transportation, and energy industries.

President Obama previously visited Macomb in 2009 and used the occasion to argue for focusing much more attention — and money — on community colleges in federal education policies.

September 8, 2015

The Path to Change Runs Through the Provost’s Office

By Lee Gardner

Fullerton, Calif.

When José L. Cruz became a provost three years ago, he knew a lot had to change. And that the change had to start with him. A self-described introvert more at home with a spreadsheet full of numbers than a room full of people, Mr. Cruz recognized that his new role, at California State University’s Fullerton campus, required him to get out from behind his computer screen.

If a campus is going to pursue new priorities, fix systemic problems, or adopt innovation on a broad scale, a provost will most likely be directing the charge. To do that, the provost has to listen, inform, discuss, and persuade, engaging people from all corners of campus.
One of Mr. Cruz’s first moves in his new job was to get rid of his desk. He set up his office more like a living room, with armchairs and a coffee table, perfect for welcoming the daily parade of deans, administrators, and professors.

Chief academic officers have always played a key role in running the day-to-day affairs of their campuses, but that role has grown even more prominent as presidents spend more time away from campus, tending to fund raising and other external duties that make up growing portions of their jobs.

While colleges still depend on their presidents to set big-picture vision and make decisions about direction, they increasingly rely on chief academic officers to shepherd improvement and innovation and get institutionwide support for change. Provosts’ roles are expanding to involve more strategic thinking, particularly as pressures grow for colleges to prove their worth and rein in costs. Mr. Cruz, like many of his peers, not only oversees Fullerton’s faculty and academic affairs, he also plays an important role in planning, budgeting, and improving student outcomes.

Provosts’ influence is reflected in the resources they manage. At Fullerton, about 60 percent of the institution’s budget falls under academic affairs, a figure that is in line with many other institutions.

"A lot of the issues that could impact a president’s ability to meet his or her ambitions or goals," Mr. Cruz says, "are dependent on the provost’s ability to deliver."

Provosts became a more common part of academic life in the decades after World War II. Booming enrollments and expanding institutions hastened the appointment of chief academic officers to oversee the bigger faculties and increased numbers of schools and programs. The provost was meant to be a dean for the other deans, the academic realm’s "first among equals." At first, provosts were most often found at elite institutions, but the position is now common at all types of colleges. Some colleges that have done without provosts for years are now adding them. Villanova University announced this spring that the dean of its business school, Patrick G. Maggitti, would become its first provost. The university had a vice president for academic affairs, but not all academic units were under the office; the law school, for example, reported directly to the president.

Villanova needed a provost, Mr. Maggitti says, to help build up its graduate-education programs and faculty research culture — part of a larger goal of enhancing the
university’s national reputation. "There became a clear need to pull together all the academic enterprises under one umbrella, to look for opportunities to increase efficiencies, but also to be more effective in delivering academic initiatives."

Provosts have traditionally come from the faculty, rising through their departments to administrative roles such as dean before landing the job. While credibility with the faculty remains an important qualification, the traditional pathway to the top academic job on campus doesn’t provide much preparation for running an entire university, says Peter Lange, a professor of political science at Duke University who served as provost there for 15 years.

"I used to say that as a professor, all of your rewards come from knowing one subject really deeply, and as a provost, all of your rewards come from seeming to know a lot about a very wide range of subjects," Mr. Lange says. "That breadth is a challenge in the beginning."

Search committees are attracted by provost candidates who have broad managerial experience, says Michael A. Baer, a former provost at Northeastern University and now a vice president at Isaacson, Miller, an executive-search firm. Colleges still want candidates with a deep understanding of curriculum and faculty expectations, he says, but they may want to see if a candidate has wider operational experience, too. Has he or she worked on a building project or a master plan? Has he or she worked with units of the campus, such as student affairs, that may once have been seen as peripheral to the academic mission?

Some new provosts provide examples of those who have come to the job with that broader background. Mr. Maggitti, who holds a Ph.D. in strategic management, spent more than a dozen years in the steel and mining industries before joining the business faculty at Villanova. Mr. Cruz rose through the electrical-engineering faculty and administrative ranks at his alma mater, the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, but he also spent three years as vice president of higher-education policy and practice at the Education Trust, a nonprofit organization that promotes student success.

At its core, the provost’s job has always been demanding, says Mark G. McNamee, who just stepped down as provost at Virginia Tech after 14 years. But the context has changed, he says. State support for public colleges has diminished, competition for students has increased, and the regulatory environment has grown more complex.
Now, Mr. McNamee says, "all the pieces are harder to manage."

Provosts’ offices have added staff to handle extra workload and also to focus on strategic priorities. Mr. McNamee estimates that his office’s staff grew by 10 percent while he was at Virginia Tech. At Fullerton, Mr. Cruz hired a deputy provost to help with operational areas such as institutional research and enrollment services. Duke University, meanwhile, added part-time vice provosts for the arts and for global strategies and programs to advance its institutional goals in those areas.

The growth in the provost’s office has contributed to the expansion of administrative ranks on many campuses, a trend that some faculty members and others denounce as "administrative bloat," which they worry diverts money from the core academic enterprise. But Mr. McNamee says provosts need more staff to accomplish the work critical to preserving the university’s academic quality and moving the institution forward. "We’re conscious of having as lean an organization as we can," he says, "but if you’re too lean, you can’t get things done."

The task of shaping change and making it happen across a campus falls to provosts partly because they have institutionwide reach. They can gather information and opinions from all of a university’s colleges and divisions. They can evaluate possible courses of action relatively free from the parochial concerns of deans, department chairs, and others who lead academic units.

Provosts have the purview to steer resources, setting clear budget priorities. And they can seed change throughout an institution by talking it up, following up with the various deans and department chairs, and sharing promising results.

"The provost needs to be an exceptionally good facilitator," says Lauren Bowen, provost at Juniata College, in Pennsylvania. "The ideas might get generated from the faculty or from advancement, but it’s up to the provost to facilitate the process so that voices are heard and decisions get made."

There are some kinds of change that only a provost can make happen, says Harold Hellenbrand, who returned to teaching this summer after 11 years as provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University at Northridge.

Mr. Hellenbrand says part of his job in recent years had been to serve as point person for Northridge’s efforts to align its technical-education programs with the needs of the region’s aerospace manufacturers. An English professor by training, he says, "If you’d told me I was going to be doing that 20 years ago, I would have told you you were nuts."
Mr. Hellenbrand oversaw the collection and analysis of data for the project, evaluated which programs and technologies might be needed, and asked questions about what the university was trying to do, why, and how.

"A technologist can provide the technology, the data people can do data, and people can ask questions," Mr. Hellenbrand says. But when it comes to tying all those things together — "so you actually get bang for the buck," he says — you need the provost.

Getting that bang also requires building support for change among fellow administrators and faculty members. Through his research on aerospace manufacturing, Mr. Hellenbrand found that the local job market was no longer dominated by huge defense contractors but filled with smaller manufacturers that needed employees with more adaptable skills. "You’re no longer preparing people for a job that’s going to be there for 20 years, you’re preparing people for developing skills in industries that will cross-migrate over time," he says.

Getting the university to adapt its programs to produce graduates with the right training meant persuading faculty members that the market had fundamentally changed and that longstanding programs needed to change, too. Some professors are never going to agree that revising academic programs to respond to industry needs is a good idea, he says. But Mr. Hellenbrand worked to get other faculty members behind his efforts, including by creating incentives to develop new courses, such as matching-grant funds. He also provided money and training to support a blend of traditional engineering curricula with team-based project learning designed with the local job market in mind.

While currying broad support among faculty is important, provosts must sometimes proceed without it, says Peter N. Stearns, a former provost at George Mason University.

About a decade ago, when the university was expanding programs, Mr. Stearns wanted to create an interdisciplinary major in global affairs. Such a major, he believed, could build on existing strengths and attract new students. But the provost says he encountered some resistance from members of a few departments who, Mr. Stearns says, worried that the program might infringe on their turf. "I won’t claim that I persuaded everybody," he says, "but I persuaded enough people that we were able to go forward with it."
Gaining support for change and innovation requires much discussion, and many, many meetings. Ask a provost what he or she does on a typical day, and out will spill a litany of back-to-back appointments: with the president, with the president’s cabinet, with the deans, with faculty members. Mr. Cruz sometimes refers to his role at Fullerton as "chief discussant." It is through his meetings, which take up at least six hours of every day and tend to be scheduled five months in advance, that he shapes and prompts change. He and his staff are already preparing for specific meetings scheduled for February.

One key issue Mr. Cruz set out to improve was Fullerton’s graduation rate, a change urged by the university’s accreditor. Only about half of the university’s first-time, full-time freshmen who entered in 2008 graduated in six years, and the university had little timely data about who was dropping out, or why.

Using data better became a topic of conversation in many of Mr. Cruz’s meetings. He talked up a new tool to deans and department chairs that culled and compiled student data from across the institution daily, and persuaded several colleges within the university to test it as a way to improve their retention rates. He oversaw the development of training programs to teach people across the campus how to use it.

Mr. Cruz also set aside money to hire a new type of academic adviser to comb through the data and find seniors who were at risk of not graduating. The advisers, known as graduation specialists, were able to help 350 people this spring avoid having to defer graduation. Fullerton’s most-recent six-year graduation rate, for freshmen who entered in the fall of 2009, is just over 60 percent, a historic high for the campus. At least four other Cal State campuses are adopting the data system Mr. Cruz advocated.

The smallest of changes can require a provost to coordinate discussions over months, and even years. At Kansas State University, administrators wanted to rethink professional titles, including adding some that would allow people who had taught off the tenure track for many years to advance beyond the title of "instructor." April Mason, provost and senior vice president, who is also president of the Association of Chief Academic Officers, convened a campus task force to examine the issue, discussed the panel’s proposals with the deans and the president’s cabinet, went over them with the human resources and legal departments, and brought a final draft before the state Board of Regents.
With the goal of improving the university’s ability to recruit and keep teaching faculty, the task force suggested creating a new range of titles that would allow a person to advance from instructor to advanced instructor to senior instructor and offering five-year contracts to some instructors. The idea required persistence from the provost. She pursued further discussions with faculty members who expressed concerns about how the new titles and a promotion system outside the tenure track might undermine the existing system. When the final proposal reached the regents, they balked at five-year contracts and approved three-year contracts instead.

Over all, the process of developing and finalizing the new titles took about three years. When you think you’ve communicated more than necessary in a process like this, Ms. Mason says, you’re probably just getting started.

For provosts, leading innovation also means helping to generate money and putting it in the right places.
A few years ago, provosts might have been involved peripherally in fund raising or working to increase tuition revenue by attracting more international students. But post-recession economic pressures have made finances a main day-to-day concern of chief academic officers, says Mr. Hellenbrand, of Northridge.

The prominence of financial matters in the job duties of colleges’ academic chiefs can be problematic because many provosts have little or no training in budgeting, says James Martin, a professor of English at Mount Ida College and co-author of two books about the role of provosts. Often, "they’re careful stewards of institutional resources, but they’re not really imaginative or skillful," he says. Now that colleges are unable to rely on growth, he says, the same old budget processes and priorities are likely to lead back to the same old impasses and challenges and inhibit strategic changes.

Mr. Lange, of Duke, says it is up to provosts to get their campuses to take strategic planning seriously.

With very tight budgets now, colleges have to deliberately map out what’s most important and what they want to achieve, Mr. Lange says. And provosts are the key to shaping those priorities, putting resources behind them, and getting the rest of the campus to support them. Given the financial challenges ahead for colleges, provosts’ ability to lead strategic thinking on their campuses and build broad support, Mr.
Lange says, is going to be even more important in the next five years than in the past decade.

At Fullerton, Mr. Cruz is preparing the university to change how money is allocated across colleges to focus resources on the university’s highest priorities. Rather than doling out money based solely on projected enrollment, he wants to require colleges to make budget requests and tie those proposals to strategic goals, such as improving retention rates or building up programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

California is moving toward a performance-based funding model for its higher-education system, Mr. Cruz says, and "we’re looking to position ourselves for when that day comes by ensuring that our internal investments are guided to those people and programs that will position us well for whatever the metrics are."

Proposing such changes requires provosts to have the will, and the skill, to brief colleagues on the facts and introduce potential new ways of operating. He is spending much of the next several weeks visiting each of the university’s more than 70 academic units to discuss how best to align resources with academic goals. "That’s a very difficult conversation to have, because now you’re letting the realities of your resources impact or influence the scholarly disciplines that are represented in your faculty," Mr. Cruz says. But, given budget realities, "we need to have those conversations."

Difficult conversations come with the provost’s job, and some of the toughest involve personnel. During her first year as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, Kathleen Enz Finken found that she would have to make some changes in the ranks of the institution’s top administrators.

"Sometimes they’re great people, but they’re just not up to the job," she says. Telling a high-profile colleague that he or she needs to move into a new role with less responsibility is one of the more stressful things provosts do, she says, but sometimes it’s the best thing for the institution.

Perhaps the biggest challenge provosts face each day is time management. With all of the meetings and day-to-day troubleshooting, it requires discipline to plan for the long term.

After five years in the provost’s role at Kansas State, Ms. Mason says that she has elbowed out three hours on one afternoon each week to prepare for meetings and
focus on strategic matters. Mr. Cruz has an hour scheduled each morning and afternoon with no appointments. But last-minute meetings, and the occasional crisis, still intrude.

"We often joke," says Mr. McNamee, "‘Do we have time to think?’"

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**4 Things New Provosts Need to Know**

Veteran provosts offer this advice on how to survive and master a demanding job:

**Delegate.** Provosts must resist the temptation to try to do everything themselves. "That’s like the mayor putting on the fire chief’s hat and instructing the fire crew how to put out a fire," says Harold Hellenbrand, a former provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University at Northridge. Delegating certain duties allows the administrators responsible to augment the effective power of the office. "People will view these administrators as a true resource rather than an obstacle to overcome," says Mark G. McNamee, a former senior vice president and provost at Virginia Tech.

**Consult widely.** Even amid the barrage of direct-report meetings, it’s important to cultivate relationships with other administrators and faculty members to gain a fuller picture of what’s really going on. "You can assume that any information that you get is inevitably biased by the network and the position that it’s coming from," says Mr. Hellenbrand. "That’s just human nature."

**Be as forthcoming as possible.** Briefing and soliciting the input of administrators and faculty and staff members in important decisions, however contentious they may be, can increase support for changes in the long run. "I always say, you can pay now or you can pay later when it comes to decision-making," Mr. McNamee says. "Even if you’re doing things they may not think are the best ideas, they appreciate knowing in advance what’s going on and what the options are."

**Don’t work too hard.** Provosts face "almost unlimited opportunities to do more," Mr. McNamee says, but that doesn’t mean they should. Working long hours and taking on more projects can make them less effective as a result of stress and exhaustion. "There’s a point of diminishing returns," says Kathleen Enz Finken, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo. "It is critical to say, I need to have time for myself, and that has to be protected."