Mizzou News

Daily Clips Packet

October 19, 2015
Health Care Is a New Flash Point for Graduate Students

By Vimal Patel October 18, 2015

After receiving basic health insurance while working for a small consulting company, Kevin J. Reuning, a would-be graduate student, was pleased to learn about Pennsylvania State University’s generous plan. During a recruitment event, a Penn State doctoral student told him that her out-of-pocket costs for having a baby had been $75 total. But now, two years after starting his Ph.D. program in political science, his deductible has more than tripled, to $250, premiums have increased, and coverage has been reduced.

Mr. Reuning is one of a growing number of graduate students angered by recent reductions in their health insurance brought on by the Affordable Care Act — changes that have exacerbated already tense relations between Ph.D. students and universities over working conditions.

The effects of the act, which was signed into law by President Obama in 2010, are now being felt on campuses as colleges deal with a host of regulations that govern student health-insurance plans. Such plans insure up to three million people, many of them graduate students who receive insurance or subsidies to help pay for it, along with stipends and tuition waivers in exchange for teaching undergraduate courses or assisting with faculty research projects. In cases like Penn State’s, the law has led to a downgrade in benefits, while other campuses have cut dependent coverage or stopped subsidies in efforts to comply with the law.

Graduate students rarely blame the law for any problems but rather the choices of administrators. Colleges are making hasty decisions about how to comply with the Affordable Care Act, the students argue, and have failed to explain cost increases and other changes. Frustration about the health-care changes is helping to spur union organizing on several campuses.

"The long-term effect of all this is there might be a few more unionized graduate schools," says Mr. Reuning, who is helping to form a graduate-student union at Penn State. "About half of us became involved with this because of the health-care issue."
Despite the concerns of graduate students, the law has led to improvements in student health care on most campuses, say college administrators and health-care consultants. It has bolstered coverage, guaranteed protections, and forced many colleges to improve their plans to meet new standards. Stephen L. Beckley, a health-care consultant specializing in higher education, estimates that before Obamacare, as the law is known, 60 percent of student health-insurance plans were "junk plans" that weren’t serving students well.

Yet administrators also express confusion about exactly what the law means for student insurance plans and for graduate assistants. The issue goes back to when the law was drafted, says Jim Mitchell, director of the Student Health Service at Montana State University, who was one of a handful of college health experts who met with Senate Finance Committee staff members in 2009 to explain the value of student health-insurance plans. It was decided that the plans would be treated as individual coverage, as opposed to group coverage, a distinction that underlies some of the confusion on campuses and one that colleges continue to try to clarify with the government.

"The federal bureaucrats are trying to be very careful in how they respond to make sure there aren’t further unintended consequences of making the wrong move," Mr. Mitchell says. "But that makes it obviously frustrating for universities trying to craft their own policies. They’re saying, ‘What are we going to do this year?’"

‘No Choice’

At Penn State, administrators say, they had no choice but to reduce coverage. Their self-described "Rolls-Royce plan" offered unusually generous coverage for graduate assistants, including vision and dental care, a low deductible, and an actuarial value of 98 percent, meaning that, on average, students could expect to pay only 2 percent of the actual costs of their health care. "Then," says Doris Guanowsky, senior associate director at Penn State’s University Health Services, "the realities of the Affordable Care Act came about."

The law assigns "metal levels" to plans. Bronze plans correspond with 60-percent actuarial value, silver with 70, gold with 80, and platinum with 90. To make plans easily comparable for consumers, the health-care law requires individual plans to fall within two percentage points of each value, so Penn State had to reduce its plan to 92. Meanwhile, coverage costs increased.

The plan remains quite good, but explaining to Ph.D. students that they have to foot extra health-care costs when many are already struggling to make do tripped up the university, Ms. Guanowsky says. "Our students were very upset," she says. "They just
didn’t believe this could happen to them and that the Affordable Care Act actually said this.

**The campus that has perhaps been most roiled by insurance problems is the University of Missouri at Columbia, which has been the site of several protests since administrators announced in August that graduate students would no longer receive subsidies because of the new law. The administration has since delayed that move and set up a panel to study how to provide affordable health care to graduate students.**

While the backlash there may be unique because of how poorly the university communicated the change (it informed students only hours before the subsidies were supposed to end), Missouri isn’t the only college that has opted to cut subsidies.

Several universities and their lawyers have interpreted the Affordable Care Act as preventing institutions from providing subsidies for individual plans. In some cases, universities have tried to offset the problems this will cause graduate students. Louisiana State University, for example, decided it would use the money it could no longer provide for subsidies to instead increase stipends.

Most colleges are not making any changes, waiting to see if the Internal Revenue Service, which is responsible for enforcing many of the Affordable Care Act’s provisions, will clarify the rules and allow the subsidies to continue.

"We’re still hopeful that any day now the IRS will either say nobody’s going to get fined this year because of this," says Mr. Beckley, the consultant, or make "a permanent determination that student insurance is not individual health insurance." (The agency did not respond to an email from *The Chronicle.*)

**Questions About Dependents**

As colleges wrestle with health-care questions, some are finding out how hard it is to please everyone. The University of California at Berkeley wanted to help graduate students avoid increased health-care costs, but its decision to do so by dropping spouses and children from coverage has led to charges that it’s not family-friendly.

"Our decision might feel personal to a few people," says Claudia M. Covello, executive director of Berkeley’s University Health Services, "but it was about doing the greater good."

The Affordable Care Act forbids insurers to charge higher rates for dependents. But because dependents are more expensive for insurers to cover, insurance companies
have presented colleges with a choice: Pay more in premiums for everyone, or drop dependents. Ms. Covello says the insurer that Berkeley works with, Aetna Student Health, told her that about 50 colleges had already dropped dependents from coverage. (Aetna didn’t respond to a phone message from The Chronicle.)

At Berkeley, 122 students, mostly graduate students, were affected by the move. The university, Ms. Covello says, worked with each family to find alternate coverage. She says the alternative was to require the 22,000 or so people on Berkeley’s student plans to pay an additional $6 million.

But for students like Mallika Scott, in the fourth year of a math-education Ph.D. program, the damage to her finances is real. Ms. Scott is raising two young children by herself; her husband died of cancer in June. The family lives on her roughly $25,000-a-year stipend and Social Security survivors’ benefits. Berkeley has set up a fund to help cover extra costs of dependent insurance this year, but after that Ms. Scott expects to pay an additional $1,400 a year in premiums for her two children, in addition to out-of-pocket expenses.

Ms. Scott wishes Berkeley didn’t frame the issue as one of students with families driving up premiums for everyone else. "It pits students against each other," she says. "It feels pretty divisive and not supportive of graduate students, who are in a really different position in life."

As for the choices that Berkeley and other universities are having to make about student health insurance, Ms. Scott says, "it’s a tragedy that we’re in a situation where we have to make those trade-offs."

Vimal Patel covers graduate education. Follow him on Twitter @vimalpatel232, or write to him at vimal.patel@chronicle.com.
Mizzou Grad Students Will Still Get Health Coverage

October 16, 2015

The University of Missouri at Columbia will offer graduate student workers health insurance next year, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said this week, according to the Columbia Daily Tribune. The news came after weeks of outcry from graduate students over the university’s announcement just days before classes started that it would cancel graduate student health insurance subsidies. The university blamed its choice on a new federal interpretation of the Affordable Care Act limiting how individual subsidies could be used to buy health insurance.

Mizzou -- unlike most universities, which have employer-sponsored health insurance plans -- offers graduate student workers individual subsidies to buy their own health insurance. A week after the August announcement, amid student protests and questions from faculty members about how they could recruit new graduate students under such circumstances, Mizzou put its decision on hold. Loftin’s announcement this week cements the university’s plan to continue to provide health insurance coverage in some form, at least through next year, but he was short on details about how the university would do it and still comply with the ACA. A university task force will make recommendations on how to do so by the end of next month.
MU graduate students respond to Loftin’s health insurance guarantee

By Megan Favignano

Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 12:00 am

Members of the Forum on Graduate Rights, a non-university affiliated student group at the University of Missouri, are unsatisfied with Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s guarantee last week that MU will cover health insurance premiums for graduate student employees next school year.

The student group released an official statement Friday commenting on Loftin’s announcement and guarantee.

“Until we have seen a contractually binding plan to secure permanent, quality, subsidized health care for all graduate workers, the Chancellor’s words remain an empty promise,” the statement read.

Loftin told MU faculty members at a meeting Wednesday that the university will cover the cost of health insurance premiums for graduate student employees next year. “We will guarantee we can make this happen,” Loftin said.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university doesn’t have additional comments beyond what Loftin told faculty members. Loftin said Wednesday that he wanted the official announcement to come from the health insurance task force and declined to comment on MU’s specific plan for covering health care costs. The task force, which has been investigating MU’s options for covering health insurance, expects to finalize its report next month.

Traditionally, MU has given non-international assistants with 20-hour appointments an annual subsidy of about $3,000 for health care costs. In August, one day before the previous year’s insurance plans expired, MU informed graduate assistants it could no longer provide that subsidy because of a recent IRS interpretation of the Affordable Care Act.

After student and faculty backlash, MU rescinded that decision for this academic year and said a task force would weigh options for next school year to help defray health care costs while complying with the IRS interpretation of health care law. Last year, MU spent about $3.94 million on health insurance subsidies for more than 3,000 students.
The Forum on Graduate Rights said personal promises from MU administrators were “not sufficient responses” to the group’s numerous demands.

It “will not deter FGR’s efforts in working towards a fair and equitable environment for graduate workers at MU,” the group said.

Graduate assistants receive tuition waivers and stipends in exchange for their work teaching and conducting research for the university. Starting next school year, incoming graduate students working 10 hours a week will receive a half tuition waiver rather than a full tuition waiver. Currently, all graduate assistants working at least 10 hours a week receive full tuition waivers.

The Forum on Graduate Rights formed in August after MU said it could no longer provide the subsidies. The group has been demanding better pay, a long-term insurance solution and full tuition waivers for all graduate assistants; members have been moving toward unionizing, provided they can gather about 2,000 signatures necessary to hold a vote this year and have a contract in place by 2016.

MU’s Graduate Professional Council, the official student government for graduate and professional students, has no official stance on Loftin’s recent health insurance guarantee, council President Hallie Thompson said Saturday.

Thompson said the group is waiting for a specific decision from MU administrators. The Graduate Professional Council plans to release statements later this week regarding the ongoing conversation on campus about graduate student benefits, she said.

Members of the Forum on Graduate Rights did not return calls seeking comment Saturday.

Jesse Hall becomes graduate student office for a day

By Megan Favignano

Friday, October 16, 2015 at 2:00 pm

University of Missouri graduate students Corinna Cook and Leanna Petronella spent their Thursday afternoon working — Cook graded 29 midterms and Petronella worked on a project for the Missouri Review literary journal.
Instead of sitting in their campus offices, Cook and Petronella sat on the floor of Jesse Hall across from Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s office. Petronella said she did so to demonstrate the important work of graduate students.

“I’m here today to be visible ... somebody whose labor is very much affected by the whim of the administration,” Petronella said.

More than 60 graduate students used the first floor of Jesse Hall as their office during a “grade-in” event Thursday, which started at 9 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m.

The Coalition of Graduate Workers, a student group unaffiliated with the university and working toward forming a union, organized the event as part of its graduate education week activities. Organizers encouraged graduate students to bring folding tables and chairs or find a spot to sit on the floor in Jesse Hall while they did their work.

“A lot of the work that graduate students do tends to go unnoticed,” said Kristofferson Culmer with the Forum on Graduate Rights student group. “The research hours in the lab, the office hours grading, mentoring — a lot of the functions of a graduate student tend to go unnoticed,” Culmer said.

A group at Columbia University in New York City contacted MU students and asked them to hold the teach-in to show solidarity with Columbia University’s “We Are Workers Unionization Program” — a day meant to show that graduate students are employees.

Colleen Young, with the Forum on Graduate Rights, said people often stopped as they passed through Jesse Hall to ask why the graduate students were working there.

“It’s more than just showing what we do,” Young said. The event was also “showing that we’re not backing down.”

The Coalition of Graduate Workers is collecting graduate student signatures and hopes to vote on forming a union this year. Talk of forming a union started after MU told graduate student employees in August it could no longer provide them with health insurance subsidies because of a recent IRS interpretation of health care law. MU later rescinded that decision for this school year and created a task force to look at options for next year.

The Forum on Graduate Rights also was formed after MU emailed students about the subsidies in August. The group aimed to inform students of their options and advocate for improved benefits, including higher stipends, on-campus child care and a guarantee that health insurance costs would be covered.

Loftin on Wednesday told faculty members MU will cover health insurance premiums for graduate students again next school year. The task force is expected to give its report next month. Many graduate students were angry that Loftin did not tell them first.
Petronella said she joined Thursday’s event because MU officials have mishandled graduate student issues.

“The graduate insurance fiasco was the thing that got my blood boiling,” Petronella said. “There has been some response from the administration, but they never talk directly to us. I’m very much in support of a union. I’m sick of there being ugly surprises.”

**the maneater**

**MSA vice presidential candidate: UM president should resign**

Junior Jonathan Segers speaks out against UM System President Tim Wolfe’s actions through a Facebook post.

**Missouri Students Association vice presidential candidate Jonathan Segers called for UM System President Tim Wolfe’s resignation in a Facebook post Sunday afternoon.**

“As a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia, we do not allow anyone that DOES NOT stand for RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITIY (sic), DISCOVERY, and EXCELLENCE on OUR CAMPUS,” Segers wrote in his post. “You sir, showed neither of those values to my friends, colleagues, and fellow Tigers that day. So let (me) be the first to ask for your letter of resignation, because we do not tolerate such actions at OUR University.”

During last Saturday’s homecoming parade, black students protested their treatment at the university by blocking the passage of the car carrying Wolfe. Graduate student Jonathan Butler was hit in the process. After the car drove off, officers of the Columbia Police Department pushed protesters back and threatened the use of pepper spray, according to a letter signed by a concerned student that circulated on social media last week.

Following the events of the parade, Segers said he was horrified to see Wolfe had no response to the situation, other than his retweet of one of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s Twitter posts regarding the LBC Homecoming court incident at Traditions Plaza.

“I was shocked and appalled,” Segers said in an interview Sunday night. “It’s still happening now. No one is actively doing anything. I don’t want his name on my diploma.”

Wolfe has not yet sent out a mass email to the UM community about the incident.

Segers’ post came eight days after the parade demonstration. Segers said a friend made him aware of the video of the protest.
Although Segers spoke out on this event as a member of the black community, rather than as an MSA vice presidential candidate, he said his actions still speak to the elements of his and Jordan McFarland’s platform.

Both candidates said this post will in no way shift their campaign’s message.

“I think Jonathan is reflecting what a lot of African-American students at the university are currently feeling,” McFarland said. “I empathize with him.”

The events of the parade have only elevated the excitement Segers said he has for Inside Out and Mizzou ’49, two components of their platform, Back to Basics. He said these two ideas in their platform shine a light on the issue of racism on a college campus.

As a black student at MU, Segers said he was hurt by the actions of Wolfe and the Columbia Police Department. Even the students on campus have overstepped their boundaries. The discriminating comments Segers said he heard from two white fans almost lead him to leave the homecoming game when one of them said, “I can play football better than his black ass” in reference to one of the players.

Segers is an advocate for social justice and feels strongly against the racial discrimination that has been displayed at MU over the years.

“I was a black man in this world long before I was running for MSA,” Segers said.

McFarland and Segers said they have high hopes that this will motivate students to do more.

“I just hope that we do not come out more divided, but a more united campus and community,” Segers said.

Here is the post in its entirety: Tim Wolfe, YOU ARE WRONG. It has been 8 days since you embarrassed, dehumanized, and disrespected the TUITION PAYING undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral candidates of an institution YOU are the president of. If you do not remember, you KNOWINGLY allowed the driver of your homecoming vehicle to strike Jonathan L. Butler during OUR homecoming parade. Your actions 8 days ago not only dehumanized the students involved in the demonstration, but you allowed MUPD to continue the shameful atrocities by SHOVING them, THREATENING them with pepper spray, & using VERBAL INTEMIDATION. I did not know that “the spirit of homecoming,” meant that even the president of the UM Schools could lose their moral capacity, but I guess you are an exception to the “Mizzou Standard.” Your actions along with spectators; (those that began to chant M-I-Z, Z-O-U) reinforced the actions of the animal that harassed the LBC Court, the animal that verbally assaulted our current MSA president Payton Head, or any person that has a racist inkling within them. Black students were allowed on this campus only 65 years ago, but your actions took us back further in history when blacks were only worthy of “building this campus on their b(l)ack,” but we can just call that 1839. As a student at the University of Missouri-Columbia, we do not allow anyone that DOES NOT stand for RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY(sic), DISCOVERY, and EXCELLENCE on OUR CAMPUS. You sir, showed neither of those values to my friends, colleagues, and fellow students.
Dear Chancellor Loftin,

Your recent email about implementation of diversity and inclusion training is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough.

In order to continue to press forward in the right direction, as a “Mizzou Family” all demands submitted to administration going back to 1969, and even before that, need to be acknowledged and addressed. All of those demands made by concerned students, faculty and staff need to be tackled in a way that is not a "knee-jerk" reaction to external/internal pressures. I would also caution you and your staff on the use of your language in email messages like these. Your language projects the image that administration crafted these strategies for change 1) out of their own concern and 2) as a result of the recent racial slur incident with LBC homecoming royalty court. This is incorrect and problematic for two main reasons:

The first reason is that administrators are not the originators of these strategies for diversity and inclusion. These strategies started with Lloyd Gaines back in 1935 as he pursued a law degree here at MU and was faced with racism and hate. It continued in 1939 with Lucille Bluford fighting for her right to an education. It continued in 1969 with black students fighting for their rights and demanding increases in black faculty and staff. It continued in 2014 with the creation
of MU4MikeBrown by three black queer women who wanted to ignite change at Mizzou and put an end to the racist culture on campus. Even today, in 2015, with the #BlackLivesMatter movement you have students, especially those doing grassroots organizing (and aren't in formal organizations) who have purposefully, strategically and consistently brought these concerns to the attention of your administration. This is why your language that attempts to adopt strategies like diversity and inclusion training as “new strategies” without acknowledging where the ideas/strategies came from is disrespectful and false. These issues and the strategies that brave individuals have brought to the attention of administrators is not new to MU and also not new to you and your staff specifically. So to not acknowledge the protesters, organizers, students, faculty and staff who have taken of their time and energy to hold you and your administration accountable is very disrespectful and paints a false image of the work that your administration has been doing on this campus.

The second main reason this message is problematic is because it continues to only highlight incidents at Mizzou that involve student organizations or people with social platforms, like the MSA President. Acknowledging their experiences is very important but by only highlighting those experiences you implicitly erase the hundreds, if not thousands, of marginalized students at Mizzou who face incidents of racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia and every other "ism" and "phobia" you can think about every day at Mizzou. I think about how, recently, a friend of mine was faced with racist students outside of the J-school and I did not see any messaging from you or your staff showing any kind of public concern or care for her situation, which happened prior to the LBC incident. These "unheard" stories are worth your time and attention; their lived experiences are worth acknowledging and their humanity worth fighting for. This constant lack of acknowledgment to the struggles of oppressed individuals reinforces the notion that administrators only react to incidents on campus that happen to people in organizations or positions of social power. This also signifies that administrators are highly selective in their "concern and care" for members of the student body, both undergraduate and graduate, which I personally believe to be a true, yet unfortunate, fact.

As I said in the beginning, I acknowledge that diversity and inclusion strategies are a step, but it is not enough. You and your staff will be on the wrong side of history if you continue to erase the voices of marginalized students who fight for their lives and the lives of their friends every
day. I hope that your staff puts out an additional statement acknowledging these facts because otherwise your words will end up being another shallow message that is not beneficial to the student body.

The struggle continues.

Jonathan Butler is a graduate student at MU.

**the maneater**

Library forum reveals concerns about potential new fee

Students will vote for the fee on Nov. 6.

Catchy tunes could be heard coming from room 114 in Ellis Library as students in support of a possible self-imposed library fee handed out fliers regarding a public forum held Oct. 15.

The goal of the forum was to answer questions that students had about the fee that would go toward renovations and improvements to the library system.

The fee would begin at $5 per credit hour for each student and continue to increase by $2 each year until reaching its peak in 2022, when the total fee would amount to $15 per credit hour. At its highest, the fee would encompass 1.4% of a student’s total cost of attending. At the $15 fee level, the library would receive over $13 million.

“Great universities have great libraries,” said Library Ambassador Tyler Adelstein, one of the students handing out flyers outside the forum. “Mizzou is in the bottom tier in terms of funding for their libraries.”

Before beginning the presentation, students rushed to a table in the back of the room to pick up free Chick-Fil-A and a T-shirt. The room quieted down as Matt Gaunt, director of advancement for MU Libraries, took the floor and began to explain the need for a fee.

“Do we have a great Rec Center?” Gaunt said. “Yes, we do. We have that because students wanted it. Do we have a great Student Center? Yes, we do; because students wanted it. The Rec Center can keep you healthy, the Student Center can keep you connected to your peers, but the library is the heart of your academic life.”
Currently, the library is the only academic unit on campus without a fee, Gaunt said. Not only would the fee help fund Ellis Library, it would also go toward every other library on campus, apart from the law library.

The effects of not having a library that operates partially under money from fees can be severe, Gaunt said. MU has dropped to No. 103 on the U.S. News and World Report and could potentially be dropped by the Association of American Universities of which MU has been a member since 1908.

The Missouri Students Association has endorsed the campaign for the library fee and wanted to focus on bringing the library into the 21st century as well as creating better amenities and new staff positions, MSA Academic Affairs chairwoman Tori Schafer said.

“There will be advancement to make our library work better for the students, help you find information faster and also find better information,” Schafer said.

The fee would account for $20 million for renovations and a compensation plan for staff. It would also allow for 40 new positions such as web service positions, student library staff, digital curators and digital media experts.

In addition, staff members would receive better compensation for work. Over nine of the past 12 years, library staff members have not received a single raise, MSA Budget chairman Bill Vega said.

“One of the main things you may see is compensation, and you may see they’re paying their staff more,” Vega said. “It means better quality. It means keeping youth. It means keeping people who are engaged. It means keeping the best staff that you can possibly keep.”

In addition to the amenities that will be added with funding, the library is also introducing a new student organization. On Oct. 14, an MU student advisory board was formed so that students could have a say in the way funds for the libraries were allocated as well as act as a general student voice for MU libraries. The student advisory board will include 25 students and will exist even if the fee fails to pass.

When the forum was opened to question and answer, there was some support from students. Others expressed concern that the amount they pay for attending MU is already high enough.

“My main concerns are that we’re already paying high tuition and high student fees as it is and there’s other ways they can fund the library” sophomore Patrick Lacey said. “They have only been looking for funding since January of 2015.”

Other students during the question and answer session suggested asking alumni for funding as well as increasing fundraising efforts.

Despite some student doubt, many remain hopeful that the fee will be approved.
“If this fee doesn’t pass, I won’t have access to the largest databases that could be used for research, so I think it’s pretty important,” Adelstein said.

With voting for the fee approaching Nov. 6, students and staff are adamant about spreading the word in support of funding MU libraries across campus.

“We can change the library on November 6,” Gaunt said. “Vote yes. Don’t get less than you’ve paid for.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU's Celebrate Ability Week closes with presentation on disability language

BRENDAN SOLIS, Oct 16, 2015

COLUMBIA — At the conclusion of the MU Disability Center's annual Celebrate Ability Week, Erin Andrews, a rehabilitation psychologist and an amputee, said the public should be careful in how they refer to people with disabilities.

Andrews gave a presentation Friday afternoon on disability language and culture at the MU Student Center. The presentation, entitled Disability Rights are Civil Rights: Developing Cultural Competence Using Disability Language, began with a brief history on disability rights in America. Andrews continued her talk into present day, speaking about the various ways in which media, public and government talk about disability.

American Psychological Association style recommends the use of person-first language— saying someone is a "person with disabilities," rather than referring to them as a "disabled person."

The complication, Andrews said, is that the language used to talk about people with disabilities is not one-size-fits all. She said even the current model of person-first language is not necessarily what an individual prefers.
"Person-first language has become just amazingly popular," Andrews said. "It's pretty much the standard out there. I think that people like person-first language, particularly people without disabilities, because it feels really safe.

"What happened was people started asking the question, 'Why is it important to separate the disability from the person?" Andrews said. "Have we overcorrected to the point of actually further stigmatizing the very thing we're saying we're trying to destigmatize?"

As a solution, Andrews supports the practice of alternating between person-first language ("person who is disabled") with identity-first language ("disabled person"). She went on to emphasize the importance of personal preference on the debate.

"People have preferences, and that's okay and that's important. It's a contentious issue," Andrews said. "Decisions about language are always personal, and people do have their own preferences."

Rather than looking at disability from a medical or social model, Andrews advocates for people to look at disability from a diversity perspective.

"Disability is a natural aspect of life," Andrews said. "It's normal; it's not a deviance."

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**When life begins is a political, not biological, issue**

By GORDON CHRISTENSEN

Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 12:00 am

*In recent weeks, members of the University of Missouri community have engaged in a vigorous debate regarding abortion and Planned Parenthood.*
One strong voice declared, “Any biologist can tell you that human life begins at conception.”

I am both a biologist and a physician, and I can’t tell you that.

I can tell you that more than 100 years ago, Louis Pasteur showed there is no such thing as spontaneous generation — life does not abruptly emerge from nonliving things. Instead, every living thing is itself the descendant of a living thing. Before conception, the human egg was also a living organism.

Biologists tell us women are born with about 1 million to 2 million eggs in their ovaries. With maturation, most of these eggs die, leaving only about 400 eggs to be released from the ovary and become available for fertilization. Once released, the egg — or ovum — has a short life span; it will die unless it is fertilized.

Each ovum carries one set of genes from the mother, and each sperm carries one set of genes from the father. The penetration of the sperm into the ovum, meaning fertilization or conception, doubles the genetic material in the cell; biologists call this fused cell a zygote.

Fertilization triggers a series of cell divisions. Over the next couple of days, the zygote splits into two cells, the two cells split again into four cells, the four become eight and so on and so forth. At this stage, each cell is “undifferentiated,” meaning if separated from the other cells, it could still form a complete, healthy individual.

After a couple of days, the splitting cells become a solid ball that embryologists call a morula. After a couple of more days, the morula becomes a hollow sphere that embryologists now call a blastocyst. At this time, the blastocyst is still free-floating, but five to seven days after fertilization, the blastocyst attaches to the inner wall of the womb or uterus, where it matures. At first the maturing organism looks like a little cyst; later it will appear to be a small growth. It will take at least five weeks or more before it will have a recognizable body with a head and limbs. At this early stage it won’t have eyes or a mouth, but it will have a tail. A more recognizable body will not be evident until seven to eight weeks have passed since fertilization.

The development of a recognizable body marks the end of the embryonic period and the beginning of fetal development. Generally, at least 20 weeks must pass from fertilization (22 weeks from last menstruation) for the fetus to have any chance of living after birth. By 28 weeks after menstruation, the infant has a good chance to survive after birth. As we all know, with good rearing over many years, the baby will become a mature woman or a man, capable of starting the cycle all over again as a parent.

And so on and so forth, every egg, every zygote, every embryo, every infant, and every parent, just one turn in the stream of life. Paleontologists tell us this stream is nearly as old as the Earth — 4 billion years. Multi-cellular life, which would be more recognizable to us as living creatures, began about 500 million years ago. There is a debate about when human life began, but most evolutionary biologists and paleontologists estimate people began walking the Earth about 200,000 years ago.
The real debate here, I suspect, is not when life began but when the embryo actually became a person. In Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court set the standard at 24 to 28 weeks after the mother’s last menstruation, a definition based on the ability of the fetus to live after birth.

I suppose calling a fertilized egg a person makes as much sense as any other definition, but there are problems. Zoologists tell us many creatures with backbones — meaning vertebrates like us — can reproduce from an unfertilized egg in a process known as parthenogenesis. As far as anyone knows, humans don’t reproduce in this manner, but biologists have speculated this might occur.

Then there are chimeras, which are animals composed of a mixture of cells from two different animals. One way embryologists create chimeric animals is to break up the zygotes from two different animals into individual cells and then mix the cells together. Sometimes the cells from one animal attach to the cells of another animal and proceed to develop into a new animal. “Quickens,” for example, are birds that began life as a mixture of chicken and quail cells. There is evidence that such fusions also occur with humans, but they are probably very rare.

Everyone knows about clones. There is now a laboratory in South Korea that clones pet dogs using the DNA from the pet’s skin cells; the laboratory does this by inserting the pet DNA into the egg of a donor dog that was first prepared for cloning by removing the donor dog’s DNA from its egg.

Cloning, of course, is a lab technique, but everyone also knows about natural cloning, meaning identical twins (also known as monozygotic twins). Identical twins occur when the blastocyst (or sometimes the zygote) splits into two; each half eventually becomes a separate individual.

It appears only blastocysts and zygotes can split into identical twins. Later splits just kill the growing embryo. When I was in medical school at Creighton University, one of my professors argued that because a blastocyst could split into two individuals, the blastocyst had not yet acquired a soul. Therefore, he claimed, it was acceptable to use contraceptive devices that killed the embryo before implantation, but it was not acceptable to use devices that killed the embryo after implantation because by then it had a soul. Whenever I think of this argument, I visualize Michelangelo’s painting of God pointing the finger with the spark of animation not at Adam, but at a little cluster of cells.

Parthenogenesis, chimeras, clones and twins certainly challenge our concept of personhood.

In my world of adult medicine, we define human life as having or not having a functioning brain, regardless of the condition of the heart, lungs or kidneys.

The point of all this is that the concept of personhood is a legal, philosophical, religious, social and medical concept. It is not a biological concept. There is no biologic characteristic that distinguishes between person and nonperson. Without destroying it, I can’t even tell you if an embryo is male or female, smart or dumb, healthy or sick. The only thing I can tell you, with complete assurance, is that someday that embryo, or whatever it becomes, will die.
I admire strong voices. I think they have much to teach us, but we should not allow strong voices to bully us. For example, there are strong voices for peace and demilitarization, but there are no plans to eliminate the university ROTC program. There are strong voices against the slaughter of animals for food and the use of animals in medical research, but there are no plans to shut down our animal husbandry programs or close our animal laboratories. There are strong voices proclaiming that one day a week should be set aside for worship and rest, but there are no plans to close MU on Saturdays and Sundays.

As long as it does not break the law, it seems to me each one of us is entitled to make our own decision as to when a product of conception becomes a human being. Despite all the noise, Planned Parenthood has not been shown to have done anything illegal; Planned Parenthood does provide needed health care for many Missourians. As a former chairman of the MU Faculty Council, a former chief of staff at University Hospital and a member of the MU faculty for nearly three decades, I hope this institution, which I hold in such high regard, will not allow itself to be pushed into doing something regrettable.

*Gordon Christensen is a physician who has had faculty and leadership roles at the University of Missouri for nearly 30 years.*

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**Missouri Innovation Center prepares to launch new startup fund**

By Megan Favignano

Saturday, October 17, 2015 at 12:00 am

The Missouri Innovation Center is seeking investors for an accelerator fund that will provide digital startups with $50,000 to turn their concept into a product. The center hopes to launch the fund by the end of the year.

The accelerator fund aims to encourage startups to stay in Mid-Missouri by providing a local investment opportunity for those companies, said Bill Turpin, president and CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center.

The accelerator fund will take care of the financial side of things, Turpin said, and the center will offer mentoring to help encourage would-be entrepreneurs to start a company.

“This is a long-term investment in the future, but it’s the first step,” he said.
Companies starting in Columbia haven’t had a resource like the accelerator fund to provide that initial investment, Turpin said. He said many startups have left the area to follow investment opportunities elsewhere.

**The University of Missouri will be one of the accelerator fund’s investors. In addition, a new MU mentoring program will be available to companies who are part of the accelerator fund.**

Hank Foley, vice president for academic affairs, research and economic development for the UM System, said MU launched the Mizzou Venture Mentoring Service this week. The program is based on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Venture Mentoring Service and will have successful business people and community members mentor aspiring entrepreneurs.

Mizzou Venture Mentoring Service is an education program and consulting service for MU-affiliated entrepreneurs and clients of the Missouri Innovation Center and Missouri Small Business Development Centers.

Philanthropists who give money to MU are able to specify their donation go to the accelerator fund, Foley said. The UM System Board of Curators voted earlier this month to change its investment policy, allowing campuses to invest in venture capital efforts such as the accelerator fund.

Foley said this accelerator fund is a big step for the region.

“It’s a lot of fun to know you’re doing good stuff with good reasons that hopefully will help people get back to work and have a better life than what they have right now,” Foley said.

The fund is designed to be $1 million to $3 million in size, Turpin said. More specific details about the fund’s investors and size will be available once the fund closes to investors and is able to start distributing funds to businesses, he said.

The accelerator fund is designed to turn a profit for its investors, including MU, Turpin said. Private investors have been attracted to the accelerator fund for more than financial reasons, he said.

“It’s a way to make money that supports the local economy and the university and the students,” Turpin said. “A lot of people like to get the confluence of those when they make an investment.”

Turpin said the Missouri Innovation Center is forming a seven-person investment committee of local entrepreneurs who will make the initial round of approvals of applications for the fund.

“We want entrepreneurs to help other entrepreneurs,” Turpin said. “They’re good at picking companies because they’ve been there, and they’re really good at supporting companies because they know how hard it is.” This is the first accelerator fund at the Missouri Innovation Center. Turpin said it’s possible the center will start similar funds for other types of startups in the future.
A dog's life: Bred for the laboratory

BY JEFF SCHWEERS The Gainesville Sun

GAINESVILLE, FLA. - Life in a laboratory is the only life Colin has ever known. The tan-and-white Maltese-beagle mix has lived in the University of Florida's kennels since he was 2 months old. Colin has had all his teeth removed, gotten into fights with other dogs, suffered from anxiety, and has been forced to wear a specially designed shirt for months at a time to help with the stress of living in enclosed, cramped quarters.

Colin was born predisposed to a deadly disease that prevents the body from using sugar stored in the body. For over four years, researchers have subjected the dog to gene therapy to combat the disease, which occurs in one in every 100,000 humans.

During that time, he's developed serious kidney and bladder infections, a prostate condition, conjunctivitis and chronic vomiting.

At 4 years old, Colin exhibits health conditions of a dog twice his age.

"From what I've seen, this kind of life is sadly typical for a dog being used in experiments," said Jeremy Beckham, coordinator of the Identity Campaign, a comprehensive nationwide effort to get the public records of lab dogs and cats at 17 public research universities and laboratories.

The campaign was started by the The Beagle Freedom Project, which enlisted over 1,000 volunteers to virtually "adopt" dogs and cats and request the animals' veterinary records, treatment and progress reports and other data.
Their goal: to shine a light on animal treatment at public research institutions, make those institutions more transparent and accountable, and ultimately push for tougher regulations and mandatory adoption of lab animals.

"It doesn't look good," said Janet Skinner, a Palm Shores grants writer for the Clearwater Police Department who requested Colin's records.

Researchers say using animals is a necessary part of creating scientific breakthroughs in medicine that ultimately can save human lives.

"We have outstanding animal research care, and researchers doing incredible things, and we see people who come here every day for treatment," said David Norton, vice president of research at UF.

People can receive state-of-the-art treatment not possible 20 years ago because of basic research that began with animal models with propensities for certain diseases being used in developing vaccines, drug therapies and other treatments, Norton said.

Two-thirds of the $705 million in research money UF received last year came from the federal government. Much of that — $251 million — came from the National Institutes of Health and Health and Human Services.

"Their focus is on improving health care," Norton said.

Obtaining specific information on animal research is difficult. A veil of secrecy has been drawn over much animal research because of the actions of radical animal rights groups. Researchers have been harassed, had their addresses and phone numbers published, and their homes vandalized.

UF successfully campaigned to get the Florida Legislature to exempt the names of researchers from public records requests about research. Access to labs and animal housing is restricted.

Getting access to animal research requires massive public records requests and patience, especially when UF alone has more than 1,000 experiments going on at a given time.

Animal research is governed by either the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Welfare Act and the NIH's Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare.
The USDA covers all warm-blooded vertebrates. The NIH OLAW covers rats, mice, birds, and cold-blooded critters.

Animals used in agricultural research are not covered by any federal agency, and therefore no public information is available on cows, horses, pigs and other animals being used at UF's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

Each researcher who wants to use animals in their experiments has to go before the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, a panel made up of scientists, veterinarians and fellow researchers and at least one member of the community.

These panels review research protocols, and have the researchers explain why a particular animal is the correct model for their research, describe the project in detail and explain how it advances science, Norton said. The key is providing a "scientific rationale" for their research. UF currently has 1,200 active protocols, according to Karl Andrutis, UF director of Animal Care Services.

"Our job is not to tell you how to do your research, but to approve or not approve based on the welfare of the animal," Dr. Lyle Moldawer, vice chairman of research for the College of Medicine and an IACUC committee member, told one researcher over the summer.

Animal rights activists counter that much of the research on animals is unnecessary or redundant, and even harmful. The FDA reported that 106,000 people each year die from adverse effects of drugs that had been found safe on animals.

"People want to have careers, publish papers and get grants. Money drives a lot of animal research," said Jeanne Stuart McVey, spokeswoman for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a nonprofit organization committed to promoting non-animal research.

The organization found that Wayne State University in Michigan, for example, was conducting research on dogs that does not lead to therapies that benefit human patients.

It isn't the only example, Beckham said. "Researchers are getting rats addicted to cocaine at universities around the country," he said.
The Beagle Freedom Project's Identity Campaign has led to a complaint with the NIH alleging that Ohio State University is doing unnecessary heart testing on dogs that is killing them.

Both groups would like to see an end to the use of dogs altogether. The Texas Health Institute just announced that it would no longer be using dogs in its experiments, McVey said.

Last year, just over 59,000 dogs were used in research nationwide. Sixty-eight percent of the dogs used in lab studies were being used for product and drug testing, Beckham said.

The "scientific rationale" standard is pretty low, he said. "There is so much duplicative work you can use scientific rationale for anything," he said, even if it is just to validate the results of someone else's previous research.

About 1,700 animals were used in research, education and experimentation at UF in 2014, including 278 dogs.

Not all those animals are housed at UF. For example, some scientists use shelter animals for their research.

Not all are used on medical research targeting human diseases, either. Many are used in clinical research to help cure diseases in animals, such as feline AIDS and degenerative spinal disease in dachshunds.

As of the most recent federal inspection report, June 23, there were 52 dogs and one puppy at UF.

The Identity Campaign sought the records of 48 animals at UF: 27 dogs and 21 cats.

Under state law, UF provided the veterinary records and daily cage charts for each animal, the protocol's title and description of the research project and the source and amount of funding.

**UF has been more responsive than other universities, Beckham said, only charging $66 per request for hundreds of pages of veterinary records. Some universities, like the University of Missouri, are charging hundreds of dollars.**
Still others, like Texas A&M University, have denied requests claiming veterinarian-patient privilege, and got an opinion from the Texas Attorney General backing them up. Beagle Freedom Project is suing Texas A&M over the records and hopes to reach an agreement soon.

The organization has filed complaints against the University of Missouri and Stony Brook University in New York.

San Diego resident Julie Radcliff requested the records of a 10-year-old female tri-color beagle named Kahlua. Records show the dog was born at the UF kennels, has been used for breeding purposes, and has been subjected to no fewer than 9 experiments.

"I have a hard time wrapping my mind around the fact that in this day and age with so many ways to test, we are still using animals," Radcliff said. "Animals and humans are not the same."

Radcliff doesn't consider herself the kind of activist who would throw buckets of red paint on people wearing fur, but she doesn't believe that research to save human lives should come at any cost.

"My stance is tax dollars are paying for these experiments, on some stuff that has been proven already. Why make dogs inhale cigarette smoke to see if it is addictive or causes cancer. That's proven."

Some of UF's dogs come from USDA-certified breeders around the country.

"These dogs are largely bred for the purpose of experimentation," said Ainsley Niemkiewicz Fillman, a medical physicist from Fort Myers who treats cancer patients with radiation therapy and has two beagles of her own.

"I can't imagine them living in a lab and being exposed to things that caused pain and harm," Fillman said. "The dogs in lab probably think the humans are helping them."

Fillman received records of a dog purchased through Covance Research Products, a company criticized by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Records show her dog was tested several times for different types of anesthesia.

"She is only 2 years old and I am hoping that she will be adopted out."
UF does have an adoption policy and application process for adopting research dogs, Norton said.

UF also has several dog colonies selectively bred to be predisposed to getting certain diseases for gene therapy research. Sometimes, dogs succumb to the disease and have to be euthanized.

Currently, 11 dogs, including Colin, are being used in glycogen storage disease gene therapy research.

Dr. David Weinstein has been conducting research on glycogen storage disease for nearly a decade at UF, using dogs bred to be genetically prone to the disease. When he and his collaborators began their research, a dog with the disease lived about 28 days.

Today, a dog with glycogen storage disease can live for years. In June, Weinstein announced he is working out a deal with Dimension Therapeutics to begin clinical trials on people.

Colin, the dog Skinner requested records for, is one of those dogs.

No explanation was given for Colin's teeth removal, and there was no explanation why he was kept in a special shirt 24 hours a day. Also, the daily cage card showed constant problems with temperature and humidity levels.

"The way they're doing this is not encouraging," Skinner said. "Most people would not be happy to know what they're doing."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Former students compile book of Thomas McAfee's poetry

ELIZABETH CASSIDY, Oct 16, 2015

COLUMBIA — Professors can leave lasting impressions on their students. Former MU professor Thomas McAfee still impacts Kay Callison’s life, 55 years after she took a fiction writing class from him.
“His big statement to me was that he could never presume to teach anybody how to write,” Callison said. "All he could do was teach them how to read."

McAfee became her mentor and friend. Now she's returning the favor.

Callison and four other former students — Ted Schaefer, Tricia Schaefer, Jerry Dethrow and Greg Michalson — came together to edit and publish "There Is Not Fashion to It," a compilation of McAfee’s poems.

Callison, Dethrow and Michalson will be reading selections from the book at 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Tellers Gallery and Bar at Ninth Street and Broadway. Copies of the book will be available, with part of the proceeds going to the MU Department of English.

McAfee's teaching influenced much of Callison’s career. Most of her life’s work was a recording project called The American Audio Prose Library. She recorded writers reading their work and conducted in-depth interviews with them — a job she said she could not have done if McAfee hadn’t taught her what it meant to read.

“He knew the craft,” Callison said. “He believed you had to know the rules in order to break the rules.”

Ted Schaefer had the idea for the book in 2010 near the 30th anniversary of McAfee’s death.

“I’m just hoping people who knew him get a chance to read and remember him and his poetry,” Michalson said, “and people who don’t know him get introduced to a man who was genuinely a fine poet and writer whose legacy would otherwise be lost.”

Michalson and Callison said the title of the book reflects McAfee’s writing style. He was precise and left out the unnecessary.

“I think it really reflected a lot of Tom’s sensibilities,” Michalson said. “He didn’t care much about fashion in writing or in any other aspect.”
When McAfee slouched into his classroom wearing his plaid sports coat, Callison said, he would set his ashtray, cigarettes, cigarette lighter and nasal spray down on his desk.

Callison said he treated every class like it was a continuation of the last and always began with, “Now, where were we?”

A north St. Louis County shelter grows, offering hope to those who have had little of it

Oct. 18 • By Doug Moore

FLORISSANT • The 43-acre complex atop the hill has impressive views of the Missouri River. Nearly 50 years ago, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd began building a new home here. A place ideal for prayer and contemplation. A place where they could grow their mission to provide a haven for some of the region’s most vulnerable young people.

Those who have been sexually or physically assaulted, often in their own homes. Those who are living on the streets. Teen mothers.

A place to come to when there is no other place to go.

It’s known as Marygrove, serving about 200 young people a day. The campus includes six cottages where those ages 6 to 21 live while receiving treatment for emotional and behavioral issues. There is a transitional living program helping teens and young adults with a variety of services to prepare them for independence. There also is a small school, although most residents are shuttled to nearby public schools. And there is a 24-hour shelter, so the most vulnerable have a place to stay. It is basically two rooms filled with bunk beds.

But beginning next week, the shelter, formally known as Crisis Services, will move to its new home, a three-story, 22,000-square-foot building that until last year was where sisters from the founding order lived. Marygrove had long known it needed a bigger, better space for its shelter and for three years was trying to figure out the best way to make that happen, said Sister Helen Negri, chief executive officer.

“Right in front of our own nose was a building,” Negri said. “The sisters had grown to a very few and they were very gracious about thinking their house could be a place for the kids.”

So when the few remaining nuns moved out a year ago and into the Sisters of the Good Shepherd location on Natural Bridge Road in St. Louis County, Marygrove began its new chapter to try to meet the needs of a region in need.

“This really allows us to develop and become even better at working with kids that have nowhere to go,” Negri said. “They’ve been on the street, they’ve experienced things you and I could hardly ever believe.”
Marygrove, established in 1849, was long a part of St. Louis’ south side, occupying two blocks at South Grand Boulevard and Gravois Avenue. After acquiring the current location in 1967 and spending two years building a campus, the sisters moved their residents, then restricted to teen girls.

But a decade into the move, the struggles of relocation were showing. The girls were getting tougher, and the sisters were getting older, Negri said. A decision was made to close the facility. Instead, it was turned over to Catholic Charities in 1983, the year Negri began.

“When I arrived there were four girls and 11 lay employees,” Negri said. Today, Marygrove and its $11 million budget serves about 1,300 young people a year, with 250 employees.

The new Marygrove shelter is licensed for 20 beds, up from 14. Gone are the bunk beds. Large rooms allow for up to three beds each, looking more like college dormitories. There is a large kitchen and a community room with floor-to-ceiling windows, a fireplace and views of a garden, a hill ideal for sledding and the river.

The larger space will allow those at the shelter to receive classes in parenting and job readiness. There are more private spaces to meet with therapists and case managers.

But the best part, said Djuana Baer, director of residential services, is all the space to grow. For now, the top two floors will go mainly unused.

The new building, where residents will begin moving in next week, is named after Martha E. Jones, one of the first members to serve on Marygrove’s board under Catholic Charities. She was the daughter of Edward Jones, founder of the financial services firm. A bequest from her death last year helped with the renovation.

On Friday, the building was officially dedicated with a blessing by the Rev. Edward M. Rice and a ribbon-cutting by a former resident, Michael, now a freshman at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Michael, 18, was in 14 foster homes and 10 schools before coming to Marygrove in 2010 as an eighth-grader. There, he met caseworker Sedrick Williams.

“I did his intake, helped guide him, went with him on college visits. I see him at least once a month,” said Williams, who picked up Michael from college for the dedication at Marygrove. Having a larger shelter means more opportunities to help more youths, said Williams, who last month became the Crisis Services director.

“This move comes with a lot of excitement,” Williams said.

Michael said staying at Marygrove gave him the stability he needed to focus on his education, including assistance with college applications (the Post-Dispatch is not using Michael’s full name at the request of Marygrove, which is bound by state privacy laws regarding the youths in the agency’s custody).

Florissant Mayor Thomas P. Schneider joined donors, neighbors and residents for a tour of the new Jones Center.

Throughout the brightly lit shelter, inspirational sayings have been painted on the wall. This one can be found several times:

“Not all who wander are lost.”