Students Should Feel Like ‘Equal Partners,’ Says Missouri’s First Chief Diversity Officer

As the University of Missouri system’s first chief diversity officer, Kevin G. McDonald faces a daunting task: setting the diversity agenda at an institution that has recently faced stinging criticism from minority students for what they see as a systemic failure to adequately support them.

With the hire of Mr. McDonald on Wednesday, the Missouri system took one of its most significant steps since protests and racial tensions erupted last fall on its flagship campus, in Columbia.

For the past six years, Mr. McDonald has been vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at the Rochester Institute of Technology, in New York. He previously spent five years in a similar role at Virginia Tech and has worked on college campuses for nearly two decades. He holds a doctorate in higher-education leadership from the University of Rochester and a law degree from Ohio State University.

The new diversity chief, who takes office on June 1, will be under immense pressure to be visible and transparent, and to bring about change quickly in a setting — academe — where change is often slow. But Mr. McDonald says he’s looking forward to the challenges ahead.

Conflict resolution, consensus-building, and interpersonal communication, he says, are some of his biggest strengths. He also hopes to use his system-level position to
spur substantive conversations about race on each of the four Missouri campuses. That might include supporting faculty members who want to make their curricula more inclusive or to tackle diversity-related research projects, he says.

The Chronicle spoke with Mr. McDonald about how he’ll approach race relations, faculty diversity, and other issues at Missouri. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Q. When you observed the protests at Missouri and elsewhere last fall, what was your reaction?

A. I wasn’t surprised. One thing that was interesting in the aftermath — a survey came out suggesting that one in every 10 high-school graduates believes that they’re going to be involved in activism when they go to college. So this is not something that is a one and done.

Much of our history and our nation is defined by levels of social movements. I think Missouri students feel very empowered and had gotten to a point — as they relayed to me during my visit there — where they’d really been trying to have these conversations for a long period of time. So dialogue is important, but then not being mired in rhetoric and identifying important action items moving forward is going to be critical for us as a system.

Q. You mentioned that you’d already gotten a chance to meet with Missouri students. What did you hear from them?

A. There’s a level of skepticism. This role represents a part of an administration, a system, a structure that some students have been skeptical about. But I think there are students who are really at a stage of wanting to engage with the administration at
meaningful levels. There have been meetings that have been ongoing even prior to my appointment.

I think we really need to engage students so that they feel like they’re equal partners in this work. Moving forward with diversity and inclusion isn’t something where you sit high and direct low.

Q. Improved faculty diversity has been one of the students’ most adamant demands. Missouri’s flagship in particular has struggled to retain minority professors. How might you help remedy that?

A. Part of it is going to be identifying what, historically, have been the issues that have impacted the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. There are stories there.

Also, there’s been research that’s looked at faculty of color and tenure, and talked about notions of climate, culture, and collegiality. Is that something that’s important here? Are there other areas of support that could be provided — is there a need to have more senior faculty who come in, or more junior faculty in clusters? Are there opportunities to have more visiting scholars, or more postdoc positions that can be supported and grow into full faculty?

Q. Missouri’s Board of Curators issued a series of recommendations last fall after the protests. At the system level, they include developing a diversity- and inclusion-education program for the board and administrative leaders, as well as broader training for faculty and staff members. Will you be overseeing that?

A. I don’t know. But I do think it’s important to have increased levels of multicultural competency and understanding about where diversity and inclusion efforts fit. For so long we talked about diversity as an access issue. Now there’s more understanding
that it has a greater connection to other areas of our organization. So what does that mean for administrators? Are we committing ourselves to integrating the work into our daily lives?

Q. A lot of the debate at Missouri recently has centered on whether the protesters and those who support them are threatening free speech by demanding safe spaces and, in some cases, trying to keep out opposing viewpoints and members of the news media. Where do you stand in that debate?

A. In the academy, we need to at least have safe spaces for people to express themselves. We build ourselves on important discourse, and sometimes these conversations are hard. I don’t know about keeping anyone out or in. But we need to have spaces on our campuses to allow for these important conversations to take place.

Quite honestly, if the media is a part of that, I don’t take any issue with that — sharing the information and getting it out there. I think our academic institutions are founded on an opportunity to engage in that way, and we definitely shouldn’t alter that.

Q. Missouri’s board has no nonwhite members after a pair of recent resignations. Do you think the board can effectively manage the system in the aftermath of racial unrest without any diversity on the board itself?

A. It’s an important question. But I’m confident that the membership that remains has a diversity lens. They clearly understood the importance of having a role like the one that I’ll be walking into and the importance of the impact that the protests have had. I think with that there’s a level of diversity awareness that will have to be inextricably bound to the search process for the new president and to any role that I can play in supporting their efforts.
Similar colleges. Similar population of black students. So why the disparate graduation rates?

MU Mention Page 3

Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Purdue University share a few things in common. They have roughly the same size student body, similar admission requirements and a similar percentage of black students. Yet in the decade ending 2013, graduation rates for African Americans at Rutgers climbed about 12 percentage points, while they slipped five points at Purdue.

A new report from Education Trust suggests that such divergent trends at comparable universities prove that what schools do to serve black students plays a pivotal role in their achievement. Schools that make a concerted effort to provide academic and financial support, as well as create a welcoming environment for African Americans are having the greatest success in helping them earn degrees.

As more college students take on debt to finance their education, getting them to the finish line is critical. College graduates enjoy higher wages and lower unemployment rates, giving them a fighting chance of repaying student loans. And with four out of five black students borrowing for college, ensuring that they graduate could mean the difference between promoting economic mobility and exacerbating the racial wealth gap.

When presidents and provosts really prioritize equity and student success for all students, they tend to have a better ability to move the needle,” said Andrew Howard Nichols, director of higher education research at Education Trust, who co-authored the report. “It starts with a specific mindset. Then you get into mining your data to figure out what the problems may be. And then from there, you can figure out what types of adjustments you need to make in terms of the curriculum, financial aid or who teaches what.”

The findings are part of a broader look at racial disparities in college completion rates. Although more than two-thirds of public four-year universities and colleges have raised overall graduation rates, the gains have had minimal effect narrowing long-standing gaps in outcomes between black and white students. Graduation rates for full-time white students at these schools increased 5.3 percent between 2003 and 2013, but only 2.1 percent for full-time black students. The data does not include part-time or transfer students, just first-time attendees. But considering that those students tend to be most academically prepared, there is even greater cause for concern, Nichols said.
Researchers at Education Trust zeroed in on 232 public universities that improved completion rates during that decade and found slightly better results, with rates increasing 4.4 percent for black students, compared with 5.6 percent for whites. While the pace of progress is worrisome, researchers say the number of schools narrowing graduation gaps between the two groups is encouraging.

To explain away graduation disparities, college officials often point a finger at students, saying they are ill prepared for the rigors of academia, Nichols said. But a closer examination of similarly situated schools raises questions about the amount of effort universities are dedicating to bridging the graduation gap.

At Rutgers-New Brunswick, the Paul Robeson Cultural Center connects black students with academic advising, mentoring programs and cultural events to keep them engaged in school, said James Whitney, the school’s assistant vice chancellor. Two years ago, the university created an office of student access and educational equity to pull together state and federal initiatives to support at-risk students. Out of that office, the university runs programs to help first-generation college students navigate the university.

“We’ve improved our strategy, our coordination of services directed at first-generation and low-income students, who are often African American,” Whitney said. “No one size fits all, so as an institution you have to think about what are the needs of a community and set up a variety of programs to help the different constituencies within that group so no one feels left out.”

For its part, Purdue has recognized the need to dedicate more resources to lifting completion rates for its black students. As a show of good faith, the school in 2014 expanded the role of its provost, Debasish Dutta, to include chief diversity officer, a distinction that means he must ensure that diversity and inclusion are woven into the academic and cultural fabric of the university.

“The report was not surprising to me,” Dutta said. After arriving at Purdue, Dutta said, he understood that there was work to be done on the diversity front. “I discussed it with the board of trustees and the president, who were all very supportive, and we made changes.”

Since he took office, the school has awarded more than $1 million to 11 project teams across the campus to improve recruitment, retention and the climate for students and faculty of color. He has also created a university-wide advisory committee on diversity and is exploring ways to make curriculum at Purdue more diverse and inclusive.

“We’ve made significant changes but also understand that it’s an effort that will take time,” Dutta said. “It is a fairly comprehensive effort, and I’m hoping we will see results in the next three years.”

While creating a culture of academic and social inclusion has proved key to student success for some universities, others, such as North Carolina State University, are mining data to identify students who are most at risk of falling through the cracks.
Administrators at N.C. State found that students teetering on the edge of dropping out were mostly under financial, not academic, strain, so the school provided them with more institutional aid, a move that has disproportionately affected black students, according to Chancellor Randy Woodson. He said the university is also using data to track academic performance and intervene when students start falling behind.

“These tools have helped us identify struggling students early on, and it’s paid off in terms of their success,” he said. “It has improved all graduation rates but has had a more significant affect on under-represented groups.”

Between 2003 and 2013, graduation rates for black students at N.C. State climbed about 12 percentage points, reaching 64.2 percent. Those gains put black graduates within 10 points of their white peers, compared with 17 points in 2003.

**Outcomes were remarkably different at the University of Missouri in Columbia, a school whose admission standards and black student population largely mirror N.C. State’s.**

Graduation rates for black students at Mizzou barely budged in the decade ending 2013 and actually slipped a little less than a percentage point, to 56.8 percent. Yet completion rates for white students rose by 3 points, to 71.4 percent, widening the gap between the two groups.

Black student activists at Mizzou raised concerns about the disparities on campus in the fall, calling on the administration to, among other things, develop a plan to increase retention and graduation rates for students of color.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies at Mizzou, said the university had been looking into disparities on campus before students began protesting. Over the summer, Mizzou hired a new director for academic retention to focus on mentoring, financial assistance and helping students transition from high school to college.

“The mentoring, in particular, is building on successful programs we’ve had,” Spain said. “Mizzou Black Men’s initiative, for example, has been very successful at helping African-American young men have higher rates of success, so we’re taking models that have worked and expand [them].”

Spain suspects that the sluggish graduation rates identified by Education Trust were partly due to students leaving because of financial hardships during the economic crisis. Mizzou, he said, has since developed financial literacy programs to help students manage their resources.

**MISSOURIAN**

MU faculty and administrators delve into budget issues, enrollment decreases
COLUMBIA — **MU administrators and faculty spent much of the spring general faculty meeting Wednesday discussing budget cuts and enrollment numbers for fall 2016.**

The meeting featured updates from administrators and a chance for faculty to ask questions.

**Budget Update**

Rhonda Gibler, MU’s vice chancellor for finance, emphasized the steady decrease in the share of funding for the university that the state provides.

Gibler said the university has made up the state funding decrease with an increase in the number of students, and hence the amount of tuition payments it receives. However, there is a projected decrease of 1,500 students for next year.

She said forums would be held to discuss the budget. The dates and format of the forums have not yet been announced, but each forum will be an hour and a half.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said that the only solution is to cut expenditures and increase revenue, possibly by increasing the price of tuition. He said that student tuition makes up 80 percent of MU's revenue.

Currently, Missouri law caps the university's ability to increase resident tuition based on the Consumer Price Index, which the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics defines as "a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services."

Based on this figure, MU is only allowed to increase the resident undergraduate tuition by 0.7 percent, Gibler said.

She added that increasing tuition can be part of the solution, but it is not the only way or the best approach.
Tuition rates are often set at the January or February Board of Curators meeting, she said.

"This year, with everything that's been happening, we as (the UM) system have determined to put off making that final decision a little later in the process," Gibler said.

Foley also said job cuts will be part of the fix. If budget decreases were only going to affect the university for one year, deficits could be covered by the university's reserves, Foley said.

Legislators in Jefferson City haven't realized the effects of the budget cuts on the whole state, he said.

Foley and Gibler answered questions about the money the university receives from the athletics department. The athletics department has a separate budget, Foley said.

Gibler said the athletics department is self-funding and is charged an overhead. It also pays the university for the scholarships it gives.

Conversations about ways the athletics department can support the campus have occurred, Gibler said. However, the department is covering exit costs from the departure from the Big 12 conference. Essentially, athletics has no extra funds.

"Today, in this current crisis, there isn't money to go take," she said.

**Drop in Enrollment**

The expected decrease in enrollment of about 1,500 students is an estimate, Foley said.

Foley said enrollment was projected to be down by 800 to 900 in the fall due to a drop in the number of Missouri high school students and to some Illinois colleges changing their entrance standards, causing a decrease influx of students from Illinois. This drop was expected, he said.

On March 10, Interim Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Barbara Rupp said the projected enrollment drop responded to a lower number of Missouri high school graduates.
But the protests at MU against racism also played a role. Foley said the remaining decrease in enrollment is due to "a combination of the media narrative" and "the politics of the situation."

"Part of what we have to change is the perception of the university," he said.

To change the narrative, Foley said he has added more recruiters and has reached out to deans and faculty members to help with recruitment. The goal is to communicate positive stories about the university.

Gibler noted that the composition of the estimated enrollment decrease is also important. The university loses more money for each non-resident student lost than it does for in-state students. Gibler said the projected loss includes more non-residents.

Foley emphasized that the effects of the projected decrease in the size of the first-year class would persist for four years.

Diversity initiatives

Interim Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Chuck Henson and Foley addressed concerns about actions the university is taking to increase diversity.

Henson gave updated attendees on recently implemented initiatives such as the Creating a Better Mizzou Project and a lecture series about African Americans' lives in Missouri. He also announced that a similar series on Native Americans is in the works.

Foley said other initiatives he would like to take include recruiting more postdoctoral and graduate students of color, creating an ACT and SAT prep program for students who don't have access to that help and working on alternative entrance programs, particularly for students interested in the arts.
The University of Missouri has hired its first ever chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer, a position that was promised in November when the Columbia campus was embroiled in discord over a series of racist incidents.

At the time, the university's Board of Curators promised a string of coming changes centered on making the four campuses in Columbia, St. Louis, Kansas City and Rolla more welcoming for minorities.

Some students at the University of Missouri-Columbia have complained that they've been subjected to numerous instances of racial hostility and don't feel welcome on campus.

Wednesday morning, the university's interim President, Michael Middleton, announced the hiring of Kevin McDonald to lead the system's diversity initiatives. The hiring becomes official June 1.

McDonald previously worked as the vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York. Before that, he was vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech.

In Columbia, McDonald will be in charge of creating policies to identify and address systemic issues related to diversity. He will also serve as an adviser to the UM system president.

“Inclusion is vital to the success of all our students, staff and faculty,” Middleton said. “The UM System will benefit immensely from his experience as he plans to foster more inclusive campus environments that embody a true culture of respect.”
University of Missouri announces new diversity official

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri has named a diversity official to help the four-campus system recover from racial protests at the flagship campus in Columbia.

The school announced Wednesday that Kevin McDonald has been tapped to serve as the first ever chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer. President Michael Middleton said McDonald would work to "foster more inclusive campus environments."

The creation of the position is one of several initiatives undertaken to address last fall's racial turmoil.

McDonald previously served as the vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at the Rochester Institution of Technology. He also has worked at Virginia Tech, John Hopkins University and University of Maryland in College Park after working for the U.S. Department of Justice early in his career.

McDonald's starting salary is $235,000.

University of Missouri hires system diversity officer
Kevin McDonald, the new chief diversity officer for the University of Missouri System, said during a visit to Columbia last month that conflict resolution is a key skill for the job.

And with conflict over racial issues on the Columbia campus sparking a national debate, how McDonald approaches his new position will be scrutinized both inside and outside the university. UM officials announced the decision to pick McDonald, vice president for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology, Wednesday morning.

“I think having the ability to navigate conflict, to be able to engage when issues of conflict arise, is an important leadership skill for everyone,” McDonald said.

Interim President Mike Middleton called McDonald a “perfect fit” in a news release, citing his leadership in diversity and inclusion efforts at other universities.

“Inclusion is vital to the success of all our students, staff and faculty,” Middleton said. “The UM System will benefit immensely from his experience as he plans to foster more inclusive campus environments that embody a true culture of respect.”

McDonald was chosen over two other candidates: Paulette Granberry Russell of Michigan State University; and G. Christine Taylor, former vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at Purdue University. McDonald will start June 1, and his salary will be $235,000 per year, the news release said.

“I think, quite honestly, whoever the system had chosen would do a great job,” McDonald said. “I am grateful for the opportunity to roll up my sleeves, work with my colleagues and move diversity forward.”

The Board of Curators voted in November to create the new position in response to the Concerned Student 1950 protests that led to the resignation of President Tim Wolfe. The group, named for the year that the first black student enrolled at the university, demanded more black faculty, a strategic plan to increase retention rates for minority students, diversity training and curriculum, and shared governance of students, faculty and staff.

The system diversity officer job was one of eight initiatives approved by the board to address those demands. The initiatives, the news release about McDonald said, include reviewing organization policies as part of a diversity audit, establishing a systemwide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force and more support for hiring and retaining diverse faculty and staff.

While the Columbia campus faces legislative budget cuts and a sharp drop in enrollment, McDonald said he was assured that his office will have the resources to implement the initiatives.
The student body throughout the four-campus system has become more diverse in recent years. On the Columbia campus, the student body was 76 percent white in fall 2015 and 7.2 percent black. Ten years ago, the campus was 80 percent white and 5.5 percent black.

On the two urban campuses, the student body is more diverse. At UMKC, blacks make up 10.3 percent of enrollment and whites are 59.5 percent of the student body for the current semester. At UMSL, black enrollment has increased from 15.9 percent of students in 2007 to 16.8 percent this year, with total nonwhite enrollment increasing from 27 percent to 33.2 percent.

At Missouri University of Science and Technology, black enrollment fell to 3.6 percent in the current year from 5 percent in the 2010-11 school year. The Rolla campus saw an increase in nonblack minority enrollment over the same period as the percentage of white students fell to 77.3 percent from 79.8 percent.

McDonald holds a doctorate in higher education leadership from the University of Rochester and a law degree from Ohio State University. Before taking his current job in 2010, McDonald was vice president for equity and inclusion from 2007 to 2010 at Virginia Tech and director of the Office for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action from 2005 to 2007.

**MISSOURIAN**

**UM System hires Kevin McDonald as first chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer**

ELISE SCHMELZER AND ERIKA STARK, 23 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — More than four months after announcing the creation of the new role, the UM System announced its first chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer Wednesday.

Beginning June 1, Kevin McDonald will work to identify organizational and systemic issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the university system's areas of humans resources, finances and academic affairs, according to a news release from the UM System. He will advise the UM System president and work with other system leadership to develop programs for lasting institutional changes.
"As one of the state's largest employers and the academic home to nearly 78,000 students, it is critical that the UM System prioritize its diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to align with and to keep abreast of best practices and current trends across all industries," Interim UM System President Mike Middleton said in the news release. "In doing this, we have a real opportunity to serve as a national leader among higher education institutions."

The UM System Board of Curators created the new position on Nov. 9 in response to student protests about racism and racial inequality at MU. The new position was one of several initiatives announced immediately after the resignation of former UM System President Tim Wolfe.

McDonald and two other candidates for the job, Paulette Granberry Russell and G. Christine Taylor, visited MU in February. During his visit on Feb. 11, McDonald said his interest in the job was sparked by Concerned Student 1950's efforts to improve diversity and inclusion on campus.

Reached at his office at the Rochester Institution of Technology where he's the vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion, Mc Donald said he would not arrive at MU with a "cookie-cutter" approach to the job. He said he'd first need to understand the university's history and what policies have been tried unsuccessfully before proposing new approaches.

"Working collaboratively with staff, faculty and students is going to be extremely important," he said.

McDonald previously worked as vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech and in various roles at John Hopkins University, University of Maryland in College Park, Network Solutions Inc. and the U.S. Department of Justice.

McDonald earned his doctoral degree in higher education leadership from the University of Rochester and a law degree at Ohio State University. He also has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Andrews University.
"Dr. McDonald's extensive background and expertise and inclusion efforts, specifically across the higher education realms, makes him the perfect fit for this crucial role," Middleton said in the release. "Inclusion is vital to the success of all our students, staff and faculty. The UM System will benefit immensely from his experience as he plans to foster more inclusive campus environments that embody a true culture of respect."

**UM System announces first-ever chief diversity officer**

Dr. Kevin McDonald previously served as vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Kevin McDonald is the UM System’s first chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer and will begin his role June 1, interim UM System President Mike Middleton announced Wednesday.

McDonald’s hiring is part of a series of initiatives the UM System put forth after a historic fall that included the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. Other initiatives include taking a review and diversity audit of the system’s policies relating to staff and student conduct and creating a task force to further inclusion and diversity for the system’s almost 78,000 students. The task force initiative is already underway.

“Dr. McDonald’s extensive background and expertise in diversity and inclusion efforts, specifically across the higher education realm, makes him the perfect fit for this crucial role,” Middleton said in a news release. “Inclusion is vital to the success of all our students, staff and faculty. The UM System will benefit immensely from his experience as he plans to foster more inclusive campus environments that embody a true culture of respect.”

According to the release, McDonald will be working with UM System departments including human resources, finance and academic affairs to ensure diversity, inclusion and equity among the entire system. He will also serve as an adviser to Middleton and other officers throughout the UM System, implementing diversity efforts and overseeing collaborative projects to create long lasting institutional changes. McDonald’s starting salary is $235,000.

McDonald previously served as vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology. He also served as vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech and in compliance roles at John Hopkins University and University of Maryland-
College Park, after working for Network Solutions, Inc. and the U.S. Department of Justice early in his career.

When he visited campus in February, McDonald spoke to students at a public forum held in the Old Alumni Center as part of the selection process. He discussed meeting the demands of Concerned Student 1950 with a strategic plan, resources and patience. He also said he would take into consideration the demands issued by the Legion of Black Collegians in 1969.

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**UM system announces first ever Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **University of Missouri System Interim President Michael Middleton announced the hiring of Dr. Kevin McDonald as the UM System's first ever Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (CDO) Wednesday.**

The appointment of this position, effective June 1, meets one of the eight initiatives announced by the UM Board of Curators in November.

“Dr. McDonald’s extensive background and expertise in diversity and inclusion efforts, specifically across the higher education realm, makes him the perfect fit for this crucial role,” Middleton said. “Inclusion is vital to the success of all our students, staff and faculty. The UM System will benefit immensely from his experience as he plans to foster more inclusive campus environments that embody a true culture of respect.”

The CDO appointment was one of several initiatives prioritized by the Board of Curators to address diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the university system. These initiatives include conducting a full review of organizational policies in conjunction with a diversity audit, establishing a systemwide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force to develop long- and short-term plans and metrics, and providing support for the hiring and retention of diverse faculty and staff. This appointment will support these initiatives systemwide and establish accountability and metrics.

“As one of the state’s largest employers and the academic home to nearly 78,000 students, it is critical that the UM System prioritize its diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to align with and to keep abreast of best practices and current trends across all industries. In doing this, we have a
real opportunity to serve as a national leader among higher education institutions,” Middleton said.

As UM System CDO, McDonald will work to identify and address organizational and systemic issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion within the larger context of the university enterprise. This includes implementing policies and best practices in operational areas including human resources, finance and academic affairs. He will serve as an adviser to the UM System president and general officers to implement diversity efforts with leaders across the system, oversee collaborative projects with the four campuses and health care, and develop programs to affect lasting institutional changes. McDonald’s starting salary is $235,000.

Prior to this role, McDonald served as the vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institution of Technology (RIT) where he committed himself to making excellence inclusive in every aspect of organizational functioning. Previously, he was vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech where he developed a significant track record of contributions toward the university’s equity, diversity and inclusion goals. He has also served in compliance roles at John Hopkins University and University of Maryland in College Park after working for Network Solutions, Inc. and the US Department of Justice early in his career.

McDonald received his doctoral degree in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Rochester and holds a juris doctor from The Ohio State University as well as a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Andrews University. He also holds certifications with the Cornell Diversity & Inclusion Studies Program and is a certified mediator in three primary mediation models.

The maneater

College of Arts and Science approves diversity requirement

The vote for a diversity course requirement passed with 75 percent of support from faculty who voted.

In 1990, 200 students organized a town meeting at Jesse Auditorium to talk about racism on campus. The two-hour meeting mainly focused on multiculturalism and the requirement of every student to take a minimum of one multicultural class, according to a news release.

Over two decades later, this plan is coming to fruition.

According to the release, students in the MU College of Arts and Science are required to take three credit hours from diversity intensive courses or “DI,” a decision that was approved by 75 percent of the tenured and non-tenured faculty who voted on the measure. Fifty-two percent voted.
“It is important to note that this is not something that we whipped up in response to the events of last fall or the student protests,” said Elisa Glick, an associate professor of English and Women’s and Gender Studies and Arts and Science Diversity Committee chairwoman, in the news release. “The proposal builds on decades of student activism and the work of previous diversity committees. I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge the work in particular of April Langley and Roger Worthington, whose campus-wide diversity proposal we drew from in crafting our proposal.”

The diversity intensive courses will follow the guidelines set forth by Faculty Council’s Diversity Enhancement Committee last November. The classes will understand differing social groups and explore at least one form of social inequality including class, race, age, ethnicity, disabilities, gender, sexuality, veterans, rural and urban communities, economic and/or resource disparities, indigenous culture, etc.

The College of Arts and Science is wanting this requirement to “serve as a model” for MU’s campus.

“This requirement won’t take care of that in any sort of comprehensive way, but I think it’s one step towards that, and our hope is that it’s a starting point — an introduction for students because diversity is not checking a box, diversity education is a process,” Glick said in the release. “We see this requirement as a starting point for students to develop a more nuanced and diverse educational experience.”

MISSOURIAN

Sen. Claire McCaskill calls for loan refinancing, transparency

ERIKA STARK, 11 hrs ago

ASHLAND — In a roundtable with Boone County parents, students and educators, U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., addressed Wednesday what she called a "growing crisis in our country:" the ever-increasing amount of student loan debt and the skyrocketing cost of higher education.

McCaskill is traveling across Missouri as part of her "College Affordability Tour." At the discussion Wednesday, which took place at Southern Boone County Elementary School in
Ashland, she asked Boone County constituents about their main concerns related to higher
education.

She also called for the refinancing of student loans and for increased financial transparency by
higher education institutions. Colleges and universities should disclose how they're spending
their money, she said. McCaskill also responded to proposed funding cuts to MU and the
University of Missouri System.

**Refinancing student loans**

McCaskill said it should be a priority to pass legislation that would allow people with student
debt to refinance their loans at lower interest rates.

"I don't think people realize how many parents have student loans they're paying while they're
trying to help educate their children," McCaskill said.

The current interest rate for direct subsidized loans — which are primarily taken out by
undergraduates — is 4.29 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Direct plus
loans, primarily taken out by parents, graduate and professional students, carry an interest rate of
up to 6.84 percent.

McCaskill said the interest payments are giving excess profit to private lenders, but also that
some of the payments are going "unconscionably" to the federal government.

Because of this, McCaskill said that refinancing the interest rates wouldn't help the process of
balancing the United States deficit, but that she thinks it's "immoral that we're charging above-
market interest rates for money that comes to the government."

"The idea that we're preventing people from accessing the advantages of low interest rates right
now — this makes a big difference in people's monthly budgets," McCaskill said. "I think
refinancing the loans is a really simple proposal we can do at the federal level to make a real
difference."
To alleviate the costs of higher education, McCaskill also suggested streamlining the process of applying for FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

**Creating transparency**

McCaskill said she had to "give props" to the Missouri legislature for the implementation of the A+ Scholarship Program, which gives students the opportunity to attend two years of community college for free. Overall, however, the country hasn't yet seen the end of the rise of tuition costs.

"We've got to have more transparency," McCaskill said. "Schools are going to have to be a lot more obvious about where they're spending their money, and I think they have to be more transparent about what the education actually costs."

**Funding cuts to MU**

In response to campus unrest against racism at MU this academic year, the Missouri House of Representatives cut funding for the UM System by $7.6 million, according to previous Missourian reporting. The Senate has yet to approve the cuts.

McCaskill said she doesn't get it.

"Right now, Missouri funds higher education 20 percent below the national average," McCaskill said. "If I was a member of the Missouri legislature, I'd be worried about the fact that we are making it harder and harder for young people to get an education in this state because of a lack of funding coming from Jefferson City."
Missouri remembers the story of a Callaway County slave

COLUMBIA – The walls of Jesse Hall rang with the sounds of one Missouri slave’s story Wednesday night.

Dr. Martha S. Jones, a professor from the University of Michigan, gave a lecture about a slave named Celia, who was purchased at age 14 in Fulton. She said Celia was sexually assaulted for five years by her slave owner and killed him in self defense at age 19 after having two of his children.

“It gives more of a historical background for us,” audience member Susan John said. "Just the fact that it happened in Missouri itself is just kind of more relevant."

Celia was prosecuted for murder in the court case The State of Missouri v. Celia, A Slave, and she was found guilty of murder and executed in December 1855. Jones said one of her goals is to get Celia exonerated because judicial justice for slaves is still relevant today.

“My talk is deeply relevant to the way we understand race and race relations in Missouri,” Jones said.

She used the hashtag #SayHerName to get the audience talking about Celia’s slave experience. She said she borrowed the hashtag from the Black Lives Matter movement to put Celia’s life in a modern context.

“This is the first time I’m doing a public lecture on the subject of Celia,” she said. “Celia is one of the early iterations of the juncture between race and state violence.”

The University of Missouri partnered with the State Historical Society of Missouri to host the lecture.
Jones is the author of "All bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African-American Public Culture, 1830-1900." She is also the co-director of the Celia Project, which researches the history of sexual violence, women and slavery in the United States.

**Intersection - Autism Mentor Program at MU**

Listen to story: [http://kbia.org/post/intersection-autism-mentor-program-mu](http://kbia.org/post/intersection-autism-mentor-program-mu)

On this week's Intersection, we are talking about autism spectrum disorder and the Autism Mentor Program at MU. Our guests are UM student Chris Brown and licensed psychologist and creator of the Autism Mentor Program Colton Miller. To learn more, listen to our entire show, or read and listen to portions of our interviews below.

**Title IX as a Threat to Academic Freedom**

**No MU Mention**

The Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights brought needed attention to the problem of sexual assault and harassment on college campuses with its [2011 letter](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/sex-assault.pdf) telling institutions to enforce the law. But in so doing, the office has created a slew of new problems with implications for free speech and academic freedom. That’s the premise of a lengthy new report from the American Association of University Professors.

Drawing on the history of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits gender discrimination in education, the report argues for a more judicious
application of the law across academe. The report is an attempt to reshape discussion of Title IX -- to put substantially more emphasis on due process.

Predictably for so controversial a topic, “The History, Uses and Abuses of Title IX” is earning praise and criticism from those on all sides of the argument.

“Success stories about compelling universities to address problems of sexual assault, such as those recounted by student campus groups, are matched by reported cases in which university administrators fail to punish gross and repeated sexual harassment, or where Title IX administrators from the [Education Department] and within the university overreach and seek to punish protected academic speech,” reads “Uses and Abuses.”

Such cases, it continues, “have compromised the realization of meaningful educational goals that enable the creation of sexually safe campuses; they also have upended due process rights and shared governance in unprecedented ways.”

“Uses and Abuses” was written by members of AAUP’s Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure and its Committee on Women in the Profession. It at no point suggests that Title IX hasn’t done good, or even more harm than good. But it argues that the law has endangered free speech, academic freedom and due process since at least 2011, with the publication of the Education Department’s Dear Colleague letter. While the line between potentially offensive speech and conduct had been blurring for years under various legal interpretations of Title IX, the paper says, the 2011 directive “conflates conduct and speech cases” by “broadly” defining sexual harassment under Title IX as “ranging from the most serious conduct of ‘sexual violence’ (including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery and sexual coercion) to speech-based hostile environment.”

AAUP also accuses OCR of granting Title IX more tentacles by saying that enforcement will focus not only on student-on-student sexual violence but all types of harassment cases -- including speech or conduct of a sexual or nonsexual but gender-based nature. The association notes that it in its letter, the department didn’t include any statement or warning about the “need to protect academic freedom and free speech in sexual harassment cases, including hostile environment allegations.” With that “conflation of sexual violence (which is also criminal conduct) and sexual harassment (including hostile environment based on speech), protections of academic freedom seem to have been relegated to the background or ignored completely.”

“Uses and Abuses” also accuses the Education Department of mandating a new evidentiary standard in that 2011 letter, telling universities to use a “preponderance of evidence” (more likely than not) assessment of Title IX cases instead of a higher, “clear
and convincing” standard. The shift, “which was in fact a substantive change, has produced significant and worrisome effects on the enforcement of Title IX,” AAUP says. The association also expresses concern over a separate OCR statement from 2001 that seems to favor the due process rights of the complainant over the respondent. The statement says, in part, that “schools should ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.”

Approximately 169 colleges and universities are now being investigated by the civil rights office for possible violations of Title IX. Documents from completed investigations reveal a “pattern” of offenses, from failing to respond to allegations of sexual assault until a formal complaint is filed to failure to consider whether there was a need for a broad response, even after complainants requested confidentiality or chose not to proceed with formal or informal resolution processes. In other words, the office may make a determination about a hostile environment even when there is insufficient evidence to support the underlying complaint.


THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

AAUP Slams Education Dept. and Colleges Over Title IX Enforcement

No MU Mention

Both the U.S. Education Department and college administrators are fighting sexual harassment and assault on campuses in ways that trample faculty members’ rights to academic freedom, due process, and shared governance, the American Association of University Professors argues in a draft report released on Thursday.
Moreover, the report warns, colleges’ current focus on eliminating sexual harassment may be contributing to other campus inequities, and may actually be hindering broader efforts to fight sexual discrimination under the gender-equity law known as Title IX.

The report says "the singular focus on sexual harassment has overshadowed issues of unequal pay, access, and representation throughout the university system." It raises concern that Title IX enforcement could "perpetuate race-based biases in the criminal-justice system, which disproportionately affect men who are racial minorities."

The AAUP has weighed in on colleges’ sexual-harassment policies before, emphasizing the need to protect faculty members’ due-process rights in statements issued in 1994 and 2012, and in a 2014 report. Its new draft report, released for public comment, says it focused on colleges’ compliance with the Education Department’s guidance on gender equity because "the uses and abuses of Title IX warrant an examination of their own."

The AAUP is releasing the report at a time when the Education Department’s Title IX enforcement has come under intense criticism from all sides of the debate over gender equity on the campus.

Some leading Republican members of Congress have accused the agency’s Office for Civil Rights of placing demands on colleges beyond those required by the law, and at least a few colleges have quietly pushed back against the department’s efforts at Title IX enforcement.

Meanwhile, some Democratic members of Congress have joined campus activists in pressuring the federal government and colleges to do more to protect women on campuses from sexual assault and various forms of sexual harassment, including that perpetrated on anonymous social media. The Office for Civil Rights, known as
OCR, has argued that it is aggressively enforcing Title IX without exceeding its powers.

The story continues: http://chronicle.com/article/AAUP-Slams-Education-Dept-and/235816

MISSOURIAN

COMMENTARY: Safe but shaken after terrorist attack in Brussels
RYAN COLLINS, 16 hrs ago

Ryan Collins is a journalism student at MU who is spending the semester in Brussels. He is working as an editorial researcher at Politico-EU with offices on the Rue de la Loi.

In the three months I’ve spent in Brussels, the number of armed guards dispersed throughout the city has made me uneasy. They patrol streets, stand outside buildings and are scattered at nearly every metro stop, clenching rifles I’m used to seeing only in movies.

But today, I’m happy they were there.

Standing on the Porte de Namur metro platform in central Brussels at about 9 a.m. Tuesday, I heard an announcement over the intercom. It was in French, so I had no idea what was said, but the look on the people’s faces around me was enough — terror.

Little did I know that three metro stops away at the Maelbeek station, a bomb would explode within half an hour of that announcement, leaving 20 dead and 130 injured.

I knew I shouldn’t have taken the metro. I was aware there had been an “explosion” at the airport, with injuries, possibly an attack. The next logical setting to strike would be public
transportation, but that didn’t happen in real life, at least not to a Small-Town-Missouri guy like me.

Besides, taking the metro would save 10 minutes. And I needed to get to the office; I had breaking news to cover.

People all around me on the platform panicked, eyes grew wide. I followed the masses and their clamor in a daze up the escalator and to daylight. I began the the 20-minute walk to work, irritated, cold and angry that I had just wasted €2.70 on a fare.

I ran into a co-worker, and we passed a woman standing outside on the phone crying. She started shouting in French to my colleague, who turned to me and said, “There’s been another explosion.” We sprinted the rest of the way to the office.

When I got there, I realized just how lucky I really was. The bomb had gone off about 400 meters from the building where I was standing, marking the worst threat Brussels has encountered in my lifetime.

I sat down at my desk, immediately texted family and friends to let them know I was safe. Then I prepared for the long, long day ahead. And I waited, anticipating the announcement of another “explosion,” robbing dozens more innocent people of their lives.

Thankfully, that announcement never came.

For about three hours after the bomb at Maelbeek station, we heard a constant ring of police sirens, interrupted only by the screech of ambulances. Those sirens represented how I felt — rushed and confused, unable to process — but we still had a destination to get to, news to report.

“What’s the number for this hospital?” “Have you checked the Commission’s Twitter feed?” “Answer the phone, she’s in the middle of an interview with BBC.” “Does anyone have an updated body count?”
And then, silence. The street outside of my office, normally bustling with the sounds of a busy city, was noiseless. The police had blocked it off, and it seemed as if all of Brussels had receded into its cracks. The terrorists hadn’t just taken 31 innocent people in their attack. The once-thriving city had been robbed of its life.

On my walk home later Tuesday, the metro was closed, a thin metal gate shutting out the world from the atrocity that had occurred. The sidewalks were filled with empty faces too scared to make eye contact with a passerby.

The streets were clear of their normal throng of window shoppers. The bars I passed weren’t filled with dancing and loud music, only with concerned eyes glued to the nearest TV.

I’m not sure what the future holds for my adopted city. What comes after tragedy? Is there a clear marking when mourning ends and rebuilding begins? Is the terror even over?

Police have made a few arrests and found at least one homemade bomb. But ISIL has promised more attacks, and I can’t help but think that every person I pass could be the next to wreak havoc — or havoc’s next victim.

The night ended with a pow-wow among the MU students. We were all feeling distressed, thankful for our safety and worried about the future. It was the first day in our lives that we had to inform the world that we were still alive.

But when asked if we wanted to leave the city we have learned to love, without a moment’s hesitation there came a firm, unified, “No.”