Mizzou News

Daily Clips Packet

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DACA students suing area colleges over high tuition

The ACLU is suing schools that raised tuition for immigrant-status students. Tuition was raised after state lawmakers changed language in budget bill.

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
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The University of Missouri and Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City are being sued by the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri on behalf of students claiming the schools illegally inflated their tuition rates.

St. Louis Community College is also being sued. The ACLU made the announcement late Tuesday afternoon.

All three students are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, created by President Barack Obama in 2012. DACA offers deferred action for certain undocumented young people brought to the U.S. as children. While the program puts these students in the country under a legal exception, the students do not have lawful immigration status.

This summer Missouri lawmakers changed language in the preamble of the state higher-education budget bill. The change said that schools getting state money must charge students with “unlawful immigration status” the tuition rate that international students pay. That rate is often more than double the rate paid by students living in the state.

The language also bars the schools from giving state-funded scholarships to DACA students.
DACA students already enrolled in Missouri schools learned about the language change weeks before classes were to start.

At the time of the language change, Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates estimated that more than 1,200 individuals with DACA credentials live in Missouri, but said that not all of them are college students.

“Our Missouri public institutions of higher learning exist to open the doors of opportunity to hard-working students striving to get ahead. Now, there are extreme financial burdens being put on the backs of students already struggling to achieve their goals of higher education,” Jeffrey A. Mittman, executive director of the ACLU of Missouri, said in a statement.

“To punish students who had no say in how they arrived in this country is not only mean-spirited, it is against the law.”

The University of Missouri in Columbia has reported having two DACA students. MU spokesman Christian Basi said his school was not sure if the suit came from one of their students. “And we do not normally comment on pending litigation.”

Last year the University of Missouri-Kansas City reported having 34 DACA students. Officials at UMKC could not be reached for comment.

MCC-KC has not reported the number of DACA students enrolled at its institution. Officials there also were not available for comment. The lawsuits were filed in Columbia, Kansas City and St. Louis.

Immigrant students sue colleges over sudden tuition hike

By Koran Addo
Oct. 13, 2015

Three Missouri college students sued their respective schools Tuesday over what’s being described as explosive and illegal tuition hikes handed down just one month before fall classes started in August.

The students are so called DACA immigrants — young people brought to the U.S. as children and becoming undocumented through no fault of their own.
Currently, they are legally allowed to stay in the country under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, known as DACA. The program puts them in a kind of limbo — no longer undocumented, but not U.S. citizens either.

The lawsuits in St. Louis, Columbia and Kansas City, stem from a rule put in place by the legislature this summer that says public colleges and universities must charge DACA students the highest rate of tuition available — either the out-of-state or the international rate.

The rule was put in place by a contingent of Missouri lawmakers who contend that DACA students shouldn't get the same benefits as U.S. Citizens.

What it means is that dozens of Missouri college students saw their tuition rates more than double shortly before classes started.

Critics of the rule have called it shortsighted and cruel, arguing that it unnecessarily creates roadblocks for people trying to become productive members of society.

Critics also call the rule invalid. Lawmakers inserted the rule into the preamble of the state's budget bill. Because the language is in the introduction and not the meat of the bill, Gov. Jay Nixon and others have said it is not legally binding.

Whether legally binding or not, House Budget Committee Vice Chairmain Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob, warned colleges earlier this year not to go against the will of the Legislature.

The Legislature controls their budgets, he said.

The three students are being represented by the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri. The schools named in the lawsuit are the University of Missouri-Columbia, St. Louis Community College and Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City.
JEFFERSON CITY — Immigrant students who live in Missouri are suing several colleges for charging them a higher tuition rate than some in-state residents.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri on Tuesday sued the University of Missouri curators, Metropolitan Community College of Kansas City and St. Louis Community College on the students' behalf.

The lawsuit claims the students lived in Missouri for years but recently were charged higher tuition, such as the international student rate.

The students were brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents as children but are considered lawfully present.

St. Louis Community College spokesman Dan Kimack declined to comment on the lawsuit, but says the college follows state law.
Lawmakers this year passed legislation to block students without lawful immigration status from getting cheaper tuition than international students.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Former Planned Parenthood worker, pathology lab rep to meet with Missouri House committees

ELISE SCHMELZER, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Two Missouri House committees will hear from a former Planned Parenthood employee and a representative of a pathology lab Wednesday afternoon as legislators continue to investigate the health care provider's operations in the state.

The Missouri House's Children and Families and Ways and Means committees will hold a joint hearing at 1 p.m. Wednesday to better understand what happens to aborted tissue after a procedure, Diane Franklin, R-Camdenton and chairwoman of the Children and Families Committee, said in an email. The hearing will be open to the public.

"We hope to use the knowledge to form safeguards making sure all fetal tissue remains from start to finish and making sure nothing like we have seen on the recent undercover videos is happening or will ever happen in Missouri," she said.

The former Planned Parenthood employee, Abby Johnson, worked for the health care provider for eight years before quitting and becoming an anti-abortion activist, according to her website.

The committees invited Mary Kogut, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri, but she had not responded as of Tuesday afternoon, Franklin said.
Gail Vasterling, director of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and Colleen McNicholas, a St. Louis doctor who provides abortion services through Planned Parenthood, both declined to testify at the hearing, Franklin said.

Multiple committees in the Missouri General Assembly began investigating the health care provider's operations in the state after the release of videos in July allegedly showing a Planned Parenthood representative illegally selling aborted tissue for profit. The videos have since been discredited by FactCheck.org for being edited to misrepresent the conversation.

The House committees along with the Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life, led by Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, began investigating whether any of the alleged illegal sales of aborted tissue took place in Missouri after the release of the videos.

Although Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster determined that Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri — the only provider of surgical abortion in the state — hadn't committed any crimes, Franklin and Schaefer have called his office's investigation incomplete.

"Attorney General Koster's investigation appears to be an incomplete review of documents that fails to fully and completely address the questions and concerns of the General Assembly and many other Missouri citizens as they relate to Planned Parenthood," Schaefer said in an email a few days after Koster announced the results of his investigation. "The Missouri Senate Committee on the Sanctity of Life's in-depth investigation and hearings will continue and extend beyond a review of documents until sufficient answers are received."

No Planned Parenthood representatives have testified before any of the committees since the investigations began, though MU's relationship with the health care provider has been the subject of close scrutiny.

Since the committees began their investigations, the university has ended the type of hospital privileges that allowed Planned Parenthood's doctor to provide abortions in Columbia
and canceled agreements with the health care provider that allowed nursing and medical students to gain practical experience in their clinics.

**Many have criticized the university and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin for succumbing to political pressure, including 322 people who signed an online petition criticizing the university's decision to end the doctor's privileges. A number of the names on the petition are physicians, MU staff and faculty.**

The petition urges university leaders to protect intellectual freedom, serve the community's health needs and stand up to the "bullying" by the Senate Interim Committee on the Sanctity of Life. The petition also compares the committee to the U.S. House Un-American Activities Committee, which investigated individuals and organizations allegedly tied to Communist groups after World War II. The controversial committee subpoenaed people — often academics and artists — suspected of supporting Communism and pressured them into revealing information about other sympathizers. If witnesses didn't comply they could lose their jobs or be jailed.

"The ability of an ideologically-based legislative committee to intimidate University leadership into backing off from a robust and principled defense of the university's mission and value to the state has implications beyond women's health," the petition reads.

One supporter said on the petition that they signed anonymously because they are a physician who fears retribution.

In his response to the petition last Thursday, Loftin pledged to "vigorously defend" academic freedom at MU and said he was committed to supporting access to women's health, regardless of their ability to pay.

"I will always stand up for faculty rights in terms of free speech and open debate, freedom to work with any outside organization within the applicable legal guidelines at both the state and federal level, freedom to determine what educational experiences are valuable for our students," Loftin said in his response.
The decision to eliminate the doctor's privileges was not intended to restrict Planned Parenthood's activity in Columbia but to eliminate an outdated category of privileges only used by two of the 800 doctors at MU Health Care, Loftin said.

Other faculty members and alumni are threatening to withhold support from the university in protest.

MU Professor Emeritus Paul Wallace said he and his wife, also a professor emeritus, fund two scholarships in the Department of Political Science and are considering withholding further donations after the university's decision.

"I am shocked about MU giving in to State Senator Kurt Schaefer and the political pressure resulting in MU essentially abandoning Planned Parenthood," Wallace wrote in an email to Loftin. "My wife and I reflect the larger academic community that will withhold further financial and other support to MU until we free ourselves from this kind of politics."

Wallace asked the Boone County Democratic Party to adopt a resolution condemning the university for "ending its relationship with Planned Parenthood due to political pressure."

The group planned to consider the resolution at an upcoming meeting, Muleskinners president Phyllis Fugit said in an email.

The Senate Interim Committee for the Sanctity of Life hadn't scheduled its next meeting, a representative of Schaefer's office said Tuesday.
COLUMBIA — Patches of sweat dotted Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s shirt after touring the campus from a different perspective. The chancellor, along with University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and Provost Garnett Stokes traversed the MU campus in wheelchairs.

The administrators, followed by MU Disability Center faculty and a handful of students who use wheelchairs, arrived at the MU Student Center on Tuesday afternoon. There, a ceremony was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which went into effect on July 26, 1990.

The event was part of the annual Celebrate Ability Week, which is put on by the Disability Center to celebrate and raise awareness of people with disabilities at MU.

“We have this idea in our culture, that disability is not normal, that it’s rare,” said Amber Cheek, the disability inclusion and ADA compliance manager for the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative.

“Disability is really just another kind of diversity,” Cheek said. “It’s estimated that 20 percent of the U.S. population has some sort of disability. We’re the largest and most diverse community in the United States.”

At the ceremony Tuesday, a prototype of a 3-D map of MU was displayed, which, once completed, will serve as a tactile aid for people with disabilities such as blindness who may not be able to otherwise read a campus map.
“This is a beautiful solution that not only incorporates a tactile image, but also a visual image,” said Julie McGinnity, a graduate student who is blind. “We’re thinking about incorporating some audio in it, too. Braille, clear color, labeling, so that not only will it be beneficial for students with visual disabilities, but it will also be useful for anyone that just wants to hold Jesse Hall in the palm of their hand.”

The map, created in part by the Mizzou 3D Printing Club, featured small white miniature figures of Jesse Hall, Middlebush Hall and other buildings on campus.

“I know that when I walk down the street, people stare at me and my dog. And that’s OK, we’re not common,” McGinnity said. “But I truly believe that this map is something that can maybe be a step toward normalizing some technology that would help people with disabilities.”

Other events for Celebrate Ability Week include:

- A screening of the documentary CinemAbility, 8 p.m. Wednesday at The Shack.
- ESPY award winner Kyle Maynard will give a talk at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Tate Hall, Room 22.
- Nationally published rehabilitation psychologist Erin Andrews will give a talk on cultural competence with regard to people with disabilities at 2 p.m. Friday at the Student Center, Room 1209 A&B.

Diversity, inclusion training is right call for campus

By BERKLEY HUDSON

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (2)

No one is being shot or killed on our campus, as they have been elsewhere in our country or in Ferguson. But University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin has made a bold step
toward helping the entire Mizzou community become aware of the spirit-murder that occurs regularly in race relations in Columbia. Too often misconceptions about race, fueled by fear, obfuscate understanding about the one race to which we all belong: the human race.

The chancellor’s approach complements the long-term work our Faculty Council Race Relations Committee began earlier this year. Our 12 members are developing strategies specifically aimed at assisting faculty.

The chancellor’s announcement responds directly to recent events of explicit racism on campus, and it responds to the call by Missouri Students Association President Payton Head, who, after he was assaulted by racist slurs, said: “It’s time to wake up, Mizzou.”

It’s vital that in positive ways we initiate our incoming students to essential practices of racial respect, that we teach them as well as faculty, administrators and staff about the complexity of the social constructs of race.

Especially since the tragic events and violence that occurred in Ferguson, groups of MU students, faculty and staff have protested about a climate of exclusion and disrespect at Mizzou and beyond. We are not alone in this struggle about racial respect on campus: The University of Oklahoma, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University, University of Alabama, University of Mississippi and University of Southern California provide recent examples.

As part of that struggle, we need to understand our Mizzou history, how we can learn lessons from it to improve in race relations, including recruiting, supporting and retaining faculty, students, administrators and staff of color.

And I ask provocative questions: What can each of us do today to make Mizzou a safe and welcoming place? What can we do to make Mizzou a local, national and global leader in race relations in terms of teaching, service, research and economic development?

Berkley Hudson is an associate professor of journalism and chairman of the University of Missouri Faculty Council on Race Relations.
While some people say racism has been a problem for years at the University of Missouri, within the past few weeks, tempers have started to flare.

"I don't know what's happening at the system level to address racism. They're down the street from us so you think they'd have some kind of role in at least fostering an environment where students feel safe," said senior Payton Head, President of Missouri Students Association and the 2015 Homecoming King.

The homecoming parade over the weekend was where that concern for safety was being voiced yet again by activists. Several student protesters interrupted the event in an attempt to get the attention of MU System President Tim Wolfe.

"It was really hard especially when I saw the recount video of my friends, these are people who I know very well were crying for Tim Wolfe to acknowledge their presence and once again he did nothing," said Payton.

This weekend's protest comes after recent allegations of racism on campus.

Last month, a "Racism Lives Here" rally was held September 24th to bring attention to the issue.

Less than two weeks later on October 5th, a student allegedly used racial slurs against African American students on campus.

That same day, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin released a video telling students to end racism at Mizzou.

One day later the person was identified, removed and suspended, pending an investigation by Mizzou's Office of Student Conduct.
In light of the alleged racism, Mizzou students protested outside the chancellor’s office for six hours.

Later that week on October 8th the chancellor announced the university is developing diversity and inclusion training for all faculty, staff and students. It is a mandatory training program that will take effect January 2016 in efforts to address the issue of racism at Mizzou.

Peyton said he knows all too well of this issue.

"The biggest thing I can say is that racism lives here and the biggest thing is that it's very exhausting trying to let people know that," said Peyton.

Last month Peyton said he was the target of racism as someone called out racial slurs to him on the University of Missouri’s campus sparking a greater dialogue.

"None of these incidents are isolated, they are happening all the time, constantly, and I think now students are finding the power within themselves to step forward," said Peyton.

Peyton believes the university has the power to make Mizzou more inclusive.

"Our chancellor said that he can’t change the hearts and minds of the people well you might not always be able to change the hearts of people but a University, especially a research one institution is here to change the minds of people so that they can be better set to go out into the real world and make a difference," said Peyton.

MU Spokesperson Christian Basi says the university is continuing to take action to increase diversity awareness on campus. He said people can visit www.transparency.missouri.edu to see what actions they are taking.

Hate crimes underreported to MUPD

MUPD Major Scott Richardson said that despite the recent incidents coming into the public’s attention, the rate of hate crime occurring at MU have “remained steady.”

By Allyson Sherwin
Oct. 14, 2015

Incidents of hate have been in the news more recently on MU’s campus, with the high-profile harassment of Missouri Students Association President Payton Head and then, less than a month later, the racist comments toward the Legion of Black Collegians Homecoming Court.

Between 2012 and 2015, nine hate crime reports have been filed with the MU Police Department.

MUPD Maj. Scott Richardson said though these incidents have come into light consecutively, the rates of hate crime occurring at MU have “remained steady.” Of the nine reports filed and investigated by MUPD, four occurred in 2015. However, hate crimes or discrimination incidents are not solely in the hands of MUPD.

“There are lots of incidents that are not reported to MU Police,” Richardson said. “So Title IX, the Equity Office, those kind of places also take you in, and student conduct, those kinds of places take in complaints of that nature as well.”

The complainant can go through Equity Office services, which allows the incident to be investigated and handled by Equity Office investigators through filing a formal report with MUPD or both.

“If it’s an actual crime, I believe it gets reported to us; it may not, it’s up to the victim to do that,” Richardson said. “But, typically when there is a crime involved, we are the law enforcement agency for this jurisdiction so we are the one that would take action.”

MUPD and MU’s policy define a hate crime similarly.
The Missouri Highway Patrol defines a hate crime “as a criminal offense committed against persons, property, or society which is motivated, in whole or in part, by offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin.” The Equity Office defines a hate crime as a criminal act against an individual's property that is motivated by biases toward a certain identity. Their webpage also adds that "hate itself is not a crime."

The victims of racism at the LBC Homecoming Court rehearsal Oct. 4 did report their incident to MUPD, and the case is still considered active.

“There is no criminal offense listed in the police report," Richardson said. “So based upon that officer’s current investigation, it doesn’t mean that they are done, but based upon current investigation it is not labeled as a criminal incident. It's an open active case, but presently there is no offense listed.”

Head also filed charges with MUPD after a perpetrator in a passing car shouted racial slurs at him on Sept. 11. Public knowledge of the harassment became widespread after Head detailed his ordeal in viral Facebook post, but the case is still pending.

“There’s been no one identified yet,” MUPD Maj. Brian Weimer said. “The case is still open but no one has been identified at this time.”

Earlier this year, the Equity Office released an annual report detailing the number of bias reports filed and the reports’ resolutions between 2014 and 2015. In that time frame, 40 bias reports were filed with the Equity Office.

Of those 40 reports, 30 percent were based on race, which amounted to 12 reports, nine of which were ethnicity-based biases.

The Equity Office also published how these incidents were resolved. One of the 40 incidents was solved through “mediation.” It cites mediation as an informal process that is outside of the boundaries of the administrative structure. The individuals who conduct the mediation “will not take any action on problems uncovered through the mediation process.”

Of the bias reports under the resolution table, 13 were listed as “insufficient info/anonymous complaint.” Twelve reports were “referred to another office.”
Freshman Wesley Woodson said "there is only so much" the university can do to combat hate offenses.

"They've been trying to raise awareness of the hate (offenses) that have been happening, so as long as they are doing that, they are doing their job," Woodson said.

The Equity Office is not a part of the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, but both programs “work very, very closely together,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

The Chancellor's Diversity Initiative is intended “to promote inclusiveness, promote diversity and create a welcoming campus for everyone,” Basi said. He said that this is done through workshops and seminars which facilitate dialogues, along with funding various organizations and programs.

Basi said Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin has asked for a full review of the Diversity Initiative to determine which programs have been successful and which have "not given us exactly what we are hoping for." The chancellor is planning to make changes based on that review, Basi said.

Woodson said that if he were to be the victim of a hate crime, he would feel comfortable reporting it to police.

“I would definitely feel safe reporting it. It’s up to the police to do their job and to handle it, and if they did not handle it then they are obviously not doing their job," Woodson said. "I wouldn't feel like I would have to cover up what happened to me just to feel safe.”
Diversity summit postponed to strengthen impact

Commission Chairman Scott Dean feels that issues of racism and diversity on campus are Columbia’s issues, too.

By Tessa Weinberg
Oct. 14, 2015

The city’s Human Rights Commission is planning a diversity summit for several months to create an open dialogue centered around issues of inequality.

Commission Chairman Scott Dean said he feels this summit is needed now more than ever and would like to see MU organizations get involved in its planning after several recent racially-charged incidents on campus, such as racial slurs directed at members of the Legion of Black Collegians Homecoming Royalty, “Racism Lives Here” rallies and Missouri Students Association President Payton Head’s vocalization of his own personal experiences with these topics.

“Obviously, we don’t have jurisdiction over the campus, per se, but issues that take place on campus are issues that take place in Columbia,” Dean said. “It’s a very good time to have these sorts of conversations.”

The commission’s purpose is to work toward minimizing, eliminating and investigating discriminatory practices. However their hope to discuss discriminatory practices with nonprofits and community members will have to wait, as the diversity summit proposed by the commission has been “old business” since discussions on the subject began in June. At its Oct. 6 meeting, the commission decided to table the topic until next month.

While Dean said the commission is still looking to hold the summit this fall at the end of November, Commissioner Persephone Dakopolos – who originally came up with the idea for the summit – said that because this is the first event of its kind that the city
hopes to hold, the group is taking cautious steps to facilitate the event in the best way possible by connecting with those who can help ensure that attendees gain a lot from the event.

While the commission originally hoped to see its plans for the diversity summit come to fruition late this month, it has taken a step back from its original timeline to instead connect with other organizations in that time to help strengthen the summit. The commission plans to do this by working with these organizations on side projects.

Since the commission’s September meeting, the group was approached to serve as a community partner in the strategic plan — which hopes to improve local services and foster communal growth — adopted by the city. This comes in addition to the association’s work toward implementing plans from the mayor’s task force on community violence.

“I think it’s a lot more productive and valuable to be brought in on these other partnership ideas than to sort of forge ahead on our own on an idea without consulting a lot of other players,” Commissioner Elizabeth Miller said during the meeting.

Dakopolos agreed by saying, “the more, the merrier.”

While no formal invitations have been sent yet, the commission has spoken to various organizations and departments within the city about the event, including members from the Department of Health and Human Services, Dean said.

The summit was originally structured to be a symposium similar to TED Talks, in which speakers from the community could pitch solutions to issues such as income inequality, inclusion and community building to the audience for five to 10 minutes.

After some discussion, the commission decided to structure the event to focus more on outreach for nonprofits and advocacy organizations. It did this in order to draw attention to the particular issues that the Human Rights Commission should address and how it can go about doing so.

Planned to be a completely free event open to the public, Dakopolos said she wants “changemakers” to be present in the audience, such as downtown business owners, people active on commissions, volunteers and especially city council members.
Dakopolos said she would like the presenters to be of a variety of backgrounds and ethnic makeups in order to better represent the community as a whole. With this combination of active audience members and varied speakers, Dakopolos said she would like to see concrete solutions come out of this conference.

“We’re putting the challenge back on the nonprofits and the human rights organizations in the city, and saying, ‘Okay, we hear you, but now what are we supposed to do with it?’” Dakopolos said. “We’re kicking the ball back. They’re going to bring their best game and give us their best solutions to what they know is already a problem, and I think it challenges the organizations, but it gives us real tools to work with.”

The commission is also looking to find solutions from its community members who attend and can give their unique input. Dean said he feels it’s easier to look for “bottom-up” solutions rather than “top-down” ones.

Dean recounted the addition of gender identity to the city’s non-discrimination ordinance in Dec. 2011. The Human Rights Commission reached out to representatives from the transgender community, Dean said, and with their recommendations, they were able to make plumbing code changes so that businesses could have gender-neutral restrooms.

“(That was) something that the commission could have brainstormed for months, and we probably would have never come up with that idea,” Dean said. “I think the beautiful thing about an idea like that is, the community can tell us things that we just aren’t going to realize without their direct involvement.”

This may take more time than originally planned and, because of this, Dakopolos said the summit may not occur until the spring, or possibly even the summer when it is a “slower time in the city.” However, Dakopolos plans on following through with her original idea despite how long it may take.

“I don’t plan on letting it drop,” Dakopolos said. “I plan on just keeping at it until we get it done and get it done right.”

Looking to pair with other city departments to include them as stakeholders in the event, Dean said the event will most likely be held at City Hall or at another safe space for open discussion, such as the Activity and Recreation Center.
Although there is still a lot of work to go, Dakopolos said she hopes this can become a yearly event that will make an impact on the community in order to build bridges between various groups through education, open-mindedness and experiences with others.

“I really want there to be a genuine discussion of inequality in this city,” Dakopolos said. “There’s no room for hatred. That’s something I don’t know if this conference will fix, but it might be a start in the right direction.”

Protest
A moment of action in the streets

By HENRY J. WATERS III

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (4)

Here in our tranquil burg, we are engaged in an unusual moment of protesting in the streets.

At a time when episodes fuel the debate, public opportunities for making points, such as the University of Missouri's annual Homecoming parade, are at hand.

I can’t remember when protesters blocked the street and caused a Homecoming parade to make a detour, but that happened on Saturday. These were the “Black Lives Matter” people, their argument spawned by events in Ferguson and kept active because of recent racial events on the MU campus.

In recent days protesters made another appearance outside the Planned Parenthood clinic on Providence Road and were met with competing activists supporting the agency, the confrontation causing vague angst among many of us.

This is not to evaluate the merits of these arguments but to notice their civilized nature. The issues are heartfelt enough and at other times enough to foment public violence, but now the antagonists are making their points in ways quite in keeping with a good tradition of public debate.

Maybe it’s because after all this time we’re learning too much accomplishes too little.
In our town, most of the recent argument centers more or less on the MU campus. Campus leaders are under pressure to “do something” about intractable issues such as sexual violence and racism, which, in the end, must be corrected or avoided by individual action. However, university presidents and chancellors can put their institutions in the right light with official actions, which UM President Tim Wolfe has done regarding Title IX sexual harassment policies and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is doing with his requirement of mandatory diversity training for everyone on campus.

Black Lives and Title IX dissidents aren’t satisfied their problems are entirely met, but many might say to themselves, “What else should we expect?” They will remain unsettled when harassment and racial slurs occur, but they don’t have as much reason to criticize official responses.

Critics are making their points well known without damaging their causes with excessive action. Though their positions surely irritate many of us, they act within the best traditions of democratic pluralism. We should pick and choose among their arguments but not deny their right to get in the street.

More students seeking help for anxiety at the University of Missouri

Lindsey Berning, Reporter, lindsey.berning@kmiz.com

POSTED: 06:15 PM CDT Oct 13, 2015

More MU students seeking help for anxiety

Watch the story at: http://www.abc17news.com/more-mu-students-seeking-help-for-anxiety/35824234

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Student stress levels on the University of Missouri campus are much higher than years past.

The MU Counseling Center has seen almost 20 percent more students so far this semester compared to the same time last year, according to Christy Hutton, Ph.D., the Assistant Director for Outreach and Prevention.
Thirty-five percent more students are also using crisis services, which means they need immediate help.

ABC 17 News talked to students to find out why this is happening, some of it may be due to campus violence across the country.

"I feel like there's a lot of school shootings happening around the country," MU Senior Myla Taylor said. "And I think that makes people really paranoid. And so a lot of people are worried about that, especially this being a big campus, there's a lot of people. Anything could really happen."

Many current issues may be increasing students' anxiety, Hutton said.

"There's been a lot of students speaking up about race relations, speaking up about safety on campus, speaking up about a variety of factors that impact their life here at Mizzou," Hutton said. "And those things we know impact students' stress."

Forty million adults in the U.S. suffer from anxiety disorders, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. Seventy-five percent experience their first episode of anxiety by the time they are 22.

Many students on the MU campus told ABC 17 their stress levels are high right now, most saying piling home school work, job searching or deadlines are what is getting to them.

"Usually a buildup of deadlines, lots of papers due at once, capstone classes, I've got research projects to do, and then other classes on top of that, just an overload of work in general," MU Senior Matthew Wade said.

The large increase in student visits is even starting to back up appointments at the counseling center.

"It is a little bit harder for students to get into services this year than what we're accustomed to for sure," Hutton said. "So when students are coming in, it is taking a couple weeks for them to get that first appointment."

Hutton believes the increase may be due to a combination of high anxiety levels and more willingness from students to ask for help.

"While there's still a lot of stigma associated with mental health problems, I think for this generation the stigma is much lower than for some previous--well all previous generations," Hutton said.
The counseling center’s phone number is on the back of all student ID cards for the first time this year. This may be another reason visits have increased, Hutton said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Missouri Supreme Court committee will study racial issues in the state's justice system

By Jennifer S. Mann

Oct. 13, 2015

JEFFERSON CITY • The Missouri Supreme Court has established a committee of lawyers and judges that will conduct a multiyear study of racial and ethnic fairness in the state’s judicial system.

Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge first announced the formation of the committee at a bar association conference last week, noting the constitutional issues raised by the U.S. Justice Department’s separate reports on Ferguson’s municipal court and the St. Louis County juvenile division. The reports offered harsh looks at racial disparities within the justice system and lack of counsel for young offenders and the poor.

“We all need to do everything we can to ensure that every individual in every case in our system of justice is treated with respect and has his or her case adjudicated fairly and impartially according to the law,” she said, according to a transcript of her remarks. “Until that is true in 100 percent of our courts, we cannot rest. Even a perception of justice denied anywhere should concern us all, no matter who or where we are.”

An Oct. 6 order of the state’s top court, released Tuesday, provides more detail on the commission’s charge, which will be focused on racial and ethnic fairness in six areas: the judicial system in general, civil matters, criminal matters, juvenile justice, municipal courts and the practice of law.

The committee will, among other things, look at biases and diversity in the system and its players, changes to court rules and laws to promote fairness, and the availability of counsel to minorities.

It will consist of at least 40 lawyers and judges and will be led by three co-chairs: William R. Bay, a partner at Thompson Coburn, Missouri Court of Appeals Judge Lisa White Hardwick and University of Missouri Deputy Chancellor Michael A. Middleton.

The committee has been asked to deliver an initial report to the court by June 1, to be followed by annual reports by the start of each year.

The court already has a committee looking specifically at reforms for the municipal court system. It is set to deliver a report to the court in March.
Commission to pursue 'racial and ethnic fairness' in Missouri legal system

By MARSHALL GRIFFIN

Oct. 14, 2015

A new commission set up by the Missouri Supreme Court will examine ways to ensure that minorities receive fair and just treatment from the state's court systems and legal profession.

Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge announced the formation of the commission at a recent Missouri Bar meeting in St. Louis. She cited findings in two Department of Justice reports, one on Ferguson and the other on St. Louis County's juvenile division, as reasons for forming the commission.

"The ... juvenile report raised issues including racial disparity in the disposition of cases, insufficient legal representation for juvenile offenders, and questions about our juvenile court structure," Breckenridge said. "While some of these issues may be pervasive throughout the country, this does not diminish them."

The commission's focus will include:

- The existence and impact of any racial and ethnic bias and/or disparities within the judicial system and the practice of law
- Changes to court rules, regulations, laws and/or practices to improve meaningful access to or participation in the judicial system and the practice of law by racial and ethnic minorities
- Measures to ensure that all persons within the judicial system and practice of law refrain from manifesting bias or prejudice, by words or conduct, based on race or ethnicity
• Measures to address any implicit or other bias within the judicial system and legal profession
• The availability of effective legal representation for racial and ethnic minorities within the judicial system
• Measures to enhance racial and ethnic diversity in the selection, retention and promotion of judicial officers, court staff and professionals in the legal community
• Measures to enhance understanding of the practices, procedures and proper role of the state's courts

"We all need to do everything we can to ensure that every individual in every case in our system of justice is treated with respect and has his or her case adjudicated fairly and impartially according to the law," Breckenridge said. "Until that is true in 100 percent of our courts, we cannot rest. Even a perception of justice denied anywhere should concern us all, no matter who or where we are."

When she announced the commission, Breckenridge gave credit to Judge George Draper and Missouri Bar President Reuben Shelton.

The commission will file its initial report by June first of next year, followed by annual reports at the end of each calendar year. It's co-chaired by appeals court judge Lisa White Hardwick, St. Louis attorney William Bay, and Michael Middleton, deputy chancellor at the University of Missouri – Columbia.

The order establishing the commission includes the names of all 52 members. Those from the St. Louis area include Salim Elias Awad, Susan Block, Winston Calvert, Gerard Carmody, Patrick Chavez, Keith Cheung, Gonzalo Fernandez, Erica L. Freeman, Sandra Hemphill, Levell D. Littleton, Annette Llewellyn, Susan McGraugh, Kimberly Norwood, Geetha Rao Sant, Booker T. Shaw, Annette Slack, Karen Tokarz, Lynn Ann Vogel and Michael L. Walton.

Earlier this year, the state Supreme Court also created a work group to focus on municipal courts in Missouri.
The Supreme Court of Missouri has established a Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness, Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge announced Thursday, October 8 during her address to lawyers and judges gathered in St. Louis for the joint annual meeting of The Missouri Bar and the Judicial Conference of Missouri.

"We all need to do everything we can to ensure that every individual in every case in our system of justice is treated with respect and has his or her case adjudicated fairly and impartially according to the law. Until that is true in 100 percent of our courts, we cannot rest. Even a perception of justice denied anywhere should concern us all, no matter who or where we are," Breckenridge said in her address.

"To that end, I am pleased to announce the Supreme Court has established a Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness. Judge George Draper and Missouri Bar President Reuben Shelton have been instrumental and inspirational in forming the commission and will serve as liaisons. The commission is made up of attorneys and judges representing diverse experiences and viewpoints from across the state."

The commission will focus its study on six areas – the judicial system generally, the civil justice system, the criminal justice system, the juvenile justice system, the municipal justice system and the practice of law – to identify solutions and make recommendations for improvement, she said.

Together, the commission members will engage with the public in examining and reviewing current practices and recommending measures "to help assure fairness, impartiality, equal access and full participation for racial and ethnic minorities in the judicial process and in the practice of law," she said.

Breckenridge issued an order on October 6 establishing the commission along these lines.

Commission co-chairs are William R. Bay, a partner at Thompson Coburn; Judge Lisa White Hardwick of the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District; and Michael A. Middleton, deputy chancellor emeritus of the University of Missouri – Columbia.

The steering committee, composed of the co-chairs of each of the commission's six subcommittees, includes Judge Louis Angles, Patrick Chavez, Dana Tippin Cutler, Judge Kenneth Garrett, Judge Sandra Hemphill, Judge Jalilah Otto, Judge Gary Oxenhandler, Judge Booker T. Shaw, Karen Tokarz, Lynn Ann Vogel, Gary Waint and Antwaun Smith.

The commission – which will have "at least 40 members" – also includes as members five other judges: Judge Charles Curless, Judge Kristine Kerr, Judge Marco Roldan, Judge Nancy Rahmeyer and Judge Todd Thornhill. The commission also includes as members a number of elected officials – including St. Louis City Counselor Winston Calvert, Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker and Kansas City Councilwoman Jolie Justus – as well as one law enforcement official, Lt. Col. Sandy Karsten of the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

The order specifies them to investigate a number of key areas, including:

• The existence and impact of any racial and ethnic bias and/or disparities within the judicial system and the practice of law;
• Changes to court rules, regulations, laws and/or practices to improve meaningful access to or participation in the judicial system and the practice of law by racial and ethnic minorities;
• Measures to ensure that all persons within the judicial system and practice of law refrain from manifesting bias or prejudice, by words or conduct, based on race or ethnicity;
• The availability of effective legal representation for racial and ethnic minorities within the judicial system;
• Measures to enhance racial and ethnic diversity in the selection, retention and promotion of judicial officers, court staff and professionals in the legal community, and court.

• In addition to its own work, the commission was ordered to “collaborate and participate in the Minority Community Engagement project with the National Center for State Courts and National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts.

Breckenridge told the Missouri Bar on October 8, “Today – whether you are from St. Louis County or Nevada, Missouri, whether you practice in the juvenile division or are working to have your municipal case disposed, whether you are a member of one of Missouri’s Asian or Hispanic bar associations or you represent ethnically diverse clients in any part of the state – no matter who you are, where you live or what kind of law you practice, we all must stand together in ensuring the culture of our profession is one that earns public trust and confidence.”

The commission was ordered to file its initial report by June 1, 2016 and annual reports by January 1 thereafter.

Missouri Supreme Court establishes commission on minority fairness

Posted: Oct 13, 2015 3:44 PM by Megan Kelly, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Oct 13, 2015 11:59 PM


COLUMBIA – The Missouri Supreme Court has formed the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness.

“This is a good step by our judicial system in the state of Missouri that doing research and determining whether or not any disparities exist is a laudable effort,” lawyer Nimrod Chapel Jr. said.

Chief Justice Patricia Breckenridge announced the new commission Thursday in an address to the Missouri Bar and the Judicial Conference of Missouri.

“We all need to do everything we can to ensure that every individual in every case in our system of justice is treated with respect and has his or her case adjudicated fairly and impartially according to the law. Until that is true in 100 percent of our courts, we cannot rest. Even a perception of justice denied anywhere should concern us all, no matter who or where we are,” Breckenridge said in the address.
Chapel said minority representation is a national issue, especially in terms of making sure everyone has access to justice. Chapel is also the president of the Jefferson City branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He said people of various backgrounds feel there are issues that need to be addressed in the judicial system.

“I think that the criminal system is probably one that we have to acknowledge that there is some real inappropriate disparities for the people who are financially disadvantaged,” Chapel said.

University of Missouri professor and member of the Asian Affairs Association Seungkwon You said this commission is a good way to make people aware of the importance of diversity in representation.

“In Missouri we have few minorities compared to other states. So sometimes people are not aware of the importance of representing minority in government or in Congress or in the judicial system,” You said.

Missouri Bar President Reuben Shelton and Judge George Draper will serve as liaisons to the commission.

The commission will focus on six study areas: the judicial system, the civil justice system, the criminal justice system, the juvenile justice system, the municipal justice system and the practice of law.

The order establishing the commission is located on the Missouri court’s website.

‘FOSSIL’ NEURONS STILL TRY TO WIGGLE HUMAN EARS

October 13, 2015

Organs that have lost their function over the course of evolution, such as our wisdom teeth, are called vestigial. New research on the vestigial muscles behind human ears shows that ancient neural circuits responsible for moving the ears may still respond to sounds that attract our attention.

Neuroscientists studying auditory function could use these ancient muscles to study positive emotions and infant hearing deficits.

“Everyone has noticed cats or dogs orienting their ears toward a surprising or otherwise interesting sound; we as humans, of course, don’t make ear
movements when we focus our attention,” says Steven Hackley, an associate professor of psychological sciences at the University of Missouri.

“However, there is a ‘cognitive fossil’ that lies more or less intact in the human brain and could be more than 25 million years old. Significant changes in the human auditory system began soon after the evolution of dry-nosed primates more than 30 million years ago. Ear size decreased and the associated musculature changed.”

Hackley reviewed more than 60 published studies on vestigial ear muscles and notes that research on the muscles dates back more than a century. Scientists discovered that human subjects who shifted their gaze to the left or right weakly activated a muscle within the posterior wall of the outer ear, or pinna. Later studies measured the weak electrical activity triggered within vestigial muscles when either interesting or intense sounds were introduced.

Although nonfunctional, pinna musculature activates during standard laboratory tests of attention and that makes it useful to psychologists and neuroscientists studying evolution and the brain.

When subjects encountered novel or task-relevant sounds, reflexes moved the eyes and attempted to move the ears toward the sounds they wanted to hear and see. The reflexes were too weak to cause actual movement of the ears.

“Understanding pinna orientation and the ancient muscles that caused it could help researchers who study auditory attention in humans,” Hackley says. “Additionally, the complete isolation of a nonworking motor system offers a new perspective on nature and nurture theories by shedding light on neural development and how this relates to genetic factors.

“Finally, gaining insight into how the relevant vestigial systems work may assist ongoing efforts to develop tests of hearing deficits in infants and, perhaps surprisingly, objective measures of positive emotions in adults.”

The study appears in the journal Psychophysiology.
The Coulter Translational Partnership Program at the University of Missouri recently awarded five grants, totaling $500,000, to help accelerate biomedical research discoveries from experimental research projects to health products that can improve patient care. MU's Coulter Program provides annual awards to researchers whose projects demonstrate great scientific potential and meet a logical health care need. These grants were awarded to five teams with a total of 11 researchers. The five interdisciplinary research teams that received these grants include faculty members from the MU College of Engineering and the MU School of Medicine.

The grants will fund various developed research projects, including a product featuring intelligent oxygen control for Neonatal Intensive Care Unit patients. Three associate professors, Roger Fales, John Pardalos and Ramak Amjad, are collaborating to create a device that automatically varies oxygen levels for premature infants. This device uses feedback from multiple sensor measurements to increase the amount of time babies spend in the desired range of oxygen saturation.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin believes MU’s partnership with the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation benefits patients’ lives.

“Our partnership between the University of Missouri and the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation is based on our common goal of transforming research discoveries into health care innovations that improve patient's lives,” Loftin said. “At MU, we are known
Since its inception in 2011, the Coulter program has created 10 startups and has helped MU research projects generate more than $10 million in new government grants. In addition to providing funding, the program also supports scientists by connecting them with research and development experts.

The director of MU’s Coulter Program, Cynthia Helphingstine, said, “The awards we announced are designed to bridge the funding gap for promising research projects that have excellent market potential but require more investment to advance through the research and commercialization process.”

MU researchers look at how an aggressive pigweed has spread in Missouri

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

YUAN YUAN, 15 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Jaime Farmer, an MU master's student in plant sciences, recently discovered the wonders of waterfowl dissection.

"When I went to grad school, I thought I would deal with weeds, plants and maybe some resistance issues," Farmer said. "I never thought I would be housing ducks, feeding them or dissecting them."

Farmer is looking at the relationship between waterfowl and an increase in Palmer amaranth, an extremely aggressive pigweed, in the northern half of Missouri.

Palmer amaranth is a summer annual that closely resembles many other pigweed species. It may reach 6 1/2 feet in height and is found throughout the southern U.S., according to an MU weed science webpage.
"It's very competitive and very difficult to control," said Kevin Bradley, an MU associate professor of plant sciences. "If left alone, this weed can result in essentially total crop loss."

The seed in the soil will germinate several times per season, requiring farmers to use multiple control tactics, he said. Palmer amaranth "also has a much faster growth rate than most weed species we currently deal with in Missouri cropping systems," Bradley said, "and it can very quickly gain a competitive advantage over crops and out-compete them for water, nutrients and sunlight."

Bradley started to find Palmer amaranth in corn and soybean fields of the Missouri and Mississippi river bottoms about four or five years ago. "It's been spreading across Missouri, and it appears to be moving north," he said.

Then he noticed that almost every time Palmer amaranth was found in the state, it was near the rivers.

"You can't say it's being spread through flooding because the weed is moving from the south to the north while the river doesn't run that way," Bradley said. He then came up with an idea that waterfowl were eating Palmer amaranth and then depositing the seeds across Missouri.

Bradley recalled that some farmers have mentioned over the years that certain weeds have shown up in their fields after a winter during which they noticed ducks or geese in those same fields, but little research has been done by weed scientists about whether waterfowl carried the seeds, he said.

Bradley brought the idea to Farmer, who designed two experiments to test whether waterfowl could be responsible for the spread of this problematic weed species in Missouri agricultural production fields.

The hunter-harvested study began last fall, when hunters collected mainly ducks and snow geese and donated them to the study. By doing this, Farmer was able to figure out what waterfowl were eating and, thus, depositing through their feces.
Farmer learned about the digestive system of ducks with the help of the Missouri Department of Conservation and the MU School of Natural Resources. Then, his team dissected about 240 ducks and 106 snow geese they had collected and removed their digestive systems. They separated and cleaned the plant seeds out of the digestive systems, then planted the seeds in a greenhouse to identify what they were.

They ended up getting more than 15,000 weeds from the 240 ducks and found more than 50 species of weeds, including Palmer amaranth. "I didn't expect to see that many weeds," Farmer said. He found Palmer amaranth seeds from snow geese as well.

Based on that data, the researchers transferred several key weed species, especially Palmer amaranth and waterhemp, into the second study. Waterhemp is the most troublesome weed species in Missouri soybean fields (the state's No. 1 crop) at present, Farmer said. This feeding study was designed to test the viability of the seeds passing through the ducks.

Farmer fed a set number of seeds to 13 mallards and kept tracking them and collecting what passed through them every four hours for 48 hours.

"We're just now getting to the point where we've got all the 48-hour collections," Farmer said. "We are going through the samples and trying to get the recovery rate. We'll test the viability to see how many of the seeds actually have the potential to germinate."

The researchers plan to get the data of their first round of the feeding study done by the first week of November and present the data at the annual meeting of the North Central Weed Science Society in December. Then they will begin to collect their second year's data of the hunter-harvested study, with the hope of getting results by next summer.

The results can answer the question researchers have about how Palmer amaranth began to show up in central and northern Missouri corn and soybean fields, Bradley said. Its more frequent emergence in Missouri suggests that this weed will be a much worse problem in the future, he said.
The research is intended to help better understand how a weed can spread and what can be done about it, Bradley said, and it contributes to the knowledge base of an area in which there is little research.

Bradley is now trying to educate Missouri farmers to look for Palmer amaranth and have them contact him and send samples when they find it.

"It's the No. 1 weed to watch in Missouri and the entire United States right now," Bradley said. "I'm not sure if eradication is possible, but we hope that we will be able to keep this weed from being a widespread problem in the future."

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**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**MU professor set to release fourth full-length film**

**CLAUDIA GUTHRIE**, 19 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — At the top of a step stool, Brian Maurer balances carefully as he works to mount a yellow light on the ceiling.

“I’m going to do something stupid and dangerous,” he declares.

Maurer curses as he positions the light and tries to secure it to a ceiling panel.

“That’s fine,” he says, climbing down from the ladder. “If it falls, it falls.”

Maurer, 33, is deep in the basement of the Academic Support Center, transforming a media library into a set for his latest short film. He is in the process of adjusting the lights until he gets the soft, creamy yellow aesthetic he's working toward.
This particular film is about a marriage proposal, a departure for him. His stories are normally sad and gloomy, but this one has a joyful mood.

"Apparently, I've shown too many sad stories lately," he said.

Both a filmmaker and professor of film studies at MU, Maurer frequently directs creative projects for his production company, Burnt Bridge Films. He produced short films and projects under several different names until he brought the work under Burnt Bridge Films in 2012.

He makes a short film, usually between two and 20 minutes long, nearly every week. Maurer calls them "humanistic portraits," personal stories that capture brief moments in someone's life. One focuses on a ballerina who has lost the use of her legs, for example. Another is about a woman celebrating a child's third birthday, but the child is strikingly absent.

Capturing a character’s life and seeing it through the lens is a theme of his work in both short films and his three longer features. The first, called “Lit,” was produced in 2009 and followed an English professor after he lost his wife in a car accident.

Maurer's latest — his fourth — is a highly stylized horror flick called “S/ash.er.” He teamed up with friend Chip Gubera, the film's director and lead producer, to build a story around a man who brings victims to a cabin to murder them. In a twist, the owners of the cabin turn out to be murderers as well.

The film is now in post-production and tentatively scheduled for a summer 2016 release date.

Building his career

Maurer said he sometimes feels as if he spends every waking hour on film projects. He wakes up thinking about film and said it often consumes him during the day.

He taught himself every aspect of filmmaking, from producing and directing to cinematography, but he didn’t always intend to be a filmmaker.
He started as a fiction writer and ran writing forums, and then he became editor-in-chief of a flash fiction literary magazine. After he graduated from MU with an English degree in 2005, however, he started watching movies in a different way.

Maurer began seeing the same type of work he was doing — the stories he was watching in film were similar to the stories he was writing.

“This sort of short storytelling really piqued my interest, and I really was interested in exploring what I could do visually,” he said.

He took a job in MU Extension where he helped manage grants and worked with the economy in rural communities. In his spare time, he made short film after short film, until he learned to master the skills.

“My first short films were just god-awful terrible, but it’s brought me to where I am today,” Maurer said. “I feel like I’ve now achieved what I was doing writing-wise in the early 2000s now visually.”

**Teaching and learning**

When he isn’t making films, Maurer teaches in the film studies program at MU. He is the only professor in the production track, teaching eight courses that cover nearly every aspect of film production.

When Maurer was an undergraduate, he said the film studies program was limited to critical analysis courses and the bachelor's degree didn't exist. He headed student-led groups on campus to petition to create a film major. Eventually, they succeeded, and Maurer decided to teach.

After earning a master's degree in education, Maurer began teaching production full time.

The program he leads is different from the way the environment of the film industry was when he was in school. A decade ago, equipment was expensive and inaccessible. If a student wanted a mentor and to hone skills as a filmmaker, he said, the only choice was film school.
Now that students have more access to technology, Maurer wants to give them the opportunity he never had — to assist students in techniques they need to develop their own work.

“I think a lot of people who make movies can be schmucks,” said Mike Russo, an assistant teaching professor in the Department of Communication. “Brian is not a schmuck. The dude just loves making movies and talking about movies. It’s his passion.”

**Dedicated to the art**

Colleagues say Maurer goes out of his way to teach others how to make movies. Most nights he’s at the Academic Support Center until 9 or 10 p.m. working with students. He once drove to Kansas City for a day just to show Russo how to use a certain type of camera.

“He really just gives a lot of opportunities,” said MU graduate Sam Ott. “Working with him is very open. It’s an open dialogue. It’s very collaborative.”

Ott met Maurer during his sophomore year, and the two have collaborated on short film projects for about five years. Ott often works with Maurer as a cinematographer.

“I was helping out with the summer internship … and at the time I was writing stuff, so I told him I had some ideas, and he (said) ‘well, send them my way,’” Ott said. “That’s kind of where it all started.”

Students in the film production program, like Ott, come out knowing the basics of filmmaking, allowing them to go further into graduate or film school.

By teaching classes, Maurer said he’s able to pass on knowledge that he was forced to learn on his own.

“It’s nice to be a part of it, and there’s just something very rewarding about being a professor in this kind of field,” he said. “Because it’s not just, ‘Here’s the math, do the math. Here’s the science, do the science.’ It’s very collaborative.”
Working with actors

As Maurer works out the final kinks in the lighting for his latest short film, the two actors arrive, and Maurer walks them through the list of shots, outlining the blocking and framing.

Once the actors and crew are in place, he stands behind the monitor, analyzing his shot. The room falls silent, waiting for his direction.

"Action," he calls.

On queue, the actress walks into the frame and begins to arrange film reels on a desk where the male actor is standing. She picks up the stack, turns to smile at him and walks back out of frame. He follows her.

The opening scene is completed. In the next shot, the couple will walk together and embrace.

“It’s really weird shooting a romance," he said. "I shoot sad and depressing. This is awkward for me.”

Many people ask Maurer why he doesn’t relocate to Los Angeles to work on his film career. But, as someone who moved to the Midwest in 1987, he said that's who he is. The kinds of stories he wants to tell are Midwest stories.

“I don’t want to have a studio tell me what my film should be like,” Maurer said. “I want to shoot my film and then the next film and the next film and work with good people.”

Between periods of filming, most of Maurer’s days are dedicated to raising money for his next feature. He is also working to expand the film program at MU, adding new courses in the coming years and expanding the faculty reach.

“Ideally what I’d love to become is a viable option for film school here in the Midwest,” Maurer said. “I think people would love to have a film school here. Hopefully during my stay here at the university it will happen or at least the foundation for it.”
How Consumers Are Reacting To Rising Health Costs

Since the next Obamacare enrollment period starts Nov. 1 and employers are rolling out health plan open enrollment for employees, the panel I just attended — Consumers React to Rising Health Costs: Affordable Care Act Update — couldn’t be timelier.

The panel, part of the Society of American Business Editors and Writers (SABEW) Fall Conference in New York City, featured three authorities: Sara R. Collins, vice president for health care coverage and access at The Commonwealth Fund, a nonpartisan health research foundation; Dan Mangan, health care reporter for CNBC.com; and David Nather, Washington editor of STAT, a new Boston Globe Media publication on health, medicine and scientific discovery.

“Health care costs continue to go up and confused consumers still don’t know what plan to choose,” said panel moderator Marty Steffens, SABEW chair in business and financial journalism at the University of Missouri.

As I noted in my recent Next Avenue post, “Is Obamacare Becoming the Unaffordable Care Act?,” a combination of Obamacare’s incentives to reduce health care premiums; the rise of so-called “consumer-driven” and high-deductible health plans and employers’ moves to combat the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) coming “Cadillac tax” (a 40 percent excise tax on benefits over a certain threshold) has led rising numbers of Americans to become underinsured.

The Commonwealth Fund defines the underinsured as insured people whose out-of-pocket costs — excluding premiums — equal 10 percent or more of household income (5 percent or more for the low-income) or whose deductibles equal 5 percent or more of household income. Commonwealth says 23 percent of insured people between 19 and 64 are now underinsured, twice the percentage in 2003.

Now that I’ve set the table, let me tell you about four morsels from the panel:

1. The upcoming Obamacare open enrollment season will be far less tumultuous than the first one. “The Affordable Care Act is more established now and we’re done with threats like the Supreme Court,” said Nather. “Most everyone accepts that it will be here to stay.”

Certain provisions, such as guaranteed coverage for children of employees until age 26, have become very popular, the panelists noted. “Millions got coverage [through Obamacare] and the satisfaction levels with the plans are really high,” said Collins.
Nather added that the “firestorm” is over of policyholders learning that their coverage would be cancelled because it didn’t meet the federal requirements.

All of this “will make it difficult politically to uproot the law by root and branch,” said Mangan. “No one would argue it’s a perfect plan. But it’s there and it’s a lot harder to take it away now.”

That said, Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush just unveiled his Obamacare “repeal and replace” plan with tax credits and an emphasis on both Health Savings Accounts and state government control. His rivals Sen. Marco Rubio and Gov. Bobby Jindal have also come out with their own Affordable Care Act alternatives.

Incidentally, The New York Times reports that the Obama administration plans to improve the HealthCare.gov site in time for Obamacare open enrollment with “decision support tools.” The site will let shoppers search for plans that include their doctors, preferred hospitals and their prescription drugs by helping them predict their health care costs for the year ahead.

2. Americans feeling the most painful health care pinch are those whose health plan deductibles are high relative to their income. While the overall health care inflation rate has slowed lately, the percentage of the public whose deductibles are high relative to their income “has been rising every single year,” Collins said.

A new Aflac survey found that 46 percent of employees selected a major medical/health insurance plan with a high deductible of $1,000 or more last year, up from 34 percent in 2014. The April 2015 Truven Health MarketScan said 64 percent of large employers now offer one or more consumer-driven health plans and 76 percent plan to in the future.

And those high deductibles are leading some to avoid medical care.

In The Commonwealth Fund’s surveys, 40 percent of people with high deductibles relative to their income said that as a result, they hadn’t gone to the doctor when they were sick, didn’t get follow-up tests recommended by their doctors and didn’t go to specialists when necessary.

“Troublingly, they also didn’t get preventive care services,” said Collins. “But preventive services are free with the Affordable Care Act. That shows the level of confusion people have about what’s covered and what’s not covered.”

High-deductible plans will only become more common from employers, Collins predicted. “I heard this week that a large number of employers are thinking of moving exclusively to high-deductible plans,” she said. “So then you’ll have no choice as an employee. That will be your plan.”

3. When deciding which health plan to sign up for — on Obamacare exchanges and through employers — people are overly focused on the cost of premiums. As a result, they’re picking plans with the lowest premiums — even if that means going with ones that have the narrowest choices of doctors.

Similarly, the Aflac survey found the monthly premium was the most important factor employees now consider when selecting their major medical health insurance plan.
“One way insurers try to hold premiums down with ACA is to structure plans so there are more out-of-pocket costs,” said Nather. “You can avoid those costs by paying more in premiums, but that’s a terrible trade-off to have to make.”

Collins noted that half of those choosing an Obamacare plan on an exchange picked a limited-provider network in exchange for a lower premium. However, “out-of-network costs can be pretty astronomical,” said Steffens.

Going with a low-premium plan can actually penalize low-income Americans. By choosing one of these Bronze plans, they give up the ability to receive federal subsidies offered to low-income people who select Silver plans, the next level up in coverage and cost.

Unaffordable premiums have been a key factor in the 15 percent drop in the number of Americans now enrolled in federal and state health care marketplaces, according to an article in The New York Times this week. The Times said roughly 9.9 million people were enrolled in the marketplaces at the end of June, down from 11.7 million who chose plans during the open enrollment period ending in February.

4. Consumers will see more examples of soaring costs for specialty drugs. Turing Pharmaceuticals and its reviled CEO Martin Shkreli were lambasted when the company hiked the price of its Daraprim pill by 5,000 percent. (Shkreli has since said he won’t increase it as much as planned, but hasn’t said what the new price will be. Last week, a Business Insider reporter learned a 30-day supply now costs $27,000 at her local pharmacy.)

“What Shkreli did was not unusual in the pharma business,” said Mangan, particularly for existing drugs with small patient populations that are “a captive audience.”

He noted that last year a new Hepatitis C specialty drug came out with an $84,000-a-year price tag. And if two new cholesterol-control drugs become widespread, Mangan said, “that would be $150 billion in extra costs alone, eventually.”

Mangan told the audience: “Something has to be done. That doesn’t mean something will be done.”

Proposing a way to tame drug prices will be tricky for Republicans running for President, said Nather. “Anything that sounds like price controls is off the table for them,” he said. “But drug costs are one of the most visible examples of rising prices, since they hit people in the pocket.”

‘Playboy’ CEO Moves To End ‘Passé’ Nudity In Magazine, Cites Internet Porn

October 13, 2015 8:56 AM

BEVERLY HILLS (CBSLA.com/AP) — Playboy, the magazine that helped usher in the sexual revolution in the 1950s and ’60s, is putting back on its clothes.
Starting next March, Playboy will no longer publish pictures of fully naked women, the magazine announced Tuesday.

Playboy has seen an extreme drop in circulation over the past few decades, falling victim to some of the very forces it helped set in motion. Porn in full color and high-definition video is now all over the Internet.

“That battle has been fought and won,” Playboy Enterprises CEO Scott Flanders told The New York Times. “You’re now one click away from every sex act imaginable for free. And so it’s just passé at this juncture.”

The magazine will still feature female models in provocative poses, but they will no longer be fully nude, according to The Times.

Hugh Hefner, the 89-year-old founder of Playboy who is still listed as the magazine’s editor in chief, agreed to the decision last month after editor Cory Jones went to see Hefner at the Playboy mansion, The Times reported.

University of Missouri history professor Steven Watts, who wrote the book “Mr. Playboy – Hugh Hefner and the American Dream”, told KNX 1070 NEWSRADIO he was caught off-guard by the move.

“That has been a trademark of Playboy since the early history of the magazine, and something the public sort of associates with the magazine,” said Watts. “It sort of takes me by surprise.”

The change represents a major shift for the magazine, which broke new ground when Hugh Hefner created it and featured Marilyn Monroe on its debut cover in 1953. It marks the latest step away from depictions of full nudity, which were banned from the magazine’s website in August 2014.

The shift from nudity will be accompanied by other changes in the magazine, including a slightly larger size and a heavier, higher quality of paper meant to give the magazine a more collectible feel.
Violent crime in Columbia on pace to increase over last year

By ALAN BURDZIAK

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm Comments (8)

Reported incidents of violent crime in Columbia through August — the most recent data available — indicate an increase over 2014, but experts caution the issue is complex and that comparing one year to the next does not show the entire picture.

Figures for three violent crime categories — aggravated assault, robbery and forcible rape — through the first eight months of 2015 were either equal to or on pace to exceed those of 2014. There were 226 aggravated assaults through August, matching all of 2014. The department reported 57 forcible rapes and 89 robberies during the same time span.

Robberies would total 134 and rapes would total 86 if they maintain their rates, more than the 116 and 63 for the two respective categories in 2014. Columbia police have investigated one homicide so far this year, a January shooting, compared with five in 2014.

Jerry East, the crime analyst for the Columbia Police Department, said numbers fluctuate so much on an annual basis that he and department heads look at five-, 10- and 20-year averages to normalize the data. Aggravated assaults are on pace for 339 reported incidents, he said, approaching the five-year high of 377 set in 2011 after three consecutive years of decreases.

“We’re expecting some sort of increase at some time because I don’t believe it’s going to stay at those levels and continue to go down,” East said.

Reports of forcible rapes jumped from 41 in 2012 to 67 in 2013 when the FBI expanded the definition of the crime. A nationwide campaign to combat sexual assaults on college campuses and more publicity for victims’ services might have increased the number of reported rapes this year, East said.
“Are people just reporting more,” or “are we ... actually seeing an increase in activity?” East said. He said the reason for the increase was not clear. When a crime is reported, the department notes the nature of the incident to determine trends. “The feel is that a lot of them are alcohol-related, people who are acquaintances to each other,” East said.

Finding causal factors when comparing single years is difficult to ascertain, said Rodney Uphoff, a University of Missouri School of Law professor emeritus.

“There’s so many different factors to take into consideration,” Uphoff said. “Over time, you can definitely look at certain things. Things like policing policies can make a difference over time.”

The number of police officers on the street also can affect crime numbers, Uphoff said, but that data would have to be examined over time. Socioeconomic factors such as unemployment rates and population shifts can affect crime rates.

Columbia’s population has steadily grown since the 1980s, which must be considered when analyzing the total number of crimes, East said.

“The question is: Where is the real level for our city?” he said. “We’re struggling with that as we grow.”

Editorial: College authorities strive for fair strategies in sexual assault cases

By the Editorial Board

Oct. 13, 2015

NO MU MENTION

Women on college campuses can’t seem to catch a break.

For decades they were shamed if they had consensual sex, while that seemed to be expected from men. When the sex wasn’t consensual, women were taught to keep their mouths shut if they were date-raped, friend-raped or even rape-raped (dare we say, “legitimately raped”). They were sneered at if they wore provocative clothing and flirted with men without expecting rape as a possible consequence.
Some of that’s changed now. Some of it hasn’t. There are still those who think a man can put his hands on a woman’s body without her permission. Or that when a woman gives a man permission and then changes her mind, he is free to coerce her. Or if a woman is too drunk or drugged to consent or not, it’s OK to assume the answer is yes.

None of those things is OK. But what if a woman packs an overnight bag, walks over to a man’s house, gets into his bed, has sex with him — and then accuses him of sexual assault?

Such was the case with two unnamed St. Louis University students who were under the microscope for more than a year in a school investigation that seems as messy as the women’s accusation. As reported by the Post-Dispatch’s Koran Addo last Sunday, the pivotal question in the university’s investigation was this: Did the man know the woman, while she was capable of packing a bag and showing up at his room, was too drunk to consent?

We’ve been here before as a society. Blaming a woman who got drunk and crawled into bed with a man and didn’t have second thoughts in time now has a name: victim-blaming. It didn’t always have that name. Women who casually slept with men used to be called much worse.

Men who fortify their courage before entering the sexual arena with a few drinks or some drugs are given a nudge-nudge, wink-wink knowing look. No one is calling them names.

Not until now. Making women and men aware of what constitutes sexual assault is as much about raising awareness as it is about stopping it from happening. Think of this as the 50-year-long no-smoking campaign, or the 35-year-long Mothers Against Drunk Driving campaign, two of the most successful public health efforts in our nation’s history.

The question raised by the SLU investigation is whether campuses are the right place to handle sexual assault cases. Critics say school procedures are slanted in favor of the accusers and that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of punishing the accused with little or no evidence of guilt.

This is new. And it follows generations of the pendulum being so far in the other direction that women used to routinely leave school or change their academic schedules to avoid the assailant. Help? Counseling? Investigation? Suspension? None of those things used to happen.

Campus authorities are trying their best to develop a system that listens to both the accused and the accuser and proceeds accordingly. They are trying to create an environment outside of the criminal justice system that is fair to everyone involved but at the same time ensures a safe campus with no tolerance for sexual assault.

Colleges do not have the authority to collect and store forensic evidence nor the subpoena powers available to police and the courts. Some schools are telling students that they have to get affirmative consent, consciously and voluntarily given, before a sexual encounter. That may be a good idea but the chances of that happening in a significant number of cases is probably not high. Still, like anti-smoking warnings on cigarette packages, it’s worth a try.

Critics say college administrators have long played down the problem, mounting sham investigations that made rape cases disappear. That was working pretty well for them until four years ago when the federal government warned colleges that they would face stiff sanctions if they did not develop strong protocols for rape and sexual assault investigations.

In their haste to meet the government requirements, schools are developing regulations that stem from Title IX, the law prohibiting sex discrimination in federally funded education programs and activities. The law also is being used to address sexual assault and harassment on campuses.
Is it perfect? No. But these are steps in the right direction. The criminal justice system is also grappling with better ways to handle sexual assault cases. So is the military.

Some young men will get caught in the undertow. The accused at SLU may be one such case. He was suspended by the university for a year as he was preparing to graduate, Mr. Addo reported. Then the university reversed itself and cleared him of blame. After his case was resolved he moved from St. Louis to Kansas City to work with a relative and is now beginning to apply to graduate schools.

This is more than a year later than he had expected to be making those applications. That is unfortunate but it is good that he is getting on with his life.

We hope the same can be said for the young woman.