Missouri investigating vandalism at dorm

October 30, 2015 10:44 am

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — University of Missouri police are investigating another incident of vandalism targeting minorities.

University spokesman Christian Basi said Friday the vandalism included a symbol that targets cultural and religious minorities. He says the university isn't identifying the symbol found Oct. 24 on a dorm bathroom wall because the investigation is ongoing.

Rabbi Avraham Lapine, director of Chabad of MU, says the symbol was a Nazi swastika.

In April, authorities found a swastika in another Missouri dormitory. Bradley Becker pleaded guilty to second-degree property damage and was given a suspended 90-day sentence. He was also placed on two years' unsupervised probation.

Basi says if the individual responsible for the latest vandalism is a student he or she could face disciplinary action from a reprimand to expulsion.
Someone used feces to draw a swastika on the wall of a restroom in Gateway Hall at the University of Missouri last week, according to a Residence Halls Association statement.

MUPD Maj. Brian Weimer said the department is investigating the incident and working to identify anyone involved.

Residence Halls Association President Billy Donley said in a statement circulated online Thursday that the executive board of the Residence Halls Association and other student leaders “will be assembling direct requests for new safety protocols in the residence halls to be released in the next few weeks.”

Donley’s statement said he was disappointed and disgusted by the incident, which he said occurred at about 2 a.m. Saturday.

“The individual used a symbol that targets cultural and religious minorities in a place where students call home,” Donley said in the statement.

A student drew a swastika in Mark Twain residence hall in April using ashes.

The student arrested and accused of the crime — Bradley M. Becker — pleaded guilty Oct. 20 to a misdemeanor and received two years probation.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Swastika drawn with human feces found in MU residence hall

EMILY TEOH, SARAH WYNN, Oct 30, 2015

COLUMBIA — Someone drew a swastika with human feces in a bathroom of MU's Gateway Hall early on Oct. 24, according to a Residence Halls Association statement.

Residence Halls Association President Billy Donley released a statement about the incident on Twitter. He described the vandalism as "an act of hate."

MU spokesman Christian Basi declined to confirm the nature of the vandalism citing an open investigation.
“It was some vandalism that was discovered several days ago in a residence hall in a restroom,” he said Friday.

Basi also said that the vandalism was reported immediately to the MU Police Department, and that it started an investigation right away.

MU Police Major Brian Weimer said that the investigation was ongoing, but that nothing linked this incident to another anti-Semitic episode in April. He encouraged anyone with additional information about the investigation to contact the department.

Adia Woodson, a freshman living at Gateway, said she found out about the incident from a poster put up by the residents hall's elevators.

“It’s disgusting,” Woodson said. “This incident shouldn’t have happened. The individuals responsible for this don’t deserve to be on campus. It creates a threatening environment for all residents of Gateway, not just students of the Jewish faith.”

Jeanne Snodgrass, executive director of Mizzou Hillel, a nonprofit organization and Jewish campus center, said she was contacted by Residential Life about the incident.

“Unfortunately sometimes things happen, and I think that the university is responding appropriately and dealing with it very seriously,” Snodgrass said.

Jordan Kodner is an executive for both Zeta Beta Tau and Chabad, a Jewish student organization on campus. He said he found out about the incident when he was at Hillel and someone brought it up right after it happened.

"A lot of people are very confused, especially with this particular one — using feces," he said. "I know that kind of confused a lot of people. It just seems very odd — were they trying to send a certain message with it?"

He said he hopes the incident will be a wake-up call about anti-Semitism on campus. He said his is upset that it is usually downplayed.
Kodner doesn’t feel threatened because nothing violent has happened yet.

"I feel like it's just forgotten about or not talked about, when it really should be," Kodner said. "Just like any racism case against any type of minority, it should be discussed and it should be on national media."

The executive board of the Jewish Student Organization discussed the issue during a meeting at Hillel on Friday evening. The members said there needs to be more public awareness about what had happened.

Thalia Sass, the president of Jewish students' group, said at the meeting that she found out about the incident from a Maneater reporter. She then confirmed it with Snodgrass, she said.

"I still think that when something like this happens, Jewish students feel threatened," Sass said. "I was actually really mad about this because I heard about it from a Maneater reporter. It happened on the 24th, and we’re only talking about it now? Why wasn’t JSO contacted earlier by Residential Life?"

The group plans on speaking to the residents of Gateway Hall during a mandatory residential meeting on Monday evening. They said they plan on talking about the history of the swastika and how it relates to Jewish people and the Holocaust.

It also plans on reaching out to the Legion of Black Collegians for a social media campaign using the hastag #hateliveshere.

The board also plans on organizing an event at Speakers Circle on Nov. 6 to hand out bagels and cream cheese. Slogans that were suggested for this event include "Spread Cream Cheese, Not Hate."

“When we stand in front of them and say, ‘I am Jewish, this affects me,’ it changes things,” Jared Kaufman, the social action chairman, said. “I think that visibility is very important.”
University of Missouri investigating vandalism at dorm


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The University of Missouri Columbia Police Investigating Vandalism in Dorm

Listen to the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=b068bd0d-4adc-4814-8d0a-ad3a99647d30

Swastika drawn in residence hall with feces

This is the second incident of anti-Semitic vandalism that has occurred in the past year.

Residential Life staff found feces smeared in the shape of a swastika on the floor and wall of a bathroom in Gateway Hall at 2 a.m. Oct. 24, according to a Residence Halls Association statement.

Residential Life then contacted the MU Police Department. MUPD completed a report of the incident, and Residential Life staff also filled out a Bias Incident Report, Director of Residential Life Frankie Minor said. MUPD could not be reached for comment.

“The university is aware of it, and the MUPD (is) actively investigating the incident,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email. “Anyone who might have information is encouraged to contact the MUPD.”

RHA President Billy Donley tweeted about the incident yesterday afternoon.

He later released a statement via Twitter detailing the incident.

“It is with regret that I am writing this letter to address an act of hate in one of the residence halls on campus,” Donley said in the statement. “I am not only upset that this happened but I am also upset that I found out via a flyer on the walls of Gateway addressed from the Department of Residential Life.”
Donley said he was dissatisfied with the way in which residents were notified. He said student leaders in residence halls should be notified immediately, and he should not have had to discover the incident on his own.

“We notified residents throughout the hall; we also confirmed our community and institutional values, and encouraged students to report any information to MUPD or staff,” Minor said.

This is not the first time a residence hall was vandalized with anti-Semitic images. A similar incident occurred in Mark Twain Hall last April, when a swastika was drawn on one of the walls in smeared charcoal. Shortly after the incident, freshman Bradley Becker, who was a resident of Mark Twain at the time, was arrested in connection with the vandalism. Minor said nothing currently indicates that the two incidents are connected.

Mizzou Hillel Executive Director Jeanne Snodgrass said the Jewish campus center is troubled and concerned by any hate message, including this most recent act.

“A swastika is particularly problematic for us because of its association with anti-Jewish sentiment,” Snodgrass said in an email. “I am glad that the university is taking the incident so seriously. Hillel and the Jewish Student Organization will continue to be available to provide support, community and dialogue to Jewish and interested non-Jewish students.”

Snodgrass said she is concerned about what seems to be an increase in anti-Semitic activity on college campuses nationally.

“The few incidents we have had at Mizzou are troubling in part because of the concern that they may be part of this trend,” Snodgrass said.

Donley said the vandalism was also impactful for those who intended Gateway to be a symbol of inclusivity because of its gender neutral bathrooms.

“I, personally, am exploring options into requiring each hall government to have a (Diversity Peer Educators) facilitation,” Donley said. “I don’t think a statement is enough. If I were to make it mandatory for every single floor in every single residence hall have a DPE facilitation, that would make a big statement.”
City Council to discuss projects, goals with MU, Stephens

By Megan Favignano

Sunday, November 1, 2015 at 12:00 am

The Columbia City Council on Monday will meet with representatives from Stephens College and the University of Missouri to discuss student housing, building projects and enrollment goals.

Stephens College President Dianne Lynch and Gary Ward, MU’s vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer, will attend the pre-council meeting Monday. Ward will present an overview of MU’s campus master plan at the meeting, which is scheduled for 6 p.m. in Conference Room 1A/1B at City Hall, 701 E. Broadway.

While MU is larger in size compared with Columbia’s other colleges, Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp said, it’s imperative to have good communication and collaboration with all local higher education institutions.

“When we talk about ... the education being a driver in our economy, we tend to talk exclusively about MU,” Trapp said. “Stephens, Columbia College and Moberly Area Community College all have a role to play and are all part of what makes Columbia great.”

Ward’s presentation Monday will cover recently completed projects on campus, construction MU has in progress and things it has planned for the future.

MU operations spokeswoman Karlan Seville said Monday’s conversation is a great opportunity for the university to provide an update to the city.

“It’s important to keep a relationship with this community and to keep the conversation going,” Seville said.

Among MU’s projects are an applied learning center at the Trulaske College of Business and a new School of Music building — both part of a 50/50 matching fund project through a state program.
Monday’s conversation is part of an effort to make the city more aware of growing student enrollment and the goals of local higher education institutions. Earlier this year, the City Council denied a proposed 850-bed student housing project.

The student housing proposal sparked Mayor Bob McDavid’s effort to improve communication between the city and the higher education institutions in its boundaries.

Trapp said collaboration between the city and local colleges and MU is in everyone’s best interest.

“It’s a good step,” Trapp said.

MU started this school year with the largest student body in its history and continues to look for growth. The university’s total enrollment this fall was 35,050.

“As we grow, it adds not only jobs from construction, but we’ll have more students and potentially more faculty and researchers” in the community, Seville said.

Columbia College spokesman Sam Fleury said the college will not attend the meeting because it has adequate housing for its student population and does not have any plans for construction.

Survey: MU medical school faculty worry about leadership change

By Megan Favignano

Friday, October 30, 2015 at 2:00 pm

A recent survey among University of Missouri School of Medicine faculty shows concerns that a leadership change will negatively affect the school’s ability to recruit and will harm the school in its upcoming reaccreditation.

School of Medicine Dean Patrick Delafontaine resigned last month after less than a year on the job. Delafontaine, who started as dean last December, continues to teach and conduct research for the university.
University of Missouri Health spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said the Faculty Affairs Council in the School of Medicine conducted the survey, which the group sent to all its full-time faculty members. Of the school’s about 600 full-time faculty, 299 responded.

The survey asked faculty to mark how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of eight statements. One statement read, “I am concerned that the forced resignation of a dean will be harmful to the medical school in the upcoming reaccreditation process.” Of the 299 faculty who responded to that question, 176 said they strongly agree. The MU School of Medicine’s reaccreditation site visit from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education is set for January.

Another statement read, “I am concerned that the forced resignation of a dean will be harmful to the Medical School’s efforts to attract researchers.” Of the 296 faculty who responded, 207 said they strongly agreed.

At a faculty meeting, MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said “certain issues” contributed to Delafontaine’s resignation. He did not specify what those issues were.

Loftin also told faculty “there was significant consultation with the dean about the issues” at the time.

Loftin said privacy rules protecting personnel files limited him from being more specific about Delafontaine’s resignation.

Most of the faculty who took the survey agreed with a statement that Delafontaine had made progress as dean in helping improve MU’s standing in the Association of American Universities. Research is a major component in how the AAU judges its members, and MU has made increasing research out of the medical school a priority to help boost its AAU standing.

The survey results also showed about 43 percent of faculty who responded thought Loftin should ask Delafontaine to reconsider his resignation.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said the School of Medicine administration is reviewing the survey.

Faculty Affairs Council Chairman Michael Brown declined to comment on the survey and directed questions to Jenkins. The Faculty Affairs Council is a representative body for medical school faculty and was formed in 1977. One elected representative from each department in the medical school and the medical school’s elected representatives to the MU Faculty Council make up the Faculty Affairs Council.

Delafontaine also declined to comment about the survey or his resignation.

A consulting group recently recommended the university restore its executive vice chancellor for health affairs, a position eliminated earlier this year when Hal Williamson retired. Once MU fills that position, the new vice chancellor will be responsible for hiring a new medical school dean.
I am pleased to see that University of Missouri nursing students will once again have the opportunity to receive training in Planned Parenthood health centers.

This decision was critical since two months prior, the university shockingly canceled 10 contracts with Planned Parenthood, ending their relationship that allowed nursing and medical students to choose the health center as an optional rotation. Although the university attributed its actions to a lack of student demand, the move felt highly politicized in the context of the political attacks on Planned Parenthood, which continued even after the attorney general’s investigation cleared the Missouri affiliates of all alleged wrongdoing.

As a college student, it saddens me to see education being interrupted by politics. The Planned Parenthood rotation could offer invaluable experiences to nursing and medical students, especially those interested in obstetrics and gynecology. The university’s decision to reinstate its contracts with Planned Parenthood demonstrates recognition that political agendas should not obstruct education.

However, there are still heavy restrictions placed on these students, such as the inability to counsel women seeking abortion services or assist in these procedures. Laura McQuade, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri, points out “more must be done,” and I couldn’t agree more. Moving forward it’s important that these students do not feel punished for their decision to seek medical training, wherever they choose to pursue their training.

Ashley Ogedegbe • St. Louis
Letter to the Editor: A defense of Professor Julie Elman

The women’s and gender studies professor’s teaching methods were criticized in a Campus Reform post.

I thought my first women’s and gender studies class would be an hour and a half of complaining about men twice a week and an easy A at the end. I was wrong.

I walked into the classroom where all the tables were arranged into a large U-shape and students of all different genders and races and abilities filled the seats. Professor Julie Elman, who looked not much older than the students, walked to the front of the U and handed out a thick syllabus. As I looked through the list of reading, I knew this was not going to be easy. I remember going home and sitting there with my fat first reading assignment, full of psychoanalysis I didn’t understand sprawled all over my kitchen table, and I thought “What did I do to myself?” Laura Mulvey just didn’t flow like Harry Potter.

But the next day, I went to class. Professor Elman, who I now call “Dr. E,” got up and began speaking — no PowerPoint, no handout. She just began speaking. She wrote some keywords on the chalkboard. She explained some points. She made some jokes. She’d get excited about a point and run back to the board and draw some arrows connecting ideas and add some more. And she began asking questions to which she demanded answers. No matter what anyone said, no matter how informed or uninformed, she’d interact with their comment and get this idea ball rolling where then the next student’s hand would pop up and they’d speak, and then the next student’s face would light up and they’d speak, and then a bunch of other hands would shoot up and suddenly, in all of this hand-raising and questioning and answering, Laura Mulvey became as understandable and as exciting as Harry Potter.

I’d never experienced anything like it. I’d never experienced a teacher who made their classes so engaging with impassioned discussion and healthy debate. It’s why now, as a senior at MU, I’m in my third class with Dr. E. It’s why I get excited to go to her office hours. It’s why I never skip her class to take a nap. It’s why can’t get enough of learning from her.

It’s also why today, I’m surprised and angry. You see, Dr. Julie Elman’s teaching methods have recently been under attack. A student from her Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies course spoke with the conservative education blog Campus Reform about how she was “required to watch a sexually explicit movie.” The movie in question is “Tongues Untied,” a 1989 quasi-documentary discussing the racial politics of the gay community.
As a disclaimer: I’m not in this specific class. But, I’ve spoken with a number of students who are, and I’d say I’m pretty familiar with Dr. E’s teaching by now.

So from my own and other students’ viewing of the film, it’s fair to say that yes, the film is graphic. Yes, the film is controversial. But the graphic and controversial nature of the film — like everything Dr. E puts on her syllabi — has a purpose.

The “investigative reporter” at Campus Reform didn’t seem to ask about that. He also must have forgotten to investigate the syllabus, which the student has possessed for 10 weeks since the class began, so any student could plan ahead for triggering content. The reporter also omitted that Dr. Elman emailed the class the night prior to the in-class viewing and told them to read about the film so they understood the film’s controversy, so the content wouldn’t shock any student. And, the reporter didn’t mention that the film took the entire class period, so there hasn’t been time to discuss the documentary yet — that critical time where the content suddenly makes sense was supposed to be Friday, but the discussion was cancelled following the student’s public criticism.

Those details better explain the context here, but those details don’t explain the issue. The issue for me is that the article paints Dr. E as if she’s some erratic liberal commie who demands all her students be erratic liberal commies to get an A. The student described this viewpoint saying, “Personally, I really do love this professor and the TAs — they’re all very nice and very helpful — but it’s like I have to act a certain way to get a desirable grade.”

That couldn’t be more false. Dr. E doesn’t require you to think a certain way to get a good grade in this class. Absolutely not. What she does require is that you engage with the material. What Dr. E does require is for you to be challenged. Everything Dr. E teaches is nuanced, complicated and thought-provoking. She does not teach a math class that produces a “correct” answer at the end that has little application to your everyday life. Instead, Dr. E teaches about the very real, very emotional parts of our day-to-days that make up our very messy and complex lives. But Dr. E also teaches you to find your voice in all of it.

When I spoke to other students who had her, I realized I was not alone in my awe and appreciation of Dr. E.

Lydia Singh has taken multiple classes taught by Dr. E, including the intro course this semester, and said: “It is amazing that every time I walk out of one of Dr. Elman’s classes, I can honestly say that I have learned something new that changes how I see the world. Her immense knowledge and her desire to validate all experiences in her classes — even those that may potentially contrast from her own — is something that every educator — but actually, like every person on this earth — should strive for.”

Ruby Ficklen took her class freshman year and said, “(Dr. Elman) taught me to critique and then look at my critique and dig deeper. Her class and her curriculum changed the lens with which I have viewed my education ever since. I don't think I have ever received a better explanation of intersectionality, four years into my education later. Frankly, I cannot fully express the difference it has made.”
Jes Philbrook, the teaching assistant for the introduction course two years ago, attested Dr. E “thinks long and hard about the films and readings she assigns.” And with this specific film, other students understood the intent of showing it.

Jim Farley is in the introduction course this semester and said the film depicting men “being excluded from a ‘gay bar’ because of the color of their skin is unreal, especially considering the illogical belief that when an individual identifies with a marginalized group they are inclusive of all groups. This is something that, as a cis, het, white male, I don’t experience, and I relish any opportunity to learn about these experiences from the people who have experienced them. That's a chance that not just this film, but this class as a whole, has afforded me.”

Hannah Feagan was also in the class and said: “Dr. Elman showed this documentary to start a conversation. All of the explicit content was not only powerful, but meant to educate. If you are uncomfortable because of said content, then you’re learning. It’s that simple.”

So when I read this specific student’s complaints about the film and Dr. E, I’m a little confused, but I think I can help. To the student who asks, “How is this pertinent to my education?” I think I have your answer. Before you complain to a conservative blog and get class cancelled, how about you go to class and find out. Go and listen to Dr. E. Go and listen to your fellow students. Go and raise your hand. Go and question those around you. Question yourself. Maybe then you’ll get your A, but you’ll also get a whole lot more.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Former Enron CFO preaches ethics in MU symposium speech

BY JACK WITTHAUS, Oct 30, 2015

COLUMBIA — Andrew Fastow always feels a bit surprised when he’s asked to lecture about ethics.

"It's like inviting Kim Kardashian to speak about chastity,” Fastow said with a grin.

A nearly full house at MU's Cornell Hall laughed at the former Enron chief financial officer's joke at his own expense. After all, Fastow was involved in one of the largest cases of corporate fraud in U.S. history.
Fastow, 53, spoke for about an hour Friday at the Orin Ethics Symposium at the Trulaske College of Business to students, faculty and members of the public. His speech, "Pride and Repentance: The Enron Story," focused on his personal shortcomings and similar number-fudging he says is still occurring in companies across the world.

Trulaske spokeswoman Ashley Burden said in an email that Fastow was paid $10,000 for the speech. Private funds paid for his talk, not state money, she said.

After his opening Kardashian one-liner, Fastow's tone changed entirely when he spoke about his guilty plea in 2004 to two counts of wire and securities fraud for his role in the Enron scandal. He spent six years in federal prison and was released in late 2011.

Fastow was blunt about his unethical behavior. He flashed a slide showing his impact on others: lost jobs, lost retirement plans, lost relationships and even lost lives because of suicide.

“This is hard for me to live with every morning when I wake up,” Fastow said, a sentiment he repeated often during the speech. He even extended an apology to anyone in the audience who might have been affected by his misdeeds at Enron.

“I consider myself most responsible for this damage,” he said. "I’m very sorry for it, and I’m very embarrassed.”

Despite the damage he caused, Fastow said he didn’t break any rules while at Enron but instead found ways around the rules for his own and the company's benefit.

But Fastow had a warning for his audience of mainly business school students and faculty. He said many companies "follow the rules" but act in an unethical manner. For example, companies overestimate growth rates, which reduces a company’s known liabilities and helps it appear to be stronger financially.

He was explaining these decisions once at a conference, he said, and caused one company executive to leap out his chair and scream an expletive in surprise.
That man’s company was keeping its books in a very Enron-like way without considering the ethics of those practices, Fastow said.

Acting unethically has its perks, Fastow admitted. He noted that before his conviction, he was praised for his efforts at Enron. He held up a shiny trophy in his right hand to emphasize the point.

Then he held up his red prison ID in his left hand.

“You can follow all of the rules and simultaneously commit fraud,” Fastow said. “That may happen if there is no ethics component in your thought process.”

Fastow also quizzed students on examples of corporate ethical decisions and asked them how they’d respond. Most students agreed in theory that fudging the numbers and hiding debt was unethical. Fastow then asked in real life if students would manipulate the numbers. Most shook their heads no.

But Fastow said that in the real world, other factors can influence ethical decision-making. Fudging the numbers might raise your bonus, help your company stay competitive and get approved by lawyers and auditors.

How do you represent the numbers then?

“I hope you’re feeling very uncomfortable about your choice of a career,” Fastow said.

The audience of over 400 people responded to Fastow's cautionary tale with enthusiasm.
Union wants concession from university after contract expired

By Megan Favignano

Friday, October 30, 2015 at 2:00 pm

About 20 members of a labor union representing service maintenance employees at the University of Missouri, UMKC and MU Health showed up at UM System President Tim Wolfe’s office Thursday afternoon to request a meeting with the president.

The UM System and LiUNA Laborers’ Local 773 have not been able to reach an agreement since their contract expired Aug. 31.

Regina Guevara, field representative with LiUNA, said the UM System notified the union it would implement its most recent contract offer, which union members voted against last month. Once a public employee contract reaches impasse, Guevara said, the employer can implement its last contract offer.

“They can do it, and they did it, but we don’t think that’s in good faith,” Guevara said “That’s not how we’ve done business. We didn’t think our relationship was like that with the university. I think the workers deserve a voice and some protections around their pay.”

The president was not in his office Thursday afternoon and union representatives briefly spoke with UM System Chief of Staff Zora Mulligan, who said she would pass on their concerns and meeting request to Wolfe.

Union members voted down a UM contract proposal last month, which included switching to a merit pay system. UM System spokesman John Fougere said the university proposed merit pay as a way to reward high performing union-eligible employees. UM, he said, will fully implement merit pay over the next three years.

The union wants UM “to change our position which includes rewarding the people who do the best work,” Fougere said in an email. “Because our primary concern is for the university’s staff who play important and critical roles on a daily basis we simply cannot change our position.”
Traditionally, the union workers were on a step program, meaning pay was based on longevity. LiUNA represents 422 union workers at University Hospital, 154 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus and 781 at the Columbia campus.

The university’s most recent pay increase for union workers varied between 1 and 2 percent, Fougere said.

Guevara said union workers worry a merit pay system, which bases pay increases on subjective employee evaluations, will make it possible for supervisors to show favoritism.

Fougere said the criteria used to place employees into specific categories on the evaluation is the same five-point scale that is part of the evaluation tools the university has used for both union and nonunion employees for years.

MU graduate student Curtis Edwards wore an orange union T-shirt and stood with LiUNA union members Thursday outside University Hall. Edwards said he wanted to stand in solidarity with the union workers. MU graduate students are collecting signatures in an effort to form a union

“As graduate employees, we’ve been under attack by the university,” Edwards said. “We want to show our support” for the LiUNA Laborers’ union “and work together.”

Thursday, four union representatives spoke to Mulligan in the president’s office while union members and students stood at the door to University Hall. After talking to Mulligan, the union representatives asked her to address their group. Mulligan agreed to let the entire group present Thursday know she will help set up a meeting with the president. Members of the media were not allowed in the room.

Adjuncts at St. Louis Community College approve joining a union

By DALE SINGER

Updated at 7:43 p.m., Nov. 1, with results of vote: Part-time instructors at St. Louis Community College have voted overwhelmingly to join a union.

Jonathan Huskey, a spokesman for the Service Employees International Union, reported Sunday night that two days of balloting over the weekend
resulted in approval of the union proposition by a vote of 188-15. He said 574 adjunct instructors were eligible to vote in the election.

The approval comes after adjuncts at Washington University also voted to join the SEIU but their counterparts at Webster University voted down a similar proposition.

The administration at the community college had not taken a stance on the union proposal one way or the other but had said it would work with adjuncts which ever way the vote went.

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Our earlier story:

After a win at Washington University and a defeat at Webster University, organized labor holds a third election this weekend for adjunct instructors at St. Louis Community College.

The secret-ballot election will be held on Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon at each of the college’s four campuses, with results expected to be available Sunday night. The sole ballot question: “Do you wish to be represented for the purpose of collective bargaining by Service Employees International Union Local 1.”

College spokesman Dan Kimack said the administration has “worked diligently to share information” with them about the upcoming election but is taking no stance on what the outcome of the election should be. He said the college has more than 630 part-time faculty members.

“The faculty are partners in our mission to deliver high quality, affordable education to the St. Louis community,” Kimack said in an interview. “We do not expect that to change regardless of the outcome of the election.”

Maryanne Angliongto, who teaches astronomy one day a week at the college’s Wildwood campus, said she feels the union will be a much more efficient and effective way for part-time instructors to get their needs taken care of. She also teaches full-time at Jefferson College.

Angliongto cited low pay and a lack of job security as two of the major issues involved.
“A lot of times,” she said, “we don’t know whether we’re going to be teaching a class or how much the pay is going to be. Sometimes, classes get dropped at the last minute, classes get added at the last minute, so you have to scramble around.”

In that situation, Angliongto added, students aren’t served as well as they could be or should be.

“Having lower wages and fewer benefits can be stressful and detracting from the mission of educating,” she said. “It’s a wonderful career, a wonderful job. We just have to make it a little more efficient.

“As part-time instructors, we love our students. We love to teach them as well as we can. Hopefully, with the union, we can get some of our professional and financial needs taken care of so we can do that to the best of our ability.”

In an interview with St. Louis Public Radio during the summer, Jeff Pittman, chancellor of the community college system, said faculty have a right to unionize.

“We have had adjunct faculty that came forward at the last couple of board meetings and have expressed their interest to organize,” Pittman said. “So we are in the process of developing board policy for that that will be on a future agenda and that will provide adjunct faculty the opportunity to move forward and organize if that's what they desire to do.

“That's really ultimately their decision, but we're going to create the means for them to do so.”

Board policy on the issue was modified during the summer, Kimack said.

That stance is sharply different from the one taken by administrators at Webster University, where unionization met with stiff resistance. Part-time faculty members at Webster voted in May not to join the SEIU.

The outcome was more positive for the SEIU at Washington U., where faculty members voted in favor of unionization. At Washington U., the administration sent out a large volume of information that was designed to be neutral. Since the election was held late last year, the union and university have been negotiating on a possible contract.
Michael O'Bryan, who has been active in the adjuncts' drive for a union contract, said in an email that 10 bargaining sessions have been held so far, with a few more scheduled for this semester. He said a tentative agreement has been reached guaranteeing adjunct access to university resources that they did not universally have before. Basic issues standard to most labor contracts have also been agreed upon, he said.

"With these issues wrapping up or concluded," O'Bryan said, "we have begun to move into issues that we consider the core of our fight for dignity and respect on campus—a fight that is itself one example of a national struggle for the same principles. In our case, this means multi-year appointments rather than the semester-long contracts we currently hold, significantly higher compensation, and some access to benefits. While we have begun to introduce articles addressing these issues, we have not, to date, reached agreement on them with the University."

He said the union wants to emphasize how much of Washington University's teaching corps is made up of adjuncts, which he said is a major shift in higher education.

"When teachers are paid poverty wages for their sections," O'Bryan wrote, "teachers must take on so many courses to make ends meet, often at campuses spread far apart, that it becomes physically possible for them to spend as much time as they would like on crucial outside-the-classroom mentoring and instruction. When teachers don't know what classes they will be teach next semester, and often don't receive their contracts until a few weeks before the semester starts, they don't have adequate time to peruse potential new course materials, order new textbooks, or modify their syllabi to better fit student needs. For these reasons, higher wages and longer appointments for adjuncts will benefit students and society as much as it will teachers.

"We remain hopeful that the bargaining team for Washington University in St. Louis will show that it understands these basic facts."

**Mizzou grad students seek to organize**

*At the University of Missouri-Columbia, it is graduate students, not faculty members, who are weighing whether to join a union – in this case, the National Education Association.*
Connor Lewis, a doctoral candidate in history who has been on campus since 2012, said as many as 2,800 graduate workers could be eligible to be part of the union. He said the effort is on an ambitious timeline, with the goal of an election by the end of the year and a contract in place in the two years after that.

He said that until recently, grad students thought there may have been some support for a union within their own individual departments, but now they are starting to realize the sentiment is more widespread.

Graduate students at Mizzou were vocal about their opposition this summer to a decision by the campus to rescind subsidies for their health insurance – a move announced with one day’s notice.

After the outcry, the university changed course. But Lewis said that issue is just one of several that graduate students are considering in the drive for unionization.

“That really was the issue that lit the fuse on a slow-burning powder keg,” he said. Noting that on-campus child care has been eliminated recently, he added:

“What we’ve seen is not only that we’re not getting paid well, but all of the things that make it livable to be a graduate student at the University of Missouri have been gradually disappearing over the past couple of years.”

Lewis said graduate student unions are common on large public campuses in other states like California, Wisconsin, Massachusetts and New York, but if the union drive at Mizzou is successful, “we would be pioneers in the state of Missouri.”

He said the administration so far has been quiet.

“We’ve gotten the sense they’re trying at least for the moment to take a relatively hands-off approach,” Lewis said. “But unofficially, we’ve gotten the sense that some administrators realize that this is a crisis of their own doing.”

In an emailed statement, a university spokesman said:

"MU leaders are committed to working with our graduate student government leaders as we have in the past. We will continue to meet with them and work to address their concerns in an effort to improve their experience at Mizzou."
Missouri QB Maty Mauk suspended for rest of season

COLUMBIA (AP) — Missouri suspended junior quarterback Maty Mauk for the rest of the season for disciplinary reasons, just six days after reinstating him.

The Tigers (4-4) play 24th-ranked Mississippi State (6-2) on Thursday night at home.

Freshman Drew Lock has made four starts since Mauk was first suspended.

The school said in a news release Sunday that it will not discuss further details of Mauk’s suspension. The first suspension was for a violation of program policies.

Mizzou suspends Mauk for rest of season

Nov. 1, 2015 • By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Former starting quarterback Maty Mauk won’t play for Missouri again this year. A week after he allowed the junior to rejoin the team following a four-week suspension, Gary Pinkel suspended Mauk for the rest of the season Sunday.
Pinkel had reinstated Mauk last Sunday and allowed the quarterback to participate in team activities last week during MU’s bye. Mauk took part in Tuesday’s practice and split reps with freshman quarterback Drew Lock, who started the four games during Mauk’s suspension and will keep that role when the Tigers (4-4, 1-4 SEC) host No. 24 Mississippi State (6-2, 2-2) on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Mauk, 22, addressed his teammates.

“He just apologized,” wide receiver J’Mon Moore said, “and said he’d get his act together and be the leader that he’s supposed to be and we all know he can be.”

Four days later, though, Mauk’s season was over.

Pinkel declined to elaborate on what changed over the course of those four days, but multiple sources have told the Post-Dispatch that Mauk’s latest suspension is related to his behavior late Wednesday night in downtown Columbia.

According to two sources, hours after Mauk apologized to his teammates, Mauk and another man engaged in a verbal confrontation outside of downtown Columbia bar The Field House shortly after midnight.

The scene was relayed to Mizzou’s administration, and after athletics director Mack Rhoades conferred with Pinkel, Mauk was suspended for the rest of the season, according to a source with knowledge of the situation.

One source said Mauk “didn’t fulfill set expectations” of his initial suspension.

Between 11:09 p.m. and 1:14 a.m., Columbia police were dispatched to the area on Broadway four times for various incidents, but a police spokesman confirmed that Mauk was not mentioned in any reports taken that night.

Mauk and his father, Mike Mauk, could not be reached to comment Sunday. Neither returned messages left by the Post-Dispatch.

“All my players trust me that I don’t ever talk about disciplinary issues since the day I got here,” Pinkel said. “I know you want more information, but that’s why I don’t do it. I’ve been very, very consistent.”

“What we did here (with Mauk) is exactly like I’ve always done it,” he added. “That’s what we do. That’s what we believe. We don’t overlook things. We don’t cover things up. We do what’s right. A lot of other places would find ways to get the problem solved without doing what we do, but we don’t do that at Missouri. I’ve never done that, I never will.”

Mauk, 17-5 as a starter at MU since 2013, was erased from the team roster in the weekly media notes. When Mauk was first suspended Sept. 29, Pinkel said he would meet with him each Sunday and Monday to review the situation until it’s resolved. Asked Sunday if he plans to meet with Mauk on a weekly basis the rest of the season, Pinkel said, “Honestly I haven’t really thought about it.”
“There is no question quarterbacks are held to a whole different standard than everybody else on the team,” Pinkel added. “That’s the responsibility. You’re going to touch the ball 75 times a game. We’re going to hand you the keys to the car. That responsibility is huge.”

Players were told via text message Sunday morning that Mauk was again suspended, offensive lineman Connor McGovern said. As they arrived at the team facility Sunday for meetings and practice, players said they didn’t know why Mauk was disciplined this time.

“You guys know about as much as we do,” McGovern said. “Maybe you guys know more than we do at this point.”

Teammates struck a similar tone of sympathy for Mauk, especially center Evan Boehm, one of Mauk’s closest friends on the team since they both came to Mizzou in 2012. Several times Boehm and others said Mauk was “getting help.”

“This coaching staff has Maty’s best interests in mind, his health and everything like that,” Boehm said. “It’s not we’re just getting rid of Maty Mauk. We’re trying to help him out as a human being, not just a player. …. We’re worried about Maty Mauk as a person, as a teammate, as a brother and as a son. That’s why Coach Pinkel is doing this.”

“Nobody knows what happened,” Boehm added, “and it’s tough to see. … But we know he’s getting help and he’s going to be all right.”

Asked if he’s personally worried about Mauk, Boehm said he’s not.

“Maty’s a tough kid,” he said. “He’s a strong kid. He’s been going through a lot. It’s tough to see. You want to be there for him as much as you can. He knows that. But Maty sometimes likes to stay to himself and do his thing. You’ve got to respect that.”

Mike Mauk was diagnosed with colorectal cancer this summer and underwent surgery in Springfield, Mo., on Sept. 28, the day before Mauk’s suspension was announced. A few players interviewed Sunday mentioned Mauk’s father’s health.

“With his dad, anything could be going through his head,” Moore said. “You want to be there for him. You want him to be around. When you’ve got a team like this and you’ve got stuff going on outside of the team, this team makes you feel better. With him not being able to be here, it makes you wonder what’s going on inside.”
Missouri quarterback Maty Mauk suspended for remainder of season

The junior quarterback was reinstated Oct. 25 from a monthlong suspension

Mauk was suspended again Sunday, this time for rest of season

Freshman QB Drew Lock will start a fifth straight game Thursday night vs. Mississippi State

BY TOD PALMER
tpalmer@kcstar.com

COLUMBIA - Less than a week after being reinstated from a monthlong suspension, Missouri junior quarterback Maty Mauk was suspended for the season Sunday by coach Gary Pinkel.

Pinkel’s decision, citing disciplinary reasons, was announced in a release from the MU athletic department.

Mauk was suspended Sept. 29 for an undisclosed violation of team rules. He returned to practice on Tuesday and apologized for the conduct that led to his initial suspension Wednesday during a team meeting.

Mauk told the team he was “going to get his act together and be the leader he’s supposed to be and we all know he can be,” sophomore wide receiver J’Mon Moore said.

It’s unclear what, if anything, transpired during the last four days, but Mauk will not suit up for the Tigers again this season.

“All my players trust me that I don’t ever talk about disciplinary issues since the day I got here . . . ,” Pinkel said. “I know you want more information, but that’s why I don’t do it. I’ve been very consistent.”
Pinkel understands the rumor mill is in overdrive regarding Mauk’s suspension, but that doesn’t sway his decision.

“I care about my players,” he said. “They’re like your kids, okay? If you’ve got three kids, you’re going to go out and have a little meeting in your front yard and you’re going to tell them all the stuff that your kids did wrong? You protect your kids. They’re your family. We do the same thing here. We protect our family.”

It’s possible Mauk never may play again for the Tigers, 4-4 overall and 1-4 in the SEC, who host Mississippi State at 8 p.m. Thursday at Memorial Stadium.

“At the end of the season, we’ll look at it,” Pinkel said.

Missouri’s players said Mauk was welcomed back last week without fuss.

“Players are always received with open arms here,” sophomore wide receiver Nate Brown said. “Everybody on the team, whether they’re suspended or whatever the case may be, they’re still part of our family and we still treat them that way whether or not they’re on the field.”

The Tigers were 3-1 at the time of Mauk’s first suspension, including narrow wins against Arkansas State and Connecticut and a loss at Kentucky.

Mauk had completed 57 of 110 passes (51.8 percent) for 654 yards with six touchdowns and four interceptions.

Freshman quarterback Drew Lock helped lead Missouri to a win against South Carolina in his first start, but the Tigers’ offense has totaled 12 points in the last three games — losses against Florida, Georgia and Vanderbilt.

It would be natural if Lock, who has completed 62 of 127 passes (48.8 percent) for 538 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions during the last four games, peeked over his shoulder.

After all, Mauk went 17-5 during the last three seasons as a starter.

“Just being a competitor and having somebody as good as Maty right behind you on your neck, it’s a feeling knowing you could have somebody come back instantly off suspension,” Moore said. “I’m pretty sure he thought about that in the back of his mind.”

Mauk and Lock, who started all four games with Mauk suspended, split reps during Tuesday’s practice, but there’s no doubt whose team it is now.
“I feel bad,” senior wide receiver Wesley Leftwich said of Mauk. “He’s been going through a lot with his dad and his life and everything. We’re not really 100 percent sure why he’s suspended. We’ll know later in our team meeting, but I hope the best for the kid, because he’s a good guy. He’s just made some mistakes here and there, but we’ve got to keep moving on. Drew’s our guy from here on out.”

Moore admitted Mauk’s status was a distraction, but the entire team worked hard to minimize it.

“We worry about the task we have at hand,” senior linebacker Kentrell Brothers said. “We’re trying to go to a bowl game right now and, if we’re going to let stuff like that distract us, nothing against Maty, but we’ve got more important things to worry about right now.”

Lock said he had expected to and was preparing to start against Mississippi State despite Mauk’s return last week. Pinkel refused to articulate his plan before Mauk’s second suspension.

For Missouri, it’s time to move on.

“Nothing but the best for Maty,” senior safety and captain Ian Simon said. “My prayers go out to him. I love him and he’s a great person, but he needs help. Right now, for the rest of us, we can just focus on Mississippi State.”

Mauk suspended for the season

Well, I guess you can only be so good for so long.

Because this sure didn't last.
Just a week after being reinstated after a month-long suspension, Missouri junior quarterback Maty Mauk was suspended Sunday for the rest of the season for disciplinary reasons, Tigers coach Gary Pinkel announced.

As usual, there will be no comment concerning why these actions were taken.

"All my players trust me that I don't ever talk about disciplinary issues," Pinkel said. "Because when I talk about very serious things publicly, my players don't have to worry about me going into detail about them."

Pinkel went on to say things like "I know you want more information, but ...," which was soon followed by "we don't cover things up."

Uh-huh. Usually, the truth is worse than the rumors, and there are certainly plenty of those swirling around out there.

Pinkel has always been more tight-lipped than the CIA about such matters, treating them like they're national-security secrets. Obviously, the state's Sunshine Law doesn't pertain to the football team at a public university.

Mauk is 17-5 as a starter (3-1 this season against weak competition), but has often been unimpressive in victory. He completed 51 percent of his passes for 654 yards this season, with six touchdowns and four interceptions.

His replacement, true freshman Drew Lock, is 1-3 as a starter (all against SEC opponents), completing 51 percent of his passes for 763 yards, with three touchdowns and three interceptions.

"You lose your starting quarterback, that obviously affects your football team," Pinkel said. "Bottom line, you've got to overcome it. We have a young player that's playing and he's doing a lot of good things. At the end of the day, we don't asterisk anything, we don't have excuses. Our job is to go win football games."

Does Pinkel apply a different standard to quarterbacks? This answer may surprise you.

Absolutely.

"There is no question, the quarterbacks are held to a whole different standard than everybody else on the team," Pinkel said. "That has always been communicated with them, that's the nature of the position. The responsibility, you're going to touch the ball 75 times a game, we're going to hand you the keys to the car.

"That responsibility is huge ... it's a lot of pressure."

On a personal level, this is sad for Mauk and his future --- both in and out of football --- is a bit uncertain.
On a football level, this probably won't matter --- Missouri's offense was bad before his suspension and it's bad ever since bad after his suspension.

How bad?

On Saturday, the Tigers matched their touchdown total from the previous three Saturdays, combined --- none. Of course, Missouri didn't play this week. Out of 127 FBS teams, the Tigers remain 126th in scoring offense and 125th in total offense.

This week, Missouri (4-4, 1-4 SEC) will host Mississippi State (6-2, 2-2) at 6:30 p.m. Thursday in a nationally-televised game on ESPN. So the nation will watch with us to see if the Tigers can score their first touchdown since Oct. 3.

"You have to overcome the distractions, you're going to have them," Pinkel said. "There's enough things ... having a bunch of serious injuries are distractions to a team, but you don't like self-inflicted ones that tap in internally.

"It's just the way it is."

Days after reinstatement, Mauk goes back on suspension


COLUMBIA - **Days after Gary Pinkel reinstated Maty Mauk, the junior quarterback goes back on suspension.** Mizzou announced Sunday afternoon Mauk will remain suspended for the 2015 season.

The team said it had no further comment on Mauk's suspension. Mizzou Football says Mauk was suspended for "disciplinary reasons."

Missouri had previously taken Mauk off suspension on October 28. Pinkel said Mauk came back and asked to apologize to the entire team. "He's really excited to be back," Pinkel said Wednesday on the SEC coaches teleconference.
Gary Pinkel and the Tigers are expected to meet with reporters Sunday at 2:30 to preview their Thursday night game against Mississippi State.

Mauk suspended for rest of 2015 season

By David Morrison

Sunday, November 1, 2015 at 11:32 pm

J’Mon Moore said he spoke with Maty Mauk every day when Missouri’s quarterback was suspended for an unspecified violation of program policies from Sept. 29 through Oct. 24.

Mauk was not permitted to participate in team activities, but Moore said Mauk would work out by himself at the Missouri Athletic Training Center.

Coach Gary Pinkel reinstated Mauk last Sunday and, after going through his first practice back with the team Tuesday, Mauk apologized to his teammates at a Wednesday meeting.

“He said he was going to get his act together and be the leader he's supposed to be, that we all know he can be,” Moore said. “He was basically saying he was going to have a clean plate from here on.”

That didn’t last long.

Pinkel suspended Mauk for the rest of the season Sunday for “disciplinary reasons,” according to a university release. Pinkel, keeping consistent with his policy from the rest of his coaching career, said he would not discuss Mauk’s discipline issues further.

“All my players trust me that I don’t ever talk about disciplinary issues since the day I got here,” Pinkel said. “I know you want more information, but that’s why I don’t do it. I’ve been very, very consistent.”

Mauk and his father, Mike, did not return calls for comment Sunday.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, citing sources, reported that Mauk’s latest suspension stems from a Wednesday night incident outside The FieldHouse bar on East Broadway, in which Mauk engaged in a “verbal confrontation” with another man shortly after apologizing to teammates and coaches.
The Columbia Police Department dispatch log shows four calls from the 1100 block of East Broadway — on which The FieldHouse is located — between 11:09 p.m. Wednesday and 1:14 a.m. Thursday, including one for a “disturbance” and one for an “assault.” Mauk was not listed on the Boone County Sheriff’s Department arrest log Thursday morning.

Senior left tackle Connor McGovern said coaches notified the players of Mauk’s suspension via text Sunday morning, and the players interviewed at media day Sunday said they did not know what led to Mauk’s latest issue.

“Everyone has their own problems,” junior linebacker Michael Scherer said. “No one can point a finger at somebody and say, ‘You’re messed up,’ without looking at themselves first and realizing the person pointing the finger also has problems. They just aren't out in the light like Maty's are.

"I think Maty's going to get the help he needs to be a better person. The way Coach Pinkel has handled this, he cares more about Maty as a person than he does about winning football games and having Maty on the field."

Mauk and freshman Drew Lock shared first-team reps in the redshirt junior’s only practice back Tuesday, and Scherer said Lock took the majority. Missouri (4-4, 1-4 Southeastern Conference) has a 1-3 record with Lock starting in Mauk’s place as it heads into a Thursday night home game against Mississippi State (6-2, 2-2).

Pinkel said he would evaluate Mauk’s status after the season. Mauk is not listed on the team roster in its game notes this week after being listed throughout his first suspension.

“We don’t overlook things, we don’t cover things up. We do what’s right,” Pinkel said. “A lot of other places would find ways to get the problem solved without doing what we do, but we don’t do that at Missouri. I’ve never done that, I never will.

“The quarterbacks are held to a whole different standard than everybody else on the team. There is no question about that. We’re going to hand you the keys to the car. That responsibility is huge. It’s a lot of pressure, especially nowadays more than ever. They know that. That always has been communicated with them. That’s the nature of the position.”

Moore, Scherer, senior linebacker Kentrell Brothers and senior center Evan Boehm all said they hope Mauk uses his time away from football to get the help he needs. Boehm said that he and Mauk’s relationship is the same as it was before his suspensions this season, saying, “Maty's my brother and I still love that kid. He knows I'm always there for him when he needs me, and I know he's always there for me when I need him.”

But at some point, the team has to move on.

“We're trying to go to a bowl game right now,” Brothers said. “If we're going to let stuff like that distract us — nothing against Maty — but we've got more important things to worry about right now.”
Peers, social media play increasingly large role in youth political socialization
VERONIKE COLLAZO, Oct 30, 2015

COLUMBIA — Social media is becoming an increasingly important source of political news and influence on millennials, and news organizations will have to work hard to tap that potential and further engage them, a group of researchers told an audience at the Reynolds Journalism Institute on Thursday night.

For the past seven years, five researchers from around the country have been studying millennials and politics. As the 2016 election cycle approaches, the group presented its research at the New Media for New Voters forum that was co-hosted by MU’s Political Communication Institute.

Dhavan Shah, Leticia Bode, Emily Vraga, Stephanie Edgerly and Chris Wells began their research in 2008. They were interested in looking at how young people are engaged in civic life, how youth engagement has changed and how civil society will change as these voters come of age.

The group found a shift in where people get their news. Nowadays, young people are finding news on their own, whereas in past generations, they would be exposed to the news because their parents read newspapers and watched the nightly news on the singular television set in the home, Shah said.

Ninety percent of people ages 18 to 29 use social media today. The vast majority are on Facebook and access the Web and social media several times a day, Shah said. This makes social media fertile ground to explore young people's political participation, he said.

The group conducted studies on children ages 12 to 17 and one of their parents and interviewed them before, through and after elections in 2008 and 2014, Shah said.
Results

In the past, families played the largest role in the political socialization of young people. In the 2008 study, the group found that young people adopted the party affiliation of their parents 65 percent of the time, especially if parents had strong opinions or talked about politics, Edgerly said.

Although there has been a shift from newspapers and nightly news to phones, laptops and tablets as sources of political information, children still model their parents. That influence, however, isn't absolute. The studies found that in earlier adolescence, parents matter more in whether a child reads the news and talks about politics. As a child grows older and more independent, their peers and social media become more important, Edgerly said.

The future

The American Press Institute has found that 69 percent of millennials get news daily, and the Pew Research Center has found that Facebook is their top source of news, Wells said.

Social media allows young people to share and discuss issues they care about. Because they get their news online rather than through a physical paper that has all types of news bundled into one package, millennials get to pick and choose what they consume, Wells said.

Entertainment ranked as the top type of news consumed and shared by millennials while politics came in ninth, Wells said. Millennials were more likely to share news from Buzzfeed on Facebook than any other source.

Vraga said politics on Facebook can be a scary experience for young people. People are afraid of offending or alienating friends and family. Still, there has been an increase in the number of millennials who are political online, and online political activism can be a gateway to other political activities, she said.

There also has been a shift in how millennials choose to get involved in politics. More young people are opting to participate in demonstrations such as the Occupy and Black Lives Matter movements, as well as
political consumerism in which they either buy or boycott companies' products according to whether they share those companies' values, Shah said.

News organizations must try to engage millennials in conversation to further reach and interest them in politics, Shah said. Social media posts should encourage people to talk, share ideas and answer questions.

Political activism among young people starts small, with simply liking posts, but the more millennials see their friends sharing posts and opinions, the safer they feel posting their own, Vraga said.

Journalists also need to rethink how young people consume news, Shah said. Audiences in general tend to view news while "dual screening," such as watching the news on TV while simultaneously tweeting or posting on Facebook, Shah said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

TELL US: How do you encounter racism?
MCKENZIE PENDERGRASS, Oct 30, 2015

Discussions about racism continue to ignite the nation, the state and our Columbia and MU communities.

We've heard from many readers that they just don't get it. They don't see racism, and they don't think it exists beyond a few high-profile incidents.

To bridge what seems to be a gap in community experiences, we are inviting readers to share their personal stories.

If you would be willing to share your experiences for publication, please fill out the form below. Everyone is an expert about their own experience, and there is power in sharing those experiences with others. Don't feel you need to speak on behalf of a group or represent anyone other than yourself.
Columbia residents born in China welcome new two-child policy

MADELYNE MAAG, Oct 31, 2015

COLUMBIA — For Muhan Lu, growing up as an only child meant not having anyone with whom to share toys, video games or silly childhood fights.

“I was really lonely growing up as an only child,” Lu, an MU student from China, said. “I played with my cousins whenever they came over but it was very sad for me to see them leave.”

The Chinese government announced Thursday that it would loosen its roughly 30-year-old one-child policy and allow couples to have up to two children. Recently, the one-child policy had become more lenient — the government allowed parents who did not have siblings to have up to two kids.

The policy change gave people born in China during the one-child policy era an opportunity to reflect.

Jiali Chen, president of the MU Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars, said she was happy about the policy change.

“I think it is pretty important and exciting news,” Chen said. “I feel that the older policy put a lot of pressure on the recent generations and did not set China up as a good social benefiting system.”
Being an only child comes with substantial pressure, Lu said. Only children receive all their parents' attention, but they're also given the responsibility to handle key financial and family matters.

“As an only child, not only do we have to worry about taking care of ourselves but how we will take care of the entire family as they age,” Lu said. “My parents don’t put a lot of pressure on me, but I know of parents that do by trying to project their dreams onto their child.”

Lu said that, as a child, he frequently asked his parents if he could have a sibling. But that wasn't possible. Parents who had more than one child could be fined by the government and potentially lose their jobs.

Yet, some families did choose to have more than one child.

Recent MU graduate Siqi Lin, 23, is the second child in her household. Her sister, Xiadan, is 10 years older.

Before Lin was born, her family was anxious about having another baby.

“My parents had only planned to have my sister, and my mom was worried about having another child for affordability reasons,” Lin said. “She was worried about giving up her job and that making my father the primary breadwinner would be a burden.”

Lin's mother eventually quit her job and decided to have a second child. When she was younger, Lin found it difficult to connect with her sister because of the age gap.

But as Lin grew up, she and her sister became closer.

“My sister helped me with a lot through school with suggestions, advice and even helping me pick an international program for college,” Lin said.

Shortly after the news of the policy change came out, Lin received a call from her sister. Xiadan Lin was thrilled: She'd been wanting to have a second child.
Pointing fingers: Exelon says feds knew radioactive waste was being dumped at landfill

November 01, 2015 12:00 am  •  By Jacob Barker

During three months in 1973, dump trucks carrying more than 40,000 tons of dirt made their way from a site near the airport to a landfill on the western edge of St. Louis County.

The truck owners didn’t have to pay to dump their loads; what they delivered was billed as clean fill dirt that the landfill operator could use to cover other refuse.

But it wasn’t clean fill.

The dirt came from Latty Avenue, which was used as a storage site for radioactive materials purchased from the federal government. The materials were owned by a Colorado company, Cotter Corp., which was looking to squeeze what value remained in wastes left behind from uranium processing that supplied the nation’s nuclear weapons buildup.

Except for what those dump trucks took to the landfill, Cotter shipped much of what was stored at Latty Avenue to its facilities in Colorado, according to official reports.

In the spring of 1974, Cotter representatives told the Atomic Energy Commission that the company decided to dispose of some of the radioactive material in “St. Louis County sanitary landfill area No. 1 on Old Bridge Road.” The 8,700 tons of leached barium sulfate, which contained several tons of uranium, were mixed with dirt scooped right off the top of the Latty Avenue storage site, company representatives and documents told the AEC.

AEC records show the agency recommended citing Cotter for not following the “intent” of its regulations because it had mixed the waste with soil.

But a few months later, in November 1974, Cotter requested and received Atomic Energy Commission approval to terminate its license for the radioactive material at Latty Avenue. At the end of the year, the AEC, which had faced years of criticism for being too cozy with industry, was dissolved and its duties handed to the new Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

This chain of events, pieced together from reports and documents from the AEC and NRC, is raising questions about the federal government’s knowledge of, and liability for, the long-contaminated West Lake Landfill.
It turns out there was no “St. Louis County sanitary landfill area No. 1.” The barium sulfate, mixed with nearly 40,000 tons of soil from the contaminated Latty Avenue site, was dumped in West Lake Landfill.

But despite the nonexistent landfill, the company that retains Cotter Corp.’s liability said it did nothing illegal. The AEC knew Cotter’s contractor, B&K Construction Co., dumped material in a St. Louis County landfill. Yet the government never cited Cotter, and it ultimately released it from its license.

“This whole thing was done under the watchful eye of the Atomic Energy Commission,” said Craig Nesbit, a spokesman for Exelon Corp., the Chicago power company that retains Cotter’s liability for West Lake because its Commonwealth Edison utility used to own Cotter.

You cannot have a nuclear material license terminated if something is amiss, Nesbit said. “It’s like trying to sell a house with a lien on it. You can’t do that.”

Others say the U.S. Department of Energy, or DOE, which retains the AEC’s liability for the West Lake contamination, has been quiet for too long. Not enough people realize the federal government’s complicity, they say, in contaminating a landfill that is now surrounded by suburbs and frightened residents.

“To me, it’s very clear that this was a federal responsibility,” said Kay Drey, a longtime opponent of nuclear waste who has followed the situation for decades. “Unfortunately, the Atomic Energy Commission and the NRC didn’t follow through and pay attention to what was at Latty Avenue and then dumped at West Lake Landfill.”

‘FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE AEC’

A review of AEC, NRC and DOE documents, spanning the early 1970s through the 1990s, shows that Cotter Corp. was never cited for the disposal of the material from Latty Avenue in West Lake.

An NRC inspection in 1977 confirmed that over 43,000 tons of barium sulfate waste mixed with soil from Latty Avenue was dumped at West Lake. Yet it said “neither site presents an immediate radiological health hazard to the public.”

“No items of noncompliance were identified during this investigation,” the NRC found in 1977.

However, a subsequent NRC investigation released in 1988 did say dumping the barium sulfate and soil from Latty Avenue in West Lake was “not authorized.”

In 1989, the NRC released an investigation conducted by researchers from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

“It is not known what levels of contamination were already in the soil before the barium sulfate residues were mixed into it,” the report authors wrote. “Disposal in the West Lake Landfill was unauthorized and contrary to the disposal location indicated in the (NRC’s) records.”
Exelon’s Nesbit acknowledged the NRC called Cotter’s actions “unauthorized.”

“But that’s 10 years after the fact, and everything that was done was done with the full knowledge of the AEC,” Nesbit said. “So I don’t know with what validity an agency can come back later and say that wasn’t the right thing to do.”

‘MORE AT STAKE’
Public concern about the West Lake Landfill contamination has exploded in recent years after an underground fire was discovered in the adjacent Bridgeton Landfill. Many worry if the underground smoldering spreads to West Lake, it could spread radiation offsite.

Republic Services, the nation’s No. 2 waste hauler and owner of the landfill, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which is overseeing its cleanup, say the fire is not moving toward West Lake. The EPA promises a cleanup plan around the end of 2016, and it said any disagreement over liability among responsible parties won’t affect its timeline. It also doesn’t matter if contaminating West Lake wasn’t technically illegal.

“Bottom line: It wasn’t the right move for the community, so something has to be done now and that’s what we’re focused on,” said EPA Region 7 spokesman Curtis Carey.

Meanwhile, Exelon has begun suggesting that there could be something more than the Latty Avenue material contaminating the landfill, material that isn’t connected to Cotter and B&K’s involvement back in the 1970s. That could put more blame on the parties it will split the cleanup tab with: the DOE and Republic Services.

Exelon is pursuing additional testing to try and prove it.

Nesbit said new testing requested by Exelon is trying to determine whether “radiological material went into that landfill that is not part of the current discussion.”

“Nobody really knows the answer to that, and that’s what the current boring testing is trying to determine,” he said. “There’s a lot of stuff that went into that landfill.”

That is adding to suspicion that more material is in the landfill than what Cotter dumped from Latty Avenue, said Doug Clemens, who chairs the community advisory group overseeing the EPA cleanup.

“The concern in the community and the concern in the research we’ve been turning up is that there are possibly other contaminants dropped in the West Lake Landfill” beyond barium sulfate and soil from Latty Avenue, he said. “There’s this idea that DOE has more at stake in this landfill than just the stuff from Latty Avenue, which Exelon keeps hinting at.”

FEDERAL LIABILITY
Exelon, one of the nation’s biggest utility companies with annual revenue exceeding $27 billion, has long been quiet on the West Lake situation. It’s only become more vocal this summer after it says Cotter discovered new documents suggesting material could be in the landfill in locations that haven’t been “adequately tested.”
The DOE has been even quieter. Many question why West Lake hasn’t been added to a special cleanup program for waste generated by the early nuclear weapons program, as other sites in the St. Louis area have.

The cleanup program, called the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program, or FUSRAP, was first run by the DOE until the corps took it over in the 1990s.

The DOE says West Lake did not meet the criteria for the program, now run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. To be eligible, the program requires the site to be involved in Manhattan Project or early Atomic Energy Commission activities. The region’s Congressional delegation has said they believe the DOE did not include West Lake in FUSRAP because the material was owned by a private company and not under the direct control of the department.

In 1990, a DOE agreement with EPA laying out the framework for cleaning up radioactive contamination near Lambert-St. Louis International Airport under FUSRAP specifically excluded West Lake Landfill.

Clemens thinks the DOE has done all it could to keep West Lake under EPA jurisdiction rather than the corps. But the federal government should be responsible for cleaning it up, he said.

“This was permitted by the federal government and created by the federal government under a weapons program,” Clemens said. “It’s their waste they’re responsible for it.”

Before being named as a potentially responsible party by the EPA, the DOE maintained it wasn’t liable for the West Lake contamination, according to several internal memos.

Asked whether it still maintains that it’s not liable, a DOE spokesman did not answer directly. Via email, the department responded that it signed an agreement with EPA in 1993 “under which it committed, along with other parties, to pay for the costs of a remedial investigation and feasibility study to be conducted under the direction of EPA.”

A 1993 DOE memo recommended signing the EPA agreement, but it maintained that the department “remains firm in its position that it is not admitting liability for the West Lake Landfill contamination.” The memo also says that signing the EPA agreement “is not an admission of liability nor a commitment to do anything more than conduct the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility study.”

Asked what share the federal government should shoulder for the West Lake contamination, the DOE said it will “begin discussing with other potentially responsible parties an appropriate share of the cleanup costs” after EPA proposes a cleanup plan. The department referred the Post-Dispatch to the NRC when asked whether B&K, Cotter’s contractor, had engaged in “illegal” dumping in West Lake.

In a 1992 memo, the DOE argued it had no “liability or responsibility” for West Lake, calling the dumping “a license violation” that “would not have been authorized if licensing approval had been sought.”
Based on his research, Clemens said he suspects the federal government didn’t know Cotter was dumping in West Lake while it was going on.

“But they certainly had knowledge after it happened, and the NRC decided not to fine them, not to do anything about it,” he said. “It does strike me as a huge mystery as to why DOE doesn’t just step up and do the right thing.”

University of Missouri is place to survive zombie apocalypse