Harmful bacteria may hide in semen

Scientists have discovered a microbiome in the reproductive tract of male mice that harbors potentially harmful bacteria.

Bacteria found in this specialized microbiome may pass from father to offspring, where it may lead to later disease risk, such as obesity. In fathers, some bacteria may initiate diseases, such as prostatitis, that can lead to prostate cancer.

“Microbiomes are influenced by many factors such as temperature, the pH or acidity of the environment, and whether there’s a food source to promote bacterial growth,” says Cheryl Rosenfeld, associate professor of biomedical sciences at the University of Missouri.

“The male reproductive tract includes a unique niche in which bacteria thrive, i.e. the seminal vesicles. These tubular glands produce seminal fluid, are located in an environment that is temperature controlled, and is rich in carbohydrates needed to feed bacteria. Our team set out to isolate this potential microbiome and analyze whether it could harbor harmful bacteria.”

For the study, researchers collected and isolated seminal fluid and vesicles from male mice and then sequenced the DNA of the bacteria located in the reproductive organs and fluid.

“The data showed that the bacterial composition found in the male reproductive tract contained potentially detrimental bacteria that can be transmitted to female reproductive partners and offspring,” Rosenfeld says. “The bacteria also could be the causative agent of chronic prostatitis, a possible precursor to prostate cancer in males.

“Additionally, further testing showed this bacterial community contains bacteria that may cause obesity in rats. Understanding how these genetic and environmental factors influence this particular microbiome could help in understanding how possible developmental disorders and diseases are passed down by fathers to their offspring.”

The study is published in Scientific Reports.
Report: Black Student Graduation Rates Up Compared to Whites

The Education Trust released a report on Wednesday that compares gains in graduation rates among White and Black college students, evaluating data from 232 universities that have improved their overall graduation rates since 2003. The report found that, among these institutions, Black student graduation rates improved by 4.4 percentage points, compared to 5.6 for White students.

The report follows up on an earlier Education Trust report on graduation rates among White and underrepresented minority students published in December. Black students have had the slowest rate of improvement in terms of graduation compared to their White, Latino and Native American peers, the report found.

“Institutions must understand that they have a lot of power and influence,” said Andrew Nichols, director of higher education research and data analytics at the Education Trust and one of the authors of the report. “When they want to, they can drastically improve outcomes for students, particularly those from underrepresented minority backgrounds, or those from low-income backgrounds. It really starts with will and desire, and a belief that you can change and that student outcomes aren’t simply a byproduct [of] students not being prepared or having other challenges outside of the institution.”

Institutions should be “mining their own data,” Nichols said, to catch areas of weakness. Universities can take steps such as revamping their academic advising, developing early-alert systems that will trigger adviser support when students encounter difficulties, and increasing or reallocating their financial aid, among other measures.

“There are a lot of small things that institutions can do to make things easier for students,” Nichols added.

Some institutions stood out as exemplars in terms of helping Black students succeed, per Education Trust’s more recent report, such as the University at Buffalo and The Ohio State University. At both schools, Black student graduation rate has improved faster than that of their White contemporaries.

While the gains at individual campuses are to be celebrated, it is important to remember that they also serve as a reminder of how wide the disparity once was between White and Black students. Today, Black students are still not graduating at the same rate as their White peers at the two institutions, although they have substantially narrowed the gap.

At Buffalo, Black student graduation rates hit a low of 37.4 percent in 2005 at a time when White students were graduating at a rate of 61.7 percent. In 2013, the most recent year measured
in the report, the difference was a 72.3 graduation rate for White students and 63.5 percent for Black students.

Similarly, Black students at Ohio State have not yet matched or surpassed the graduation rate of White students: 84.6 percent of White students graduated in 2013 compared to 72.7 percent of Black students.

Other institutions serve as a cautionary tale, according to Education Trust. At the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC), Black students were graduating at a higher rate than their White peers as recently as 2003, but then their success reversed. As the White graduation rate steadily improved, the Black student graduation rate steadily declined. In 2013, 53.9 percent of White students graduated compared to 31.2 percent of Black students.

**UMKC is one of four campuses within the MU system, and is distinct from the University of Missouri–Columbia, which is the system’s flagship campus and the site of student protests last fall.** Within the University of Missouri system overall, 56.8 percent of Black students graduated in 2013 compared to 71.4 percent of White students in the same year, according to Education Trust’s analysis of the College Results Online database.

Representatives of UMKC said that the university was not prepared to comment on the graduation statistics cited by Education Trust, but that they expect to produce a formal statement later on Wednesday. “We are committed to providing access to the community that we serve and giving students the opportunity to try to succeed,” John Martellaro, UMKC director of media relations, said.

Dr. Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies at the University of Missouri–Columbia, said that all four of MU’s campuses are committed to a comprehensive retention initiative. He noted that Mizzou experienced an 87 percent freshman retention rate last year, which he said was the highest yet in the institution’s 177 year history.

Mizzou has spent time and resources examining “bottlenecks” that might be impeding student success, Spain said. One significant obstacle to student persistence are finances — students might run out of scholarship money or their family’s financial situation might change for the worse. The university is working to improve its financial services to help more students complete their studies, Spain said.

Another critical component to student success was whether they develop a strong support network on campus.

“We know that students who graduated, their No. 1 support resource were friends on campus,” Spain said. “The students who were leaving early, their No. 1 resource were their parents or other family members off campus.”

In terms of the support it offers specifically for Black students, Spain pointed to the Mizzou Black Men’s Initiative, a leadership development program on campus, among various other diversity initiatives.

The report shows that the old maxim “a rising tide lifts all boats” does not apply to college graduation rates. “We want to make sure that, when folks highlight their success, they’re taking into account that overall success can mask other trends for other groups,” Nichols said. Beneath the generalized improvement, there is a more complicated story to be told.
Graduation Gap Widens

By: Jake New

Most public colleges have improved overall graduation rates during the last decade, a new study found. But gaps between the academic success of black students and that of white students continue to widen.

Graduation rates improved between 2003 and 2013 at nearly 70 percent of the public, four-year institutions examined by Education Trust, a nonprofit group. At more than half of those colleges and universities, however, the gains among black students trailed those of white students. And at one-third of the colleges that improved overall graduation rates, the rates of black students actually fell or remained stagnant.

“It’s not an encouraging finding,” said Andrew Nichols, co-author of the report and director of higher education research and data analytics at Education Trust. “It underscores the need to really dig into data and to look at success of particular subgroups, not just at overall success. We’re seeing improvements, but the improvements among black students have not occurred at a pace that enables institutions to close the gap.”

Other recent research also has found that black students at predominantly white institutions continue to lag behind white students. A study released last week by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education concluded that black male athletes, in particular, are graduating at rates much lower than their peers. At the 65 wealthiest institutions in the National Collegiate Athletic Association, according to the report, just over half of black male athletes graduate in six years, compared to 75 percent of undergraduates overall.

Like the Education Trust study, the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education's report found that overall graduation rates have increased, but not at a pace that would help close existing gaps between racial groups.

“There’s been a slight increase in graduation rates, about three percentage points, but it’s been across the board, so that doesn’t narrow the racial equity gaps,” Shaun Harper, the center's executive director, said last week. “That increase is perhaps good news for universities, but the racial disparity still remains.”
Education Trust, which advocates for the academic success of low-income and minority students, began comparing the graduation rates of white students and minority students last year. In a report released in December, the group found that 77 percent of the 255 institutions included in the study increased graduation rates of their minority students between 2003 and 2013, narrowing the completion gap by about one percentage point in 10 years.

The new study focuses on the graduation rates specifically of black students, comparing them to both the rates of white students and students overall. At the 232 institutions that have improved overall graduates during the past decade, graduation rates for white students improved 5.6 percentage points. The rate for black students improved 4.4 percentage points.

The researchers also compared graduation rates of black students at similar institutions and found that the rates vary widely.

At the University of Missouri, where student protests over racial inequality erupted last semester, graduation rates of black students “have barely budged over the last 10 years,” the report notes, dropping less than one percentage point. For white students, the graduation rate actually increased by three points, increasing the gap between the two groups from 10.6 points in 2003 to 14.6 in 2013.

The report compares those rates to that of North Carolina State University, where graduation rates for black students improved by 12.5 percentage points over 10 years, narrowing the gap between black students and white students to 10 points. “Even though both institutions are similar in size, have similar admission requirements and serve nearly identical percentages of students who receive Pell [Grants] and identify as black, NC State has a better track record of success for their black students,” the researchers wrote.

At Rutgers University at New Brunswick, the gap between black and white students narrowed from 13.4 points in 2003 to 8.1 points in 2013. During that same time frame, the gap between black and white students at the similarly sized Purdue University more than doubled to 19.7 percentage points.

The report also highlights initiatives at a handful of institutions that seem to have helped improve the graduation rates of black students in the last decade.

“Institutional leaders can’t be satisfied with overall gains, or even just with any increase for black students,” José Luis Santos, vice president of higher education policy and
practice at Education Trust, said. “Leaders must strive for accelerated gains among black students so they can catch up to their peers. Thankfully, there are institutions across the country that are showing the way forward.”

At Ohio State University, the graduation rate for black students has increased by 25.6 percentage points since 2003 and the gap between black and white students has narrowed by 8.6 points. The report suggests that those gains can be partially credited to the university’s Young Scholars Program, which connects low-income, mostly black middle school students to a college-preparation curriculum and provides a need-based scholarship if they later enroll at the university.

Once at Ohio State, the students also meet once a month with a success coach. The report suggested that mentoring and advising focused on black students has been an effective way to close the achievement gap between black and white students. At the same time, “there is no silver bullet,” Nichols said.

“Typically when I ask college presidents or individuals responsible for student success what they’re doing, I get a laundry list of things similar to the programs we’ve seen be successful,” he said. “But some of these institutions are not having that same success. There are some things that we know work: remediation, better advising and course scheduling, providing cleaner pathways toward a degree. All these things are important and helpful, but you can’t just do them. You have to do them well.”

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Graduation Rates for Black Students Aren’t Increasing at Same Pace as for Other Students**

**No MU Mention**

Report: “[Rising Tide II: Do Black Students Benefit as Grad Rates Increase?](#)”

Authors: Andrew Howard Nichols, Kimberlee Eberle-Sudré, and Meredith Welch

Organization: The Education Trust

Summary: Graduation rates at higher-education institutions are broadly on the rise, but overall data do not take into account completion rates among students of different races. Of the 232 four-year, public institutions that improved their overall graduation
rates from 2003 to 2013, 70 percent also had increased graduation rates among black students. However, the increases among black students’ graduation rates were not as high as the rates among white students at more than half of those institutions.

The report found, among other things, that:

- In the past decade, completion rates for black students improved 4.4 percentage points, compared with 5.6 points for white students.
- Fifty-two of the institutions improved overall graduation rates while also achieving gains for black students by nine or more percentage points.
- Thirty-nine institutions saw a decline in graduation rates among black students.

Bottom Line: While some of the universities studied are improving graduation rates for black students, about a third of the institutions did not improve rates among black students at all from 2003 to 2013. The report states, however, that since some institutions have narrowed the graduation-rate gap between black and white students, “it’s reasonable to believe others could too if they worked at it.”

MISSOURIAN

MU committee affirms free-expression rights on campus

BRITTANY CROCKER, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — An MU ad hoc committee on protesting in public spaces released an interim report Tuesday expressing the university’s commitment to promoting and protecting freedom of expression.

The committee, chaired by MU law professor Bob Jerry, was created in response to protest-related conflicts last semester to find ways to regulate public spaces on campus while still protecting safety and free speech.
The committee’s interim report affirms that constitutional free speech protections primarily exist for offensive speech, since it is the most at risk to censorship.

It goes on to urge students to contest speech they find offensive by exercising their own rights to free speech, rather than seeking to suppress the speech of an offending party.

"Individual members of the University community, not the University as an institution, should make their own moral judgments about the content of constitutionally protected speech," the report said. "And should express these judgments not by seeking to suppress speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas they oppose."

The letter then repeated that members of the university community are free to criticize others’ expressions, as long as they do not attempt to obstruct or interfere with them.

By the end of the semester, the committee hopes to recommend a framework for use of the campus’s public spaces and how the university can resolve public space conflicts.

**Interim Chancellor Hank Foley releases report on free speech**

COLUMBIA - **MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley released an interim report Tuesday about the University’s commitment to free speech.**

The report was submitted by the Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech and the Press. The report said the purpose of the committee was to recommend how
public spaces on campus can be regulated while protecting safety, free inquiry and free expression.

The report said MU is committed to "free and open inquiry."

"The University fully respects and supports the freedom of all members of the academy “to discuss any problem that presents itself,” the report said.

It also said MU may restrict expression that violates the law, falsely defames a specific individual, constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University.

Foley said he wanted to thank the committee in a statement.

"I, too, value a commitment to freedom of expression and I am in support of the committee's recommendation, which will now go to the Faculty Council for discussion and vote," Foley said, "I also look forward to the committee's subsequent report, and in the meantime, thank them for their ongoing work on behalf of our university."

**Following Brussels Attack, U.S. Universities Reach Out To Students Abroad**

Following Tuesday’s deadly explosions in Brussels, major American universities with study abroad programs scrambled to locate students who are currently in Europe.

The WorldPost reached out to a number of U.S. schools where it was mentioned on social media that students are currently abroad in Belgium. Officials from more than a dozen universities told The WorldPost they were making contact with their students abroad, their partner schools in Europe and officials at the U.S. State Department.

At least 34 people were killed in two attacks Tuesday, one at Brussels’ Maelbeek metro station and another in what appeared to be a suicide attack at the Zaventem airport. The militant group that calls itself the Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign told The WorldPost it has 57 people in Belgium. So far, the school said, it has confirmed 55 of those people are safe. UIUC was still working as of 11 a.m. EST Tuesday to connect with the remaining two people.
The University of Missouri reported that 16 journalism students studying in Belgium are all “accounted for and are safe.”

“Their safety is our top priority right now, and we are working with the lead faculty member there to make sure everyone stays safe,” said Christian Basi, spokesman for Mizzou. “No other decisions have been made at this time.”

James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, has a study abroad program in Antwerp, Belgium, which is about 27 miles from Brussels. JMU told The WorldPost it has confirmed that all of its students and faculty are safe.

The University of Michigan told The WorldPost it has only one student registered as being in Brussels, and that student has been confirmed safe. The University of Mississippi and the University of Wisconsin-Madison similarly reported their students were safe.

Some schools, like the University of Texas, said they have no students studying abroad in Belgium.

UT Austin’s “overall posture for travel in Europe is not changing at this time,” school spokesman J.B. Bird told The WorldPost. However, he added, school officials are “in the process this morning of reaching out to students in Western Europe to offer resources and support, and to reiterate travel precautions.”

Furman University, in South Carolina, pulled its students from Brussels last fall following the Nov. 13 terrorist attacks in Paris. School officials explained Tuesday that Furman does not operate a study abroad program in Belgium in the spring semester, so there were no students to contact this time.

UPDATE: 1:50 p.m. — A New York University spokesman said the school has four students in Belgium, although none of them are there on a study-abroad program or in any other school-sponsored context. “All are safe, and three of the four are currently in transit out of the country,” spokesman Matt Nagel said.

The University of California, Berkeley confirmed it has three members of the campus community who are studying abroad in Brussels, and all are fine.

MU journalism students in Brussels describe ‘horrific day’
Students in internship program use social media to say they’re OK

“Thank you for your messages of concern,” one student posted to her friends on Facebook

BY MATT CAMPBELL
mcampbell@kcstar.com

Journalism student Ryan Collins, interning in Brussels, normally gets off the subway one stop away from the site of the terrorist attack at the Maelbeek station, where 20 people were killed and 130 were injured.

The Politico office where he and 15 other students from the University of Missouri journalism school are working is less than 150 meters from the station.

Collins and his tech team had an event scheduled on Tuesday, but “obviously that was not going to happen,” he told The Star by phone from Brussels.

Gareth Harding, journalism lecturer and head of the internship program, tweeted that none of the students was among those killed or injured.

“All 16 of our Missouri journalism students in #Brussels safe and sound,” Harding said. “Our hearts go out to the innocent victims.”

Collins, who is from Springfield and will graduate this spring, said the atmosphere in the Belgian capital and headquarters of the European Union was strange throughout the day.

“Our office is on one of the busiest streets in Brussels and it was shut down today,” he said. “There were constant sirens, pretty much nonstop. You could look out and see no one on the street besides police officers.”

Toward evening the street reopened and people appeared to be able to move about without restriction, he said.

Student Uliana Pavlova told The Star via Facebook that she was in Germany working on a story when the attacks happened. She planned to stay overnight in Cologne because the Brussels train stations were closed most of the day.

“Thank you for your messages of concern,” Pavlova posted to her friends on Facebook. “I just wanted to let you know that I am safe. Please keep Brussels in your prayers. This
is a dark moment for all of the civilized society. Terrorism is real and this crime against humanity should not be forgiven."

Another student, Meg Hilling, tweeted photos of the security situation around the Maelbeek metro station.

“Truly a horrific day,” Hilling wrote.

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University of Missouri journalism students in Belgium safe in wake of Brussels attacks

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 12:13 pm

University of Missouri journalism student Meredith Magrath woke up Tuesday in Belgium to text messages from her employer alerting her to explosions at the Brussels airport.

After she arrived at the Reuters’ office where the St. Louis senior is an intern, she learned of the second attack at the Maelbeek Metro Station and that the death toll was rising.

“It has been nonstop coverage since,” she wrote in an email to the Tribune. “I feel safe covering from the office. I am heartbroken that this has happened in a city that has become a second home. I’m grateful that all of us on the trip are safe.”

Magrath is one of 16 students studying in Belgium this semester under the supervision of Gareth Harding. None of the students were close to the explosions, Harding said in an interview, and he sent emails to their parents reassuring them the students were safe.

The blasts killed 11 people at the airport, and an explosion at the metro station an hour later killed 20, according to the latest Associated Press reports available at the Tribune’s deadline.

Magrath’s roommate, strategic communications and political science major Kyrie Bussler, wrote that she learned the extent of the attacks after arriving at her workplace, FTI Consulting.

“It’s also been hard realizing how close this hit to home,” wrote Bussler, a junior from Lakeville, Minn. “For example, I was just at the airport last weekend for a trip to Dublin, and some of my co-workers had passed through the” Maelbeek “stop just 15 minutes before the explosion.”
Bussler wrote she feels safe at the office and that her employer has taken several precautions, including arranging a ride to her apartment.

The Brussels program of the Journalism School was launched in 2008. The city has become a focus of anti-terrorism efforts since investigators linked the Nov. 13 Paris attacks to Brussels residents. Salah Abdeslam, charged with terrorist murder in relation to the attacks, was arrested over the weekend after a Friday shootout with police. Earlier in the week, one terrorist was killed and four officers wounded when they raided an apartment in the Molenbeek neighborhood looking for Abdeslam.

The threat of terrorist attacks has not deterred applicants for the program, Harding said.

“They are mature about this, they read the paper, they see the news,” he said. “Until today, there was no such attack in Brussels. Now Brussels joins the sad litany of places that are attacked by these cowardly terrorists. Yes, there are risks, but there are risks anywhere in the world.”

The students are under strict instructions not to go to areas where they could be in danger, Harding said. If they are participating in coverage of the attacks, they are doing it from the safety of their offices, he said.

“Of course, it is frustrating for journalists,” Harding said. “Most reporters want to rush toward harm, rather than away from it.”

**MU Journalism students safe after attacks in Brussels**

SAVANNA HEINEY, 14 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — All 16 of the MU journalism students studying abroad in the Brussels program are safe, but some said Tuesday that fear pervades the city following the bombings.

Katelyn Lunders — a junior and a correspondent for news website MLex Market Insight — walked past the central Maelbeek Metro station during her Tuesday morning commute to work prior to the explosion. Lunders, a former Missourian reporter, was working on a story about trade when the explosion happened.
"I love Brussels so much, and I hurt for the people and my friends here," Lunders said in a phone interview. "Terrorism does not directly target a certain person, but affects everyone. Where is it going to happen next?"

Two explosions at the airport in the Brussels suburb of Zaventem and one at the city subway station in Maelbeek killed 31 people and wounded 187. Twenty people died and 106 were injured at the subway station, located near the European Union offices in central Brussels.

Shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday, two explosions took place at Brussels Airport in the suburb of Zaventem. At least 34 are reported dead and 187 wounded from the attacks at the airport and at a Brussels subway station. According to eye witnesses, the first explosion took place near a baggage check-in, and the second hit near a Starbucks cafe. JASON BREDEHOFET

The Islamic State, who was also involved in the Paris attacks last November, claimed responsibility for the bombings, according to the New York Times.

Lunders said she had used that metro station for travel and had flown out of the airport to Dublin, Ireland about a week ago. Lunders left the MLex office early Tuesday and decided to return home to her apartment. She said she walked near an eerily silent, taped-off street where people had previously been running out of the station.

"I left work around 2:30 p.m., and I was yelled at in broken English by the police officers to go inside and find a safe place," Lunders said. "I was confused and just trying to get home."

Shock surrounded the city as all movement on airport and public transportation came to a halt in the aftermath of the bombing. Lunders said it was hard to find a taxi to get home due to the lockdown on all other immediate forms of public transportation out of the city and country.

MU senior Jane Booth woke up around 9:30 a.m. expecting to head to work until she opened her email inbox. Booth said she received multiple emails Tuesday morning from the MU's study
abroad program director and the U.S. Embassy advising the students to stay safe inside. Booth did not report to work Tuesday and said she had been keeping track of the news on social media, news outlets and the information provided by local authorities.

"It’s sad that a place I have called home for the past three months has bombs going off down the street," Booth said. "This is intense."

Fritz Cropp, associate dean for MU's Global Programs, contacted the family members of the journalism students in Brussels to inform them of what had happened and assured that the school was doing all that it could to keep their students safe. Students in the international program have contacted family and friends by email, social media or other calling services to let them know that they are safe and doing OK, they said.

"I talked to my parents to take my mind off of the nerves and shock that’s happening too," Lunders said.

MU senior and former Missourian reporter Ryan Collins arrived at work, the Politico office in Brussels, Tuesday morning just after the metro station explosion occurred. Three of the four members of Politico’s technology team, a group Collins works with, were on the ground reporting while Collins stayed in the office to answer phone calls and emails.

Collins said he watched the chaos that ensued on the street below him outside his window, and he said it felt strange to watch.

"I'm in a little bit of disbelief," Collins said. "We heard that there was this kind of possibility going into the program, but we didn’t expect it."
MU student says Brussels attack hit close to home

COLUMBIA - People around the world had heavy hearts Tuesday over terror attacks in Brussels, Belgium. For some MU students, the attack hit close to home.

Many students at the University of Missouri study abroad in Brussels, Belgium. Jeremy Schmetterer participated in the MU Journalism abroad program in Brussels, Belgium during the spring 2015 semester.

“It’s like a home away from home for me. I mean, I called it home for four months and I know in the grand scheme of things, that might not seem like a lot, but I really learned a lot about the city and a lot about myself from my time in that city,” Schmetterer said.

He said he woke up to a text from his father about what happened in Brussels.

“When I woke up this morning I was really pretty terrified because I have a lot of close friends and people I worked with in Brussels who are there now and I just reached out to all of them. I wanted to make sure everyone I knew was safe,” Schmetterer said.

After doing that, Schmetterer said he turned on the TV to watch the news. He described how he used to intern very close to the Maelbeek station where one of the terror attacks took place.

“It was too familiar and it was pretty eerie to watch on national TV,” Schmetterer said.

He said his first day in Brussels was also the day of terrorists attacked the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, killing 11 people.

"From there we knew that there was going to be stuff happening all throughout Europe,” Schmetterer said.

He said he is not surprised terrorists targeted Brussels because it is the capitol of the European Union.
"There are some really important political figures there from all over Europe. People have been expecting things to happen," Schmetterer said.

Two times Schmetterer was at the European Parliament when it had to be evacuated due to security threats. Despite the fear he said he loved Brussels and his experience there.

"It was really just the best time of my entire life.”

He said he hopes the attack does not affect students' ability to study abroad there because, he said, the program provided valuable experience.

"You really can’t get that experience through anything else,” Schmetterer said.

He had one final message about the Brussels attack.

“One thing that I learned about Brussels while I was there is that the people, and just as a country, they’re really resilient. The country is going to get through this. Brussels is going to get through this,” Schmetterer said.

**Bombs in Belgium make students reconsider spring break trip**

COLUMBIA - A University of Missouri study abroad trip is scheduled to begin in Brussels on Saturday, but after the attacks Tuesday, the group is hesitant to move forward.

Tom Johnson is leading the planned Belgium spring break trip.

"The first and most important priority is the students' safety. If we are not assured that the students will be safe, we will not go," Johnson said.

He said he and the students want to be sensitive to the people in Brussels.
Johnson said, "If they are still recovering and busy trying to respond to the people that they serve, we don't want to be there and get in their way."

Johnson said the group will determine on Wednesday how to proceed with the spring break trip.

The group is keeping in touch with students already in Brussels.

KOMU 8 News reporter Hannah Knutson, is among the 16 MU journalism students there. She reported from Brussels about the terror bombings and the state of the city after the incident.

Mizzou students in Brussels react to attacks

COLUMBIA, Mo. — More than a dozen University of Missouri students and their professor were shocked to learn of the deadly attacks in the city that's been their home for the past few months. After the news of the bombings, University officials confirmed all of them were safe and accounted for.

"It's just unbelievable that this happened in Brussels," said Kyrie Bussler, a Mizzou student in Brussels with the journalism study abroad program.

The 16 students have been living in the city since January and have since adopted Brussels as their home.

"We've come to love it. It's become our home for the past three months. It would be like if something happening in Columbia - the Mizzou community would come together and rally behind it. So I feel like we have that sense of pride for our city here in Brussels, it just going to be really hard to move forward in the next couple of days in the aftermath," said Bussler.

Many students described the event as "unreal," saying although it happened in their city, it was hard to believe.

"While it's close, it's not something that I'm directly seeing. And so once i started seeing pictures of the check-in desk, and the metro station that I pass by, that's when it became ' i can't believe this is happening. It's so horrible," said Grace Dustin, a Mizzou journalism student in Brussels.
The attacks happened close to where the students live and work. They said they're about 20 minutes away from the airport and 10 minutes away from the metro station. Both locations they've used in the months they've lived there.

"I was just at that airport last weekend to go to Dublin. I was just in that same area, so that's crazy. Couple of my coworkers had just gotten through that metro station maybe 15 minutes before that attack. They had that 'this could of been me' moment," said Dustin.

Some students are still on edge.

Dustin said, "I still don't feel very comfortable walking around outside. I'm sure nothing is going to happen but just in case to be safe. But there are people going about their day-to-day lives. In general though, most of my friends, their co-workers are not going to work today. A lot of events have been cancelled, a lot of things have been cancelled."

The study abroad program ends in late April. The students KRCG 13 spoke to said they plan on staying in Brussels.

16 Missouri Journalism students safe in Brussels after terror attacks

BRUSSELS, Belgium - All 16 University of Missouri Journalism students studying abroad in the Belgian capital of Brussels are safe Tuesday morning after terror attacks.

ABC 17 News talked to Samantha Kummerer, a Missouri Journalism student interning at Reuters TV in Brussels. Kummerer tells us all 16 students in Brussels are accounted for and safe.

There were at least two explosions at the Brussels' Zavantem airport, and a third explosion struck at one of the city's metro stations near the European Union. At least 28 people were killed in the attacks, according to Belgian media.

Convergence student Megan Sheets is also on the trip. She said she found out right before she went to work about the airport attack. A coworker picked her up and when she arrived at work, she found out about the metro station.

"I saw a metro photo," she said. "I've been on that metro before, I could have literally been in that metro car. It's crazy when it's right at your back door."
She said everyone at work was eerily calm about the incident and she's not sure why, since she was visibly upset.

"I had a very physical response," she explained. "I was just shaking a little bit in a way that I didn't really understand."

Despite her coworkers calm demeanor following the attacks, Sheets said the city is devastated and uniting in a way she didn't think was possible in a place she said is full of people from all different backgrounds and walks of life.

"Today everyone was tweeting saying things like 'hey do you need a ride somewhere, there are a lot of hotels that are free tonight,'" she said. "It's been really crazy to just watch the city come together since it's so cosmopolitan usually."

ABC17 News spoke with Christian Basi at the University of Missouri News Bureau about the study abroad program. He said the journalism students are the only ones in Brussels currently and the school has been in touch with all of them.

Sheets confirmed that the program director, Gareth Harding, as well as university officials have emailed them on and off all day.

Sheets said Harding warned them to stay away from the metro station as well as the airport, and to stay inside.

Sheets said Harding spoke with the students in person and said the school is not canceling the current program but any student who feels unsafe is welcome to go home.

"We talked about it before Gareth came and everyone was so worried that we'd have to leave," Sheets said in a text. "I don't think anyone wants to."

Basi said they are working to assess the future of the program in the next couple of days and are in touch with the U.S. Department of State.

If any students or parents have their own concerns about future study abroad trips, Basi said the university would be flexible if someone may want to cancel or anything similar to that.

"It's a scary time to be in this city but I'm not really all too worried," said Sheets. "But I don't want to fall into the trap where I forget this all happened today. It did happen and we can't forget about it, we can't pretend that it didn't."
AAUP coming to Columbia to investigate Melissa Click firing

COLUMBIA, MO. - The AAUP is coming to Columbia today to investigate the firing of Melissa Click, two weeks after announcing an investigation into her termination.

Days after Click was fired in February, the AAUP sent a letter to interim chancellor Hank Foley asking the UM Board of Curators to rescind Click's firing.

The AAUP's investigating committee consists of three AAUP members from other institutions. They are visiting Columbia to meet with administrators, board members, faculty leaders, and Melissa Click.

The AAUP says they will determine if Click's firing violated academic procedural standards as well as MU's own policy.

They will then submit a report of their findings to the AAUP's committee on academic freedom and tenure. That committee will decide whether the UM administration should be censured at its annual meeting in June.

The censure list serves as a warning to prospective faculty members that their rights may not be respected by the university.

The University's Faculty Council agrees that the procedure of firing Melissa Click was not typical but that does not mean the University will make the list.

The chair of the faculty council, Ben Trachtenberg said, "The AAUP has its standard practices to which Mizzou normally adheres, but did not in the Melissa Click case. I think the AAUP is going to come in and say, 'Did the University do what its supposed to do?' And the answer is probably going to be no. That doesn't mean that we have to be censured."

The faculty council also says that being put on the list will probably not deter any potential faculty members because professor positions are very few and far between.

Q&A: Former student representative talks about working with the Board of Curators
Tracy Mulderig: “Getting to know people in the system personally and seeing some of the good that it does, I think I have a more balanced perspective. I grew to learn more about the role that everything the university does.”

From resignations to substantial changes, Tracy Mulderig has seen a lot in the past two years as the UM System Board of Curators’ student representative. From February 2014 to February 2016, she was the voice of the UM System’s 77,000 students and had access to the curators’ inside information and executive sessions. Mulderig, a doctoral student at UM-St. Louis, discussed her time in the position with The Maneater.

How did your experience as the representative match up to your expectations?

I think it’s safe to say that it far surpassed any of my wildest dreams. Reflecting on last fall, things happened that I never would have imagined when I applied for the position in the fall of 2013. Overall, I had numerous opportunities to have an impact and ensure that the student voice was heard throughout the entire two years.

It was rewarding, but I think a two-year term is the ideal length for a student representative to the board. While I could relay student concerns and relate to the student perspective, it became increasingly difficult for me to be objective. The student representative is both a student and a board member. After spending a lot of time with other board members, there’s a point toward the end where you may think more like a board member than a student. That’s one of the beauties of board members cycling in and out every two years. You’re constantly being pushed by new perspectives and people who were not around when certain events occurred. You can challenge your thinking and things that you might take for granted because everyone else experienced it from the same perspective.

What was it like being on the board during everything that happened last fall?

It was challenging. There were a number of extra meetings. Thankfully, my dissertation advisor and my boss at work were both supportive of me fulfilling my role to the best of my ability. The student representative is the voice of all students in the system. I worked hard to stay engaged with what was happening at MU, while also trying to reassure the other campuses that I was focused on how decisions might affect their campuses as well.

It was an isolating experience. For better or for worse, the student representative is likely to have a more complete or different set of information about events that unfold in the system. Because of this and because executive session topics must remain confidential, you can feel isolated at times. It’s important to have people in your corner you can lean on even if you cannot confide in them. We all need a support system, especially students in leadership positions.

I think it will be great for the next student representative because he/she will have an opportunity to impact the rebuilding process. The events of the fall happened at the end of my term. I continued to be engaged, but it was difficult knowing that I wouldn’t be around to help rebuild. That was personally challenging for me, to continue fighting and engaging when I knew it would be time to pass the baton in a month or two.
During executive session, there are things that only you and the curators knew. Was it hard to not be able to tell friends, family or anyone else this information?

Absolutely. I think that is probably one of the biggest burdens that comes with the position. Any one small thing is fine, but it gets to be cumulative. It certainly was a great challenge. We would use each other as sounding boards, but there are times when you just really want to talk something through with someone who has a fresh perspective. But it’s so important to protect the confidentiality of executive session, because your decision-making ability is compromised if you’re racing against the clock. That’s difficult, but I found that individual curators were incredibly encouraging and supportive of me personally. People would always accept my call if I needed to talk something through.

Did you ever feel left out of conversations among the curators?

Yes, but I think it was an accident. The nature of the role involves a lot of one-on-one phone calls, which can make it difficult to stay up to speed. There were times when I felt like I was the last person to know things, but I never felt that it was intentional. In hindsight, it was never detrimental. I think it might be different if the student had a vote, but who knows.

How do you think the role would be different if the student were able to vote?

I don’t think it would be different in terms of student engagement. As the student representative, you know you’re the only student at the table. You’re eager to pay attention and ask questions to make sure that the student perspective is heard when it needs to be.

Having a vote might have changed my approach with getting things done. Currently, the student representative has a lot of ability to influence decision-making, but it’s entirely based on the power of persuasion. Persuasion is still important if you have a vote, but your final opinion does not go on record for action items. I suppose that the student representative could proactively use time at the end of open discussions to say “I would vote yes/no on this”, but that was not my style. There were a number of times when I would have liked to go on record by voting on an action item. There were also times when not having a vote was preferable. If I had a vote, I might have abstained from these items. At the end of the day when board meetings concluded, I had to return to my campus and make progress toward my degree. While it would be unfair, there is a risk that a voting student representative could face backlash from faculty or administrators during difficult times if the board takes actions that upset individuals who have power over a student’s degree progress.

Moving forward, do you think there’s hope for the UM System’s relationship with the Missouri legislature?

I’m very optimistic. I know that a number of people are working very hard to repair these relationships. Members of the General Assembly only have so many resources to give out, and there’s always going to be conflict over how these funds should be allocated. I will always say that an investment in education is a solid investment. I believe it’s important for individuals to reach out to their elected officials to help communicate the importance of funding higher
education. We can all do our part. It’s not only the responsibility of leaders at the university. Citizens of the state can also help repair the relationship by communicating how the university has impacted their lives for the better.

**How has your perception of the UM System changed after your time in the position?**

I learned so much about the university and the financial responsibilities that come along with steering such a large organization. For example, I learned about extension and MU Healthcare. I think I grew to have more compassion for people who work at the system level, because I think there are perceptions on individual campuses that the system is too big or that the system is interfering with campus operations. Coming from that and then getting to know people in the system personally, I think I have a more balanced perspective now. I deeply respect Interim President (Mike) Middleton. I had a good working relationship with President (Tim) Wolfe. Prior to taking the position, I had many misunderstandings about the roles and responsibilities of the president.

**Do you plan to be involved in anything related to the UM System in the future, such as lobbying?**

Absolutely. I think I need a little bit of a break to recharge and try to focus on school because it’s been difficult to ramp back up. I’m a believer in quality affordable public higher education. I think it’s a very important investment that our state should absolutely make. Anything that weakens public higher education has dramatic consequences on people’s lives in so many ways. I don’t know that I’m the right person to visit Jefferson City, but I’d like to continue serving, giving back and playing my part, because I think every alumni has the responsibility to do their part.

### MUPD explains MU Alert’s protocol

A communications operator and an alert supervisor are at the MUPD office 24/7 to take in, evaluate and respond to threats when necessary.

**An MU Alert message reporting gunfire near campus Sunday night was sent to students, faculty and staff.** The alert was later clarified as firework blasts.

Maj. Scott Richardson, MU Police Department spokesperson, said MUPD received three different calls around 11:50 p.m. about possible shots fired and no indication of seeing fireworks. The tips went through the communications operator, and an alert was approved by a supervisor and sent out at 11:58 p.m.
After the text alert was sent, the office received a call confirming a fireworks sighting. MU Alert received some criticism for their approach.

This is the third MU Alert of the semester relating to gunfire.

Here’s an overview of how the MU Alert system receives information, processes it, and decides to alert students, faculty and staff:

- MUPD takes in calls and online threat tips.
- A communications operator, on hand 24/7, compiles incoming information.
- A supervisor assesses information and instructs the operator to send out one of 10 to 12 alert templates through an appropriate communication tool. These include phone calls, text messages and campus computer desktop notifications. According to the MU Alert website, messages are not sent when an immediate danger is isolated to one location. MU generally restricts campus-wide alerts to a threat impacting the entire campus or the location of the threat cannot be pinpointed.

According to the MU Alert website, its goal is to reach students and staff quickly, while being selective in order to avoid over-notification or spreading partial information.

“Our overall (vision for campus safety) is to support a safe learning environment for students, and provide information about threats on and near campus,” Richardson said.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Concerned Student 1950 documentary released to global audience**

CECILIA SALOMONE, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The story of Concerned Student 1950, as filmed by three MU documentary journalism students, can now be seen around the world for free.

Commissioned by Field of Vision, the visual journalism branch of acclaimed news website The Intercept, "Concerned Student 1950" made its online debut Tuesday afternoon on the Field of Vision website.
Directed by juniors Varun Bajaj, Adam Dietrich and Kellan Marvin, the 30-minute film was first shown at the True/False Film Fest on March 5. The film, a last-minute addition to the festival, began at 11:30 p.m. and was sold out.

The students began filming on Nov. 2, when Jonathan Butler of Concerned Student 1950 announced he was going on a hunger strike until Tim Wolfe, president of the University of Missouri System, resigned.

When the Missouri football team decided to go on strike six days later in solidarity with Concerned Student 1950, Bajaj said Field of Vision co-founder A.J. Schnack, who graduated from the Missouri School of Journalism in 1990, contacted the students’ professor, Robert Greene of the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at MU.

Schnack asked Greene if he would be interested in making a film about the protests; Greene told him his students were already on the case.

Schnack said his response was immediate: "When can I see something?"

The students filmed for 13 days. Schnack said Field of Vision first saw footage a week or two after Wolfe resigned. He said not only did the students present Field of Vision with enough footage for a film, but it was of "high quality and incredible access" and showed events from multiple perspectives.

"It was important to us because they had all of the stories in their film," Schnack said. "It was a great opportunity for us, too. ... Even though they’re first-time filmmakers, they were really capturing something that no one else was able to have access to."

Bajaj said the goal of Field of Vision, to have immediacy in documentary, was something the student filmmakers felt was a good fit for their film, which was capturing breaking news in real time.
Bajaj said that Field of Vision has distribution rights for its edited version, with sound mixing and color correcting, and that the students still own the copyright for the footage.

The Intercept, Field of Vision's parent company, is an online publication launched in February 2014 whose mission is to "provide aggressive and independent adversarial journalism across a wide range of issues." In March 2014, the website published Edward Snowden's leaked documents about the National Security Agency and has also reported on American drone strikes.

Stacey Woelfel, director of the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism, called the collaboration an enormous accomplishment — and not just because of Field of Vision's reputation.

"Field of Vision hit the scene last year as something big in the documentary and journalism world," Woelfel said. "They're putting what’s seen as valuable content for people online to see for free."

"It's an amazing spot for student work to be," he said.

Now that their film has wide exposure, Bajaj said he hopes it will lead to solutions both at MU and other colleges.

He said in his opinion, once the dust settled at MU, national coverage focused on "side narratives" like the Melissa Click controversy. Bajaj wants the film to show what he feels is most important — the safety of students of color at MU.

Concerned Student 1950 was formed after several incidents involving racial slurs and discrimination at MU. The group's name comes from the year the first black student was admitted to MU.

"We need to have this conversation about why this happened in the first place and to make sure it never happens again," Bajaj said. "There are solutions, and not talking about it isn't a solution."
In an essay posted Tuesday on The Intercept website, co-founder Glenn Greenwald said the film "will most certainly cause a re-evaluation of what you believe you know about this protest and similar ones like it on campus. It underscores how partial and misleading national media coverage can be."

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**In Explaining Confederate Symbols, Colleges Struggle to Summarize History**

*No MU Mention*

In a prominent spot on the University of Mississippi campus stands a statue of a nameless Confederate soldier. Erected in 1906, it was one of many unveiled across the South as a generation of Confederate veterans reached old age, says Andrew P. Mullins Jr., an associate professor of education and former chief of staff to the chancellor.

Mr. Mullins, who has worked at the university for decades, has spent a lot of time thinking about the history of the statue over the past several months. In 2014 several racist incidents at the university — including the appearance of a noose on a statue of the institution’s first black student, James Meredith — prompted the creation of a committee to analyze Confederate symbols on the campus. In the fall, as renewed cries from students surfaced to demand such symbols’ removal, the committee, which includes Mr. Mullins and several others, began drafting language to put the Confederate statue in historical context.

*Across the country, and the South especially, colleges and universities are coming to terms with their historical ties to the Confederacy, and how those ties are*
honored through monuments, statues, and building names. In fielding students’ calls to remove such symbols, many colleges have promised to add much-needed context — to turn what protesters see as a celebration of white supremacy into an honest historical snapshot.

The plaque, which will be placed directly in front of the statue, describes when the statue was built and by whom, as well as its role in a historical event in 1962, when a mob rallied there to prevent Mr. Meredith (whose statue now stands just across from the Confederate soldier) from entering the campus. The plaque concludes: "This historic structure is a reminder of the university’s past and of its current and ongoing commitment to open its hallowed halls to all who seek truth and knowledge and wisdom."

But not everyone agrees with those words. Students in the university's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will present a counter narrative to administrators on Thursday, part of which will read, "While the current university creed advocates respect for and the dignity of all persons, this historic structure is a reminder of the central role of white supremacy in the history of the University of Mississippi and the state of Mississippi."

The story continues: http://chronicle.com/article/In-Explaining-Confederate/235802