MU wants more lab space for growing student body

By Megan Favignano

Monday, December 14, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri’s master plan prioritizes projects that will add lab space to accommodate MU’s goal to increase enrollment, officials said.

Gary Ward, MU’s vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer, outlined new upcoming projects to the Board of Curators at its meeting Thursday.

He said MU prioritizes projects based on the need for the campus to house and educate students while keeping in mind the university’s goal to increase enrollment to 38,000.

MU did a study in 2009 to determine whether current facilities could support student enrollment growing to between 38,000 and 40,000.

“We could house 38,000 to 40,000 students within our current classrooms,” Ward said. “However ... we have a shortage of class lab space.”

Ward shared five new major projects with curators, which MU administrators may bring to the board for approval next year: tearing down and rebuilding McKee Hall, building graduate student/family apartments, constructing a new School of Nursing building, building the MU Translational Precision Medicine Complex and adding plant growth facilities such as greenhouses.

“Combined, these five projects will further our teaching and research mission and improve our graduate and family student life,” Ward said.

The new McKee Hall — estimated to cost about $25 million — will have class labs. Because the current building, McKee Gymnasium, was not built for science, technology, engineering and mathematics teaching purposes, Ward said MU plans to demolish and reconstruct the building. McKee was built in 1922 and houses music, theater and nutrition and exercise classrooms.

“This building combined with Lafferre and combined with Stewart removes the bottleneck for class lab space on campus,” Ward said.
Lafferre Hall renovations, which are set to be completed in about a year, and Stewart Hall renovations, which the board just approved in October, also will increase class lab space on campus.

Ward said a study showed 400 to 700 graduate students would take advantage of graduate student housing at MU. The university wants to pursue a public-private partnership to address that need.

“At this time we, are looking for a consultant to help us,” Ward said. “We also will be exploring the possibility of adding childcare space to this project.”

Graduate students have pushed for better benefits this semester, including graduate student housing and an on-campus child care center.

MU closed and later demolished its graduate student on-campus housing, which included a child care center, in July 2014. Columbia Fire Department Lt. Bruce Britt died while working the scene of a walkway collapse at an MU-run apartment complex housing graduate students earlier that year.

A new $50 million nursing school building would give MU space to educate more nurses and add a clinical simulation center. The existing Sinclair School of Nursing is not conducive for modern health sciences education, Ward said.

A new MU Translational Precision Medicine Complex would become the university’s premier research facility, Ward said. The $120 million project would combine top researchers in medicine, veterinary medicine and bioengineering.

The university also wants to add plant growth facilities, which would include more than 72 additional greenhouse compartments. The total project would cost about $85,000.

Curators asked MU officials how these projects could affect the university’s status in the Association of American Universities, a prestigious group of research schools to which MU belongs.

MU interim Chancellor Hank Foley said plant science, animal science, integrated medical science and engineering all significantly contribute to MU’s AAU ranking.

“Those areas are the ones that are the most likely to garner the kinds of statistical results that AAU considers to be very important,” Foley said.

Foley told curators that while MU cares about its AAU status, the university does not prioritize projects based solely on AAU’s metrics.

Ward expects to bring projected timelines, funding plans and specific details for these projects and others to the board for approval throughout next year.
MU employee returns to job after protests


COLUMBIA, Mo. - **ABC 17 News confirmed Janna Basler has returned to her job as student life associate director at MU, after she was placed on administrative leave following the campus protests in November.**

Basler was captured on video during the confrontation last month between a student photographer and protesters. She was also an assistant director for Greek life.

After the incident, Basler released this statement:

"As a student affairs professional, I take my responsibility to students very seriously. [Yesterday] I allowed my emotions to get the best of me while trying to protect some of our students. Instead of defusing an already tense situation, I contributed to its escalation. I regret how I handled the situation, and I am offering a public apology to the journalist involved.

I have the utmost respect for journalists and the profession of journalism. I have devoted my career to helping students learn and develop outside the classroom. What happened on Carnahan Quadrangle has been a lesson for me. I am deeply sorry for what happened."

Missouri legislator proposes bill that would revoke scholarships if players strike

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- A state legislator is proposing that student-athletes lose their scholarships if they go on strike, in response to a threat by Missouri Tigers football players to not
play because of criticism of the administration's handling of racial discrimination complaints on campus.

The bill proposed by Republican Rep. Rick Brattin last week in the Missouri House of Representatives would strip scholarships from any athlete who "calls, incites, supports or participates in any strike." Colleges and universities would be required to fine coaching staff members who encourage or enable such student protests.

University of Missouri athletic department spokesman Ryan Bradley didn't respond Monday to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

The bill could face challenges because the Missouri athletic department operates on its own revenue and not on state funds, according to the university student-athlete handbook.

Brattin wasn't immediately available to comment, but Rep. Kurt Bahr, the co-sponsor of the bill, said his goal is to show that some state lawmakers don't approve of how University of Missouri administrators handled student unrest. Bahr said he hopes this bill fosters discussion between the legislature and university leadership.

The aim is to show "the response that they've had has not been as strong as the legislature would like," said Bahr, a St. Charles Republican, "and that we, the General Assembly, expect the leadership of this state institution to actually lead and not allow the students to call the shots."

The Columbia campus gained national attention in November after members of the football team backed calls by a student on a hunger strike for former University of Missouri system president Tim Wolfe to resign or be removed. At issue was Wolfe's administration's handling of racial discrimination complaints.

Graduate student Jonathan Butler refused to eat and football players threatened to not play until Wolfe stepped down, which he did Nov. 9. R. Bowen Loftin, former chancellor of the Columbia campus, also announced his resignation that day.

Brattin's bill is one of a number proposed in response to the unrest at the university. Republican budget leaders have said state funding for the university will be under greater scrutiny in the legislative session that begins Jan. 6.
Missouri bill would strip scholarships from athletes who refuse to play

Missouri state representatives Rick Brattin and Kurt Bahr have proposed a bill that would revoke scholarships from college athletes who refuse to play for a reason unrelated to health.

The bill, HB 1743, was introduced on Monday, and its authors hope to pass it by next August, just in time for next college football season. A hearing for the bill has not yet been scheduled.

The bill follows a high-profile boycott from the University of Missouri football team in November.

This fall, a number of Missouri students criticized university system president Tim Wolfe for his handling of several racially-charged incidents on campus. One student, Jonathan Butler, a 25-year-old graduate student, became the face of the campus movement to address recurring incidents of racism when he announced in a letter to the university that he would engage in a hunger strike until Wolfe “is removed from office or my internal organs fail and my life is lost.”

In support of Butler’s hunger strike, several members of the Missouri football team said it would boycott all football-related activities until Wolfe resigned or was fired. Missouri coach Gary Pinkel tweeted his support for the striking players and said the entire team was united behind the protest.

Wolfe resigned two days after the football team announced its strike. After Wolfe’s resignation, the football team resumed activities and Butler ended his hunger strike.

On Monday, Bahr said that the bill was in reaction to the boycott, adding that “if they’re going to receive state money, there are going to be ramifications.” However, the university’s athlete handbook states that the school doesn’t receive state funds to operate intercollegiate programs. The athletic department operates solely on the revenue it generates.

Former Missouri defensive lineman Lucas Vincent took to Twitter to respond to the proposed bill.
Missouri bill would strip scholarships if athletes strike

BY SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, MO. - A state legislator is proposing that student athletes should lose their scholarships if they go on strike, a response to a threat by University of Missouri football players not to play over criticism of the administration's handling of campus racial discrimination complaints.

The bill Republican Rep. Rick Brattin proposed last week in the Missouri House would strip scholarships from any athlete who "calls, incites, supports or participates in any strike." Colleges and universities would be required to fine coaching staff who encourage or enable such student protests.

University of Missouri Department of Athletics spokesman Ryan Bradley didn't immediately respond Monday to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Brattin also wasn't immediately available to comment, but co-sponsor Rep. Kurt Bahr said his goal in supporting the bill is to show that some state lawmakers don't approve of how University of Missouri administrators handled student unrest. Bahr said he hopes it fosters discussion between the Legislature and university leadership.

The aim is to show that "the response that they've had has not been as strong as the Legislature would like," said Bahr, a St. Charles Republican, "and that we, the
General Assembly, expect the leadership of this state institution to actually lead and not allow the students to call the shots."

The Columbia campus gained national attention in November after members of the football team backed calls by a student on a hunger strike for former University of Missouri System president Tim Wolfe to resign or be removed. At issue was his administration's handling of racial discrimination complaints.

Football team members threatened not to play, and graduate student Jonathan Butler refused to eat for a week until Wolfe stepped down Nov. 9.

Former Columbia Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin also announced his resignation that day.

Brattin's bill is one of a number proposed in response to the unrest at the university. Republican budget leaders have said state funding for the university also will be under greater scrutiny in the upcoming legislative session that begins Jan. 6.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Legislation targets Mizzou football team strike

JEFFERSON CITY • A state lawmaker has introduced legislation taking aim at the University of Missouri football team’s role in the racial tension that roiled the campus in November.

State Rep. Rick Brattin, R-Harrisonville, filed a proposal Friday that would revoke the scholarship of any college athlete who refuses to play “for a reason unrelated to health.”

The measure also would require the university to levy a fine against any member of a coaching staff who encourages an athlete to participate in a strike.

The bill comes after members of the MU football team said they would stop participating in team activities until former university system president Timothy M. Wolfe resigned.

A day after the announcement by more than 30 players, the Tigers’ then-head coach Gary Pinkel expressed support for the move, saying on Twitter that the team “stands as one.”
“We are united. We are behind our players,” he tweeted.

On Nov. 9, Wolfe resigned and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was reassigned. Pinkel announced his resignation soon after for health reasons.

Rep. Kurt Bahr, R-O’Fallon, has signed on as a co-sponsor of the bill, saying he wants to try and send the university a message about the use of scholarships.

“That is state money. We can, as a Legislature, make sure the money is being used wisely,” Bahr said.

A university spokesman declined to comment Monday. But, a section of the MU student athlete handbook notes that scholarship money is raised through private sources, not state appropriations.

Brattin, a member of the Legislature since 2010, is the owner of a drywall company and served in the Marine Corps for six years.

The Cass County lawmaker could not immediately be reached for comment.

The proposal is the latest legislative reaction to the flare-up on the campus in Columbia.

State Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, filed legislation on Dec. 2 that would make course materials taught by employees at state-funded universities publicly accessible.

He said the measure was inspired by a media criticism class taught by assistant professor Melissa Click, who was thrust into the spotlight after she had an altercation with journalists covering the upheaval.

“The taxpayers of Missouri spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year to fund our colleges and universities,” Schmitt said. “At a minimum, the taxpayers should know what topics professors are teaching our students and what resources they are using.”

Schmitt also wants tougher audits of the university.

“We have to be to sure the administrators are spending our tax dollars wisely,” Schmitt said in a statement issued Dec. 2.

The House and Senate return to action Jan. 6.
Missouri lawmakers want scholarships revoked if college athletes go on strike

State Reps. Rick Brattin, Kurt Bahr propose canceling scholarships for healthy athletes who won’t play

Measure also proposes fines for coaches who endorse such actions

University of Missouri football team last month threatened boycott if chancellor, president didn’t resign

BY DAVE HELLING
dhelling@kcstar.com
AND TOD PALMER
tpalmer@kcstar.com

Two Missouri representatives have offered a bill that would require colleges to revoke scholarships held by healthy student-athletes who refuse to play and fines for coaches who endorse such actions.

“Any college athlete who calls, incites, supports, or participates in any strike or concerted refusal to play a scheduled game shall have his or her scholarship revoked,” the bill reads. “Any member of a coaching staff who encourages or enables a college athlete to engage in (such) behavior ... shall be fined by his or her institution of employment.”

State Rep. Rick Brattin, a Harrisonville Republican, filed the legislation, H.B. 1743, on Friday. State Rep. Kurt Bahr, an O’Fallon Republican, is a co-sponsor.

“This discussion needs to be had,” Bahr said Monday. Brattin was unavailable for comment.

On Nov. 7, more than 30 University Missouri football players announced via Twitter a solidarity strike with the group Concerned Student 1950, threatening to
boycott all practices and games until System President Tim Wolfe resigned. Racial incidents on the Columbia campus inspired the protests.

After a team meeting Nov. 8, then-coach Gary Pinkel and the rest of the Tigers announced their support of the boycott and canceled a practice that afternoon. The team and coaches returned to practice only after Wolfe and R. Bowen Loftin, the chancellor of the Columbia campus, announced their decisions to resign.

The team did not miss a scheduled game.

Bahr said the incident prompted him to re-examine the relationship between student-athletes and the universities where they play.

“The student has a right to protest or to make their voice heard,” he said. “But if they have a contract to perform certain duties, and they violate that contract ... then it’s not an issue of the First Amendment. It’s an issue of contract law. They failed to uphold that contract.”

Ian Simon, a senior captain and safety for the Tigers this fall, told a reporter for the Columbia Missourian that athletes might still boycott games, if necessary. “I don’t just wear a helmet on Saturdays and disappear the other six days of the week,” he said.

Most U.S. universities already can cancel an athletic scholarship if a student fails to meet team rules or university policies. The Brattin bill would require universities to revoke scholarships if an otherwise healthy athlete refused to play or urged a player boycott.

The MU athletic department is self-sustaining and receives no public funds. Scholarships, facilities upgrades and other expenses are paid for through a combination of broadcast rights, private donations, ticket sales and merchandising.

The MU Student-Athlete Handbook says all scholarships renewals, reductions or revocations are “made at the discretion of the coach and the Director of Athletics.”

Any legislation that forced colleges to pull athletic scholarships might put Missouri at a severe disadvantage from a recruiting standpoint, experts believe.
The Brattin/Bahr bill apparently would apply to all Missouri colleges, both public and private, that offer athletic scholarships.

In January, Brattin offered a bill called the Campus Free Expression Act that prohibited public colleges and universities from setting aside “free-speech zones” on their campuses. Instead, the measure allows schools to maintain regulations concerning expressive activity in outdoor spaces, but they cannot prohibit it.

A bill to revoke student-athlete scholarships is pre-filed to Missouri House

AARON REISS, 15 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — In reaction to Missouri football players who boycotted in November, two state representatives are taking action.

Rick Brattin, R-Harrisonville, sponsored a pre-filed bill on Friday that proposes revoking the athletics scholarship of any student athlete who "calls, incites, supports, or participates in any strike or concerted refusal to play a scheduled game." Additionally, the bill calls for any member of a coaching staff who "encourages or enables a college athlete to engage" in such behavior to receive a fine from his or her institution of employment.

Does the bill have any legs? Probably not. Even if the bill, which does not yet have a hearing scheduled, becomes a law, MU student-athlete scholarships are not state-funded. The Tiger Scholarship Fund pays for athletics scholarships.

Brattin was out of his office and not immediately available for comment. The bill’s co-sponsor, Kurt Bahr, R-O’Fallon, said it is "obviously in reaction to the athletes who were saying they
weren’t going to play to what they considered to be social issues on campus. I don’t think that is an appropriate response on their part."

Missouri football players announced a boycott on Nov. 7 to support graduate student Jonathan Butler’s hunger strike. Butler said he would not eat until University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe was no longer in office; the Tigers said they wouldn't play football until Butler ate.

“The issue really is, they can have the freedom of speech (when they) like or don’t like something on campus,” Bahr said. “But if they’re going to receive state money, there are going to be ramifications.”

Former Missouri safety Ian Simon, a team captain and leader of the boycott movement among players, said such a reaction in the legislature doesn’t surprise him. He believes the boycott, in which many black college athletes flexed the power they hold, “scared some people.” Butler, in a Facebook post Monday, called the proposed legislation “anti-Black tactics.”

Simon said he and some teammates considered before the boycott whether their scholarships would be revoked. Even if the bill does become a law, Simon said, Missouri players would still take a stand on social issues — and boycott — if they felt it necessary.

“They want to call us student-athletes, but they keep us out of the student part of it,” Simon said. “I’m more than just a football player. … As soon as we’re done playing at the University of Missouri, the University of Missouri does not care about us anymore. We are not their responsibility. … Our sport is just a small part of who we are.”

According to the Missouri student-athlete handbook: “The University of Missouri does not receive state appropriated funds to operate its intercollegiate athletics programs, thus, similar to private business, the Mizzou Athletics Department must operate solely from what revenue it generates.”

Missouri coaches seemingly already have the power to take away scholarships if they choose. Doing so, in most cases, would jeopardize their trust with players and recruits.
“If student-athletes do not maintain their academic or social responsibilities, or fails (sic) to adhere to team rules and policies, it is within the authority of the MU Athletics Department, under NCAA and SEC regulations, to authorize the non-renewal of a grant-in-aid,” the student-athlete handbook states. "Any renewal, reduction, or cancellation of an athletics scholarship is made at the discretion of the coach and the Director of Athletics.”

Bahr said he doesn't know how a law would be enforced, and that he's never read the student-athlete handbook. He hopes the proposal will lead to “increasing dialogue and discussion” regarding how university administration should react to events like those at MU this fall.

“We saw the university taking too timid of a response, so we want to encourage them to take a more forceful response,” Bahr said. “Forceful response doesn’t mean kicking everyone off the team and creating a new team. … We want to see better leadership from the leadership of our flagship university.”

For the bill to become a law, the House would have to approve it, then the Senate. The governor would have to sign it or allow it into law without his signature. The bill’s proposed effective date is Aug. 28, 2016.
Former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius staked out a sound economic case on Monday while criticizing attempts in Missouri and Kansas to restrict family planning services.

Two strong downward drivers of economic mobility are teen pregnancies and unintended pregnancies among women of all ages, Sebelius said. The former Kansas governor was the keynote speaker at the annual conference sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri.

With attempts to defund Planned Parenthood, a leading provider of family planning services, and with the refusal to expand Medicaid eligibility, state governments ensure that more women and teenagers will become pregnant without intending to do so, Sebelius pointed out.

Thousands of young women will be unable to fully participate in the workplace. Many of those women and their children will be consigned to lives in poverty. They will be less well-educated and more dependent on the very social services that anti-abortion lawmakers tend to disdain.

“Here in the Heartland the work is absolutely critical, but it’s getting harder every day,” Sebelius accurately told an audience of about 150 Planned Parenthood supporters.

**The two Planned Parenthood chapters that work in Missouri have been under attack for months by extremist state legislators. Bullying from a Senate committee and its chairman, Kurt Schaefer, a Boone County Republican, led the University of Missouri to cancel essential hospital admitting privileges for a physician who also performed nonsurgical abortions. That forced the Planned Parenthood clinic in Columbia to shut down abortion services, at least temporarily.**

A barrage of legislative actions to further restrict abortions is expected when lawmakers convene in Jefferson City and Topeka in January. Meanwhile, legislators hamper the ability of low-income women to prevent pregnancies.

Thousands of women in both states work for employers who don’t offer health insurance benefits but earn too much to qualify for state Medicaid programs, which include family planning benefits. Missouri and Kansas so far have refused to expand Medicaid eligibility, as called for in the Affordable Care Act. That
leaves women who can least afford contraceptive services without help in paying for them.

“It is morally repugnant and it’s economically stupid policy,” Sebelius said.
Agreed. Voters should insist that it be changed.

**MISSOURIAN**

Trump's proposed ban on Muslim immigrants sparks reaction among local party members, Muslims

INES KAGUBARE, ANNE MARIE HANKINS, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's call for a ban on Muslims entering the United States has provoked a range of responses from party representatives in Missouri, while Muslims in Columbia have condemned it as un-American, insulting and divisive.

In the wake of the Dec. 2 shooting in San Bernardino, California, that left 14 dead and 22 wounded, Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of all Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on."

That comment was only one in a slew of anti-Muslim remarks Trump has made during his campaign. He previously called for surveillance of mosques and to establish a database of all Muslims living in the United States.

William Samuels, who is the Columbia First Ward committeeman for the Boone County Republican Central Committee, said Trump has the right idea in banning Muslims from entering the U.S.

"For the time being, (a) moratorium on Muslim immigration is necessary," Samuels, an attorney, said. "Immigration is not a right. Look at all the terrorist attacks we have already had."
Samuels said he doesn't believe Trump's comments will cause minorities to feel alienated by the Republican Party. In fact, he predicted Trump's campaign would increase voter turnout, particularly among the working class.

"I have no reason to believe Donald Trump is a racist," Samuels said. "Massive immigration works against the interests of African Americans, undercutting wages and jobs in a community that has systematically dealt with poverty."

Samuels said that while there is no organized support for Trump in Columbia, the potential is there.

"There is a disconnect between Republican voters and major donors, and Trump is more in tune with the voters because he doesn't need the donors," he said. "The general public are aware of the (immigration) problem, and the Republican Party is losing a great opportunity if they don't stand strong against immigration."

Hallsville Mayor Cheri Reisch, who is running for the 44th District seat in the Missouri House of Representatives now held by Caleb Rowden, also said Trump's comments would not push minorities away from the party, but she declined to explain why. She is undecided about Trump and said she thinks many other Republicans are as well.

"I haven't really gotten a feel one way or the other," she said. "I did see that there is a precedent for what (Trump) wants to do. It's not like he's saying a complete and total ban on Muslims. It's just temporary."

Rowden, a Republican who is seeking his party's nomination for the 19th District state Senate seat, took a strong stance against Trump's comments. In an email statement Thursday, Rowden called Trump's comments "lazy, dangerous, and destructive to any forward-facing dialogue about the very real threat of ISIS and extremism in the Middle East."

Rowden also called Trump's plan "unconstitutional" and "un-American."
U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Missouri, discussed the issue during a conference call with Missouri reporters on Wednesday, his spokesman Brian Hart said. "I think it is a mistake anytime we walk away from religious freedom in this country," Blunt said.

**Experts around the country are debating the constitutionality of Trump's proposal. Carl Esbeck, professor emeritus at the MU School of Law, said there are two different aspects to consider when discussing whether to exclude immigrants from entering the U.S. based on their religion:**

- The First Amendment protects religious freedom.
- The U.S. Constitution gives the federal government authority to exclude noncitizens from entering the country.

Esbeck said the U.S. Supreme Court would have to take up the matter of whether barring Muslims from entering the country is legal. The court in the past has upheld the denial of visas in spite of the First Amendment's freedom of speech protection.

"This proposal is so novel in the American experience that it's not surprising there is no case like it," Esbeck said. "It's unthinkable America would do something like this."

Muslims respond to Trump's proposal

Hina Syed, who is chairwoman of the Islamic School of Columbia, said Trump's comments are insulting to the Muslim community because “terrorism has no religion.”

Syed also volunteers at the Islamic Center of Central Missouri and the International Medical and Educational Trust, a humanitarian organization.

Trump’s "divisive" remarks will make matters worse by causing friction between Muslims and other Americans. That, in turn, could empower extremist groups such as the Islamic State and give them more reason to attract and radicalize people to commit terrorist acts, she said.

“We condemn terrorism," Syed said. "There are bad apples in every religion, whether it’s Christians, Jews or Muslims.”
She expressed her condolences to the families who lost loved ones during the San Bernardino shooting.

Syed said the meaning of Islam is peace. “We are taught to be peaceful and merciful.”

Humera Lodhi is a freshman at MU double majoring in journalism and statistics. She thought that Trump's comments were un-American.

MU freshman Humera Lodhi said Trump’s comments are “creating an environment of, at the very least, hostility and intolerance” against Muslims. It just “goes completely against what being American is and what American founding principles are,” she said.

Lodhi is double majoring in journalism and statistics. She was raised in Columbia by Indian parents who moved to the United States more than 20 years ago. She said she has had several conversations with her mother and her friends about what it means to be a Muslim American living in the U.S.

Despite the negativity Trump has created, Lodhi said she is glad there are a lot more people who condemn Trump’s views. She said many of her non-Muslim friends have shown her support.

Husam Aljaff is a senior at MU studying art and math. He said the bigger issue is not Trump's comment but defeating the Islamic State.

MU senior Husam Aljaff said he doesn’t care about Trump’s comments because he has dealt with people like Trump in the U.S. and in Iraq whose agenda is to promote hate and divide people.

Aljaff is originally from Iraq. He moved to Missouri in 2009 and is now studying interdisciplinary studies in art and math.

Although he disagrees with Trump’s comments, Aljaff said people should be more concerned about the Islamic State. He wants the United States and the international community to help his people back in Iraq and figure out how to defeat the Islamic State and its propaganda.
President's address garners widespread reaction

President Barack Obama addressed the nation from the Oval Office on Dec. 6 about national security and the strategies his administration is taking to defeat the Islamic State, not only abroad but at home as well.

One of Obama's key points was ensuring that Americans understand that the U.S. is not at war with Islam but with the Islamic State, whose members he said are “thugs and killers.”

Obama said extremist groups such as the Islamic State “account for a tiny fraction of more than a billion Muslims around the world, including millions of patriotic Muslim Americans who reject their hateful ideology.”

“If we’re to succeed in defeating terrorism, we must enlist Muslim communities as some of our strongest allies,” Obama said.

In her weekly newsletter, 4th District U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Harrisonville, attacked the president's call for more gun control. She emphasized the government's responsibility to protect American citizens.

Hartzler did not respond to multiple requests for comment about Trump's remarks.

Lodhi said the president was “on point.” Still, she said, “it’s a little frustrating when all we do is say, ‘We’re not terrorists. We condemn these acts.’ It seems that we’re constantly saying that, and it’s like, when is it going to be enough?

"At a certain point, other people need to start opening their eyes and realizing that a whole group of people is not responsible for a very, very minute faction,” Lodhi said, noting that "other religious groups aren’t asked to constantly step-up” and condemn terrorist attacks like the Muslim community is.

Syed said she appreciated the president’s support and agreed with his statement that “ISIL does not speak for Islam.”

The media's portrayal of Muslims
MU journalism professor Debra Mason, who teaches courses on how the news media portray different religions, said that after the shootings in San Bernardino, “many media outlets did a good job of holding off trying not to associate (terrorism and Islam) until they had more information from law enforcement.”

Mason said research shows that some media outlets have improved the way they portray Muslims since the 9/11 attacks, even if it’s still far from perfect.

Mason gave some examples of major news outlets such as the New York Times and NPR that have specialists in religion. Those news media, she said, “work hard at being fair in the coverage … and doing a better job of not using the word Muslim in front of the word terrorist.”

Trump's standing in the polls

Polls attempting to gauge the level of support or opposition to Trump's proposed ban on Muslim immigration vary in their results.

A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll published last week indicated that 38 percent of likely Republican primary voters supported the ban, while 39 percent opposed it.

An online survey conducted Dec. 8 by Bloomberg Politics/Purple Strategies PulsePoll, however, found that 65 percent of likely GOP primary voters favored the proposal, while 22 percent opposed it. Among likely general election voters polled, 37 percent said they supported the idea, and 50 percent opposed it.

Overall support for Trump hasn't waned, according to a national poll released Monday afternoon by Monmouth University. It showed that 41 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning voters would support him as the GOP nominee for president.
GENE ROBERTSON: Now is the time to 'seize the opportunity' for greater diversity

GENE ROBERTSON, 19 hrs ago

We at MU are embroiled in the midst of a context that is amenable to diversity enhancement change. Mizzou in 2015 appears to be the context for addressing its diversity issue. This context can in a large part be attributed to the will and effort of the Concerned Student 1950 organization at MU.

Since my arrival at MU in 1971, I have never experienced a time so ripe for addressing the needed diversity problem at this institution. Elaine Brown urged 1960s' activists to "seize the time" and make the most of the opportunity to address some needed changes then. Now is the time to move MU toward a multicultural and tolerant university.

I urge all students to keep their eyes on the prize, as Dr. Martin Luther King would always say. The prize I refer to is their education. That prize is the reason for their presence at MU. Their personal prize is not social change at an institution that is steeped in decades of intolerance and denial. That is too big a job for students whose tenure at the institution is temporary. The students did enough by focusing the university on the issue of racism. It is the job of the institution as a whole to address its problems — and opportunities.

The university has strayed away from these values that are necessary to any university. Tolerance values must be re-embedded in the mission. Addressing diversity must not be viewed as an extraordinary activity. Still this intersectionality will not occur through any proclamation by a dynamic president or chancellor. There must be an initiative started to immediately instruct each department, college and supportive area to critically assess their programs relative to
diversity actions and impacts. There must be a written plan of action developed to address needed remedies, aspirations and means by which they will hold themselves accountable.

Timetables must be included. These reports would be sent to the diversity officer after they are reviewed by the deans and other administrative bodies. The diversity officer would react with recommendations. This process can began immediately.

Budgetary allocations would be affected by the presence or absence of satisfactory initiatives as well as the maintenance of a diversity sensitive program.

The diversity administrator would be held accountable for the vigor of the process.

This process may not be perfect, but it would start some productive dialogue and programs where the rubber meets the road in a diversity initiative. There is no context like the present one we are experiencing.

All we have to do is to seize the time.

MISSOURIAN

CARL KENNEY: Ending the semester with lessons on compromise, not conflict

CARL KENNEY, 1 hr ago

On the last day of classes, I told my students it feels as if we have been through a war zone. They all agreed. I then told them I feel like a wounded general.

All of us are wounded. Students, faculty and staff at MU have endured a semester that will be remembered for shifting the way we talk about student empowerment. Years from now,
students who participated in the protest will tell their children stories related to what happened.

Members of the faculty are still pondering what it all means. So much of our energy is dedicated to remaining on track while pressing to teach lessons beyond things placed on the syllabus before the semester began. Our plans were vastly interrupted by reporters, followed by MU as the subject of headline news across the country.

The intrusion is a teachable moment. For journalism students, the Missouri Method is on full display. We teach our students by creating a working environment similar to the real world of news gathering. For me and my students, this semester was more about what was happening on campus than grammar, Associated Press style, how to write effective ledes and how to structure a news story by using the inverted pyramid.

I pressed my students to find the stories within the stories. We talked about angles that many reporters lost because of the mayhem. We talked about how to use bias to craft stories that others can't see because of the fear of partiality. We judged the press while honoring reporting that moved beyond the common narrative.

I told them to ask questions when bias pops up in a way that tempts them to minimize their focus. This is most critical when it comes to controversial topics. We talked about moving beyond labels in determining focus. I told them it's the trick that separates good journalist from those stuck in clipping and pasting stories to get things done before their deadline.

We talked about white rage and black pain. I told them they miss the story when they limit the conversation to simple explanations. Yes, racism is at the core of much that confronts society, but the issue for journalists is not the "what" of the story. Good journalists ponder the "why" underneath what shows up in public space.

We talked about the responsibility of the press. It's not enough to write about people being mad. The challenge of journalists is to help people understand why people are mad. They have to push
beyond those common assumptions that minimize conversations to people on opposite sides yelling too loudly for people on the other side to listen.

I told them they are responsible for changing the world. They do that with their words. More than that, they do that by asking questions and digging until people fully understand the issues that keep people pitted against one another.

Rather than focusing on racial slurs on campus, try to confront the mindset of those who use hate language to denigrate a group of people. How did we get here? I told them to confront emotions on both sides of stories. We talked about patiently listening to voices on the other side of your opinions. Good journalists are fierce in attempting to convey how others feel. You may disagree, but change happens when journalists do all they can to understand.

There is something deeper, much deeper, underneath the narrative of the moment. Something can be lost in the way the story is shared. I told my students they own the responsibility of helping people filter through the language hindering people from hearing how others feel and think.

I told them we, as journalists, can't participate in the narrative of confusion. We are obligated to listen to people we disagree with and distrust due to the conflict between their message and our own. We can't pretend to be impartial. That isn't possible. All of us bring our bias to the way we communicate messages. Knowing that means we have to work harder to understand why a person feels the way he or she does.

It's like a war zone.

How do you teach the ethics of journalism to students who want to protest? How do you tell them to deny their natural instinct to participate in something that matters to them?

How do you tell white students not to care about black students? What do you say to white students when they tell you they're ashamed to be white and they can't help but show black students they care?
It's like a war zone.

This is a great teachable moment. I told my students to refrain from participating in conflict journalism. This is what my profession has become — journalism determined to promote a specific agenda removed from the obligation to listen to the voices on the many sides of the issue.

Change can't happen if you stay in that place. People can't learn from one another if journalists refuse to help them understand why people feel the way they do.

Our nation has become a war zone.

The lesson for this semester is about changing the culture that breeds opposition. Journalists, like those outside the profession, are learning to transition within a culture enamored with separation and confusion. We have learned to love fighting more than compromise.

I say put the weapons down and listen to what others have to say.

I may not like it, but it's the only way to end a war.

DECEMBER 14, 2015

Vicky Hartzler will have a Democratic opponent in 2016

Doctor will challenge Missouri’s veteran 4th District congresswoman

BY STEVE KRASKE

skraske@kcstar.com
A former chief of staff at the University of Missouri Hospital has announced that he’ll run for Missouri’s 4th Congressional District.

Dr. Gordon Christensen of Columbia, a Democrat, hopes to take on veteran GOP Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler in fall 2016. The 4th District is south and east of Kansas City.

He has served as chair of the MU Faculty Council (2003-2005) and chief of staff at the University of Missouri Hospital (2008-2009). A former epidemiologist, he describes himself on his campaign website as a one-time VA whistleblower who testified before Congress.

“If enough like-minded citizens and elected officials work together, we can overcome the partisan gridlock and restore integrity to government,” he says on the site.

He pledges to make improving the Affordable Care Act a key part of his campaign platform.