Mizzou student leader says discrimination common on campus

Sept. 14, 2015 • By Koran Addo

If you’re black on Mizzou’s campus, you might want to stay away from Greek Town at night. And if you’re gay, you probably want to avoid holding hands with your partner outside of certain Columbia eateries.

At least that’s the prevailing wisdom from a number of students who say the University of Missouri-Columbia campus is frequently a hostile and uncomfortable place for minorities, Muslims and gay and transgender students.

And while the topics of race and tolerance are often discussed only quietly, those discussions tend to get louder when wrapped around occurrences like an incident that happened last weekend.

Student body president Payton Head said he was walking down the street Friday night when a group of men driving by in a pickup started yelling at him, using a racial slur repeatedly.

As president of the Missouri Students Association, the incident puts Head in a peculiar place: elected to be a leader on a campus where he feels uncomfortable.

“We all paid money to come here, we should all feel comfortable, or at the very least, we should all feel safe,” he said. “It’s not like this is the first time this has happened.”

One time walking through Greek Town as a sophomore, Head said he was accosted by fraternity members who yelled racial slurs at him. Another time, a friend who is transgender was spit on while walking down the street. Another friend left Mizzou after a series of incidents, including one in which a fraternity member slammed a door in her face at a party and said, “We’re not accepting black girls for the night.”

Head described those incidents and his experience on Friday in a lengthy Facebook post that has generated a lot of discussion on campus.

His posting describes a campus where different minority groups feel like second-class citizens, Muslim women are called terrorists and homophobic slurs are commonplace.

Symone Lenoir, a senior majoring in interdisciplinary studies, described life on campus in two ways: segregated and tense.

And while the incidents described make up a small sample size, Lenoir said outsiders shouldn’t be too quick to dismiss them.

“After all, this is a campus where black people by and large don’t participate in homecoming,” she said. “Mizzou is known for homecoming, but a lot of us don’t feel included, so we have our own entirely separate homecoming.”

University spokesman Christian Basi did not comment specifically on Head’s experience or other matters of discrimination, but he said the university takes the incidents seriously.
“We take all incidents of bias and discrimination seriously and will take action against any perpetrators who we can identify, as we have in the past with other incidents.”

In 2010, when two white students scattered cotton balls outside the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, they were arrested and suspended.

Basi also encouraged students who feel unsafe on campus as a result of an incident to contact the campus police, and to file a bias report if they’ve experienced or witnessed an act of discrimination.

For Head, there’s only so much the university can do.

“It’s really on us as students to hold each other accountable,” he said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MSA president speaks out about racist incident

COLUMBIA — Payton Head said the first time he was ever called the "N-word" was behind a fraternity house in Greektown when he was walking a friend home from campus at night last spring.

"I'd had experience with racism before, like microaggressions, but that was the first time I'd experienced in-your-face racism," Head, now a senior and president of the Missouri Students Association, said.

He had considered leaving MU but joined MSA instead.

Then on Friday night, Head said he was walking down Hitt Street when a pickup passed him and a passenger repeatedly shouted racial slurs at him.

"Some guys in the back of a pickup just started yelling the 'N-word' at me," Head said Monday.

This time, his response was a Facebook post on Saturday that brought it to the attention of the MU community.

"I could either not say anything and go about my night, or I could finish my term and stay angry, or I could say something," Head said in the interview.

In his online post, Head expanded his experience beyond racism and addressed issues of exclusion that multiple MU minority groups face.
"I really just want to know why my simple existence is such a threat to society," Head wrote. "For those of you who wonder why I'm always talking about the importance of inclusion and respect, it's because I've experienced moments like this multiple times at THIS university, making me not feel included here."

In his post, Head mentioned aggression against a Muslim woman who wears the hijab, a transgender student who was spat on downtown and students with disabilities trying to navigate Memorial Union. He talked about women who feel uncomfortable walking outside at night.

In both the post and the interview, he described his experience walking past a bar with his partner and having drinks thrown at them.

"I could have easily made this post about myself, but it's my job to think about the whole community," Head said.

Head said he wants to challenge the respectability many people think MU has and the notion that racist incidents don't happen in Columbia, or that the MSA president would be exempt from racism.

As MSA president, Head has the power to introduce legislation or take direct action, and he can push committees to look at specific issues and bring students' concerns to the attention of committees and MU leaders.

"These are some of my experiences and the experiences of the ones closest to me," Head said in his Facebook post. "This is what I'm fighting against every day in boardrooms, conferences, meetings, classrooms, the Capitol, and in my daily life. This is my reality. Is it weird that I think that I have the right to feel safe here, too? If you see violence like this and don't say anything, you, yes YOU, are a part of the problem."

More than 684 people liked Head's post as of 9:30 p.m. Monday, and there were 645 "shares." Cathy Scroggs, MU vice chancellor of student affairs, posted on Head's Facebook page: "Payton is a profile in courage."

Head said a friend called MU Police.

The police have reached out and spoken to Head, MU spokesman Christian Basi said Monday evening.

After the first time he was called a racist insult, Head said, "I didn't want to be (at MU) anymore." But this time, he said his duty as president is to make sure MSA and the MU community know that students face racism and other aggression.

"Mizzou is home," Head said. "But if I don't expose the issues going on in my own home, how will anything change?"
MU School of Medicine dean resigns

COLUMBIA — Patrice "Patrick" Delafontaine, who became dean of the MU School of Medicine on Dec. 1, has resigned from the position effective immediately.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced the resignation in a statement published in Insight, an email newsletter for employees of the University Health System. He also wrote that James Stannard, chairman of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, has agreed to serve as interim dean. He did not address why Delafontaine has decided to step down.

The chancellor also said he has accepted a recommendation from Huron Consulting, which was hired to review the organizational structure of MU's Health Care, to restore the position of executive vice chancellor for health affairs.

"This structure will help us align strategy and operations around the goals for both our clinical and research enterprise and to support the academic mission of our Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions," Loftin wrote.

"We will recruit for this position a physician leader who fosters collaboration, is focused on the future of the health care industry, is able to provide visionary and strategic leadership, can mentor key leaders and has a track record of fostering and growing sponsored research."

Delafontaine was hired as dean in July 2014 and took on the role five months later. He was previously chief of cardiology at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he had worked since 2003, according to previous Missourian reporting.

He also had served as the Sidney and Marilyn Lassen Chair of Cardiovascular Medicine and director of the Tulane University Heart and Vascular Institute.

Delafontaine was the first scientist to establish the critical link between the human hormone system that regulates blood pressure and a protein that is essential for childhood growth, which provided insight into muscle-wasting diseases, according to a university news release. He has authored more than 115 articles about his research.

Three months after his arrival at MU, an unfavorable report was presented to the MU Faculty Council that examined the organizational culture of the school. According to previous Missourian reporting, the Faculty Council had earlier appointed a four-person committee to examine the work environment for tenured and tenure-track faculty after receiving several reports of perceived imbalances in the priorities of the School of Medicine.
The report not only criticized clinical department leadership, but it also found that the School of Medicine's research productivity ranked low when compared to other schools in the Association of American Universities, Southeastern Conference and the Midwest.

Delafontaine came a month after the arrival of Warren Lockette, the School of Medicine's new senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion. Lockette came to MU to help it address ongoing problems with the recruitment of minority students.

The former dean of the MU School of Medicine, Robert Churchill, retired in October 2012, according to previous Missourian reporting. The move followed a federal investigation that revealed fraudulent billing practices of two doctors in the Department of Radiology at MU Health Care. Churchill was not implicated in the investigation. Les Hall served as the interim dean.

Delafontaine's office had no comment on Monday afternoon. His annual salary was $600,000, according to previous reporting.

Trogdon Pledges $1.5 Million to University Libraries

MU alumnus and New York Times best-selling author William Trogdon and his wife JoAnn have pledged $1.5 million of their estate to the University’s libraries.

The gift will contribute to the William Trogdon Libraries Fund, which supports rare books and special collections on American exploration, travel and topography and Native American studies. Trogdon also donated his personal collection of over 3,000 rare books about travel.

Trogdon is known for his 1982 travelogue, Blue Highways, which was written after receiving his PhD in English from the University of Missouri. He hopes that his donation will help future students become better scholars and writers.
“[Young writers] don’t develop ideas because they are too largely uninformed by 3,000 years of human culture,” Trogdon said. “So that’s why you come to Ellis Library. This is where you learn what’s there, among these 3 million books.”

The Trogdons will also donate $100,000 to the MU School of Health Professions in honor of William’s father, to support scholarships for physically disabled students. Trogdon says he was inspired on his undergraduate graduation night, when he helped a man in a wheelchair travel up ninth street.

“I just thought, ‘This man has a rough way to get an education. It shouldn’t be that hard, if there’s anything we can do to make his path to a degree easier,’” Trogdon said.

JoAnn Trogdon is an attorney and historian whose book, *The Unknown Travels and Dubious Pursuit of William Clark*, was published by the University of Missouri Press last month. The couple met while conducting research in Ellis Library.

**University of Missouri to test emergency alert system**

Monday, September 14, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri plans to test its emergency notification systems at 12:50 p.m. Friday, the university said in a news release.

MU tests its warning system every semester. During the test, alert beacons will flash for 10 seconds, the release said. The beacons are in lecture halls and in the common areas and hallways of most classroom buildings and student unions.

The drill also will test text message and mass email systems and computer desktop notifications. Messages also will be posted to MU’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, and a notice will be posted on the MU Alert webpage, the release said.
Nicklaus: Tax credit would be better for workers than minimum wage hike

Sept. 15, 2015 • By David Nicklaus

Pro-business groups always seem to be on the defensive in debates over the minimum wage, but they don’t have to be.

Groups such as the St. Louis Regional Chamber and the Missouri Restaurant Association are absolutely right when they argue that a big increase in the wage floor will destroy jobs. Unfortunately, voters don’t want to hear that. They’re swayed more by tales of hardship than by cold, hard logic.

This issue is likely to be front and center in Missouri next year. The same groups that pushed successfully for big increases in Kansas City and St. Louis have served notice that they want a statewide minimum-wage referendum in November 2016.

They’ve received approval to circulate three initiative petitions, with the goal of taking the state minimum eventually to $11, $12 or even $15 an hour. Even the lowest of those proposals, which would match St. Louis’ new $11 wage floor, would destroy a large number of jobs.

As I said, though, voters won’t want to hear that. If the pro-business side wants to have a chance of winning this fight, it needs to propose a better way of helping the working poor.

Fortunately, the earned-income tax credit would do just that. We’ve had one at the federal level since 1975, and 26 states have added it to their tax codes, too. Missouri has not.

The earned-income credit is designed to reward work while boosting the wages of low-income workers. The federal credit and many state ones are refundable, meaning that you can qualify even if you don’t owe any taxes.

The federal credit has become one of the government’s most powerful antipoverty tools. It also improves progressivity, a virtue that’s lacking in many state tax systems, including Missouri’s.

“It can help offset the really regressive taxes, like sales taxes and excise taxes, which hit low- and middle-income families hardest,” says Meg Wiehe, state tax policy director at the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

This spring, a study found that Missouri’s tax system exacerbates inequality. Not only does the state rely heavily on sales taxes, it imposes the top income tax rate on people who earn as little as $9,000.

A higher minimum wage creates winners and losers: Some folks get a raise while others lose their jobs or have their hours reduced. A state earned-income credit, by contrast, helps all low-income workers.

**Michael Podgursky, a professor of economics at the University of Missouri, says the earned-income credit is clearly the better policy of the two. You don’t get a tax credit unless you work, so it increases the incentive to find a job.**

Some minimum-wage proponents have turned that argument on its head, complaining that the tax credit subsidizes employers that pay low wages.
“Yes, it is” a subsidy, Podgursky responds. “We are trying to entice employers to buy the labor services of low-skilled workers.”

That’s not a subsidy anyone should need to apologize for. Missouri handed out $549 million in tax credits last year, subsidizing everything from grapevines to low-income housing.

Many of those programs are bloated and inefficient, as a state commission pointed out five years ago. Redirecting a big chunk of that money to Missouri’s working poor would strike a blow for fairness while helping the state’s economy.

It might not derail the campaign for a higher minimum wage in Missouri, but it would at least show voters that there’s a superior alternative.

September 15, 2015

‘How Much Will I Make After Graduating?’
College Scorecard Offers Only Clues

By Kelly Field

**NO MU MENTION**

When President Obama announced the release of a new federal College Scorecard in his weekly address on Saturday, he said the website would give Americans "access to reliable data on every institution of higher education."

"You’ll be able to see how much each school’s graduates earn, how much debt they graduate with, and what percentage of a school’s students can pay back their loans," he said.

But prospective students who turn to the revamped tool to estimate their future earnings probably won’t get a realistic sense of what they can expect to make after graduating. And if they’re checking out state websites with wage data as well, they’re likely to end up more confused than enlightened.

To understand why, let’s consider a hypothetical student — Jake, a junior in Virginia who is looking at four-year colleges in his state. Jake doesn’t want to take on large amounts of debt, so he’s leaning toward a public college at which he can pay in-state
tuition. He has excelled in STEM classes, so he enters "Virginia Polytechnic Institute" in the search field of the government’s College Scorecard. A graphic tells him that his projected annual "salary after attending" is $57,900, well above the national average of $34,343. He also learns that 80 percent of Virginia Tech graduates earn more than someone who has only a high-school degree.

If he dug a little further, hovering on the "information" icon above the graphics, Jake would learn that the earnings figure accounts for recipients of federal student aid only, and reflects the earnings of students 10 years after they first enrolled. The 80-percent figure, he’d discover, is based on the share of former students who earn more than $25,000 (the average annual income of young high-school graduates) six years after enrolling.

Here’s what the website wouldn’t tell him: how students who don’t receive federal aid fare, or how graduates’ earnings compare with those of dropouts. Nor would it show how majoring in English, rather than engineering, might affect his earning potential. That limitation matters. A wealth of research has shown that "what you study is more determinative than where you study it," said Mark S. Schneider, vice president of the American Institutes for Research.

As Jeff Strohl, director of research at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, put it, the scorecard "tells you what people make, on average, but nobody is average."

"The misleading part is the variation," he said. "If you’re a French-literature major at Harvard, you’d better not look at these data and think you’re going to earn $87,000" five years out.

**Where State Sites Fall Short**

For program-level information, Jake could turn to his state’s higher-education website, which provides average earnings at 18 months and five years after completion, by degree. There he’d learn that the median annual wage for Virginia Tech graduates who earned four-year bachelor’s degrees in the five years ending in 2006 was $52,090 five years after graduation.

He’d also discover the wide variation in wages among majors. Five years out, the average English major was earning just $41,094, while the average chemical-engineering major was making $73,889. Those nuances aren’t captured on the federal site, which provides only a single number for an entire institution.
But the state site has some significant gaps, too. Chief among them is the fact that the data are limited to graduates employed in Virginia in positions that are covered by the state’s unemployment insurance. Missing from the data are graduates who work in the neighboring District of Columbia or Maryland (or any other state), along with federal workers, members of the military, and the self-employed, among others. A note on the state’s website cautions users to "exercise great care to understand the limitations of the available data and their meaning."

"Wage outcomes of graduates do not measure the quality or effectiveness of any institution," the note warns.

And while the state site would give Jake a good sense of what he might earn if he graduated and remained in the state, it wouldn’t help him understand the fiscal consequences of dropping out. That’s because, unlike the federal site, it includes only graduates. Tod Massa, director of policy research and data warehousing at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, said the state was exploring ways to draw distinctions between those who earn a degree and those who drop out.

"Clearly, you get a better return if you finish than if you don’t, but we can’t say that right now," he said. (The feds can’t either, since they combine everyone who started at a college.)

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<tr>
<th>Post-Completion Wages of Graduates</th>
<th>Years Post Completion</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>FT Wages (%)</th>
<th>Enrolled at Higher Level (%)</th>
<th>Part-Time Wages (%)</th>
<th>No Information (%)</th>
<th>25th Percentile</th>
<th>Median</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language and Literature, General, Four-Year Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>$19,441</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language and Literature, General, Four-Year Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>5 years post-completion</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>$30,692</td>
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<th>Post-Completion Wages of Graduates</th>
<th>Years Post Completion</th>
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<th>No Information (%)</th>
<th>25th Percentile</th>
<th>Median</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering, Four-Year Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
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<td>256</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>$35,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering, Four-Year Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>Virginia Tech</td>
<td>5 years post-completion</td>
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<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>$62,521</td>
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Meanwhile, the U.S. Education Department has begun collecting earnings data by program level, with plans to include it in future versions of the scorecard.

Now let’s imagine that Jake’s college counselor urges him to expand his college search to private institutions, noting that many of them offer generous financial-aid packages. If Jake restricted his search to Virginia, he would be able to view the same earnings information that he did for public colleges.

But if he ventured outside his home state, he would be likely to be out of luck. That’s because most states that publish graduates’ earnings do so only for public institutions, not private colleges, according to Mr. Schneider. And none allow consumers to compare similar programs across state lines.

So what is Jake, as a prospective student, to do with the inconsistent and incomplete earnings data available to him? He could choose to ignore it, as some overwhelmed students no doubt will. Or he could draw what conclusions he can, piecing together a rough picture of whether a college is likely to be worth the investment in time and money.

In the Right Direction

September 15, 2015

By

Nancy Zimpher

NO MU MENTION

While the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard website may be a scaled-back version of what President Obama first announced on the State University of New York’s own Buffalo campus in 2013, it will be a useful tool for providing the information
students and their families need to make decisions about college costs and return on investment.

We agree with President Obama: it’s not a moment too soon for colleges and universities across the nation to be held to a standard of transparency and accountability. The bottom line is that if we really want to take a bite out of student debt, we have to help students understand the true cost of college and what it is they’re paying for. The College Scorecard, which provides new measures of student outcomes at specific colleges and universities -- including graduation rates, median salaries and loan repayment rates -- is an important step in the right direction. Increasing college completion ought to be the next.

While SUNY is proud to offer fair and predictable tuition that is the most affordable of public colleges in the Northeast, we know that controlling tuition alone will not solve the debt crisis. There must also be a strong commitment to ensuring that students finish their degrees as quickly as possible, without taking unnecessary courses and thus ringing up additional cost.

SUNY has committed to increasing the number of degrees awarded annually from 93,000 to 150,000 by 2020. We’re going to ensure that more students complete on time at lower cost. And in doing so, we will expand access to what we know is one of the most valuable commodities in today’s society: a high-quality college degree and an educational experience that has prepared each graduate for workforce success. SUNY is already a leader when it comes to student completion and achievement, in part because we have created and expanded programs that help students get their degree. Our four-, five- and six-year graduation rates for baccalaureate students surpass those of our national public peers, and the same is true of our two- and three-year graduation rates at the associate level. We launched our own financial literacy tool, SUNY Smart Track, which ensures that students and families understand their borrowing options and responsibilities; we adopted the nation's most comprehensive seamless transfer policy; and we are significantly expanding online course offerings through Open SUNY.

However, we know that until every student completes, we have more work to do. We recognize the need to continuously improve and welcome effective ways to do so. I am pleased to see that the metrics included in the Scorecard mirror those used to ensure quality through SUNY’s own performance management system, SUNY Excels. In fact, the 64 campuses of SUNY are currently at work fine-tuning performance plans for how they will answer a systemwide call for improved retention and graduation rates, greater financial literacy among students, expanded applied learning and research opportunities, and more. The College Scorecard could help us measure our progress on some of those goals, both within SUNY and in comparison to others nationally. It will allow us to identify the programs and interventions that really move the dial on student completion so we can take them to scale across our university system.

I am especially encouraged by the administration’s commitment to adding Student Achievement Measure (SAM) data, which accounts for the outcomes of transfer students, to the Scorecard. A large number of students move in and out of institutions or transfer without a degree, which means that many colleges and universities have a majority of students that the federal system would otherwise not count. Throughout this process, I have stressed the importance of SAM, joining my colleagues in the
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities just recently in a final push to use this data because it is so vital in providing students and their families with the complete picture on degree attainment. At SUNY alone, nearly 30,000 students transfer annually among our institutions, and last year, 35 percent of all our undergraduate degrees were awarded to transfer students.

In pivoting from the original proposal to rate colleges and universities -- many of which have significantly different missions and serve vastly different student bodies -- and ultimately adding in SAM data, the Scorecard will also account for the diversity of institutions and the students they serve. As a public institution with a founding commitment to access for New Yorkers, we see transparency and accountability as fundamental to helping parents and students understand opportunities and challenges as they navigate an increasingly complex cradle-to-career pipeline.

I applaud President Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan for recognizing, as SUNY has, that data must be a driving factor as higher education works toward continued improvement. I look forward to working with my colleagues in higher education and with our federal partners in a continuing effort to bring to light the most comprehensive and accurate data available to help students make informed choices.

BIO

Nancy Zimpher is the chancellor of the State University of New York.

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Next Steps on FAFSA
September 15, 2015

By

Josh Logue

NO MU MENTION

Plenty of questions remain unanswered after the White House announced Sunday a rejiggering of when and how students apply for federal financial aid.
Starting in 2016 for the 2017-18 academic year, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid will be available earlier, in October rather than January, and applicants will be able to use income information from two-year-old completed tax returns rather than sometimes incomplete information from the previous year.

In less than 24 hours, dozens of universities -- including the University of California system, the University of Texas at San Antonio and Loyola University Maryland -- committed to realigning their own institutional financial aid applications to use the “prior-prior year” data. And more university commitments are on the way, said the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), an organization that has pushed for this change for years.

Effects of the policy shift will be wide reaching, even for colleges that haven’t opted to change their financial aid applications. But until the government releases more specific information, many are stuck in a holding pattern.

“There are more questions than answers now,” said NASFAA President and CEO Justin Draeger. Those questions, he said, include what the new deadlines will be, exactly (when in October?), and if certain students will need to reapply or submit new or different information. “Until they release that information, we will be a little hamstrung with implementation,” he said.

Answers to those questions will raise new ones. How will this affect a college’s budget cycle or its recruitment targets? What about the deadlines and timelines for state aid agencies and legislatures? The necessary changes to information management systems could pose challenges, too. “A lot of the time you think these things will be simple, but it can have pretty far-reaching effects,” Draeger said.

During the first year of implementation, for example, the shuffled deadlines could see recruitment offices ending one student recruitment season only to come right up against the next one. “I think that’s going to pose some challenges, going into next year, trying to juggle those things,” Draeger said. “Not insurmountable challenges. Just challenges.”

Despite all that, NASFAA and many of its members are supportive of and eager to make the changes, which, they say, will simplify and streamline the financial aid application process and give students more information earlier.

“One of the biggest concerns families express is they apply for admission in the fall or in some cases in earlier winter and [they] don’t have a financial aid decision by April,” said Mark Lindenmeyer, assistant vice president for enrollment management and director of financial aid at Loyola University Maryland. “It doesn’t give them as much time to make that decision.”

These changes “will allow us to include need-based financial aid decisions with the admission decision,” Lindenmeyer said. “I think across the board it makes the process easier for all families.”

Another outstanding question is whether more institutions like Loyola, which uses the College Board’s College Scholarship Service Profile for its institutional financial aid
applications, will adopt the prior-prior year change. CSS collects data from the three previous years but relies most heavily on the prior year’s information. Not requiring prior year data on the FAFSA application, but requiring it on the college’s own application, could raise eyebrows.

“There’s been a lot of discussion, as you can imagine, on how colleges that use the profile will proceed,” Lindenmeyer said. “My hope is those colleges will align with prior-prior year. It just makes more sense.”

Whether the College Board itself opts to change CSS to align with the federal government’s changes to FAFSA also remains to be seen. The College Board did not comment on Monday.

And some among the colleges and organizations that are supportive of the change have raised concerns.

“Some people express concern that schools will start pressing students to make commitments earlier than they already do,” said David Hawkins, executive director for educational content and policy at the National Association for College Admission Counseling. Others are worried their colleges could be put at a competitive disadvantage if their budget cycle doesn’t allow them to announce aid packages earlier than other colleges.

“As we’ve looked at these issues, we’re certainly acknowledging them as concerns, and we will continue to pay close attention,” Hawkins said. But over all, Hawkins said, he and many of his organization’s members are still excited about the change.

“When students have better information, they’ll make better decisions,” said Hawkins.