The University of Missouri Department of English voted no confidence in Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s leadership during its department meeting Tuesday.

Associate Professor Samuel Cohen sent UM System President Tim Wolfe and the Board of Curators a letter on behalf of the department about the vote. The letter cited a disrespect of shared governance and low campus morale among faculty, staff and students as reasons for the department’s vote.

“While we recognize Chancellor Loftin’s service, his twenty-one month tenure has been marked by dereliction of duty in maintaining the quality and reputation of graduate education, violations of the bedrock principle of shared governance, and failure to defend the University’s educational mission against outside political pressure,” the letter said.

The department’s vote resulted in 26 votes of no confidence, zero votes of confidence and two abstentions, according to the letter.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said Wednesday that Loftin did not receive a copy of the letter. Loftin was not aware of the department’s concerns, she said.

“The chancellor has no comment concerning the letter, but he continues to work hard to listen, to learn from our students, faculty and staff,” Banken said. "He continues every day to work toward solutions for some of the issues we are currently challenged with."

Cohen said the department discussed changes that have occurred on campus during Loftin’s tenure, particularly changes related to graduate education. He said under Loftin’s watch and without significant input, MU informed graduate student employees they could no longer provide health insurance subsidies — a decision that later was revoked — and cut tuition waivers for graduate student employees who work less than 20 hours a week.

Loftin’s decisions “are indicative of a management style that does not respect shared governance,” Cohen said.
Cohen asked faculty at a department meeting last month to consider taking a vote during a discussion about how to adapt to the elimination of full tuition waivers for some graduate assistants. Graduate assistants with 10-hour and 20-hour appointments have traditionally received a tuition waiver, stipend and benefits in exchange for their work teaching and conducting research for the university.

This summer, MU said graduate assistants with 10-hour appointments would start receiving half tuition waivers beginning next fall. Departments on campus have expressed concerns about recruiting graduate students without a full tuition waiver, saying the university's stipends are too low. English accepts about 10 new masters students each year, Cohen said. Typically, those students only work 10 hours their first year.

The English Department, the letter said, believes the UM System should find a new chancellor to repair the flagship campus’ graduate programs and defend academic freedom.

“This is not personal,” Cohen said. “We feel responsible for saying we think this.”

Banken said Loftin is happy to meet with English Department and any other individuals or groups to discuss the issues mentioned in the letter.

UM System spokesman John Fougere said Wolfe and the Board of Curators had not received letters from other departments.

Cohen said he hopes the letter will encourage other departments to voice their opinions.
JEFFERSON CITY, MO. (AP)- Members of the University of Missouri Department of English say they don't have confidence in Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin's leadership.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/1NQBOZ5) 26 members cast no-confident votes and two others abstained during a department meeting Tuesday.

University spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken says Loftin was not aware of department concerns. She says Loftin is working to listen to concerns expressed on campus.

A letter from associate professor Samuel Cohen to university system President Tim Wolfe and others says faculty members feel Loftin is disrespectful of shared governance. It says there's low morale among faculty, staff and students.

The vote came as students were protesting and calling for Wolfe to be removed from office.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU English Department votes no confidence in chancellor's leadership

COLUMBIA – Twenty-six members of MU’s English Department voted no confidence in the leadership of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in a department meeting Tuesday afternoon. Two members abstained from the vote, but no members voted confidence in Loftin's leadership.

"While we recognize Chancellor Loftin’s service, his twenty-one month tenure has been marked by dereliction of duty in maintaining the quality and reputation of graduate education, violations of the bedrock principle of shared governance and failure to defend the University’s educational mission against outside political pressure," the letter read.
The letter was sent in an email to University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and the UM System Board of Curators on Wednesday morning by Samuel Cohen, associate professor in the English Department and faculty fellow in the Office of Graduate Studies. Cohen initially suggested the no confidence vote in October.

"I proposed it to the department during a discussion about the cut in tuition waivers for 0.25 students," Cohen said. "I think we had an email discussion prior to and after meetings about it and I said, 'You know, I think we should talk about this.'"

The revocation of full tuition waivers for graduate student employees with quarter-time assistantships — who work for the university about 10 hours a week — is one of the primary concerns of William Kerwin, an associate professor and director of graduate studies in the English Department.

Kerwin said Loftin gave lip service to the issue, among others, at a general faculty meeting but has not addressed it.

"He is not responding to this outcry about what is a terrible injustice," Kerwin said. "It suggests he doesn't understand what goes on in the departments and what the needs of the students are."

He said the current administration is getting in the way of the university's potential, undermining and dismantling it.

"We (stood up) because we feel like we haven’t been listened to and that we have been treated poorly, and by we I mean the broader university community — graduate students, minorities, all sorts of people are suffering under this administration," Kerwin said.

Last month, about 300 faculty in the School of Medicine took an informal survey about the abrupt resignation of the school’s dean, Patrice Delafontaine. The survey included language that reflected some concerns about Delafontaine's departure, such as "forced
resignation," and exhibited a distrust of the chancellor and in his ability to lead the university.

**Loftin has been the lightning rod for many of the issues that have been brought forward by faculty, staff and students this year,** including graduate student employee rights, race relations on campus, the cancellation of Planned Parenthood contracts, the restructuring of academic departments and Delafontaine's resignation.

"Fiasco after fiasco ... it just never stops," Kerwin said of the contentious issues popping up around the university. "It isn’t one thing; it’s a constellation of things."

Loftin has been cited by some faculty, staff and students for a lack of transparency and cooperation in decision-making, for his slow response time to major issues and for bowing to outside political pressures.

"Because of these failures of leadership, we believe the best course of action is to find a new Chancellor who will be better equipped to repair the damage done to our graduate program, adhere to the principle and practice of shared governance, and defend academic freedom at the flagship campus of the public university serving the citizens of Missouri," the English Department’s letter concluded.

Cohen sent the letter to about 22 other university departments and programs, he said, in hopes that the English Department’s statement will encourage others to come forward with their opinions and frustrations. Although he had been in communication with other departments and programs about the university's leadership, he did not want to say which were considering taking the same action. He said some departments have been quiet about their frustrations, for fear of repercussions.

"I know there have been discussions. ... A lot of departments are talking about it, and many of them expressed a reluctance to stick out their necks, which I totally understand," Cohen said. "Hopefully this will help them."
The English Department's letter was also sent to the dean of the College of Arts and Science, Michael O'Brien. O’Brien said through an assistant Wednesday that he did not want to comment on the English Department's vote.

Wolfe, the UM System president, has also been the focus of much discussion, especially after the announcement Monday that graduate student and campus activist Jonathan Bulter would engage in a hunger strike until his demands — including Wolfe’s removal from office — were met.

Also standing up to administrators, the MU Graduate Professional Council held a vote Tuesday evening at its General Assembly. The vote was to pass a resolution showing the council stands in solidarity with those who are fighting for social justice causes at the university. The resolution had no reference to Loftin but cited Wolfe a number of times for failing to speak up during recent protests and announcements.

One part of the letter included references to Wolfe’s "... continued negligence towards the racism, homophobia, sexism, labor exploitation, and other issues at this university."

"GPC has had the question asked of them by one administrator, 'Why is this a GPC issue?' and that’s what we want to combat," GPC treasurer Alex Howe said. "This is all part of the social justice movement, and these aren’t individual, isolated issues. These are all facets of the same thing."

GPC vice president Rachel Bauer said members of student organizations who have spoken to administrators about university issues and concerns were directed by those administrators to their elected student representatives such as GPC and the Missouri Students Association.

"What this is really showing is that we’re standing in solidarity," Bauer said of the resolution. "And we’re showing the administration that we are not going to allow them to talk to us all individually anymore because if it's a student issue, it's a GPC issue."
To Kerwin, the best-case scenario is for university administrators to start listening to faculty and students and be active in making positive changes that align the university with its true values. The worst-case scenario, he said, would be for the university to continue as it is, straying from its values and purpose.

"Our primary mission is to promote thoughtful, creative and empowered citizens," Kerwin said. "We are here for the citizens of Missouri, and they have had a world-class university, and it's being dismantled. ... It’s time for that to be questioned in a variety of venues including the role of the chancellor."

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**Mizzou chancellor gets no-confidence vote**

*The University of Missouri's Department of English voted no confidence in Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin's leadership during a Tuesday meeting, citing a lack of shared governance and low campus morale during Loftin's tenure.*

A letter about the department's vote was sent to UM System President Tom Wolfe and the system's board, the Columbia Daily Tribune reports. The vote included 26 votes of no-confidence, two abstentions and zero votes of confidence.

“While we recognize Chancellor Loftin’s service, his twenty-one month tenure has been marked by dereliction of duty in maintaining the quality and reputation of graduate education, violations of the bedrock principle of shared governance, and failure to defend the University’s educational mission against outside political pressure,” the letter said, according to the newspaper.

Mary Jo Banken, an MU spokeswoman, told the Columbia Tribune that Loftin had not received a copy of the letter and was not aware of the English department’s concerns.
Mizzou English Department calls for Chancellor Loftin's resignation


COLUMBIA, Mo. — UPDATE:

MU’s English Department said Wednesday it wants the UM System Board of Curators to replace Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

The department's faculty sent a letter to the Board and to UM System President Tim Wolfe on Wednesday saying Loftin had violated the principle of shared governance and failed "to defend the University's educational mission against outside political pressure." The department faculty met a day earlier. Twenty-six professors submitted votes of no confidence and none submitted votes of confidence. Two abstained from the vote. MU English professor Sam Cohen said Loftin hasn't consulted others on decisions which have resulted in negative publicity for the university.

"There is a management style which is act first, don't consult, let the chips fall, that you can see across any number of decisions," Cohen said. "And I don't think this is going to change. This is not his first job as chancellor."

The department's letter comes as Loftin and Wolfe both find themselves under pressure to quit. Loftin has been criticized by both sides of the abortion debate over his handling of MU’s relationship with Planned Parenthood. He and Wolfe have both taken heat for what some students perceive as inaction on issues of race relations. MU student Jonathan Butler started a hunger strike earlier this week, saying Wolfe has ignored the racial climate throughout the four-campus system. Butler has said he won't end his hunger strike until Wolfe resigns or is fired by the Board of Curators. The student group calling itself #ConcernedStudent1950 held a town hall on Wednesday evening. Members wouldn't say what they discussed, but they said the meeting wasn't related to the English Department letter.
Loftin’s office said he is interested in talking to the English Department faculty about their concerns. UM System spokesman John Fougere said Wolfe and the Board of Curators had received the letter but declined to comment further.

EARLIER STORY:

The University of Missouri English Department is calling for the resignation of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

In a letter sent to the UM Board of Curators and UM President Tim Wolfe, the faculty submitted a vote of no confidence of the chancellor.

The faculty held a vote Tuesday, with 26 votes of no confidence and two abstaining.

The letter was written by Associate Professor Samuel Cohen on behalf of the English Department.

In the letter, Cohen cited a low campus morale among the faculty and students. They said that, due to the failure of leadership, they believe the best course of action is to find a new chancellor.

The chief communications officer for the UM System, John Fougere, said they received the letter, and have no comment at this time.

"The Chancellor is aware of the letter," Christian Basi of the MU News Bureau told KRCG 13. "He is interested in meeting with the English faculty to talk about their concerns."

The Missouri Students Association tweeted Wednesday afternoon, saying they will be holding an emergency town hall meeting in regards to the removal of UM President Tim Wolfe.

That meeting is scheduled to be held at the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center at 6 p.m.

**MU English Dept. submits vote of no confidence in Chancellor**
COLUMBIA, Mo. - The English Department at the University of Missouri submitted a letter to the MU Board of Curators, expressing their lack of confidence in the Chancellor.

The letter, addressed to the board and President Tim Wolfe, said the department took a vote on November 3, resulting in 26 votes of no confidence, 0 votes of confidence, and 2 abstentions.

The letter reads, While we recognize Chancellor Loftin’s service, his twenty-one month tenure has been marked by dereliction of duty in maintaining the quality and reputation of graduate education, violations of the bedrock principle of shared governance, and failure to defend the University’s educational mission against outside political pressure. Campus morale among faculty, staff, and students is at a low point.

The campus climate is not one in which all members of the community feel included and respected. Because of these failures of leadership, we believe the best course of action is to find a new Chancellor who will be better equipped to repair the damage done to our graduate programs, adhere to the principle and practice of shared governance, and defend academic freedom at the flagship campus of the public university serving the citizens of Missouri."

ABC 17 News reached out to the President’s Office and was told they have no comment as the letter is considered a personnel matter.

English Department calls for Chancellor Loftin to resign

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri English Department has asked for Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin to resign in a letter to the UM Board of Curators.
The faculty held a vote that resulted in 26 votes of no confidence, 0 votes of confidence and 2 abstentions Tuesday. They have asked for the chancellor to resign.

The letter was written by Samuel Cohen, associate professor, on behalf of the English Department. He said he initiated the vote because of the low morale on campus.

"I think the damage his tenure has done to our campus is grave," Cohen said. "And needs to be fixed. I don't think he's the person to do it."

The letter referenced both the Planned Parenthood controversy and the temporary cut of health care for graduate students as failures of leadership. The letter asked for the board of curators to find a new chancellor who will make a community where all members can feel included and respected.

Cohen said the letter is not a personal attack on Loftin.

"I understand that many people in Columbia," Cohen said. "And attached to the university in various ways have a personal fondness for Chancellor Loftin. I think it's important for them to understand that we are trying to protect the health of the university."

John Fougere, chief communications officer for the UM System, said the curators received the letter.

Cohen said the department is not alone. He said he thinks other departments will follow suit now that the English department has sent its letter.
A departmental vote on Tuesday resulted in 26 votes of no confidence, 0 votes of confidence, with two members of the faculty abstaining from the vote. Samuel Cohen, an Associate Professor in the English department, wrote that Loftin has failed to defend the University's mission from outside political pressure, among other things.

"We took the vote because we were frustrated with the effects of our Chancellor's leadership over the past 21 months," Cohen told KBIA. "We felt it was hurting the campus climate, hurting morale, and hurting our national reputation."

Cohen said he hopes that the English department will set a precedent for other departments to make statements of their own.

"We are hoping that sticking our necks out a little bit on this vote will encourage other departments and other parties to come forward," Cohen said.

Associate director of the University of Missouri News Bureau Christian Basi says Loftin has seen the letter and is willing to meet with the department. John Fougere, Chief Communications Officer for the UM System said that they received the letter, but had no further comment at this time.

A Mizzou graduate student has gone on a hunger strike to demand the removal of University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe.

Starting at 9 a.m. on Nov. 2, Jonathan Butler said he embarked on an indefinite hunger strike in opposition to Wolfe’s leadership. Since Wolfe became president in 2012, Butler said he has failed to address “a slew of racist, sexist, homophobic, etc., incidents” directed at marginalized and underrepresented MU students.
“During this hunger strike, I will not consume any food or nutritional sustenance at the expense of my health until either Tim Wolfe is removed from office or my internal organs fail and my life is lost,” Butler stated in a Nov. 2 letter to the MU Curators.

He said he has committed himself to cause because he believes university system deserves “a leader who is competent enough to perform at all levels of the position including administrative, political, financial, and emotional.”

On Oct. 10, African-American Mizzou students held a #ConcernedStudent1950 demonstration during the Homecoming parade. About 10 students linked arms in front of the red convertible that Wolfe was riding in. They took turns reciting points in history where MU students had endured discrimination – all the way up to September 2015 when Missouri Students Association President Payton Head was called the n-word when walking near campus.

Instead of talking with students, Wolfe tried to drive around them, a video of the demonstration shows. Wolfe’s driver didn’t get past the line, but he did succeed in hitting one of the student demonstrators with the car.

Wolfe also watched as on-lookers manhandled the students and yelled at them, the video shows. Columbia police also threatened the peaceful protestors with pepper spray, only a few feet from where Wolfe remained seated.

Ayanna Poole, a senior majoring in English literature, participated in the action and said that Wolfe was even laughing at the students. Poole said all of the students were deeply saddened that the president of the MU system would allow that type of “psychological and physical violence.”

“In that moment, he had so much power to show us that he cared and he didn’t,” she said. “And that hurts.”

Poole said Wolfe has failed to address several other incidents of racial slurs, including when members of Legion of Black Collegians were called the n-word while preparing for Homecoming.

In his letter, Butler also pointed to recent the “vile and disgusting act of hatred” where a MU student drew a swastika in the Gateway residential hall with their own feces.

“Although these incidents individually are not his fault” Butler wrote, “as a collection of incidents at the university they are his responsibility to address.”

Wolfe had ample opportunity to create policies and reform that would create a safer and more inclusive place for students – but he didn’t, Butler said.

On Oct. 26, the ConcernedStudent1950 group, including Butler, met with Wolfe. Prior to that, they sent him a list of demands, which included more faculty diversity and a stronger focus on inclusion in the curriculum. It also included his removal as president.
“It didn’t go well,” said Storm Ervin, a member of the group and a Mizzou senior.

At that meeting, Wolfe said he has failed to address issues of racism, sexism, bigotry, homophobia, etc., at Mizzou because he is “not completely” aware of these issues, Butler stated in the letter.

“A world where a university president in charge of thousands of personnel, millions of dollars, and countless moving pieces and can still afford the luxury of being ‘not completely’ aware of the environment they function in is a scary place to be,” he said.

On Nov. 3, Wolfe released a statement, saying he intends to “deepen relationships and have frank conversations” to combat racism.

“When I heard that Jonathan was participating in a hunger strike, I contacted him directly that day and expressed my concern for him,” Wolfe said.

He also said he would like to have additional meetings with Butler and the ConcernedStudent1950 group, beyond the initial meeting they had on October 26.

To support Butler, about 30 people have been camping out in tents on the Carnahan quad, Ervin said. The group has also started a boycott of all MU products, and they have encouraged others to join in. Ervin said the administration and faculty have been supportive.

Mizzou Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin released a statement saying that he supports Butler’s “right to peaceful protest.”

“Racism has deep roots at our university,” Loftin stated. “Racism shapes the current climate for and educational experience of all of our students. We must create a better future.”

Loftin said they have already announced initial steps, including creating the position of Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, requiring training for all incoming students, committing to a campus climate survey, and requiring search committees to complete training aimed at diverse and inclusive hiring — all endorsed by Wolfe.

However, Poole said these steps are halfhearted. The required diversity training that incoming students must complete is an online session. They can just click buttons without paying attention, she said.

“It’s not an effective way of solving problems of race on campus,” she said.

Poole said she has also attended the race relations forums, which are held by Loftin’s staff. Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Catherine Scroggs is regularly at the forums. However, Poole said she was told that Scroggs allegedly referred to the forums as “b*tch fits” in a meeting with graduate students.
“Her white privilege doesn’t allow her to see how her language is problematic,” Poole said. “It has happened literally every week.”

The St. Louis American is awaiting response from Scroggs on this accusation.

Butler is not taking media requests, but he has been posting on his social media about his experience.

“I woke up this morning in a state of exhaustion with pain all over my body, but I am still empowered and my spirits are still uplifted,” he wrote on Facebook. “This fight is necessary.”

He also posted a tweet from a Mizzou student named Lauren who wrote, “Mizzou hunger strike is a fabulous example of natural selection.”

Above it, he wrote, “Y’all this is Mizzou 2015.”

Student on hunger strike against Missouri system president

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A graduate student is refusing to eat in an effort to oust University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe for failing to respond to a range of student concerns, such as the use of racial slurs on campus.

Graduate student and campus activist Jonathan Butler began the hunger strike Monday, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported. Butler wrote in a letter to the Board of Curators that he won't eat "until either Tim Wolfe is removed from office or my internal organs fail and my life is lost.”
Wolfe in a statement said it's "very concerning to me when any of our students' wellbeing is in jeopardy," and said he's especially concerned about Butler's health.

Other university students pledged to camp at Traditions Plaza, in the heart of the Columbia campus across from Jesse Hall, in support of Butler and until Wolfe is removed from his position.

"As long as Tim Wolfe is UM System president, we will be here," said DeShaunya Ware, one of the students who camped out Monday night.

The Columbia Missourian reported Butler in his letter to curators cited the abrupt removal of graduate student health care subsidies, the end to university contracts with a Columbia Planned Parenthood clinic, anti-Semitic graffiti and the use of racial slurs on campus.

Concerned Student 1950, the group camping out in protest, similarly cited frustrations with how Wolfe has handled race issues, the Daily Tribune reported. That group in a separate protest last month blocked a car Wolfe was riding in during the university Homecoming parade and were removed by police.

Wolfe said in a statement that he has spoken with both Butler and Concerned Student 1950 and will continue to have conversations with others interested in affecting change.

"The only way we can begin to address the systemic and pervasive issue of racism in society and the effects it has on our campuses is to engage in dialogue, to build deeper relationships and have frank conversations," Wolfe said.

Also this week, members of the Department of English sent a letter to Wolfe expressing frustration with another university leader: Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

The newspaper reported 26 members voted that they have no confidence in Loftin's leadership. No one voted that they have confidence in him, and two abstained.

In a letter to Wolfe and the Board of Curators, associate professor Samuel Cohen cited concerns with the treatment of graduate students, disrespect of shared governance and "failure to defend the University's educational mission against outside political pressure."

University spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said Loftin had not received a copy of the letter and was unaware of department criticism. She says Loftin is working to listen to concerns and continues to "work toward solutions for some of the issues we are currently challenged with."
MU GPC passes resolution supporting social justice movements

By Megan Favignano

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri graduate and professional student body government passed a resolution of support for social justice movements on campus — emphasizing recent events with a student movement called Concerned Student 1950.

Concerned Student 1950, a group of 11 that protested race issues by blocking UM System President Tim Wolfe’s car during MU’s Homecoming parade last month, are camping out in tents on campus and calling for Wolfe’s resignation or removal.

With this resolution, MU’s Graduate and Professional Council agreed to stand in solidarity with student organizations and others on campus supporting social justice movements.

“This shows we are standing with all of the student groups on campus that are experiencing any kind of treatment for being a minority,” Council Vice President Rachel Bauer said. “If it’s a student issue, it’s a” council “issue.”

The resolution also said the council expects the administration to “develop appropriate, adequately-supported solutions to the social justice concerns being voiced by the student bodies, and to do so without passing undue burdens onto student activists or student leaders.”

Jonathan Butler, a graduate student with Concerned Student 1950, started a hunger strike Monday and said he will not eat until Wolfe is no longer president. The resolution mentioned Butler’s hunger strike and the students with Concerned Student 1950 who are camping out.

“My body is physically tired and sore but my spirit is uplifted because of the support I’ve seen and the amount of people who are now becoming aware of the injustices on campus and are ready to fight,” Butler said in an email Tuesday.

In a letter Butler sent Monday to the UM Board of Curators, he said Wolfe has not addressed racism, sexism, bigotry and homophobia on the system’s campuses.
Graduate and Professional Council Treasurer Alexander Howe submitted the resolution, which passed at the group’s general assembly meeting Tuesday night. The resolution mentioned multiple movements by name, including Concerned Student 1950, Racism Lives Here, Student Coalition for Critical Action and Black Lives Matter.

While the resolution names recent movements addressing race issues on campus, it does not limit its support to solely those movements. The resolution specified solidarity for all marginalized communities, including lesbian, gay and transgender people, individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities, “individuals of faith systems” and women.

The Graduate and Professional Council passed several resolutions at its Tuesday meeting that are meant to make a statement on behalf of the organization rather than just its executive board. About 80 students attended and voted on the resolutions.

A resolution to resume MU partnerships with Planned Parenthood passed after some discussion. Jordan Hoyt, a graduate student who volunteers with Planned Parenthood, wrote the resolution. She said students should have access to learn about abortion services and counseling for those considering abortion.

MU discontinued several agreements with Planned Parenthood this school year. The agreements allowed nursing students or medical trainees to complete their clinical rotation at the clinic.

Since the agreements were discontinued, a few new ones have been created for nursing students who expressed interest in completing their clinicals at Planned Parenthood. “These new contracts do stipulate that students cannot have access to education about abortion or abortion services,” Hoyt said.

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**Student leaders respond to Butler's hunger strike**

After Jonathan Butler announced he will not eat until Tim Wolfe leaves office, students expressed concern for his health and for administration.

Multiple student leaders have expressed their support for graduate student Jonathan Butler’s hunger strike via social media, such as Residence Halls Association President Billy Donley, who tweeted about the protest Nov. 3.

Butler began a hunger strike Nov. 2 to protest UM System President Tim Wolfe’s position in office. Butler said he will not eat until Wolfe is removed from his position. Members of Concerned Student 1950 are also protesting alongside Butler.
Donley said that while he can use his platform as RHA president to spread the word about issues on campus, students have to become a more active part of any potential change.

“I made a statement because I’m a student who’s really concerned about the way other students are not supporting the people on campus,” Donley said. “I use my presidential Twitter as an outlet to get what I think out. You don’t have to be a student leader on this campus to make a stand on something, but it’s a shame that when you do make a stand on something it seems that people only listen to the student leaders.”

Donley said he will approach the situation as a student who has something to learn, rather than as a student leader.

“I’m out there on Carnahan Quad and I’m having these discussions and I’m also learning, because I don’t fully understand everything that’s going on and I can’t say that I do,” Donley said. “That’s why I’m out there learning, because that’s what I can give to this situation.”

All three Missouri Students Association presidential slates expressed support for Butler’s strike.

“We are extremely saddened that it would ever come to the point of someone feeling the need to put their life on the line for the issues that are occurring here in campus,” presidential candidate Haden Gomez said. “With that being said, we 100 percent support what Jonathan Butler is standing for.”

Gomez’s running mate Chris Hanner called the issue “complicated” and “complex,” and echoed his statement of support. Gomez and Hanner said they agreed Wolfe should resign.

Presidential candidate Jordan McFarland also said he supported Butler’s strike, and said he would participate if he didn’t have medical conditions that prevented him from it.

“I'm fed up with the politics thrown at race relations and student demonstrations,” McFarland said. “It's time to empower all students to use their voice, knowing what students like Jonathan continue to sacrifice, so that we might mend the institutional divides that have grown since the conception of this university.”

Vice presidential candidate Heather Parrie said she and presidential candidate Syed Ejaz would camp with protesters in solidarity.

“We believe the voice of underrepresented students on this campus deserves to be heard, and though it never should have taken a hunger strike to further campus awareness of the constant oppression minority students face on this campus, we believe every person has the agency to act in the way they see fit in order to make societal change,” she said.

However, not all student leaders supported Butler’s choice of a strike to advocate for change.

MSA Senate Speaker Kevin Carr said he supported the cause Butler was advocating for but said the strike endangered students.
“Jonathan Butler’s expression, and his way of going about it, is putting himself in danger, and it’s even encouraging other students to put themselves in danger, too,” Carr said. “I think it’s irresponsible of student leaders to endorse that sort of behavior.”

He emphasized that he was not speaking for MSA, but as a student at the university. MSA President Payton Head and Director of Communications David Wallace did not respond to requests for comment.

Carr said students should take other actions, such as attending Board of Curators meetings, instead of demanding that Wolfe resign. He said he thought students would actually accomplish less if Wolfe resigned due to the lack of leadership that would result.

“Unfortunately, it depends on how dedicated Jonathan Butler is to his stance,” he said. “I can’t fathom what’s going to happen.”

**Hunger strike against UM President**


An MU graduate student and campus activist is on a hunger strike.

Jonathan Butler is not eating until University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe resigns.

Mizzou student's supporting Butler's cause told KRCG 13 they want Wolfe to quit his job because of his lack of leadership on race relations on all 4 University of Missouri campuses.

Some Mizzou students are showing support by fasting for one day at a make shift campground on their campus. Protestors said Butler is leading a group of Mizzou students in a hungry strike against oppression at the University of Missouri. Members of the Concerned Student 1950 Group are spending the night in tents at Mizzou's Carnahan Quadrangle near the Jesse Hall administration building. 1950 was the first year a black student attended Mizzou. Mizzou protestors want University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe to resign because of his failure to respond to students' concerns with sincerity or concrete action.
Student Protestor Ayanna Poole said, "When we met with him last week, he said he didn't understand systems of oppression, but he cares about black students and marginalized students on his campus. If he doesn't understand the systems of oppression, you don't know what they face. You don't know what they are up against. You don't know how to help them if you don't understand how they are oppressed."

President's Wolfe's spokesman John Fougere told KRCG 13 Wolfe is concerned for Butler's health and wants Butler to find another way to further his cause. Fougere said Wolfe talked with concerned students last week and will continue to have discussions.

Fougere said, "He has invited them to meet again and have a dialogue with him and talk together about how they can address this pervasive, systemic issue of racism in our society as it applies to our campuses."

Fougere said President Wolfe believes there is no easy solution to racial problems on all 4 University of Missouri campuses. Protestors said Wolfe is not the right man to solve those problems and he needs to resign or be fired.

The Concerned Student 1950 Group is the same group that stopped President Wolfe's car during last month's homecoming parade.

Wolfe did not respond to the students' concerns while he was in the car.

**Letter to the Editor: MU graduate argues that hunger striking is unreasonable strategy**

*The strategy has potential for more future harm than any possible good.*

By Will Felton

To Jonathan Butler and the larger MU student body,

*I'm a University of Missouri alumni and fellow graduate student, albeit currently at a different university.* I want to initially point out that I respect the intestinal fortitude to announce a hunger strike; that decision (I can only assume) takes a huge amount of courage and a larger level of commitment. That said, soon (I suspect) any supporter of your announcement will disregard everything here following, and conversely, any critic or your announcement will immediately support everything here following. I think you are going about this in a misguided way. To be perfectly clear, I am not and will not in this letter, be referring to any perceived conflicts within the MU community to which your open letter refers. I hope that last sentence
reads as clear and sounds as unbiased as it is here intended. I do not think a hunger strike is a reasonable method to achieve any positive outcome. To start, I think you are putting the UM System, at large, in a very difficult position for a different reason than you intend. If Mr. Wolfe resigns, due to this hunger strike, it sets forth a highly dangerous precedent of the means to enact a change. If it’s a success it opens the door to future actions of the same for any cause, good or bad. A future student can likewise declare it is either their life lost or a change, seeing that it has worked in the past (with you, Jonathan, being the potential example) and they go about doing the same. Here is the crux of this: It opens the potential to demand virtually any change (even objectively negative change) or face a student death. A student can threaten self-harm or suicide (a harsh reality of the current announcement) with this history of (potential) success to demand any outcome. Any outcome: different dining hall food, cheaper tuition, the resigning of a professor, or even an all-white campus (an objectively negative change mentioned). The powers that be then, whether they be Gov. Nixon or other administrative officials, are then forced to choose between accepting the demand (for better or worse) or having a student take their own life. Further, this incredibly difficult decision would have to be made in the ultimate of timely manners, when you or a future student(s), can no longer go on without sustenance. The precedent of a hunger strike or any other threat of self-harm, while I know you yourself are superbly well intentioned, sets a precedent to similar acts where others may simply not be as well intentioned and seek outlandish or again, objectively negative outcomes. To illustrate this idea of precedence further in a stark way, what if another student announces a hunger strike (or other self-harm) if Mr. Wolfe does resign? Then what outcome could be expected? What and how could anyone possibly take action one way or another at such ultimately high competing costs? There simply needs to be a better way to enact the changes you seek. The potential for a snowball effect so to speak, with your announcement, in my eyes puts the university at the potential for more future harm than any possible good. This well-intentioned writer suggests rather the way to go about the changes you seek is from the bottom upward. To state first though, any person who perpetuates intolerance of any kind based on such ignorant beliefs (examples in your letter) is simply wrong. As a fact. That said, positive change and tolerance should not have to come from any level higher than that of the student. I would encourage you to actively motivate your bright and well-intentioned peers, and the student body at large, to stand up to any such intolerance. Any comment or action denoting hatred of another, based on any such superficial and incredibly wrongheaded belief, should be swiftly rejected in that moment on the personal level. As an illustration of the importance of this bottom up action, I would bet everything I own that the person who drew the swastika (as an example) gave no thought to Mr. Wolfe at that time whatsoever. Further, Mr. Wolfe’s potential resignation simply will not solve each problem of intolerance to come. A larger cultural change toward total and complete acceptance must take place. Positive change needs to be rooted in the individual heart and directed at the student body before all else.

I sincerely hope that the courage and commitment you have so clearly demonstrated in your announcement can likewise be demonstrated in a change of your current decision to actively make a change at the level it truly matters.
University of Missouri Student on Hunger Strike

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=76b794b8-cf45-42c4-8352-5b0a91f95ce5

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN
VIDEO: Concerned Student 1950 holds news conference about boycott

YouTube Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBaYWZtYZ2g

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN
Students hold emergency meeting to call for Tim Wolfe's removal

COLUMBIA — A group of MU students which calls itself Concerned Student 1950 officially announced a boycott of university services including merchandise, retail dining services and ticketed events at a news conference at Traditions Plaza on Wednesday afternoon.

Also, the Missouri Students Association and the Graduate Professional Council hosted a meeting in conjunction with the Associated Students of the University of Missouri on Wednesday night. The purpose of the emergency meeting was "in regards to the removal of Tim Wolfe," according to a tweet from the MSA Twitter account, @MSAmizzou.
Wolfe is president of the University of Missouri System.

Wednesday night marked the third night that Concerned Student 1950 and its allies camped on the Mel Carnahan Quadrangle in solidarity with Jonathan Butler, the MU graduate student who pledged to continue a hunger strike until he either dies or Wolfe leaves his position.

Football game causes early school dismissal

Columbia Public School students will get out early Thursday because of a nationally broadcasted football game.

The Missouri Tigers will host Mississippi State on ESPN at 8 p.m.

Columbia Public School administrators do not want their 200 school buses to battle game day traffic.

Students will leave their classes 2 1/2 hours early to help prevent any traffic problems throughout Columbia.

CPS Spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said, "We really felt like it was in the best interest to not have all of those school buses on the road and all of those kids walking home and student drivers. There really were some safety and traffic concerns that we felt were significant enough that we decided to have an early release day."

The last time Columbia Public School administrators let students out early because of a Thursday night football game was in 2009 when the Tigers played Nebraska on ESPN.
MU Health Care employees concerned with weekday Mizzou game

Watch story: [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=31313&zone=5&categories=5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=31313&zone=5&categories=5)

COLUMBIA – MU Health Care employees expressed concerns over traffic and parking for the football game on Thursday.

Traffic near Faurot Field is bad on a normal workday during rush hour, but with extra game day traffic, it will be even worse.

An MU Health Care spokesperson said in an email parking lots that are normally reserved for health system employees will be used for fan parking.

Clinics located in University Hospital, Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, University Physicians Medical Building and the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute will close at 1 p.m. Thursday.

Multiple University Hospital employees who asked to not be named said they were also concerned they may have to use vacation time for the rest of the day, and the part-time employees would have to leave work without getting paid for those hours.

KOMU 8 News reached out to MU Health Care spokespeople to ask if this is true.

An MU Health Care spokesperson responded in an email, “While many supervisors at MU Health are allowing employees to use vacation, personal time or work from home on Thursday afternoon, no one is required to leave work early.”

KOMU 8 News also asked if employees who cannot work from home or do not have paid vacation time had any options since the clinics they work in are closing.

The spokesperson said in another email, “We’re clarifying with our clinic employees that no one is required to leave work early, and that we will find work for those employees who don’t wish to use vacation or personal leave or take unpaid leave.”
Employees who will be at work for the full day and park in designated football parking lots will have to do some shuffling late Thursday afternoon to avoid being towed.

Employees that park in CG1 must move their cars by 4 p.m. to any level of Parking Structure No. 7.

Employees that park in WG1 must also move their cars by 4 p.m. to Tiger Avenue Parking Structure on Level 3 and above.

After noon Thursday, lots CG1 and WG1 will be exit only. If employees leave for lunch and return to work they will need to park in the alternate lots.

MU prepares for students and tailgaters sharing parking lots

Watch story: [http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=31314&zone=5&categories=5](http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=31314&zone=5&categories=5)

COLUMBIA- **Unlike most Missouri football games, the Tigers are strapping up the laces this week on a Thursday night.**

For the first time since 2009, and the third time in school history, Missouri will be playing on a Thursday. With classes still in session on Thursday for MU students, parking became an issue, as many wondered whether students would be able to park in their commuter spots, since these spots are also donor parking lots for football games.

"We've had an academics subcommittee, an operations subcommittee and a communications subcommittee and we've been looking at things very holistically and checking out everything that would go in to this game day to make everything go as smoothly as possible," said Tony Wirkus, Director of Event Management for Mizzou Athletics. For the past year Wirkus and his staff have been working to make sure everything runs smoothly for the weekday game in regards to parking.
On game-day, students who normally park in the donor parking lots will have access until 4 p.m. After this time their cars will be towed from the lots to make space for fans attending the game. Fans and tailgaters will have permission to enter the lots starting at 4:30 p.m. For those MU students and staff who may need to stay on campus after 4 p.m., Mizzou Athletics has left the Tiger Garage and Parking Structure #7 available for free parking, compared to the usual paid spots it sells there most game-days.

Students don't seem too upset about the change in parking for Thursday.

"I'm fine with it, since I like to tailgate and the whole game day atmosphere," said Dylan Demkowicz, an MU student. Demkowicz works on campus after 4 p.m. on Thursdays and will be one of the students who has to move to another lot during the day. Since it's to help out fans, he's fine with doing so this one time. "It's nice to have a night game here, with the sold and crowd and ESPN here."

The Tigers kick-off against the Bulldogs at 8 p.m. Thursday night.

Columbia schools to dismiss early Thursday; MU offers employees short day

By THE TRIBUNE’S STAFF

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 9:43 am

Columbia Public Schools will dismiss students 2½ hours before their normal dismissal times on Thursday.

The Columbia Board of Education approved the early dismissal last school year in developing the district calendar.

University of Missouri officials had made the request to CPS officials when Thursday’s University of Missouri football game was scheduled because of concerns about traffic and safety.

The game starts at 8 p.m.
Michelle Baumstark, CPS spokeswoman, said traffic operations for the game would start around the time schools ordinarily dismiss.

“The number of fans arriving to town, young drivers, students trying to get home and buses on the road at the same time are not a good combination,” Baumstark said, adding that the district learned a lot when there was a weeknight game in 2009.

“This hasn’t been something we’ve considered in the past, but based on the information provided by MU game operations and their team of experts, it was important we consider the safety of our students and make an adjustment to the calendar,” Baumstark said.

In preparation for increased traffic on campus leading up to the game, the University of Missouri is asking supervisors to work with employees who want to work from home Thursday afternoon or take paid time off.

MU spokesman Nathan Hurst said MU is not requiring any employees to leave campus.

Additionally, MU is asking that all students, faculty and staff with permits to park in the lots surrounding the stadium move their vehicles to another location on campus by 4 p.m. Thursday.

The lots will reopen at 4:30 p.m. for tailgaters and game attendees.

The Student Health Center and all Mizzou Pharmacies will be open during regular business hours on Thursday, MU Health Care spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said.

Clinics at University Hospital, Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, University Physicians Medical Building and the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute will close at 1 p.m.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN
Survey highlights faculty dissatisfaction in MU School of Medicine

COLUMBIA — A survey taken by more than half of MU School of Medicine faculty highlighted unease with administrative decisions following the abrupt resignation of Patrice Delafontaine as dean in September.
Almost all respondents said they were dissatisfied with the medical school's leadership and worried about the effects the dean's resignation would have on the school.

Ninety-one percent of respondents said they agree or strongly agree that Delafontaine's resignation will make it difficult to attract a new dean and executive vice chancellor in health affairs. The survey also cited concern for the effect the resignation would have on the school's reaccreditation process and its efforts to attract new researchers.

The anonymous, informal survey was sent to all 509 faculty members of the School of Medicine on Oct. 21. Two hundred ninety-nine faculty members, or 58 percent of the faculty, responded to the survey before it closed five days later. The survey was created by the Faculty Affairs Council, a body of faculty members across multiple disciplines that represents the School of Medicine in matters of governance.

Julia Crim, a professor of clinical radiology who helped draft the survey, said the council decided to use the survey to try to find a majority opinion about Delafontaine's resignation and the June retirement of Vice Chancellor Hal Williamson.

Delafontaine resigned Sept. 14, after only 10 months as dean. Delafontaine will continue to work as a professor of cardiology and will draw the $600,000 annual salary promised for the first two years of his time at MU, according to the terms of his hire.

Crim and the survey both referred to Delafontaine's resignation as being forced by Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, while other faculty referred to the decision as a firing. Delafontaine declined to comment on the circumstances of his resignation.

“I am very appreciative of the faculty and of their support for the work we have done together," Delafontaine said in an email Tuesday.
Art Jago, a professor of management in the College of Business, is a member of the MU Faculty Council, which consulted with the Medical School's Faculty Affairs Council before the survey was written.

"The firing of Dean Delafontane is the most recent of a series of autocratic decisions that have portrayed MU in a negative light among our national peers," Jago said in an email Oct. 26. Jago said faculty are frustrated because they haven't heard the administration's rationale and don't know if the "firing" was justified.

"But we do know that it will likely affect our ability to attract applicants for other open deanships, open department chairmanships, and the entire process of accreditation," he said.

Comments to the Faculty Affairs Council indicated distrust of the chancellor. Since Delafontaine's resignation, faculty and staff have been prodding Loftin about the reasons for Delafontaine's unexpected announcement.

The dean’s resignation came after a conversation with Loftin and Provost Garnett Stokes earlier that same day, Loftin said in a September Faculty Council meeting, and was effective immediately.

A spokesperson for MU Health Care said the public relations office is aware of the Faculty Affairs Council survey but will likely not discuss it publicly because it affects personnel matters.

Numerous faculty from the School of Medicine and members of the Faculty Affairs Council were contacted for this article. Few responded to repeated phone and email interview requests, and some cited concern for their jobs.

Respondents were worried about the confidentiality of the survey, according to comments made on the survey. Concerns about anonymity feed into larger anxieties
about job security, said Virginia Huxley, a professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Physiology.

Huxley said faculty have been told that MU’s inclusion in the Association of American Universities is in jeopardy and that the strategic hire of Delafontaine, given his research qualifications, funding and productivity, was to help maintain AAU standing. Now MU has gotten rid of that investment, she said.

“In my 31 years here, I’ve not experienced a mood like this,” Huxley said. “As a member of the faculty, you wonder, what’s going on?”

Senator: MU hasn't cut ties with Planned Parenthood

State Senator Kurt Schaefer is now asking MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin for documents concerning a study that purports to, "gain a better understanding of the abortion decision-making process," as well as the effects of Missouri's 72 hour waiting period on the decision to have an abortion.

Schaefer's letter to Loftin says the MU’s connection to this study is a concerning revelation considering the University’s recent "troubling connections" to Planned Parenthood.

Earlier this year Loftin told state lawmakers the University had cut ties with Planned Parenthood.

The allegations in Schaefer's letter indicate Loftin either lied to the senate panel, or Loftin himself was lied to by his own staff.

Missouri state law states, "it shall be unlawful for any public funds to be expended for the purpose of performing or assisting an abortion, not necessary to save the life of the mother, or for the purpose of encouraging or counseling a woman to have an abortion not to save her life."
Schaefer alleges this study between Planned Parenthood and the University is a marketing aid for PP, and is not an unbiased research project.

The Senator has asked Loftin to provide him documents about this study by no later than 4 p.m this Friday.

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**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

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**Onetime chancellor revisits farm kid roots**

By Bill Clark

Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 2:00 pm

*Brady Deaton’s business card carries two titles: “Chancellor Emeritus” and Executive Director, Brady and Anne Deaton Institute for University Leadership in International Development.”*

Now we know what a University of Missouri Chancellor Emeritus does when he allegedly retires.

Brady Deaton never planned to be a university chancellor. Born in the hardscrabble hills of eastern Kentucky, he graduated in 1960 from London High School, where he played football and ran the mile. He was a farm kid who had an early education in a one-room school, and agriculture was his world.

It is truly his world today.

Brady built a strong foundation, beginning with two years living in the barns at the University of Kentucky to work his way through school in a quest for a degree in agricultural economics. Halfway through his degree work, he gave two years to the Peace Corps, serving as an agriculture teacher in Thailand, returning to graduate from UK in 1966.

A year later he added his master’s from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and set off on a journey that led to the new Deaton Institute.

He added a doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1972, worked for the Robert Kennedy Memorial Association in the hills of East Tennessee in job development, spent six years at the University of Tennessee and 10 more at Virginia Tech, arriving in Columbia in 1989 as the department chair of agricultural economics, hired by the late Roger Mitchell, who Brady calls “a good friend and a great leader.”
He became chancellor in 2004 and returned in November 2013.

When he stepped down as chancellor, he returned to his roots — agriculture.

He and Anne, his strength and companion for nearly half a century, moved quickly into the institute named for them.

The Anne and Brady Deaton Institute was established by MU to accept the challenge that “nearly one billion people worldwide live in extreme poverty and subsist on $1.25 a day. Additionally, the world’s population of seven billion people will increase to nine billion by 2050, resulting in a potentially catastrophic global good shortage.”

The Institute is dedicated to developing interdisciplinary research and applied programs focused on food security in developing countries to eliminate extreme poverty.

The Institute thus calls upon the strength of land-grant universities “to establish global relationships to tackle the problem of neediest people in the world so that no one will go hungry,” the Deatons are quick to summarize.

Anne and Brady Deaton have been on the move almost constantly since “retirement.” Brady was appointed chairman of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, or BiFAD, by President Barack Obama 2011 and reappointed in 2012 for a four-year term.

Brady actually serves two masters today, spending half his time with BiFAD and half with the Deaton Institute. Those roles have taken him to numerous stops in Africa, the United Nations on several occasions, and, since August, to Italy, Ireland, Ghana, the Adventist Development Relief Agency in Cancun, Mexico, and a week on world hunger in Des Moines.

Come Feb. 26-27, MU and the Deaton Institute will host the 11th annual summit of Universities Fighting World Hunger in the Bond Center.

In this column, Ol’ Clark once described Brady Deaton as “too nice to have to deal with being a chancellor,” believing he had a much deeper calling.

The Anne and Brady Deaton Institute for University Leadership in International Development is that calling.

His easy smile these days tells you he has returned to his world — agriculture.

Welcome back.
Missouri Taser-related death was the impetus for Nick Berardini’s ‘Killing Them Safely'

By KELLY MOFFITT • 15 HOURS AGO

Nick Berardini was just a journalism student at the University of Missouri when he was sent out on an assignment that would impact his life and his career as a filmmaker. He was sent to Moberly, Missouri to report on a man who died while in police custody after being pulled over for drunk driving.

Berardini would later find out it was because he was hit with a stun gun in the chest three times for a total of 31 seconds. He died of cardiac arrest soon thereafter.

Following this revelation, Berardini continued on a mission to find answers about how a supposedly non-lethal weapon in the hands of police could end up killing someone. What he found, from the depths of Taser International’s corporate rigmarole to the number of people who’d been killed in Taser-related deaths, was enough to fill a documentary.

He started the documentary process through a day-long visit to Taser International, where he spoke with the company’s Vice President of Communications, Steve Tuttle. That winding discussion became one of the narratives of the documentary, which is interwoven with training videos, archived interviews, and footage from Taser-related deaths.

“It just seemed like whatever was happening beneath the surface was real and what I was seeing on the surface wasn’t real,” Berardini said on Wednesday’s “St. Louis on the Air.” “While I didn’t have a lot of ‘gotcha moments’ with this vice president, and that’s not the kind of filmmaker I’d like to be anyway, I had enough curiosity to pursue ‘why doesn’t this seem to fit? Why is this pitch he’s giving me not seem to match what’s going on behind-the-scenes?’”

“Killing Them Safely” will be screened at the St. Louis International Film Festival this Saturday, and was recently optioned by Sundance Selects to be released Nov. 27.

Tasers are frequently billed as the best non-lethal weapon that police departments have in their use-of-force arsenal. That’s because, when Taser International started, their claim was that the Taser was 100 percent non-lethal. That’s how police departments were trained to use the Taser, encouraging use-of-force without strings attached.
That’s just not the case, Berardini found. He estimates that since the Taser was put into use, there have been over 1000 Taser-related deaths across the country.

“They started with the claim of ‘this could never kill anybody,’ not that this is rare, but that it is impossible. I liken that to a pharmaceutical company without the requirements of the FDA about having to put the side effects of a drug in the commercial. They wouldn’t tell you the side effects if they didn’t have to. It wasn’t just that [Taser] wasn’t telling police officers, their customers, what the side effects were…it was that they were actively telling them that they didn’t exist.”

Taser was essentially, in training, telling police officers that the thing they fear most (killing somebody) doesn’t exist, Berardini said. There is no federal body regulating the Taser or a requirement that they include or publish research about the effects of the Taser on people who have been hit with one.

That made gathering hard data on Taser-related deaths incredibly hard. However, Berardini and his team of producers have found since he released the documentary that police departments across the country have paid out over $100 million in wrongful death lawsuits and the like, for officer interactions while using a Taser.

Some police departments across the country have never used the Taser, while others have ceased using Tasers in recent years. The load of wrongful death or use-of-force lawsuits is often born by the police departments themselves, not Taser International.

While the revelations of the potential lethality of the Taser are pretty damning, Berardini said he tried to approach the story of Taser International from an evolutionary standpoint—looking at how the company’s founders, Rick and Tom Smith, evolved from doing something from an almost altruistic place, to reduce officer-involved gun shootings, to one that was motivated by the bottom line.

“Sometimes when we make documentaries, we get caught in the trap of, especially when they’re ‘issue films,’ present a thesis and prove a thesis,” Berardini said. “That’s not really the best way to approach a film. You have to be three-dimensional…what makes this a film is that the Smith brothers are complicated characters. The film is beyond good guys and bad guys.”

Related Event

What: St. Louis International Film Festival Presents "Killing Them Safely"
When: Saturday, Nov. 7 at 6:30 p.m.
Where: Webster University's Moore Auditorium, 470 E. Lockwood Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119
More information.
Letter to the Editor: Outgoing MU Director of Libraries urges students to say “yes” to the proposed library fee

"Your libraries are the ONLY academic division on campus that does NOT have a designated student fee."

To all students at MU:

I want to thank all of you who have attended the several open forums held by MSA and GPC to learn about the proposed student library fee. Having attended most of the forums, I have been heartened by the expressions of caring and support you have voiced at the meetings. I and other members of the library staff have listened and learned from your comments and ideas. We deeply appreciate your concerns.

Like you, I’ve been frustrated by the pervasive underfunding that the MU Libraries have experienced since long before I arrived as library director almost 14 years ago. For as long as I have worked here, I’ve attempted to increase revenues for the libraries. When I arrived on campus in 2002, I knew there was no hope of gaining any new funding from the state. Missouri has not adequately funded higher education for many decades, and it has ranked near the bottom of the 50 states in per-capita support for public colleges and universities for generations.

As for gaining any significant new funding from the MU campus administration, I have been successful only once, in academic year 2009-10, when we received an increase of $1.1 million to our base budget for library collections. That was important, because it allowed us to avoid major cuts in journal subscriptions for at least a few years. Unfortunately, the annual rate of inflation for scholarly journals is often more than four times that of the Consumer Price Index, and we now face as much as $700,000 in cuts to our materials budget in order to avoid a deficit next fiscal year.

In terms of raising cash donations from alumni and other private individuals, our fundraising efforts have increased library endowments (pooled accounts that pay earnings every year) from $2 million in 2002 to over $10 million last year. These funds currently provide us with an annual revenue stream of $500,000, an amount that helps us cover some shortfalls, but it does nothing to address the fact that we are $15 million below the average annual expenditures of our peer libraries. We can’t expect our alumni and friends to provide that kind of ongoing support for library operations.
That leaves only one source to relieve the substantial underfunding that has plagued the MU Libraries for many years: our largest and most important user group, MU students. All academic divisions and colleges on campus have been facing the same financial pressures as the libraries, but they now have something that we don’t have – they all have a dedicated student fee. **Your libraries are the ONLY academic division on campus that does NOT have a designated student fee.** Every other MU college has been able to gain more revenue in recent years from the increased numbers of students at Mizzou — but not your libraries.

That’s why we have proposed a student library fee. It’s the only means we have left to stop the decline that has resulted from decades of underfunding for the MU Libraries. Students now at MU have a rare opportunity: by enacting this fee, you will be making an investment that will have an immediate and lasting effect on both the quality of the education and the value of the degrees that you receive from this university.

This is an important vote on Nov. 10. We hope you will vote YES for the MU Libraries.

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**Court Wins for Accused**

More students punished over sexual assault are winning lawsuits against colleges

November 5, 2015

By [Jake New](#)

Last week, Brandon Austin, a former college basketball player, filed a lawsuit against the University of Oregon for $7.5 million, arguing that administrators there violated his rights when they suspended him over [his alleged involvement in a gang rape](#).

Austin was able to [transfer to a community college](#) and play basketball there last season, but has since left to (so far, unsuccessfully) pursue a professional basketball career. In the lawsuit, Austin claims that the punishment caused him emotional distress and lessened his chances of one day playing in the National Basketball Association. His case joins more than 50 other pending lawsuits filed by men who say they were unfairly kicked off campus after being accused of sexual assault.

If filed last year, Austin’s lawsuit would have seemed like a long shot, especially as the athlete had been accused of sexual assault at another institution before he enrolled at Oregon. But accused students suing the institutions that suspended or expelled them
are now increasingly winning those lawsuits, including at least four cases in the last four months.

“Almost every week, there’s at least one more suit like this,” Samantha Harris, director of policy research at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, said. “It’s a very rapidly emerging area of law. Up until this point, it’s an area that has not been super fleshed out by the courts, and earlier lawsuits have been largely unsuccessful. But that’s starting to change.”

The increased success of these lawsuits adds another wrinkle to colleges’ attempts to address the problem of campus sexual assault. Institutions are under intense pressure from the Obama administration and activists to crack down on sexual assault and to remove alleged offenders from campus, but the stakes are now also high if they respond to that pressure by cutting corners.

As recently as a few months ago, accused students seemed destined to lose lawsuits challenging their penalties. In May, it was widely believed that there had been just one such case in recent memory -- a lawsuit brought against the University of the South in 2011 -- that made it to court and had a favorable outcome for an accused student.

Though a few cases have seen success in the way of pretrial settlements, including recently at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Swarthmore College and Xavier University in Ohio, many more have been dismissed outright.

Then, in July, a California trial court judge ruled that the University of California at San Diego must reverse the suspension of a male student who allegedly assaulted a female student. The student accused the university of violating his due process rights by presuming his guilt ahead of a hearing, not allowing the accused student access to witnesses and evidence, and informing a hearing panel of his guilt instead of letting the panel reach its own conclusion. The judge in the case agreed.

The UCSD lawsuit was, at the time, a rare win for accused male students who turn to legal action after having been found responsible for sexual misconduct. Since then, accused students suspended or expelled by the University of Southern California, Middlebury College and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga have also won lawsuits against their institutions. In Tennessee’s case, a judge ruled that the university’s policies were unjust, as they force an accused student to prove his innocence rather than a university to prove his guilt.

Harris, of FIRE, cited key differences between the recent cases and the ones that accused students have lost: the losing cases focus on gender discrimination and are often heard in federal court. The cases at USC, UCSD and Tennessee were filed in state courts. “They have a little more leeway to overturn cases because of the relationship public universities have as state bodies, and the responsibility they have to due process,” Harris said.

Cases that claim an accused male student has been discriminated against because of his gender, Harris said, rarely result in the student winning. That’s because Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 -- the gender discrimination law that requires
colleges to investigate and adjudicate cases of campus sexual assault -- does not provide a way to challenge disciplinary policies simply based on disparate impact. While university sexual assault policies do affect male students more than female, the policies themselves aren’t to blame, as they are written to be gender neutral. The disparate impact on male students is not because colleges are targeting men, a number of courts have concluded, but because men commit and are accused of sexual assault far more than women. Two recent lawsuits against the University of Missouri and Augustana University in South Dakota were both dismissed for similar reasons.

The cases that have resulted in wins for the accused are generally built on claims that the disciplined students’ rights to due process were violated, not that they were discriminated against for being men.

Even lawsuits in federal courts are starting to have some level of success by focusing on due process. A recent lawsuit against Pennsylvania State University survived the university’s motion to dismiss, with a federal judge granting the accused student a preliminary injunction that prevented his suspension and deportation back to Syria. In an analysis of the UCSD case, Erin Buzuvis, director of the Center for Gender and Sexuality Studies at Western New England University, said that institutions can still fulfill their obligations under Title IX without taking the shortcuts the University of California at San Diego and others seemingly have. When colleges fail to follow due process, it makes it easier for accused students to win lawsuits and reverse their suspensions or expulsions -- and that could mean letting predators back on campus, too.

“Not only for the sake of students who are accused, but victims and their advocates have a stake in the integrity of the process as well,” Buzuvis said. “It is possible to hold fair hearings and comply with Title IX, and that is what colleges and universities should be striving to do.”

Not everyone’s convinced that accused students can get a fair shake, at least not under the current system. Emboldened by the recent burst of accused students winning lawsuits against the institutions that suspended them, civil liberties groups like FIRE argue that the pendulum that has long prevented sexual assault victims from finding justice has now swung too far in the other direction.

In July, congressional Republicans introduced a bill designed to reverse that momentum by limiting how colleges could respond to cases of campus sexual assault.

The bill would allow an alleged victim to decide whether to involve police officers, but a college could not begin its own investigation unless the student chose to report the incident to law enforcement. Currently, colleges are required to conduct investigations even if police officials are not informed of the crime, a rule that victims’ advocates say encourages reporting of sexual assault to campus officials.

Under the legislation, both the accused and the accuser would have the right to hire lawyers at their own expense, and both would be allowed to question witnesses.

Colleges could also choose what standard of evidence to use when deciding if a student committed the assault, rather than being required to use the lower burden of
proven known as preponderance of evidence.

Last week, Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, a Democrat from New York, and Claire McCaskill, a Democrat from Missouri, blasted the legislation and its support as “disturbing.” The two lawmakers are the lead co-sponsors of the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, a separate piece of legislation that would require confidential resources for victims of sexual assault and would impose fines on colleges that mishandle sexual assault cases.

McCaskill said while it’s important for colleges to honor the due process rights of accused students, treating both the accuser and the accused fairly can be accomplished without turning campus hearings into courtrooms. The legal system is about is "about depriving someone of their liberty, putting them in prison, labeling them a sex offender for the rest of their life,” she said, while the Title IX process is focused on campus safety.

McCaskill said the Campus Accountability and Safety Act would help remove "the underpinning of these lawsuits" by making adjudication processes uniform for all institutions, including requiring training for those involved with the investigations and allowing both students to have advisors during hearings.

"When these proceedings are fair and professionalized, we’re better able to protect and empower students," she said. "That's including the rights of the accused."