Taking a Cue from Textile-Making to Engineer Human Tissue
Researchers in search of a faster, cheaper way to engineer human tissue found success in traditional textile production methods

By Emily Matchar
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Engineered human tissue plays a small but growing role in medicine. Engineered skin can be used on surgical patients or burn victims, engineered arteries have been used to repair obstructed blood flow and entire engineered tracheas have even been implanted in patients whose airways were failing. As the science progresses, researchers hope to be able to engineer entire organs, such as hearts or livers.

But tissue engineering is not easy. It involves first creating a “scaffold” to grow the tissue on. The scaffold is typically made through a process called “electrospinning,” which involves using an electrostatic field to bond materials together. In some cases, the scaffolding can be implanted along with the tissue, and it will dissolve in the body over time. But electrospinning can be a slow and costly process, making it difficult to create tissue on the large scale needed for medical research and applications.

What if, researchers wondered, making scaffolding was as easy as, say, making socks?

“We started thinking, ‘could we look at some other industry standard practices that make other materials, like textiles?’” says Elizabeth Loboa, dean of University of Missouri's College of Engineering.

Reasoning that textiles and human tissues are not so different, Loboa and her team worked with researchers at the University of North Carolina and North Carolina State University’s College of Textiles to investigate the scaffold-building potential of traditional textile manufacturing processes.
The researchers investigated three common textile-making methods—melt blowing, spunbonding and carding. Melt blowing involves using high-pressure air to blow hot polymer resin into a web of fine fibers. Spunbonding is similar, but uses less heat. Carding separates fibers through rollers, creating a web of textile.

“These are processes used very commonly in the textile industry, so they’re already industry standard, commercially relevant manufacturing processes,” Loboa says.

The team used polylactic acid, a type of biodegradable plastic, to create the scaffolds, and seeded them with human stem cells using the various textile techniques. They then waited to see if the cells began to differentiate into different types of tissue.

The results were promising. The textile techniques were effective and more affordable than electrospinning. The team estimated a square meter of electrospun scaffolding costs between $2 and $5, while the same-sized sample made using textile techniques cost only $0.30 to $3. Textile techniques also work significantly faster than electrospinning.

The team’s next challenge will be to see how the scaffolds work in action, which will involve animal studies. The researchers also need to reduce the fiber size of the textile-produced scaffolding to better resemble the extracellular matrix of the human body, or the network of molecules that support cell growth. Electrospun scaffolding produces very small fibers, which is one of the reasons it’s such a popular method; the textile methods seem to produce larger fibers.

In the future, Loboa hopes to be able to produce larger quantities of scaffolding to grow human skin, bone, fat and more. These tissues could help repair limbs for wounded soldiers, Loboa says, or help babies born without certain body parts.

“We have to really figure out ways to get these to be successful in our patients,” she says.
Anti-cholesterol drugs show promise in fight against prostate cancer

By Laura Donnelly, Health Editor

18 April 2016 • 6:59am

Drugs designed to lower cholesterol may turn out to be an effective weapon against prostate cancer, research has shown.

Previous studies have suggested that taking statins, which cut cholesterol levels, reduce the spread of disease, and cuts the chance of death.

One study of prostate cancer sufferers found death rates 43 per cent lower among those who happened to be taking the drugs.

However, such research did not prove that the treatment was causing the effect.

The new study, on mice, using other drugs which cut cholesterol production found that doing so caused tumour cells to die.

Tumour cells need cholesterol to construct their cell membranes. By cutting their cholesterol production, the new molecule, known as RO 48-8071, causes the cells to fall apart and die.

It could also have the added benefit of preventing prostate cancer developing resistance to hormone therapies.

**Professor Salman Hyder, from the University of Missouri in the US, said: "Cholesterol is a molecule found in animal cells that serves as a structural component of cell membranes. When tumour cells grow, they synthesise more cholesterol."

"Often, cancer patients are treated with toxic chemotherapies; however, in our study, we focused on reducing the production of cholesterol in cancer cells, which could kill cancer cells and reduce the need for toxic chemotherapy."

The compound was originally developed by the drug company Roche for the treatment of high cholesterol.
Prof Hyder's team found that human prostate cancer cells exposed to the drug in the laboratory died.

When the drug was injected into mice with human prostate cancer, tumour growth was curbed.

Importantly, the drug appeared to be effective against prostate cancer cells that had become resistant to hormone treatments.

Prostate cancer is initially tackled by preventing its growth being fuelled by the male hormone testosterone. But over time, the cancer stops responding to this treatment.

One way tumours ensure their survival is by manufacturing their own testosterone through a process that relies on cholesterol.

"Cholesterol ... can contribute to the development of anti-hormone resistance because cholesterol is converted into hormones in tumour cells," said Prof Hyder. "Therefore, these cholesterol-forming pathways are attractive therapeutic targets for the treatment of prostate cancer."

The study is due to appear in the journal OncoTargets and Therapy.

**The cholesterol drug 'that kills prostate cancer': Compound within experimental treatment is found to cause cancerous cells to fall apart and die**

An experimental drug designed to lower cholesterol may turn out to be an effective weapon against prostate cancer, research has shown.

Tumours need cholesterol to build their cell walls. By cutting their cholesterol production a chemical compound known as RO 48-8071 causes the cancerous cells to fall apart and die.

**Professor Salman Hyder, from the University of Missouri in the US, who led the research said: 'Often, cancer patients are treated with toxic chemotherapies.**

'We focused on reducing the production of cholesterol, which could kill [the] cancer and reduce the need for chemotherapy.'
The study, to appear in the journal OncoTargets and Therapy, tells how Professor Hyder's team found that the drug killed cancer cells in the laboratory.

Nearly 11,000 men die from prostate cancer in Britain each year.

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'Cholesterol ... can contribute to the development of anti-hormone resistance because cholesterol is converted into hormones in tumour cells,' said Prof Hyder.

'Therefore, these cholesterol-forming pathways are attractive therapeutic targets for the treatment of prostate cancer.'
She didn’t have a precise vocabulary for the subtle harassment she experienced every day. Schmelz’s supervisor gossiped about her to colleagues and demeaned her, making inappropriate comments that highlighted their uneven power dynamic.

When Schmelz, now a professor of physics at the University of Memphis, began her career in the 1980s, such behavior appeared to be common and acceptable for women in the male-dominated field.

“It was hard to ask for help, socialize, or even just say ‘good morning.’”

“It was hard to ask for help, socialize, or even just say ‘good morning’ in such an environment,” Schmelz says.

Then, in 1991, President George H.W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court and his confirmation hearings became a pivotal moment in American politics and pop culture.

Anita Hill gave nationally televised testimony that Thomas had sexually harassed her while both were employed at the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. The hearings are the subject of the fictional HBO film Confirmation, which airs Saturday.

Thomas called the hearings a “high-tech lynching.” Hill, then a law professor at the University of Oklahoma, endured attacks on her credibility and the public’s scorn. Schmelz watched the proceedings unfold.

“It wasn’t until Anita Hill…that sexual harassment had a name,” Schmelz says. “All of the sudden, I could label what had happened to me.”

So, apparently, could her colleagues; the pinups soon disappeared from the lab’s walls.

"All of the sudden, I could label what had happened to me.”

Schmelz didn’t publicly speak out about her harassment experience until 2011, when she shared the details in a blog post. Female scientists had previously shared their accounts with her and the blog post led many more to confide in Schmelz. Their stories collectively portrayed a disturbing pattern of harassment in astronomy.

Much has changed since Hill's testimony forced the public to think seriously about sexual harassment.

While women still share information and experiences through in-person "whisper" networks, they've taken advantage of the Internet as a medium to communicate more efficiently and powerfully about workplace harassment and abuse. Some women anonymously use the platform to make their emotional stories public if only to feel vindicated and less alone. (Though both
men and women endure sexual harassment, women report the majority of claims, according to government data.)

The Internet can't solve the endemic problem of sexual harassment, and might even bring additional harm to those who speak out, but it does provide an outlet to women who were once commonly silenced. Such testimonials may empower victims to report harassment and require bystanders to account for behavior they might have previously dismissed as a fluke or misunderstanding.

"Now there’s this other avenue to share what happened," says Maya Raghu, director of workplace equality at National Women's Law Center, where Hill serves on the board of directors. "Social media amplifies that voice and allows you to reach people all over the world with your story, which wouldn’t have happened 25 years ago."

'Tweet, write, post'

Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, a distinguished professor of law at UCLA who assisted Hill’s legal team in 1991, says tools like Twitter, blogging and online petitions could have made a considerable difference during the contentious hearings.

At the time, Hill and her team tried to dispel the notion that she had few supporters, particularly in the black community. They put a call out to black men who could talk to the media, but only a few came to the Capitol. While they appeared on many news programs, Crenshaw says, she can imagine how much easier it might have been to spread their message and galvanize others.

"I don’t think women would have been comfortable telling their story."

"What we would have been saying was, 'Tweet, write, post so we can make this part of the conversation,'" Crenshaw says.

She also believes that black women might have been able to forcefully insist on the intersection of race and gender in the hearings. Back then, Crenshaw notes, Hill's identity as a black woman was essentially erased by Thomas' identity as a black man. Nearly 1,600 women sponsored an ad in the New York Times in November 1991 to make that point, but it cost $50,000, according to Crenshaw.

"Today we could go to ColorofChange.org and start a petition," she says.

Yet, there's one aspect Crenshaw can't imagine differently.

"Even if there had been Twitter back then, I don’t think women would have been comfortable telling their story when there was so much acrimony and disdain [for Hill]."
An 'open secret'

In the quarter century that has passed, sexual harassment has increasingly become a viral subject. In 2014, the #YesAllWomen hashtag featured women sharing their vivid encounters with sexism and misogyny, and a controversial PSA about catcalling showed what it's like to be a woman walking down the street.

In the past several months alone, people have used Twitter to draw outrage and attention to evidence of serial sexual harassment in several high-profile cases.

In November, the adult film actress Stoya accused her ex-boyfriend, fellow actor James Deen, of sexual assault, and within days several actresses shared allegations about his abusive behavior on film sets. Deen has denied any wrongdoing.

The progressive communications firm FitzGibbon Media, which counted MoveOn and the AFL-CIO as clients, abruptly closed in December when several staff members accused its founder, Trevor FitzGibbon, of more than two dozen incidents of sexual harassment and assault.

FitzGibbon called the allegations a "distraction to the mission at hand" in a statement published by BuzzFeed. The well-publicized incident ultimately became the impetus for four women to launch an online story and data collection tool to combat sexual harassment.

In October, the famous astronomer Geoff Marcy resigned from his position at the University of California at Berkeley after Buzzfeed reported that he was found guilty of violating the university’s sexual harassment policies over several years.

Marcy apologized for his actions in an open letter published online, saying "while I do not agree with each complaint that was made, it is clear that my behavior was unwelcomed by some women."

Schmelz helped connect women harassed by Marcy, whose inappropriate behavior was called an “open secret” by some in the astronomy community.

The debate over Marcy, along with other prominent harassment cases in academia, prompted graduate students and others in the sciences to voice their support and document their own experience of academic or workplace abuse and violence through hashtags like #AstroSH, #AnthroSH or #BioSH.

The hashtags weren't a panacea, but they did lift up a chorus of women's voices. That has the potential to shift public opinion when it comes to believing victims; the outpouring of support for women who've accused Bill Cosby of assault is a single but indelible example of why social media can be instrumental in changing perceptions of abuse and harassment.
Employees most at risk

While these recent cases prove that sexual harassment can and does happen in any workplace, it's difficult to quantify how frequently it occurs.

As of March 1, the Department of Education was investigating 267 cases of sexual harassment at 208 post-secondary institutions in the United States, according to data provided to Mashable by the Office for Civil Rights.

In the past few years, sexual harassment claims filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have actually declined from 7,944 in fiscal year 2010 to 6,822 in the last fiscal year. The number of men who’ve filed those claims increased by 1 percentage point to 17.1% during that same time period.

Raghu says the decrease in overall complaints may not reflect a changing culture. The EEOC figures don't fully account for statewide trends or the fact that seeking government intervention is a decision that relatively few people can make.

Raghu says that since Hill's testimony in 1991, workplace sexual harassment policies have generally improved while state and federal laws have offered greater legal protection to victims.

The major exception, however, is a 2013 Supreme Court decision, Vance v. Ball State University, which made it more difficult to hold a company liable for damages when the harasser is a low-level supervisor without the ability to hire and fire his or her victim.

The National Women's Law Center estimates that the decision affects 17 million low-wage workers who now may have little recourse in holding their supervisor and employer accountable for sexual harassment. Those workers, Raghu says, may be disproportionately affected by sexual harassment, yet they're also unlikely to storm the Internet with blog posts or hashtags or even anonymous accusations.

"In certain industries, especially those that pay low wages or [employ] immigrant workers," Raghu says, "people are more vulnerable to exploitation, and this kind of sexual harassment and assault is still a huge problem."

No more 'dirty little secret'

Deanna Zandt and Jeanne Brooks had spent years "back channeling" with other women about serial harassers.

"We're done with it being the dirty secret we have to share over encrypted [chats] with one another."
"A small network would activate to give [victims] advice," says Zandt, "...but with the FitzGibbon incident the four of us, we were like, 'We're done with it being the dirty secret we have to share over encrypted [chats] with one another.'

With two other women, Zandt and Brooks cofounded Shine Squad, an online platform that invites victims — regardless of gender — to share and have their stories published. It also hosts a survey to track and quantify people's experiences. Participants can privately name their harassers and opt to be connected to others who call out the same individual.

More than 100 people have taken the survey; the Shine Squad founders are trying to ethically use the results to address systematic harassment. The possibility that people could use the Internet or their survey to unfairly damage or ruin someone's reputation is an important consideration, which is why they do not publish the names of the accused.

They are especially focused on reports of bad behavior at social change conferences and networking events, where the lines between professional and casual frequently blur and there are no human resources staff to institute or enforce boundaries.

The Shine Squad founders are contemplating what accountability looks like in these settings. It could mean organizers adopt community guidelines and create an evaluation process. Attendees could even assign safety ratings to events as a way of changing expectations and giving useful information to others.

The Shine Squad's founders believe that radically transforming a culture of abuse requires greater transparency. "It’s past the point of us just creating back channels," says Brooks.

**More than 'breaking silence'**

Hope Jahren, a professor of geobiology at the University of Hawaii who has written extensively about sexual harassment in the sciences and academia, says she frequently receives emails from women describing unacceptable workplace conduct.

Jahren believes digital platforms and tools are effective at "breaking silence" when it comes to sexual harassment, but don't achieve institutional change.

"We have to be very careful about acknowledging that the Internet is very good at combatting isolation, but it’s not very good at delivering justice," Jahren says.

Indeed, while Deen, Marcy and FitzGibbon may have been professionally sanctioned or punished, that's not the equivalent of criminal charges or civil penalties.

"The Internet is very good at combatting isolation, but it’s not very good at delivering justice."
Jahren also worries that in-person and digital networks that warn women about serial offenders put the onus on potential victims to change their lives, when it should be an employer's responsibility to discipline or fire people who violate sexual harassment policies.

**This is where the challenges of rooting out such behavior become particularly complicated.** Forthcoming research by Debbie Dougherty, a professor of organizational communication at the University of Missouri, shows that even when sexual harassment policies are in place, employees reinterpreted them so that the focus is on the perception of the offender's behavior and not the conduct itself.

**The Internet and social media can only do so much to combat that instinct, says Dougherty.**

"*If we're going to manage this problem effectively, we need to first recognize the complexity,*" she says. "*The target and the perpetrator, they're a very small piece of it. They're the outcome of a larger social, cultural phenomenon that allows that behavior to be a possibility.*"

That becomes very clear when women who document their own experiences online encounter even more harassment from critics and trolls.

When women in astronomy started sharing their stories using the #AstroSH hashtag, some users attempted to silence them by posting dismissive and even abusive messages.

Using social media to broadcast one's experience with sexual harassment can be both gratifying and treacherous. While women may receive sympathy and encouragement, there's no guarantee they won't be subject to the same demeaning comments they report.

**You're not alone**

The important difference for Schmelz is that she couldn't necessarily ask for moral support from an expansive community years ago.

Before the Thomas-Hill hearings, when sexual harassment was much more overt in the astronomy community, women had very few options for recourse or justice.

"*You could change supervisors. You could leave the field,*" Schmelz says. "*If you were really lucky, and had a good chain of command, you could report it up and something could happen, but really the feeling was that there was nothing substantive you could do.*"

Women may still face that same reality, but ending the isolation and shame of harassment has become imperative and a real possibility online.
"[N]ow, if [women] can come together and find out that they’re not alone, that this has happened to other people, that empowers them a bit," says Schmelz. "It also supports them."

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CLIMATE

As Fracking Chemicals Reach A Creek Companies Fight Against A Fracking Waste Ban

BY ALEJANDRO DAVILA FRAGOSO • APR 15, 2016 8:00 AM

The smell of gas surrounding the northern streets of Lochgelly, West Virginia, was so pungent that Brad Keenan could taste it as he was driving home with his windows up that evening in 2004. He called 911 and the gas company, thinking a punctured gas line was to blame, but the smell and the evacuation it prompted came from something few knew existed in town: fracking waste.

“I had no idea what was going on,” said Keenan, 54, who by then had been living for two years near Danny E. Webb Construction Inc., a dumping site for fracking fluids. “You couldn’t even drive out there because the smell was so bad,” he told ThinkProgress.

At least two open pits holding fracking wastewater were responsible for the smell that got homes evacuated and forced some businesses and a daycare center to temporarily close, according to interviews and published reports. After state citations and complaints, pits were covered giving some temporary relief to affected residents. Keenan notes, however, that Wolf Creek, a major waterway traversing his 140-acre property, is polluted.

Twelve years have passed since the emergency evacuation put a little-known, state-permitted fracking disposal site under the county’s spotlight, yet things haven’t improved. The company is still marred in controversy. Locals worry about confirmed fracking chemicals in Wolf Creek as it connects to the water
supply. And last year, the state renewed Danny E. Webb Construction’s permit to continue disposing fracking waste in underground injection wells, also known as brine disposal wells. The Environmental Protection Agency has jurisdiction over these wells only if diesel fuel is among the chemicals.

The feud in Fayette county is now likely to intensify with two companies facing officials who, in the coming months, will defend in federal court an ordinance approved in January that banned fracking waste disposal. Hearings were set for this month, but habitual court delays are already being reported. One argument officials have raised against fracking waste in Fayette is that zoning laws don’t even allow traditional landfills.

In interviews, officials also said they’ve revised their ordinance to appease the industry, which they say doesn’t use fracking for local gas extraction in the first place. But Danny E. Webb Construction Inc. and EQT Corp, an oil and gas company from Pennsylvania, still object saying the county lacks jurisdiction and the ordinance is so broad it could shut down gas and oil extraction.

And with that, Fayette County has become part of a growing list of communities struggling to keep brine wells at bay through local laws. There are more than 30,000 fracking waste disposal sites across the country, according to interviews and multiple published reports. But New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and now West Virginia have counties favoring laws limiting brine waste disposal. The trend has been particularly robust in New York, where more than 10 counties have passed ordinances controlling fracking waste in the last couple of years.

States, too, are limiting fracking waste with Nebraska creating the most recent legislation. Industry often fights back, and in some instances, they win. Last year a federal court in Pennsylvania ruled against a town’s “community bill of rights” that limited brine disposal.

In Fayette, a county of some 46,000 people, residents and officials fear Danny E. Webb Construction wells are leaching toxic chemicals into nearby Wolf Creek, a waterway that feeds into the New River, a major tourist attraction and a water source for thousands of people. West Virginia American Water, the local water utility, told ThinkProgress the water supply is being monitored and the New River Water Treatment Plant, located more than 10 miles downstream from Wolf Creek, meets high standards. Still, studies conducted in the last couple of years in Wolf Creek seem to substantiate some of the concerns. In 2014, Duke University scientists sampled Wolf Creek and found elevated levels of chloride, bromide, manganese, strontium, and barium; all chemicals associated with fracking wastewater.
Claims of leaching even got a boost this past week after a peer-reviewed study conducted by the United States Geological Survey and other universities reported endocrine disrupting chemical activity, or EDCs, in Wolf Creek at levels that could alter development and reproduction in wildlife, researchers said. After sampling various areas including a neighboring stream, scientists measured significantly greater EDCs on and downstream of the Danny E. Webb Construction site.

These revelations come at a sensitive time for the public, the government, and water utilities around the country are scrutinizing water quality after towns like Flint, Michigan, showed that local, state and federal agencies can simultaneously overlook tainted water supplies. Though unrelated to lead pollution, fracking and its effects on water have been front-and-center in recent times, too. The Environmental Protection Agency is weighing whether fracking poses risks to drinking water ahead of a report that’s been years in the making.

Meanwhile, studies examining how fracking chemicals may affect water and public health are published regularly, as some property owners are winning lawsuits and getting millions from the industry for water contamination.

Yet in the case of Fayette, researchers told ThinkProgress they simply studied water chemicals, not how these chemicals got there in the first place. So while in the study researchers note the chemicals are associated with the waste disposal site, they don’t describe how pollution may have happened. “The findings do not have a direct impact on wildlife or public health, but demonstrate the potential for impacts on wildlife or public health,” said Denise Akob, one of the authors and a USGS researcher, in an email to ThinkProgress. She added the USGS is expected to release more studies on this topic as the agency is researching potential environmental impacts of unconventional oil and gas waste.

Bad for health, bad for business

The endocrine system is a collection of glands that produce hormones that regulate metabolism, growth, reproduction, sleep, and more. EDCs are mostly artificial and can be found in pesticides, metals, additives or contaminants in food, and personal care products. EDCs are also found in brine and have been linked to adverse health effects on reproduction, growth, and the immune system, to name a few. Hormones are essential to multiple biological processes, said Susan Nagel, a University of Missouri toxicologist, who also worked on the EDC study. “So if we disrupt hormones we disrupt those
processes and that is true for humans, for mammals, for fish living in these creeks,” Nagel told ThinkProgress.

The pending question now, researchers said, is to single out the chemicals causing the EDC activity. “We know the site is impacting the water, and we know there is an unconventional oil and gas impact on the stream,” said Christopher Kassotis, a Duke University researcher and author of the study, in an email to ThinkProgress. “It’s just drilling down to that final detail to determine which chemicals are responsible and where they are coming from.”

Request for comment sent to the lawyer for Danny Webb Construction Inc. went unanswered, as were calls made to the company’s phone number. West Virginia Department of Environmental Quality didn’t reply to a request for comment on the study or the company’s permits. And EQT declined to comment noting the ongoing litigation. However, the study has reached the desks of residents, county officials, and West Virginia American Water.

“We are aware of the recent article ... and will continue to monitor water quality at our withdraw site on the New River,” Laura Jordan, West Virginia American Water external affairs manager, told ThinkProgress via email. “Ongoing water quality testing at the New River plant and in the distribution system confirms that water meets all federal and state drinking water standards.”

Yet to be sure, some residents told ThinkProgress they avoid their tap water, noting they distrust West Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and its inaction towards alleged pollution in Wolf Creek. “We do not drink the water, not a chance,” said Frank Lanier, 69, who lives down the street from Danny Webb Construction Inc. Even those who trust their tap water or live on the other end of the county worry about Wolf Creek, saying news of tainted waters can discourage spring tourism, a vital component of the county’s economic portfolio. “It’s bad for business. If people think the water is polluted then they may not take that rafting trip,” said Kenny Parker, owner of Water Stone Outdoors.

University of Missouri won't recognize 'mock election' for graduate assistant union, Foley says

By Rudi Keller

Saturday, April 16, 2016 at 12:00 am

ROLLA — The union representation election set for Monday and Tuesday on the University of Missouri’s Columbia campus won’t alter the administration’s decision to not recognize graduate students as employees, interim Chancellor Hank Foley said Friday.

In an interview before Friday’s session of the Board of Curators, Foley said he has tried to address every concern raised by graduate students since they began organizing during the fall semester. The election results will be watched closely, he said, but the courts ultimately must decide the graduate workers’ employment status.

“I consider it a straw poll more than an official tally,” Foley said. “It is important for the League of Women Voters to tell us how many students voted as well as what the percentages for and against are, and then we will take it from there.”

From 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, graduate assistants will vote at polling stations in the Memorial Union and the MU Student Center. They will decide whether the Coalition of Graduate Workers, associated with the Missouri National Education Association, will become their bargaining agent.

Foley said he has tried to keep talks with coalition leaders respectful and congenial. “I am not trying to go to war with these kids,” he said.

Connor Lewis, coalition co-chairman, reacted strongly to Foley’s statements, challenging both his description of the election and his characterization of graduate assistants.

“This is a troubling indication of the way the university views this and in a very condescending way,” Lewis said.

Lewis is 27 and married, he said. Many of his colleagues have children.
“He sounds like a parent scolding indulging kids instead of two equals coming to sit down and work on something mutually beneficial,” Lewis said.

The university has refused to recognize that graduate assistants are employees. Graduate students who are hired as teaching or research assistants receive a stipend, a tuition waiver and university-paid health insurance.

After the university announced in August that it would stop providing the insurance, graduate assistants formed the Forum on Graduate Rights as an advocacy group.

The forum members became the core of the unionization efforts. The decision on insurance was reversed, and no changes will be made until after the academic year that begins in September. In January, Foley announced that minimum stipends for doctoral students with 20-hour assistantships would increase to $15,000 on July 1 and to $18,000 in July 2017.

“We’ve done all the things they’ve wanted and more, so we are trying to walk a fine line of saying, ‘We don’t think you need the union,’” Foley said.

His last meeting with graduate assistant leaders was April 8, the same day he issued an email expressing surprise at the decision to hold a vote, Foley said. He thought the coalition was going to seek a court ruling on the employment status of graduate assistants first, he said.

“That is why I was so surprised when I heard they were going to have a mock election on this or a mock vote, because I had thought we had all agreed that they were going to seek guidance and that we were going to see what would happen,” Foley said.

The vote is not a mock election or a straw poll, Lewis said.

“What this is is a democratic election on union representation following all the state and federal best practices for an election,” he said.

Interim UM System President Mike Middleton said he, too, would be watching for the election results but that it would not change how the system administration views graduate assistants. Whether they are legally considered employees of the university is not settled, he said.

“I would hope that we could solve all their issues without adding a layer of people to talk to about it — an outside group, the union,” he said.
University of Missouri’s interim chancellor says the union representation election set for this week won’t change the administration’s decision to not recognize graduate students as employees.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley told The Columbia Daily Tribune Friday that he has tried to address every concern raised by graduate students since they began organizing last fall.

Graduate assistants will vote Monday and Tuesday to decide whether the Coalition of Graduate Workers will become their bargaining agent.

But the university has not recognized graduate assistants as employees. Graduate students who are hired as teaching or research assistants receive a stipend, a tuition waiver and university-paid health insurance.

Connor Lewis, who is co-chairman of the Coalition of Graduate Workers, says the vote is following all state and federal best practices for an election.
I consider it a straw poll more than an official tally," Foley told the Tribune. "It is important for the League of Women Voters to tell us how many students voted as well as what the percentages for and against are, and then we will take it from there."

Mizzou graduate students who are hired as teaching or research assistants are given a stipend, a tuition waiver and university-paid insurance, the Tribune reports.

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**Missouri graduate workers voting on whether to unionize**

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri graduate workers will vote Monday and Tuesday on whether or not to unionize.

If approved, the vote would not force the university to recognize the graduate workers as an official union. Rather the vote is simply to determine if graduate workers would like to be represented by a singular group.

Connor Lewis, co-chair for the Coalition of Graduate Workers, said he hopes the administration keeps a close eye on the election results and shows the graduate workers more respect.

"Our hope is that the University of Missouri will take a look at the election results and see that these were achieved through a fair and free democratic election and choose to recognize the results and begin contract negotiations with graduate student employees," Lewis said.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said in a statement last week the university would not back any decision to unionize.

"In recent conversations, we indicated there was some question regarding the legality of unionization among graduate students, and until this question is resolved, it would be inappropriate to move forward. To this end, any vote to unionize at this time cannot be considered binding or recognized by the university," Foley said.
If the graduate workers vote yes and the university stays with its initial decision to not recognize the graduate workers as a union, Lewis said they will have re-evaluate their strategy moving forward.

Any graduate worker is allowed to vote in the election at either the Student Center or Memorial Union. The voting runs from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday.

MISSOURIAN

Middleton sounds optimistic note in speech to UM System Board of Curators

AUSTIN HUGUELET, Apr 15, 2016

ROLLA, Missouri — In his first address to the UM System Board of Curators in December, UM System Interim President Mike Middleton spoke about the work yet to be done.

He promised to make strides on healing racial tensions exposed by November protests, but the wounds were still fresh and the campus divides stark. He emphasized the importance and value of the system to the state, but the ire of Missouri legislators wouldn't be doused so easily.

The UM System interim president had some better news to report Thursday.

A conference committee is still hashing out how much state money the system will get in fiscal year 2017, but the Missouri Senate's funding proposal came a long way from cuts passed in the House.

Concerned Student 1950, the black activist group that led the November protests, has continued to put pressure on the curators and make demands at MU. But on Thursday, Middleton remained optimistic as he highlighted the hiring of Kevin McDonald, the system's incoming diversity chief, the upcoming selection of an audit firm to examine equity and inclusion throughout the system and a growing respect for MU among other schools.
Middleton recalled that when he spoke at a joint panel hosted by the American Education Council and the National Association for Diversity Officers in High Education "it was clear that others are learning from the example we're setting," he said. "We are clearly becoming seen as a national leader in addressing these (diversity) issues."

As for the Senate's offering $34 million more than the House, Middleton said in a news conference after the meeting that the difference could have come from a vigorous lobbying effort by system officials, alumni and students.

"But as they say, time heals most wounds," he added. "So it may simply be a matter of time. I'm hopeful the conference committee will find a way to be as generous as the Senate was."

Middleton had fewer answers for other challenges facing MU.

On Monday and Tuesday, graduate student workers will go a step further in deciding whether the Coalition of Graduate Workers will represent them in collective bargaining.

But Middleton questioned its legal implications and lamented the acrimony between graduate students and administration.

"It's really unfortunate that our graduate students feel the need to form a union," he said. "I think this is all part of the turmoil that we experienced back in November, with students feeling as if their concerns were not being accurately addressed by the administration."

"The problem is that in the state of Missouri it's not clear that students have a right to collectively bargain," he said.

His comments mirrored those of Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley, who said in an email to graduate students last week that "any vote to unionize at this time cannot be considered binding or recognized by the university."

When asked about Friday's protest at Jesse Hall against cuts to retirement benefits — a part of former president Tim Wolfe's agenda — Middleton maintained that the board had little choice.
The curators voted to limit the benefits for 84 percent of eligible employees Thursday in hopes of reducing a budget deficit projected to reach $4.5 billion by 2045.

"When I got here it was pretty much a done deal. I asked a lot of questions, like 'Do you really want to do this?'" Middleton said. "But they showed me the data and it was inevitable."

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**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**In a Year Defined by Demands, Mizzou Seniors Make One More: Beer**
The University of Missouri at Columbia this year has seen intense activism. It was the center of student protests last fall that sparked nationwide efforts to deal with accusations of institutional racism in higher education. But lately a group of students has championed a new, more lighthearted cause: beer. Specifically, free beer, and their right to it.

Here’s the story of how this year’s graduating class persuaded the alumni association and the university to give each one of them a pint of beer on the house.

For about 20 years, Missouri has held a send-off for graduating seniors, the Tiger Prowl. Basically, soon-to-be grads gather on the campus quad, eat, get some free Mizzou-themed swag, and prepare to say goodbye to the university and their classmates.

Then they pass through the six iconic Ionic columns, symbolizing their departure for the real world. It’s the reverse course they took as freshmen, when they strode toward Jesse Hall during the Tiger Walk.

For a number of years, the senior send-off has included a free beer or two (in the past, options have included Budweiser or Bud Light, which are brewed in-state.) In 2014 the university purchased 16 kegs of beer and Budweiser donated six more, according to the Columbia Missourian.

But last spring, the chancellor at the time, R. Bowen Loftin, and the Mizzou Alumni Association’s executive director, Todd McCubbin, said there would be no more suds at the send-off.

"We evaluate every year, and the last several years we’ve had some concerns about this may be losing focus about what this is all about. It became more about having a
beer than having a nice event for graduates," Mr. McCubbin told KOMU-TV last spring. "I think traditions change all of the time."

Students were not pleased.

However, when Mr. Loftin announced plans to step down as chancellor, in November, students began to wonder if the beer would be brought back for this year’s Tiger Prowl, scheduled for the afternoon of May 6.

In the wake of racial tensions and student protests on the campus, the university established Chancellor Chats every Friday with the interim chancellor, Henry C. (Hank) Foley, during which students could pose questions to him. In early March, two seniors, Veronica DeStefano and Katherine Knott, asked Mr. Foley if they could count on his support to bring back the beer. In a follow-up email to Mr. McCubbin, they copied Mr. Foley. He replied to all, voicing his support.

"I’m in favor of these seniors having a beer or two together at this event," the interim chancellor wrote in his March 7 email. "Let’s use tickets and not punish 99 for the one. Besides they can ‘pre game’ and come to the event plastered anyway. Let’s treat the majority as adults."

Meanwhile, another senior, Jack Witthaus, sent an email to Vice Chancellor Catherine C. Scroggs. "I know last May former chancellor R. Bowen Loftin (and others) nixed the getting a beer after graduation tradition," he wrote. "I was wondering, since Loftin is no longer the chancellor, if we could bring that tradition back. I think it was a pretty cool tradition that most people enjoyed. I understand the reason for canceling the event had to do ‘send(ing) the right message,’ but I’m not so sure how much one beer per student detracts from MU’s image."

She told him his request "was under consideration."

Then, on Wednesday, Mr. Witthaus posted on Facebook: "WE DID IT! WE GOT BEER AT SENIOR SENDOFF! BE PROUD, EVERYBODY!" Attached was a picture of an invitation to Tiger Prowl sent to graduating seniors with a line that said, "one pint of beer for graduates 21 and older. … You must have your ID verified to receive a wristband to redeem a beer at Senior Sendoff. Limit 1 per person. (We suggest you arrive early to avoid the lines.)" The beer is back.

One beer per graduate isn’t much, but for Mr. Witthaus, it’s a nice gesture to complete a senior year marked largely by turmoil.
"I guess, in a larger sense, there are some real issues here at Mizzou, and that can’t be overstated," he said in an interview. "But it is nice to have this tradition restored for the class. For the most part, people looked at Mizzou with a lot of disdain, and people were upset by what happened, and people said some pretty rough things about Mizzou. So just leaving here and having this is a nice small gesture."

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

Raises unlikely, layoffs possible at University of Missouri System offices because of budget uncertainty

By Rudi Keller

Saturday, April 16, 2016 at 12:00 am

ROLLA — Employees of the University of Missouri System administration should not expect raises in the coming year, and it is uncertain whether there might be layoffs, interim President Mike Middleton said Friday.

The university is awaiting the results of legislative negotiations over spending that will determine how much of a cut in state aid will target the system’s administration. The Missouri House approved a $7.6 million cut, and the state Senate approved a $1 million cut. The House also froze the university out of a pool of $9.4 million set aside for increased funding of colleges and universities, while the Senate approved $55.8 million in new funding, with UM receiving about $27 million.

The uncertainty means that no decisions on layoffs have been made, Middleton said, but job cuts have not been ruled out. At the same time, he said, enrollment losses will require layoffs on the Columbia and St. Louis campuses because of a loss in tuition revenue.

“It is hard to imagine giving significant raises at the system while two of our campuses are suffering,” Middleton said to reporters Friday after the public sessions of the Board of Curators. “It is unlikely there will be significant merit increases or anything like it at the system.”

The legislative spending decisions also will determine whether the curators impose a tuition increase this fall. The Senate budget plan accepts Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposal to increase college and university support by 6 percent in exchange for a tuition freeze.
Regardless of the outcome of the budget talks, the curators will have to hold a special meeting soon to set tuition rates for the fall even if no changes are made, Chairwoman Pam Henrickson said.

The Senate budget proposal shows that efforts to rebuild UM’s image with lawmakers are having a positive effect, Middleton said.

“I am just grateful that the Senate has been a bit more generous with us, and I am hopeful the conference will find a way to be as generous,” he said.

During a two-day meeting this week, the curators discussed the budget situation, revised the rules governing retiree health insurance benefits and held a meeting of the Presidential Search Committee. They also approved a $16.95 million expansion of the emergency room and psychiatric unit for MU Health Care and a new master’s degree program in applied behavior analysis.

The hospital expansion will add about 20,000 square feet, providing 23 new beds for the 26-bed emergency department and 10 new beds for the 14-bed psychiatric unit.

The emergency room serves an average of 160 people each day and treated 23.8 percent more people in the year that ended June 30 than five years earlier, according to figures provided by hospital spokeswoman Mary Jenkins.

The curators also approved a new policy to allow informal discussions between curators, faculty and students, an avenue of communication that former UM President Tim Wolfe tried to stifle.

In the bitter letter Wolfe wrote in January about his resignation, he complained that curators “called subordinate staff and faculty members to dig up dirt.”

The new policy calls for lunches with student leaders during board meetings at each campus and visits by the board vice chair and chair of the Academic, Student and External Affairs Committee to the Intercampus Faculty Council.

Curator David Steelman, who was the target of Wolfe’s complaint, said he wants more discussions.

“I am always willing to accept an invitation to any faculty council,” he said.

MISSOURIAN

MU Student Health Center trimming services to students
COLUMBIA — No more free back rubs. No more free flu shots.

Those are two of the cuts students are likely to feel most keenly as the MU Student Health Center adapts financially to the expected drop in number of students attending the university next fall, according to an email sent to MU Student Health Center staff last week.

Student Health Center Executive Director Susan Even wrote in the email that the anticipated student enrollment is at the same level as fiscal year 2011, which is about 2,000 students fewer than the fall 2015 enrollment total.

In the email sent April 7, Even said the changes include but are not limited to:

- Eliminating the Stressbusters program, which provides free massages and stress-reduction information.
- Not rehiring graduate students who coordinate some wellness programs.
- Not filling a vacant position for a licensed practical nurse.
- Charging MU students for flu shots at a price still to be determined.
- Ending outreach immunization clinics for flu or for rabies for veterinary medicine students, except for international students and students with learning disabilities.
- Phasing out a staff physician position.

The well-liked Stressbusters program provides free five-minute back rubs to MU students in the Student Center from 1 to 2 p.m. every day, usually about 30 each day.
Stressbusters President Jackson Osaghae-Nosa said he knew the MU Student Health Center was ending its support of the organization a few weeks ago, but he said he and other leaders in health promotion and wellness had no additional details.

Osaghae-Nosa said Stressbusters is looking for a new home and hopes to be able to continue relieving student stress.

Other organizations and classes under health promotion and wellness are being reviewed, including BREATHE, which provides a form of meditation centered on the breath, and SHAPE, which advocates for and teaches about sexual health. Some health promotion and wellness classes meet in the Newman Center, and the email states the MU Student Health Center's contract with the Newman Center is also being assessed.

MU students pay a general health fee for organizations under health promotion and wellness, as well as for flu shots, but no information has been released about whether budget cuts will affect that cost.

"I would like to acknowledge that we are all affected in some way by these changes and change is always a very difficult process," Even said to staff in the email. "My goal is always to strive to communicate openly and directly with you as we make these changes."

**MISSOURIAN**

**Positions, collections and hours to be trimmed from MU Libraries budget**

RACHEL PHILLIPS, Apr 15, 2016

COLUMBIA — **MU Libraries is planning to cut positions, collections and hours as part of $894,000 in expected budget cuts for the 2017 fiscal year, Ann Riley, director of libraries, said Friday.**
These cuts follow a memo sent by MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley on March 9 announcing a campuswide hiring freeze and a 5-percent cut to MU’s general revenue budget for fiscal year 2017.

Because of a decrease in student enrollment and retention for the fall 2016 semester and the amount of necessary investments, MU faces an expected $32 million budget gap, according to the memo. The gap does not account for any losses due to a decrease in state appropriations. If the estimate remains accurate, the school will have to cut $10 million more next year.

MU libraries also have reduced funding because of a failed vote for a tuition fee increase that would have gone toward library operations and improvements. The fee would have started at $5 per credit hour in the 2016-17 school year and then increased to $15 by the 2021-22 school year. By 2022, it would have generated an estimated additional $12.9 million for the libraries.

"When we didn't get the fee, that was very unfortunate for us because we knew we were going to have to cut quite a bit, and then we got the 5 percent cut on top of that," Riley said.

She said the reductions in collections and hours were particularly tied to the failed fee vote.

In December, the Missourian reported that 24-hour access to Ellis Library is expected to end after the spring semester. Riley echoed the sentiment, and said hours would be cut unless another source of funding is found.

An additional $1 million will be cut from the collections budget — which is used for services such as buying materials and subscribing to databases — due to inflation and rising costs over the past few years that budget increases have not matched, Riley said. The $1.2 million in materials cuts will primarily affect online journal and database subscriptions, Riley said.

"We're working with the Campus Library Committee, our student advisory committee and the Faculty Council to consult them on our materials cuts," she said.
As for the position cuts, eight people are leaving because of retirement or attrition, and the library expects to fill only two of the vacated spots, Riley said.

Some part-time and student positions will also be eliminated, though the number is uncertain, Riley said. "If people leave, unless it's an essential function, we won't rehire."

Riley said most of the cuts would be effective July 1 at the start of fiscal year 2017, but some would depend on when people are leaving their positions.

**MU units work to tighten belt around budget**

Director of Student Life Mark Lucas: “Our job is to provide experiences for all the different components of our campus, and we will still be able to do that, we just may not be able to do that as much to benefit the people who are paying for it."

**MU colleges, schools and departments have been working to trim their budgets following interim Chancellor Hank Foley’s announcement of a 5 percent budget cut, including laying off staff, not filling open positions and not providing merit raises.**

The anticipated $32 million budget shortfall comes from a projected 1,500 fewer students for fall 2016. Even with the 5 percent cut, MU will still be $10 million short of reaching $32 million. Reserve money will be used to make up the difference, Foley wrote in the email announcing the shortfall. In addition to the cut, Foley has imposed a hiring freeze. It is up to the discretion of campus administrators to hire faculty or staff, but the need must be “exceptional,” he wrote in the email.

**What’s being affected**

For the College of Arts and Science, that means cutting $4.2 million. Dean Michael O’Brien said he is hoping most of that money can come from not filling open positions.

“Level of instruction will not be affected,” O’Brien said about the decision to hire fewer faculty. “We may have to offer some larger classes … (but) I think we've done a really good job of holding that kind of thing absolutely the same.”

Jim Spain, vice provost for Undergraduate Studies, said laying off staff will be a last resort for his department because of the negative effect it will have on delivering services to students, such
as the Learning Center and Academic Retention Services. He said he's unsure of what will be cut first, but that there will not be a standard cut for every program.

“We're working so that we minimize the impact on the student services that we're providing through the Student Success Center, for example,” Spain said. “So we will have minimal cuts to zero cuts with the Learning Center, with Academic Retention Services, so that we can maintain those core student support student success services in the Student Success Center.”

Spain said not taking that approach would hurt students.

“Some of our programs will have a 0 percent cut, and other programs will have a 7 to 9 percent cut,” Spain said. “We're doing that so we minimize the number of disruptions of services in support of students.”

Director of Student Life Mark Lucas said that layoffs are in the future for the department.

“We will have fewer people,” Lucas said. “That's a fact; it's already in the books that way. We will have quite a few less people working in Student Life. We will have fewer student employees.”

Lucas said that the Department of Student Life is losing $100,000 a year and is increasingly having to do more with less.

“We only get $1 million in student fees,” Lucas said. “I say 'only' because if we're losing more than $100,000 a year, you're losing 10 percent of your entire budget in one year.”

MU Operations will be cutting 50 jobs, according to an email from Vice Chancellor Gary Ward obtained by the Columbia Missourian. Unfilled positions will remain unfilled, layoffs will occur and fewer student positions will be available in the fall.

Among other changes, faculty will be responsible for emptying the trash from their offices, and trash from Saturday football game tailgates will not be cleaned up until Monday. Snow removal and response times for maintenance requests will also be slower.

“We will be unable to sustain the level of service for which you have become accustomed,” Ward wrote in the email. “I do not anticipate that changes beginning July 1, 2016, will inhibit the academic mission at Mizzou, nor is it my intention for that to ever happen.”

The Trulaske College of Business will not be making layoffs, but it will be instituting the cuts in other ways, interim Dean Stephen Ferris said in an email.

“Unfortunately, we will be unable to grant merit raises for the coming year,” Ferris said in the email.
Kathryn Chval, dean of the College of Education, said her school will be eliminating positions from the administrative level down to graduate student level. She said in an email that faculty and staff have been professional throughout conversations regarding the budget cuts.

“Our faculty and professional staff have provided valuable insights into suggested cost-saving measures that we can make as well as ways in which we can increase revenue by offering further programs and services to the current Missouri workforce,” Chval said in the email.

In an email to faculty and staff following Foley’s announcement, Chval said that searches started before his announcement would be continued; future searches will depend on the necessity of the position.

MU Libraries will be losing $894,000 as a result of the budget cuts, according to the Missourian. These cuts will affect employee numbers, collections and hours. The libraries have already had to make cuts after a proposed library fee was failed.

Making the cuts

Lucas is allowing his staff to prioritize and decide what to cut. He said that he decides the monetary amount that programs will have to cut and his staff then has conversations.

“We sit down with everyone and say, 'OK guys, we can only do 80 things, let's figure out what those 80 things are for next year,’” Lucas said. “As these discussions are happening in each office, I have staff that will update me on those discussions.”

O’Brien said he is also allowing each department within the College of Arts and Science to decide what to cut. He said despite the hard conversations about the budget, the faculty has been cooperative and understanding.

“I think they've responded like the true great citizens of the campus they are,” O’Brien said. “I work carefully with the chairs of the departments and the programs, they work with their faculty, we try to make everything as transparent as possible … We don't like it, but at least we know everyone’s under the same gun, somebody's not being treated better or worse than someone else.”

The budget shortfall, Spain said, will have a multi-year impact. His department is already planning ahead to reduce disruption in future years.

“Our budget planning scenarios are actually accommodating to our need to think forward or think ahead … It allows us, I think, to have a better handle on what cuts and what size of cuts to make within programs this year that will minimize not only the disruption this year, but can help us minimize the disruption the next fiscal year as well,” Spain said.

While there will still be campus programs and activities for students, Lucas said, they will be different than they are currently.
“Our job is to make the out-of-class experience really meaningful,” Lucas said. “Our job is to provide those experiences for all the different components of our campus, and we will still be able to do that, we just may not be able to do that as much to benefit the people who are paying for it. It's going to change.”

University of Missouri countersues professor in gun lawsuit

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The University of Missouri is countersuing a law school professor who has asked a court to invalidate the university’s ban on firearms.

Royce de R. Barondes’ case has the potential to redefine the limits of acceptable gun regulations under the Missouri Constitution, which voters amended in 2014 to make the right to bear arms “unalienable.”

But since his attorney filed the lawsuit in September in Cole County, the university’s team of private attorneys has moved the case to federal court and sought a court order forbidding Barondes from bringing a gun onto campus.

Jennifer Bukowsky, the attorney representing Barondes, told The Associated Press that the university’s “aggressive” approach is slowing down the case and making it more expensive.

She wants to move on to arguing the merits of Barondes’ case, she said, “but they’re making it very difficult to get to that point.”

Barondes, a tenured professor who teaches a class on firearms law and is licensed to carry a concealed weapon, claimed the university’s rules against carrying a weapon on campus violate his rights under the U.S. and state constitutions, as well as a state law that allows public employees to keep guns locked in their cars.
In their court filings, the university’s attorneys wrote that the board of curators is charged with creating a safe environment, and the rule banning guns is narrowly tailored to achieve that objective.

“The right to keep and bear arms under the federal and state constitutions is laudable, but not absolute,” they write, noting that the university includes hospitals and day cares and hosts large events.

They also note that the state’s laws on concealed weapon permits do not allow people to carry weapons into a higher education institution without the permission of the governing board.

But Republican lawmakers are considering changing that. The House is debating a measure that would allow people with a concealed carry license to take guns some places on campus. Republicans have proposed similar measures in the Senate, though they have not advanced since a January committee hearing.

Meanwhile, Bukowsky argues that for the board of curators to withhold consent violates Barondes’ civil rights.

A spokesman for the University of Missouri System declined to comment other than pointing to the rule prohibiting weapons on university property. A spokesman for the Columbia campus did not return calls requesting comment, nor did the university’s attorneys at Bryan Cave’s offices in St. Louis and Kansas City.

Courts typically have been hesitant to rewrite gun regulations from the bench, said Gregory Magarian, a professor at Washington University’s School of Law. But the caveat there is that state courts deal with different legal standards than federal courts, he said.

Bukowsky said Barondes is dropping his Second Amendment claims in an effort to bring the case back to state court.

 Generally speaking, Missouri’s 2014 constitutional change makes challenging a gun regulation “substantially more likely to succeed than if you were only going on the Second Amendment,” Magarian said.

Both Barondes and the university are seeking to recoup attorney fees and court costs — though Bukowsky says the possible cost of the university’s four attorneys is a daunting expense.
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MISSOURIAN

New protest emerges in criticism of MU's new retiree health insurance policy

GUOHAO CHEN, Apr 15, 2016

COLUMBIA — Since February, the UM System Board of Curators has been talking about making cuts to retiree health insurance benefits. On Tuesday, the board voted in favor of the cut. On Friday, a group of about 10 people gathered in front of Jesse Hall to bring their dissatisfaction into the public eye.

The group made up of retirees and a graduate student affected by the new policy held signs sporting phrases such as "Mizzou lies" and "MU Must Stop Disrupting Our Lives."

The curators voted Tuesday to limit retirement medical benefits for 84 percent of eligible employees to reduce a budget deficit. The new policy will give about 11,000 employees with at
least five years of service $100 for each year they've worked in the UM System, with a cap of $2,500.

For 16 percent of employees, the UM System will continue paying up to 73 percent of monthly premiums for employees ages 60 and up with at least 20 years of service, as well as for those whose combined age and tenure add up to at least 80 years, according to previous Missourian reporting.

About 5,400 people hired after Jan. 1, 2013, will not receive health insurance benefits after they retire.

Employees who are 60 or older and have been working for the UM System for at least 20 years won't be affected.

Karen Piper, a 51-year-old English professor at MU, organized the protest. She started working at MU in August 1996 and falls into the affected category with about 11,000 others — what the UM System calls "Category C."

She said that with rising health care costs, the subsidy wouldn't be enough to pay for her medical costs post-retirement.

“When I retire, I will have to pay so much for insurance, and I won’t able to afford it,” Piper said.

She would have gotten about 75 percent of her retiree health care costs covered by the university prior to the policy change.

Drew Amidei, an English graduate student, also participated in the protest. He and other graduate workers faced health insurance subsidy cuts in the fall semester, which resulted in a widespread outcry. In January, MU's administration announced the subsidies would be restored.

“Both staff and faculty have been really supportive of graduate student. ...,” Amidei said. “I’m here in solidarity because they supported me, and I feel like I need to support them.”
Lincoln Sheets, 53, will start work as an associate professor in the School of Medicine in June. He will not get any health care insurance when he retires because he is a new hire.

“I think there is a pattern of the decisions by the administration to make unilateral decisions about finances," he said.

Sheets said he understood the administration had difficult financial constraints, but he thinks they were making the cuts "at the expense of the faculty and the staff and the graduate students."

“There are lots of other things that we could consider cutting back on. That needs to be discussed by the entire community, not just people inside the Jesse Hall,” he said.

MU faculty members protest against retiree changes

COLUMBIA — Faculty members reacted to the changes to retiree insurance recently decided by the UM System Board of Curators.

Several faculty members brought signs to the south side of Jesse Hall Friday to show their opinion on changing the retiree health benefits. The signs had several messages such as "MU, stop disrupting our lives!" and "Give me my health care back!"

Karen Piper, an English professor at MU for the last 20 years, organized the protest by sending out an email and posting an update about it on her personal Facebook. However, she doesn’t expect much to happen after the protest.

“I had to do something," Piper said. "I can’t say nothing. That is all I’m hoping to get out of it."
The changes will limit medical benefits for a large part of the retirees of UM System starting from 2018.

At that point an employee must be benefits-eligible with at least five years of service prior to January 1, 2018 to get benefits. The person must also be at least 60 years of age and have at least 20 years of service to the UM System on the date of retirement.

An employee will receive the same percentage subsidy as previous retirees if their age and years of service add up to 80 or more. If it adds up to less, the employee will get an annual subsidy of $100 per year of service up to $2,500 annually.

“With these changes, the UM System maintains our commitment to fiscal responsibility while respecting the very real needs of our faculty and staff. The changes place us on a path to reducing projected liabilities by over $5 billion by 2050, while preserving access to UM retiree insurance for more than three quarters of our employees,” it said.

But the focus on reducing liabilities isn’t a great argument according to Karen Piper.

“They say, they are saving $5 billion,” Piper said. "But they are taking those $5 billion from us."

UM System Board of Curators voted to approve the changes this Thursday.

MISSOURIAN

MU pays respects to recently-deceased students at remembrance event

BRIANNA STUBLER, Apr 15, 2016

COLUMBIA — The mood was somber Friday afternoon in Memorial Union as friends, family and community members paid their respects to MU students who died in the past year.

Provost Garnett Stokes emphasized how MU is more than a community — it’s a family, and though some members are physically gone, their memories remain.

“Although these people are not with us, their hopes and dreams are kept alive,” Vice Chancellor Cathy Scroggs said.
She encouraged everyone to think of a positive memory of those who had died.

“Families experience happiness and sadness together, and the MU family is no different in that regard,” Scroggs said. "We want to both celebrate and mourn their contributions to the university."

Ryan Marquardt from the School of Music played a tribute on his guitar.

MSA President Sean Earl gave a brief eulogy for each person. At one point, he became overcome with grief and had to pause before continuing. He talked about each individual — their contributions to the university, the community and their hopes and dreams.

Hallie Thompson, the president of the Graduate Student Professional Council, offered condolences to family and friends. She quoted Maya Angelou, saying that "A great soul never dies."

“In their own ways, each of these students contributed to campus and in doing so, continues to live on in the Mizzou community," Thompson said.

Following a moment of silence, lights were dimmed for a photo slideshow, and Brad Paisley’s "When I Get Where I’m Going" played in the background.

The pictures were followed by the quote, “If there ever comes a time when we’re not together, keep me in your heart. I’ll stay there forever.”

The following students were honored:

- **McKenna Campbell** from South Elgin, Illinois, died Sept. 26. She was a sophomore at MU in the School of Health Professions.

Family and friends remembered her at a candlelight vigil held on Francis Quadrangle in late September as a selfless person who was involved with the Christian-affiliated sorority Sigma Phi Lambda, according to an article in the Maneater.
Campbell's father announced at the vigil that her death was ruled an accidental alcohol overdose.

- **DeAndra Carter** of Columbia died May 31. She was a senior graphic design student at MU.

She is remembered for her strong work ethic and high moral standards, according to her biography on Memorial Funeral Home's website.

She graduated from Moberly Area Community College in 2013 with an associate's degree.

- **Kayce Goldberg** from Dallas, Texas, died March 9. She was a freshman at MU in the School of Human and Environmental Sciences.

She was remembered for her lighthearted personality in a vigil held by members of her sorority, Phi Mu, according to an article in the Maneater.

- **Curtis Ham** of Winfield, Missouri, died Dec. 8. He was a senior at MU majoring in political science.

He enjoyed playing sports, especially football, wrestling and baseball, according to an Alternative Funeral Cremation obituary.

He is remembered for his huge heart and ability to make friends with anyone.

- **Alexander Johnston** of Ballwin, Missouri, died April 5. He was a senior at MU in the College of Arts and Science.

His favorite phrase was, “Don't worry about it, it'll work out,” according to an obituary in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

In his memory, a college scholarship fund was started for his goddaughter, Lux Renee Metroff.

- **Jacob Meyers** of Normal, Illinois, died Dec. 13. He was an engineering student at MU.

An obituary said he was a "bright and shining light in the lives of all he touched."

- **Paul Miltenberger** from Southlake, Texas, died April 5. He was a business student at MU.
One of his dreams was to open a food truck named "Tacos and Tequila,” according to an article in the Columbia Missourian.

He was a member of Beta Theta Pi and will be remembered for his humor. He died in a hit-and-run accident.

- **Michael Niles** of Columbia died Nov. 8. He was a fine arts student at MU.

He loved art, skateboarding, music, animals, reading and laughing, according to an obituary in the Columbia Tribune. He will be remembered for his joyful spirit.

- **Christopher Parsons** of Wildwood, Missouri, died Jan. 17. He was a fourth-year nursing student at MU who was dedicated to helping others.

He was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and will be remembered for his loving and hilarious personality, according to an article by the Maneater.

- **Elizabeth Upton** of Columbia died May 3. She graduated from Rock Bridge High School in December and studied textile and apparel management at MU in the spring.

She enjoyed traveling and poetry and is remembered for her kind heart and open mind, according to a life story in the Missourian.

She died in a car accident.

- **Matthew Wade** of Florissant, Missouri, died Feb. 22.

He was a senior at MU in the College of Arts and Science.

- **Matthew Yarick** of Hume, Missouri, died May 16. He was a senior studying biology at MU.

He loved being outside and spending time with his family. He is remembered for always being part of the action, according to an obituary in Obits for Life.
Search committee approves qualifications for next UM system president

ROLLA, Mo - A committee leading the search for a new president of the University of Missouri system nagged by racial unrest says candidates must have "a deft command" of communications and public relations.

The committee approved a list of qualifications for the successor to Tim Wolfe during a meeting Thursday in Rolla of the system's governing board of curators.

Wolfe resigned in November along with the Columbia campus' chancellor amid protests spurred by what activists said was administrators' indifference to racial issues on campus.

The 12-point list of qualifications approved Thursday also requires candidates for the system's presidency to have an acumen to handle political and business relationships, as well as the business judgment to run a large organization.

MU officials say the following qualifications were assimilated through a statewide effort to engage various constituencies and stakeholders in a series of dialogues and listening sessions related to the search:

- Fluency in, and a passion and respect for, the culture of public higher education and the System’s unique mission;
- An abiding interest in the development and success of students, faculty, and staff, with sincere respect and honor for their contributions;
- A fundamental commitment to the importance of research and the pursuit of academic excellence;
- The acumen necessary to cultivate key political, civic and business relationships essential to leading a public university system; demonstrated success in securing resources and support from public sector agencies;
- A deft command of communications and public relations that enables the broad dissemination of the System’s vision to the broader communities it serves;
- A multi-culturally competent individual with a demonstrated awareness and sensitivity for all people and who will foster and create a supportive climate and internal systems to evidence the same;
• Ability to create an enduring social compact with the citizens of the state that generates a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, the critical importance of University of Missouri System to the economic viability and success of all Missourians;
• A tireless advocate and relationship builder, attentive to many highly varied constituents as well as the ability to appreciate institutional memory while moving the institution forward;
• The ability to communicate effectively across numerous audiences, with a demonstrated capacity to listen actively, engage constructively, and motivate others to action through a compelling vision he or she can articulate broadly;
• A strong executive leadership record in a complex organization, with a demonstrated ability to develop and drive strategy, and appropriately steward resources to ensure education remains affordable;
• Demonstrated business judgement to foster continuous performance improvement and accountability, and to guide the operational effectiveness and organizational efficiencies within an organization; and,
• The experience and talent to assemble and empower an exceptional leadership team and to work with a committed Board of Curators.

MISSOURIAN

FROM READERS: MU Confucius Institute shares Chinese culture with community
DAN LI/MISSOURIAN READER, Apr 14, 2016

Dan Li is the Chinese director of MU Confucius Institute. The MU Confucius Institute holds events to celebrate Chinese traditional festivals and shares Chinese culture in Columbia.

I'm a professor in the college of Humanities and Communications, Shanghai Normal University. I teach and research in the field of literary criticism and poetry. Two years ago, I applied for the position as Chinese director of MU Confucius Institute co-operated by MU and SHNU. I came to Columbia in August 2015 after the examination and training. My main duty here is to teach Chinese language and to publicize the Chinese culture.

Teaching Chinese is the most basic work of the Confucius Institute. Every day, Confucius Institute teachers go to teach in local schools. I taught Chinese lessons in Rock Bridge High
School last semester, which included the basic knowledge such as pronunciation, conversation and Chinese character writing. The teaching started with pinyin, greetings and strokes and ended in reading passages, having conversations and writing complicated characters. The students improved their ability in Chinese a lot within the semester.

This semester, the Confucius Institute has been offering Mandarin lessons for students, faculties and other learners from the community. The course is divided into three levels. The daily life culture is taught in level 1; the popular culture is taught in level 2, and the historical culture is taught in level 3. I'm responsible for level 3, which generally is in heated discussion because the topics of historical culture are attractive, and the students have an abundance of background knowledge and strong ability in comprehension.

During the last 5 months, the Confucius Institute has held several cultural events, such as Chinese Dumpling Festival, Spring Festival and Lantern Festival.

For the Dumpling Festival, to show the variety of Chinese food for the guests, we made different kinds of food such as Jiaozi, pancake, fried rice, steamed noodles and dishes, and invited guests to make dumplings by themselves and experience Chinese food culture. More than 100 people from MU, Columbia Public Schools and community took part in the event and warmly welcomed the Chinese food.

In February, we celebrated the 2016 Chinese Spring Festival at Battle High School. Fourteen shows were performed by more than 70 teachers and students from 10 local schools. The performances included poem recitation, singing, dancing and drama playing. Both traditional Chinese performances and modern popular shows were all well received.

This was the first time that such kind of event was held by the Confucius Institute. Its main purpose was to take exercises on students' ability in Chinese expression and spread Chinese culture visually. It was reported that more than 200 people came to watch the showcase and the event was widely accepted and welcomed by the community.
On Feb. 22, we held the celebration for the Lantern Festival with activities such as making lanterns, guessing riddles and eating sweet dumplings. Lantern-making is the highlight of the event. To leave a deep impression and combine the United States' DIY culture, we provided one hundred lantern models with different shapes to let the guests make lanterns of their own. After finishing lantern-making, the guests ate sweet dumplings as well as guessing riddles to taste the cultural implication of the activities. The event was filled with laughter and happiness while Chinese culture soaked into the Columbia community in a soft and gentle way.

In order to integrate deeply into the community of Columbia, more works will be done by Confucius Institute in the field of Chinese teaching and Chinese culture publicity.

The Kansas City Star.

April 16, 2016 7:44 PM

Former MU football coach Gary Pinkel settles into retirement

Autumns will be different after 45 years devoted to college football as a player and coach.

His 118 wins with the Tigers are more than anyone else in program’s history.

By Tod Palmer

tpalmer@kcstar.com

Gary Pinkel is in for a shock Sept. 10 when Missouri plays Eastern Michigan in its 2016 home opener at Memorial Stadium.

That’s where he’ll watch the program he nurtured into one of the nation’s best storm Faurot Field without him for the first time in 16 seasons.

Tears might come easily that afternoon, but what he really needs to brace for is “Mizzouka” — the 75-millimeter howitzer, which the Mizzou Army ROTC fires to earth-shaking effect after each score.
Pinkel won more games as the Tigers’ head coach than anyone in program history, which dates back to 1890.

Former Missouri head football coach Gary Pinkel was inducted Sunday into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame during a ceremony in Springfield. He spoke about how things have changed now that he has retired from coaching.

Beginning in 2001, Mizzou went 118-73 in 15 seasons with Pinkel at the helm, including five Big 12/SEC division championships and 10 bowl-game appearances.

Somehow, in 95 home games, Pinkel said he never heard Mizzouka’s bone-jarring report.

“It blows my mind that he never heard the cannon,” Pinkel’s wife, Missy Pinkel, said by phone last week. “Seriously, that thing shakes the stadium. It rocks the whole place, but that’s how focused he was as a coach.”

Gary Pinkel missed more than cannon blasts during 45 years devoted to college football as a player and coach.

Two years ago, when he and Missy were dating — the couple was married last June — she called him to say goodnight one autumn evening.

“The trees here at the lake are just so gorgeous,” she said. “They’re every color you can imagine.”

Gary hadn’t noticed. He never noticed the leaves change color in the fall.

The time suck of recruiting left no time to enjoy winter’s first snow and spring practice prevented Pinkel from appreciating nature’s annual renewal.

Aside from occasional motorcycle rides, he spent most summer days cooped up in an office preparing for another season as life for his family and friends eddied around him.

“Before you back away from it, you don’t realize how consuming it really is,” Gary Pinkel said by phone last week. “You’re up every day at 5:30 working out, getting coffee at 7 and being in the office by 7:30 for meetings all day long. Then, you do it again. I look back at it and go, ‘My goodness,’ but I didn’t think anything of it at the time. I loved what I did and I was blessed.”

The first few months of marriage were eye-opening for Missy Pinkel.

Her new husband was up every two hours, waking her as he obsessed about football-related minutiae. That didn’t stop immediately after Gary Pinkel retired.

“I’ve been changing pillows, thinking maybe it was the pillows,” Missy said. “Now that he doesn’t have to think about all the ifs and buts and whats, he should be getting rest. I bought probably
six pillows in the last two months, thinking that would help him get rest. We’ve determined the best pillow for him is extra firm and, boy, isn’t that a shock.”

Now, Pinkel, who announced Nov. 13 that he had follicular lymphoma and would retire, counts new blessings as he embarks on his first spring without football since he was a freshman tight end at Kent State in 1971.

“I miss the players,” he said. “Spring ball was always fun, because you can’t really win or lose. It’s just about getting better all the time. You didn’t have the pressures of the season, but at the end of the day it’s nice being out of the grind.”

Driving along Mick Deaver Memorial Drive between Memorial Stadium and the Hearnes Center, Gary Pinkel would catch himself glancing at the 40-foot picture of him prowling the sidelines that adorned the east-side expansion.

He called Missy one day in January, “I don’t know how much longer that will be up.”

It was a rough welcome-to-retirement moment a few weeks later when he drove by and noticed it had been taken down, but there also have been wonderful moments.

The Pinkels will plot an NFL tour this summer, so he can catch up with former players who are #MizzouMade — a social-media construct that encapsulates MU’s player-development gains on his watch.

The couple also is feverishly checking off bucket-list concerts.

By his own admission, Gary Pinkel “stood up like a teenager and clapped the entire show” at a recent Paul McCartney performance.

He and Missy also went to see Michael Bublé and hope to catch shows by Lionel Richie, Kenny Chesney and Earth, Wind & Fire soon.

“I even got him to get a facial,” she said. “I told him it was good for his blood flow.”

He’s a shutterbug at his grandkids’ soccer games and an inquisitive parent at stepson Jace’s track meets.

“He even went to (stepdaughter) Mira’s dance competitions,” said Missy, a Mizzou alum from Grandview. “He’s getting a chance to do all these things he honestly didn’t even get a chance to do with his kids. It’s really cool, though.”

Not everything is cool. Picking up dry cleaning is a new experience for Gary Pinkel and he’s already grown weary of doing laundry.
“He throws all the colors in the same load,” Missy Pinkel complained. “That’s such a guy thing.”

Otherwise, Gary Pinkel said he’s adjusting well to retirement — downshifting, as he calls it — even if it was early April before he slept through the night.

“It’s gradual,” Missy said. “There was a lot going on even still in his head, but he’s slowly getting accustomed to retirement. Here’s how I know. The other day he said, ‘Look how green the grass is getting.’ He’s never noticed anything like that.”

Most things still come back to football for Gary Pinkel, who compares awaiting PET scan results to a fourth-and-1 play in the final 30 seconds of a close game.

Missy Pinkel also feels it.

“Your anxiety level, your stress level — it just takes your breath away,” she said. “You’re numb basically. As a fan, you feel it, but intensify that by about 600 times. That’s what it feels like when he’s waiting for PET scan results.”

Pinkel’s next PET scan is scheduled for early May, a few days after his 64th birthday.

Weighed against his health, Pinkel decided to forego the stresses of major-college football, even with perks like a $4 million annual salary.

Last fall was a challenging time for Pinkel. He was reeling from a cancer diagnosis and at a loss to fix a struggling offense, especially after starting quarterback Maty Mauk was suspended for the final eight games of the season.

“He’s GP, but during the season last year I substituted GP as ‘grumpy pants,’” Missy Pinkel said. “He had a lot of those moments this last year.”

Gary Pinkel understands that everyone didn’t approve of his handling of the brief player boycott in November and he’s aware that his name was invoked by a grandstanding senator in the Missouri legislature during funding hearings.

“I don’t want to go into it, but I stand by my press conference,” Gary Pinkel said. “I want to remain positive, so I will not comment.”

Missy Pinkel said her husband has no regrets.

“It’s too bad how things happened, but there are things that happen on every campus,” Missy Pinkel said. “He knows in his heart that he did what he needed to do.”
Between his new fundraising/public relations role, speaking engagements — during which he imparts lessons learned from 25 years as a head coach or gleaned from his mentor, Don James — Pinkel finds ways to fill his time.

He's even weighing a few offers to work in broadcasting after working as an analyst on the SEC Network during the conference championship and College Football Playoff title games.

Pinkel knows he'll miss game day, at least until Mizzouka’s first boom gives him an arrhythmia, but “I won’t miss anything that leads up to it,” he said. “I won’t miss anything afterwards either. But, boy, I loved once the whistle blew.”

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Ripples From a Protest Past

In 1969, an armed occupation by black students roiled Cornell’s campus. Here’s why it still matters today.

Walking past the heavy wooden doors of Willard Straight Hall that April afternoon in 1969, Ed Whitfield felt relieved. For 36 hours he and other members of the Afro-American Society had occupied Cornell University’s student union, and now, with the tense standoff over, the lanky sophomore was leading his fellow protesters out into the cool Ithaca air.

In his left hand, he gripped notes he had taken during the negotiations with administrators to end the occupation; in his right, a loaded rifle, a 7.65-millimeter Argentine Mauser.

As he and other armed students left the building, a crowd of students, reporters, and other onlookers seemed stunned.

"Oh my God, look at those goddamned guns," said Steve Starr, a photographer for the Associated Press, who snapped a picture of the dramatic departure, a shot that would win a Pulitzer Prize.
Looking back, Mr. Whitfield, now 66, says he never expected to become a symbol, one that is both celebrated and derided. As the group’s president, he was focused on the safety of the other black students and himself.

"We wanted to make our leaving a public activity for the sake of our own protection," he says. "I wasn’t thinking what the photographs would look like."

Yet that iconic photo has become something of a Rorschach test.

To some it shows a victory to be celebrated, a moment when higher education started listening to African-American students and offered them an opportunity to help shape their own academic experiences.


As one historian, Mr. Kendi of the University of Florida, noted, Cornell in 1969 was in some ways a "climax" to an era of unprecedented student protest and activism. In 2015, the University of Missouri, where students forced out a president and grabbed headlines, inspired campus demonstrations all across the nation. Mizzou, he says, was a "trigger" to a social movement.

It’s a movement that history will ultimately judge, answering the question: Did today’s students and university leaders learn any lessons from the past?