A new study links walking the dog with lower body mass index, fewer doctor visits, more frequent exercise, and an increase in social benefits among older adults.

“Our study explored the associations between dog ownership and pet bonding with walking behavior and health outcomes in older adults,” says Rebecca Johnson, a professor at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, and professor of gerontological nursing in the Sinclair School of Nursing. “This study provides evidence for the association between dog walking and physical health using a large, nationally representative sample.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults of all ages should engage in 150 or more minutes of moderate physical activity per week. Among adults 60 years of age or more, walking is the most common form of leisure-time physical activity because it is self-paced, low impact, and does not require equipment.

The study analyzes 2012 data from the Health and Retirement study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Social Security Administration. The study includes data about human-animal interactions, physical activity, frequency of doctor visits, and health outcomes of the participants.
“Our results showed that dog ownership and walking were related to increases in physical health among older adults,” says Johnson, who also serves as director of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction. “These results can provide the basis for medical professionals to recommend pet ownership for older adults and can be translated into reduced health care expenditures for the aging population.”

Results from the study also indicate that people with higher degrees of pet bonding were more likely to walk their dogs and to spend more time walking their dogs each time than those who reported weaker bonds. Additionally, the study shows that pet walking offers a means to socialize with pet owners and others.

Retirement communities also could be encouraged to incorporate more pet-friendly policies such as including dog-walking trails and dog exercise areas so that their residents could have access to the health benefits, Johnson says.

The study appears in the journal The Gerontologist. Angela L. Curl of Miami University and Jessica Bibbo of the University of Missouri also contributed to the study.

MU researchers say dogs can affect their older owner's physical health

COLUMBIA - Researchers at the University of Missouri found a new link between dogs and their impact on the health of older owners.

A team led by Rebecca Johnson, professor at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, discovered a positive relationship between older adults’ physical health and the bond that owners have with their dog.
The study found that dog owners who walk their dogs regularly have a significantly lower BMI than people who do not. Other health benefits of the regular dog walkers included fewer chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and high blood pressure.

"Those who walked their dogs had fewer everyday limitations in their daily activities," said Jessica Bibbo, a graduate research assistant at the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction (ReCHIA).

Bibbo said the most important finding is that the owner's bond with the dog facilitated the dog walking. Those owners who had a higher degree of bond with their dog were more likely to spend time and engage in activity with their dog.

"This activity is what really allowed for the health benefits," Bibbo said.

The population analyzed in the study included 500 non-dog owners and 271 dog owners. The adults surveyed were 50 years of age or older. According to Johnson, the sample was purposely chosen to be representative of the national population.

The results from the study are consistent with previous dog walking research at the ReCHAI.

"In our previous research, we were able to show that we could improve older adults' walking speed by having them walk with shelter dogs on a regular basis," Johnson said.

Johnson has also published two books based on her research into dog walking.

"The beauty of dog walking is that it does benefit both sides of the leash," she said.

The journal Gerontologist recently published the study. More information on Johnson and her team's research can be found on the MU website.

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University of Missouri secures funding boost, limited cut to administration in budget deal

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at 3:21 pm
JEFFERSON CITY — **Power and patience protected the University of Missouri during budget negotiations between the House and Senate and both are likely to be in short supply next year.**

In a budget conference committee on higher education, the Columbia campus was spared, the UM System administration cut was scaled back to $3.8 million and the university as a whole would receive $17.1 million from a pool of $37.2 million set aside for increased aid for public colleges and universities.

The $13.3 million net increase to this year’s appropriation of $434 million is a best-case scenario in a year when lawmakers toyed with the idea of no appropriation at all and the Senate’s top leader called for the UM budget to get “a haircut.”

“When you have people who care a lot about the university on the conference committee, that usually yields results,” said House Budget Committee Vice Chairman Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob, referring to Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, and state Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia.

The final versions of 13 bills that detail how $27.1 billion will be spent in the year beginning July 1 were approved Wednesday by conference committees and will face floor votes Thursday in both chambers.

The increased aid to colleges and universities, set at 4 percent overall, drew promises that students would be spared a tuition increase this year.

Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education, told the negotiators that four-year universities would not increase tuition for the 2016-17 school year. The council consists of the presidents and chancellors of the state's 13 four-year campuses.

“We met last week and discussed several factors involved,” Wagner said in an interview. “It is really just a decision of what we thought was practical and possible here in the Capitol.”

Representatives of State Technical College of Missouri and community colleges also said their institutions would forgo a tuition increase. Gov. Jay Nixon in September promised college and university leaders that he would seek a 6 percent increase in funding in exchange for no tuition increases.

When the budget left the House, the UM System administration was facing a $7.6 million cut. The House Budget Committee allocated $9.4 million for increased state aid but cut UM out of the distribution. And on the House floor, by an 83-75 vote, the Columbia campus budget was cut by $1 million.

The Senate in its version cut only $1 million, from the UM System administration, and awarded the university about $27 million of the $55.8 million dedicated to increasing aid to state colleges and universities.
“I thought it was unfair and arbitrary to cut the university out” of performance funding, state Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said to the conference committee.

The cuts expressed anger at the university over the administrative turmoil exposed when President Tim Wolfe resigned Nov. 9 under pressure from protesters angry over racial issues on campus. Columbia campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin followed the same day.

The Concerned Student 1950 protests, with a hunger strike by graduate student Jonathan Butler and boycott of athletic activities by the Tiger football team, drew international headlines to the university. When Melissa Click, an associate professor of communication, called for muscle to help remove reporters, captured and posted on YouTube by a student videographer, it touched off a political reaction that dominated debate until the curators voted to fire her in February.

Fitzpatrick said he expects the House to pass the bill, but anticipates it will be tough. House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, House Majority Leader Mike Cierpiot, R-Lee’s Summit, Budget Committee Chairman Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, and Fitzpatrick all voted against the amendment.

“When the body votes against the leadership in mass, that speaks volumes there,” Fitzpatrick said.

In a statement issued soon after the conference committee decision, interim UM System President Mike Middleton said the university appreciates the increase and the new funding will allow it to "continue the invaluable service we have been providing unabated to the state."

The cut means the university still has work to do repairing its image, he said.

"We also recognize that, as illustrated by the reduction of $3.8 million to the UM System administration budget, that much work remains to restore confidence and trust in our leadership, which we will continue to do by being completely transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible in our actions," Middleton said.

In other budget actions involving Columbia or the university, the conference committee agreed to increase funding to the State Historical Society of Missouri by $1 million — from the $2.2 million appropriated this year — and spend $2 million to start work on a new classroom and lab building at the MU Research Reactor.

The final budget includes $500,000 for equipment purchases at the College of Veterinary Medicine in Columbia, $2 million for expansion of Missouri University Science and Technology engineering programs at Missouri State University and $400,000 to Missouri S&T to expand Project Lead the Way in 10 southern Missouri counties.

Before the committee began meeting, the House approved a capital improvements spending bill that provides $5 million to expand the Thompson Center for Autism at MU.
The budget also includes $750,000 to support the University of Missouri Review Commission created by a resolution proposed by Schaefer. The House has not yet passed the resolution, but Schaefer said the message to the university should be clear.

Lawmakers are willing to wait to see the results of the commission’s work, Schaefer said.

“If the powers that be at the university can’t right that ship, which is in part why we passed my Mizzou oversight committee legislation to help them do that, then I think they are not going to be in any better of a position next year,” he said.

Next year, Schaefer will either be attorney general or an attorney in private practice. After six years in charge of state spending, he is leaving office because of term limits. Rowden, a member of the Budget Committee since 2013, is seeking Schaefer’s Senate seat. Obtaining a seat on the appropriations committee is difficult for new members of the Senate.

“Obviously I won’t be here, but I think frankly if they don’t show some serious progress, then they are probably in a worse situation next year than they are this year,” Schaefer said.

APRIL 20, 2016 8:48 PM

Budget negotiators scale back University of Missouri cuts

BY ADAM ATON Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, MO. - Budget negotiators from the Missouri House and Senate agreed to scale back proposed funding cuts to the University of Missouri and boost overall higher education funding as they settled the final pieces of the state's proposed spending plan Wednesday.

The $27 billion budget, which would take effect in July, must still pass both full chambers.
The deal comes amid a legislative session during which lawmakers have sharply criticized the university after student protests last fall that thrust it into the national spotlight. And though lawmakers said the university still needs to reckon with serious problems, including an anticipated enrollment drop, its relationship with the Legislature has recovered since the beginning of the year.

Budget writers from both chambers decided to reduce a proposed $7.6 million cut to the university system's administration to less than $4 million. They also eliminated a proposal to cut $1 million from the Columbia campus.

The compromise spending plan boosts core funding for higher education by about $37 million, or 4 percent. The House had recommended a 2 percent increase and excluded the University of Missouri, while the Senate called for a 6 percent boost that included the university.

Gov. Jay Nixon called for a 6 percent increase, which he said would be enough for universities to freeze tuition next year. But a 4 percent increase would still be enough to hold down tuition, said Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education, which represents the presidents and chancellors of Missouri's 13 public, four-year universities.

University officials have faced criticism for how they handled the protests last year over administrators' perceived indifference to racism, which ended with resignations from the system president and the chancellor of the Columbia campus.

Many House lawmakers have said budget cuts are the only way to ensure the university does a better job of addressing student concerns, and the chamber voted against both parties' leadership to approve deeper cuts to the Columbia campus.

But the lawmakers negotiating the final budget plan included several members who represented areas with University of Missouri campuses, including Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, and Sen. Dan Brown, R-Rolla.

"When you have people that care a lot about the university on conference committee, that usually yields results," said Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, the Shell Knob Republican who is vice-chair of the budget committee.

Schaefer has warned that deep budget cuts could hurt students and low-level employees rather than administrators. Instead, he has proposed forming a commission to review the University of Missouri's system's policies, which is budgeted to receive $750,000.

Some lawmakers said despite the broad increases, the spending plan continues long-running funding inequities for the state's historically black colleges. Although the budget includes a $1.5
million increase for Lincoln University's land grant, they said several items for Harris-Stowe State University remained excluded or underfunded.

"Black colleges are being treated so unfairly," said Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, a Democrat from St. Louis. "It's kind of racist."

Schaefer said he took offense to that, adding that Harris-Stowe needs to improve its performance indicators, such as student retention, before lawmakers reward it with more money.

Lawmakers could vote on the budget plan Thursday.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Legislative compromise to give $9.75 million to UM System administration**

ELLEN CAGLE, 16 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — The UM System caught a break Wednesday when legislators agreed to reduce the system administration's upcoming fiscal year budget by less than previously proposed.

In a conference committee comprising House and Senate members, legislators agreed to:

- Appropriate $9.8 million for UM System administration for fiscal year 2017. In March, the House voted to give about $5.9 million to the administration, a $7.6 million cut from this fiscal year's budget. In early April, the Senate approved about $12.6 million for the system's administration, reducing the House's proposed $7.6 million cut to $1 million.

- Approve a 4 percent performance-based funding increase for all state-funded universities. A previous House vote had left the UM System out of performance-based funding raise. The 4 percent increase was a compromise between a Senate-approved 6 percent increase and a House-approved 2 percent increase.

- Remove language requiring a tuition freeze. Still, leaders of state-funded universities agreed that the 4 percent increase in performance-based funding would allow them to freeze tuition, even if the law doesn't require it.
• Allot $750,000 for an oversight commission to examine the UM System’s structure. Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, proposed the commission in March. The Senate approved it, but the House has yet to vote on it.

In a statement Wednesday, Interim UM System President Mike Middleton expressed gratitude that the UM System was included in performance funding increases.

"We deeply appreciate that the legislative conference committees appropriated $17.12 million for our performance funding, allowing the University to continue the invaluable service we have been providing unabated to the state in terms of education, research and economic development for decades," he said in the statement.

"We also recognize that, as illustrated by the reduction of $3.8 million to the UM System administration budget, that much work remains to restore confidence and trust in our leadership, which we will continue to do by being completely transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible in our actions."


"I thought it was unfair and arbitrary to cut the university out of that," Rowden said in the conference. "I applaud ... the compromise that's been made."

This year, each of the four UM System campuses will receive its own appropriation, an unusual legislative move. In past years the legislature has funded the system in a lump sum, which the UM System president distributed to each campus with consent from the UM System Board of Curators.

For fiscal year 2016, the legislature appropriated about $429 million for the system.

Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, D-St. Louis, who served on the conference committee, said cuts to the UM System are unreasonable.
"They still have financial needs that need to be met," she said after the meeting. "I did not want to see any of their funding cut as a result of what happened on campus."

MU’s campus is slated to receive about $190 million under this year’s budget. MU Extension would get about $28 million. For fiscal year 2016, the UM System allotted $220 million in state appropriations for MU and Extension’s operational budget. The House voted in March to divert $1 million of MU’s appropriations to Lincoln University in Jefferson City, but the conference committee stood with Senate decision to restore the money to MU.

Agreements made by the conference committee will be submitted to both the House and Senate for a vote.

Since the legislative session began in January, lawmakers have censured the UM System, citing poor leadership after turmoil last fall, when campus protests against racism culminated in the November resignation of former UM System President Tim Wolfe.

Some legislators have said budget cuts could serve as punishment for ineffective university leaders.

Nasheed said legislative threats to cut MU’s budget are political pandering.

"Right now, we’re in a season of politics," Nasheed said. "At the end of the day, MU is going to be just fine, because that’s the golden child of the state of Missouri."

Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, has been outspoken against funding cuts, but said a compromise is a step in the right direction.

"Anything they can get back is going to be positive for the students," he said.

Tension is starting to abate, Basye said.

"It’s started to cool down a little bit," he said. "Mizzou is starting to move in the right direction. Everything should hopefully be getting back to normal."
**New budget restores some funding to University of Missouri**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri is getting back some money in its budget that was initially stripped by lawmakers following the protests on campus last fall.

The latest budget negotiations in committee shielded the MU campus from any funding cuts. However, the UM system administration will see a budget deficit by almost $4 million.

House and Senate members settled upon a four percent funding measure that would give about $17 million to Mizzou.

"I think all things considered, it's a win," said Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia. "I think it's a good year for Mizzou to get that four percent increase. The students deserve that because there's a lot of students on that campus that are working hard and doing what they're supposed to be doing."

Rowden also said some money will go toward funding a new UM System Review Commission.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Loftin searches for military research opportunities while MU role is developed**

WILLIAM SCHMITT, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — R. Bowen Loftin has his eye on retirement, but that's still about five years down the road. Meanwhile, the former MU chancellor, 66, has been meeting with research institutions across the country and university faculty within the state without being sure of his role.
One proposal in a transition agreement he and former University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe signed Nov. 9 outlined a position with the Tiger Institute of Health, which is jointly run by MU and the health care company Cerner Corp., but Loftin never worked there because Cerner officials were never asked to approve it. Loftin said Friday in an interview that he hasn't spoken to Wolfe since Nov. 9.

Questions have been raised recently about whether Loftin has been drawing an MU paycheck since stepping down as chancellor, the nature of his role with MU and what sort of work he has been doing.

"I can't even answer those questions myself sometimes," Loftin said. "I've been working myself fairly hard for many months now without any certainty about exactly what is going on."

**Clarifying Loftin's role**

Loftin is still being paid by MU and will remain on the payroll. He is receiving his full chancellor's salary of $459,000 through the end of this month, when his pay will drop to $344,250. He said he doesn't know his current job title.

However, he has been working to find revenue sources for university faculty by traveling and renewing relationships with people overseeing private and public research institutions — including work with U.S. military agencies and defense research laboratories.

Loftin said he has continued to work for months despite being frustrated by uncertainty and said he hoped to have the answers to what his formal job is soon. He said that between Nov. 9, the day he announced he would step down as chancellor, and February, he attended three meetings at which the Tiger Institute's director was present and one meeting about the institute with only MU personnel present.

When asked whether his transition agreement was still valid, Loftin said he thought "it ultimately is. I think the issue now is what modifications are to be made to it to make it realistic and actionable, and therein lies what's happening. I believe, right now. I don't really know."
The other position described in Loftin's agreement was "director of research facility development," which dealt with developing and planning for construction of research buildings and renovations to existing facilities. Loftin said the work he was doing now wasn't either of those roles.

"I've met with (Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley), and we've agreed on a role for me that he thinks is appropriate, and I agree with him on, and I've been doing that for months without having anything in writing to say, 'This is what it's going to be,'" Loftin said.

In a statement from MU News Bureau, Foley said that he and Loftin "had been discussing ways to increase our research, teaching and service to Department of Defense and related agencies" and said the UM System Board of Curators asked him in January to work with Loftin to come up with a different set of duties than those outlined in November. The two met in person, over the phone and via email, Foley said.

Loftin "will spend the rest of this year surveying strengths we have in defense and intelligence-related research at MU and the other three campuses in the system and matching those to agency needs," Foley said. "It is our goal to grow our work in geospatial intelligence teaching and research. Dr. Loftin has had experience in defense- and intelligence-related R&D, and this is the basis for his new assignment."

UM System spokesman John Fougere said in a text message Tuesday that Loftin "is not being paid, nor has any official role, with the UM System."

**Getting back in the game**

Loftin's work now involves reaching out to people in the private sector and in government and connecting them with MU faculty looking for revenue — grants and contracts — to fund research partnerships. Loftin was interviewed Friday while touring a virtual reality open house in Stanley Hall. He also talked to several researchers to understand what they were working on and what commercial uses their research might serve.
These connections come about through personal relationships, Loftin said. "Over an over-40-year lifetime in higher education, I have built lots of relationships. People who reach out to me are people who manage big government laboratories, who manage big programs."

Loftin said he had been helped by recently receiving "a small amount" of money to cover his travel expenses. He said he had been working out of the Chancellor's Residence until two weeks ago because no office space had been assigned to him. He now has an office in the General Services Building.

"A salary is all I had," he said. "As a chancellor, I had a budget to fund my travel. If I went to Washington, D.C., to meet a congressman, I had money to pay for that. That's true of all the administrators here. But in my role after being a chancellor, there was no money at all assigned to me. I was being paid, but I had no money to go anywhere with. ... You don't pay for your own travel when it's professional university business."

Last week, Loftin drove to the University of Missouri-Kansas City to meet with Tony Caruso, a professor of physics and UMKC's assistant vice chancellor for research.

Caruso said Wednesday that his and Loftin's job was to "read the tea leaves and try to see where the Department of Defense is heading with its funding portfolio" to find overlap among UM faculty and research needs of military agencies such as the Air Force Research Lab, the Army Research Lab, the Office of Naval Research and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

"While our discussions have been focused on programs of interest to the Department of Defense, we also are interested in Homeland Security and related agencies as possible sources of funding for research and collaboration," Loftin said in an email.

Caruso's body of research includes studying materials for counter-directed energy weapons "that would go on the front of an airplane or other materials that protect antennae and protect electronics that would stop high-powered microwave threats."
These threats are becoming more common, Caruso said, as contemporary gunpowder-based weapons are replaced by lasers, microwaves and rail guns, which are electromagnetic weapons that shoot projectiles much more quickly than assault rifles.

But these futuristic weapons might not be the best in which to invest, Caruso said.

A better or parallel track would be to focus on military-centered research with health and life science applications, such as creating synthetic blood for medical care in the field, improving treatment options for veterans afflicted with post-traumatic stress or "trying to come up with methods to improve the longevity of soldiers in the field, such as exoskeletons, requiring joint work between engineering and life sciences to design and test those kinds of instrumentation," Caruso said.

"That's where I would recommend putting my eggs," he said.

Caruso and Loftin's meetings sometimes involved tours and sometimes involved strategic planning, Caruso said, and were mostly "big-picture discussions right now about what the best thing is to do for university research within the defense enterprise."

"We both have a lot of experience with the DOD, so we share those ideas and bounce them off of each other," Caruso said.

The two will present their findings and recommendations to research officers at all four system campuses and to the office of the UM System vice president for research, but they won't make their report for another six to 12 months, Caruso said.

Loftin said he recently spent three days in Orlando, Florida, to visit the U.S. Army Research Laboratory and go through its portfolio of programs.

That trip included a half-day meeting to review adaptive training and tutoring methods, ARL-Orlando spokeswoman Michelle Milliner said. She said these tutoring technologies included the Generalized Intelligent Framework for Tutoring, which is "intelligent courseware that will adapt based on how the
learner performs. It can tell if the person's bored or if they're interested," and whether they might benefit from more text, more video or a different teaching tempo.

Loftin also discussed intelligent tutoring with Steve Goldberg, an ARL research associate.

Goldberg said one demonstration of technology that Loftin looked into was a training system to teach soldiers how to better counsel subordinates who were having performance or personnel problems.

"Basically, you have a soldier sitting there looking at his computer screen, looking at a virtual human," Goldberg said. The soldier has a "conversation" with a digital sergeant about his or her problem and is trained by the virtual officer to improve listening skills, summarize problems and discuss how to come up with plans to resolve an issue.

"Bowen, before he got into university administration, was quite a leader in this whole area of virtual environments and training research," Goldberg said. "... There's a lot of people that he still knows who work in it, and he's trying to reconnect how far the state of the art has gone since he was working in the day-to-day and to see what kind of opportunities are available for himself and for the university."

**Future travels**

Loftin has also planned a trip to Southern California to visit the Institute of Creative Technologies, which he described as "an Army-funded program at USC in Los Angeles, which is a kind of a marriage of Hollywood creativity with computer science technology to help better equip the men and women in our armed forces to do their jobs." He said he also went to Greenville, South Carolina, for a conference hosted by Clemson University.

Also on his itinerary was a trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with U.S. Office of Naval Research officials about opportunities involving federally funded research and development centers and to talk with a U.S. government official about science, technology and mathematics education.
"That's what I'm doing right now: going back and refreshing relationships I had left alone because I had no time for them as a president or a chancellor," he said. "... I want them to be open to the opportunity for our faculty to propose research to be paid for by them."

Loftin said he had funded some trips out of his own pocket. He said meeting face-to-face was more effective than communicating via phone or email.

He said he had been told his work would not be limited to MU but would be for the entire UM System. He said he had plans to go back to UMKC to follow up on previous meetings and to visit Missouri University of Science & Technology and the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

"I'm trying to learn as much as I can about what we can do here at MU and other campuses in the system in terms of our faculty capabilities, our technology capabilities," he said. "I'm trying to take that knowledge and then understand what opportunities may be out there for us to go out and compete successfully for more money to fund our research enterprise here."

Loftin, a professor of physics and computer science, said that if he were to stay at the university in a non-administrative position, "the ultimate solution would be a pure faculty role."

"People got the impression I wasn't working, which is totally false," he said. "... I'm very happy about doing this. I have no bitterness about this. It is what it is."

**Loftin’s new position focuses on connecting faculty with research opportunities**

R. Bowen Loftin: “People seem to think I’m doing nothing, which is totally false. I’ve been very busy since all this happened back in November.”

**R. Bowen Loftin is still working at MU, but five months after resigning as chancellor, he doesn’t yet have a defined job title.**
“It’s close to being finalized, and then I’ll have a business card, finally,” Loftin said.

Loftin and interim Chancellor Hank Foley have worked together to create a completely new role focusing on connecting MU faculty’s research goals with national security organizations to increase research opportunities and funding.

“We have great faculty here who have a lot of expertise, but we aren’t going after these particular sources of funding right now the way we could go after them,” Loftin said. “If I can find ways to make that more available and more easily done, that would be helpful.”

His work to obtain research funding could improve MU’s standing in the Association of American Universities, which has taken a backseat to other issues in the face of budget cuts and administrative transitions.

Loftin said he is still earning his full chancellor’s salary of $459,000 per year until May 1, when he will begin earning $344,250 per year. He said he doesn’t know if his role will be affected by the university’s budget shortage.

“The system decided to keep paying me through the end of April as part of the transition,” Loftin said. “The idea was that I would assist in the transition to a new leader here on the campus, and that was the way they put it together.”

Loftin stepped down Nov. 9 following a semester of tension with some administrators, faculty and students. According to his transition agreement signed the day he resigned, he planned to take two administrative roles: director for research facility development and director of university research in support of the Tiger Institute for Health Innovation.

Five months later, neither of these positions are solidified, Loftin said in an interview with The Maneater. The development of new facilities has been slowed considerably because of campuswide budget shortages.

The position with the Tiger Institute, which is a partnership between MU and health care IT company Cerner, is “still a possibility,” Loftin said, but it’s uncertain right now. Cerner spokesman Dan Smith told the Columbia Daily Tribune that a job for Loftin had not been submitted to the institute’s Board of Governors.

So far, Loftin said he’s been reaching out to people he has worked with who are involved in government organizations to find opportunities for faculty to expand their research. He’s also spent time meeting with faculty members to discuss their research and goals for the future.

“The faculty here are really very good people,” he said. “They know a lot and they can do a lot. They need to be encouraged to think bigger. We need to realize that we are really a good place and that we haven’t been good enough about telling other people how capable we are of doing some extraordinary research and extraordinary teaching.”
He said he’s also been able to gain a greater understanding of what faculty are doing on an individual level.

“I studied the university a lot as chancellor, but not at the level I’m doing right now,” he said. “I need to really understand who our faculty are in terms of our research capabilities and their research aspirations. To me, that takes a lot of time and energy, but I don’t mind doing it.”

Even in a less public position, Loftin has still been involved on campus, meeting personally with students who reach out to him and attending sporting events as “purely a spectator.”

“People seem to think I’m doing nothing, which is totally false,” he said. “I’ve been very busy since all this happened back in November. It’s really on relationships and on learning more about the university at the right level.”

**Fear gripped MU during last year’s racial protests; according to news reports**

A news request yielded 7,400 pages of records, including emails between campus leaders and students

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

mdwilliams@kcstar.com

Five months after the University of Missouri administration was toppled by a series of race-related student protests, emails may reveal the depths of fear that gripped the Columbia campus at the time.

Emails correspondence among some key campus leader were requested by electronic news operations to learn a bit of what was going on behind the scenes at Mizzou during protests in October and November of 2015.

Student protests that called for the resignation of the university system president, culminated with a tent city erected on a campus quadrangle, a student hunger strike, and the football team refusing to play a game. It led to then President Tim Wolfe and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigning.
Heat Street and National Review report that their email request yielded 7,400 pages of records and their analysis of them show that “By mid November, the mood on campus had become even more hostile... Racist comments and rumors had circulated on Yik-Yak; the black student-body president erroneously reported that the KKK was on campus, to the horror of many black students; and non-minority students and faculty quietly wrote to the administration that they felt increasingly targeted, silenced, and fearful.”

MU student leader calls state of system board "extremely concerning"

COLUMBIA - A University of Missouri student leader said she's concerned students' voices are not being heard by University of Missouri System board members while they search for a new president.

Tori Schafer, the vice president of the University of Missouri's student association, made a post on Facebook Tuesday night outlining the lack of student representation at board meetings.

The UM System Board of Curators rotates a student representative to the board every two years. Gov. Nixon nominated Patrick Graham, a student at the Columbia campus, for the position March 10. The Missouri Senate had not confirmed Graham for the position as of Thursday, meaning Graham had not been allowed to sit in on closed board meetings. The UM System's website also listed the position as currently vacant.

In her post, Schafer said the Senate was deliberately delaying Graham's confirmation.

"The excuse he has been given by the Missouri State Senate is that his 'liberal social media' is preventing him from going through the confirmation process," Schafer wrote.

Lauren Hieger, a spokesperson for the GOP Senate, said the confirmation process this year was no different than years past. She said Sen. Ron Richard, R-Dade and Senate President Pro Tem, had said he wouldn't confirm anyone to the board this session, students included.
Schafer said the lack of student representation at board meetings leaves students without a say in key decisions.

"He cannot sit in on closed meetings and represent the students of ALL FOUR UM System campuses," Schafer wrote. "We get one student to represent 70,000+ of us, and that student isn't being able to be heard."

Schafer said it was "extremely concerning" to her that the lack of a student presence came at a time in which the board is searching for a new system president.

John Fougere, a communications officer for the UM System, said in a statement there were still other ways for students' input to be heard during the search.

"The committee has held four public forums (at MU, UMSL, UMKC and Missouri S&T during the first week of April) that were open to any and all UM System students, providing them with an opportunity to give their input on the next president," Fougere said. "Not to mention, any and all UM System students can give their input on the search by going to the presidential search webpage (https://www.umsystem.edu/ps) at any time."

Fougere also said Rakeem Golden, another student from the Kansas City campus, serves on the presidential search committee for the UM system. Golden was the only student representative listed on the committee pending Graham's confirmation.

"The two students on the committee are two more than were on the committee during the last presidential search," Fougere said.

Schafer said she hopes there is a way around the pending confirmation so students can have a say in the selection process.

"Hopefully, Gov. Nixon will pull the nomination and allow Graham to serve as interim," she wrote. "In the interim position, he can still serve in those closed door meetings."

If the Senate has not confirmed Graham within 30 days of the 2017 legislative session, he will be removed from the position. Hieger said the governor can ask for his letter of nomination back, and it would not prevent Graham from a future nomination.

Graham said he did not want to comment on any board matters until he is confirmed.

Schafer's post has since been deleted.
MU graduate workers start organizing union despite lack of university recognition

PAYTON LIMING, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The Coalition of Graduate Workers already considers itself a union, and they're going to start acting like one.

In an election Monday and Tuesday, 84 percent of the 795 MU graduate students who voted were in favor of allowing the Coalition of Graduate Workers to represent them in collective bargaining, according to previous Missourian reporting.

They're already working on organizing.

The coalition is focused on building the union's internal structure by creating a Representative Assembly. Powers not delegated to union committees or officers will be vested on the assembly, according to the coalition's bylaws.

The coalition also plans to appoint seven permanent officers for its executive body, the Coordinating Committee, to replace current interim members. Committee co-chairs will serve two-year terms and other officers will serve of one year, according to the coalition's bylaws.

Despite the fact that the workers have started to put organization in motion, they're still waiting on the university to recognize the vote, said Eric Scott, co-chair of the coalition.

"We want them to look at the win and see the union won overwhelmingly," Scott said.

There were a total of 2,629 graduate employee names provided to Scott by the university, he said. Since the UM System provides an option to opt out of registering in the directory, the number of graduate
workers is most likely closer to 2,700 or 2,800, Scott said — which means about 30 percent of all graduate student workers turned out to vote.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said in an April 8 email "any vote to unionize at this time cannot be considered binding or recognized by the university," according to previous Missourian reporting. MU spokesman Christian Basi was not available for comment Wednesday.

Scott said that if the university doesn't recognize the union, a legal battle could ensue. An affiliate of the coalition, the Missouri National Education Association, would join in the fight, Scott added.

"We are absolutely prepared to take legal action to have our rights respected and our election affirmed," Scott said.

Graduate workers formed the Forum of Graduate Rights after MU said it would end graduate workers' subsidized health insurance in August, according to the organization's website. MU reinstated health insurance subsidies for the next school year. The Coalition of Graduate Workers branched out of that group with the sole purpose of unionizing.

Scott said he knows that since change takes time, he might not reap the benefits of the union's work.

"This is for the people who come after me, so they won't have got go through the same year graduate student workers had in 2015-16."

MU graduate students vote to unionize
The vote will allow the Coalition of Graduate Workers to represent the grad students

COLUMBIA, Mo. – University of Missouri graduate student workers have overwhelmingly voted to unionize.

The Columbia Missourian reports about 84 percent of the 795 graduate students who voted were in favor of allowing the Coalition of Graduate Workers to represent them in collective bargaining. Voting took place on Monday and Tuesday.

University administrators still must recognize the union before negotiations can occur.

State law says employees have the right to form a union.

However, the university has never officially classified graduate students as employees, despite a resolution passed by the Graduate Professional Council in February reaffirming the students’ rights as workers.

Graduate students are not required to join the union. Those who decided to join will have to pay a monthly fee.

Mizzou Grad Student Workers Vote to Form Union

After a threat to their health insurance and the tumult of on-campus protests in the fall, the National Education Association-affiliated Coalition of Graduate Workers at the University of Missouri at Columbia voted to form a union this week. About 30 percent of 2,600 eligible graduate student assistants participated, with 84 percent favoring a union, according the Columbia Daily Tribune. The union maintains that the process met all federal and state standards but it has yet to be recognized by the university. Interim campus Chancellor Hank Foley questioned the validity of the union in an April 8 email to students and faculty.

In an interview with the Daily Tribune, Foley referred to the vote as a “straw poll more than an official tally,” and said that formal union recognition and students' employee status was a matter to be settled by the courts. In his campus email, he promised “an educational campaign to ensure that all graduate students impacted by this decision will be knowledgeable about what this means,” in the event of a successful vote.
COLUMBIA — An MU student was arrested Wednesday morning in connection with a child pornography possession case.

Aaron Becker, 18, was served a warrant and taken into custody at 10 a.m., according to a news release from the Boone County Sheriff's Department Cyber Crimes Task Force. The task force is made up of the Sheriff's Department, MU Police and FBI investigators. Becker, who is listed as a freshman in the MU Directory, was arrested at the MU Police Department.

The investigation into the case began in March when the Task Force received a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, according to the release. The center reported that someone in the Columbia area was thought to have uploaded child pornography to an email account.

According to the release, Becker was living on the MU campus when the content was uploaded to an email account through Google. The account had been used to store and transfer child pornography for several years.

Becker was arrested on suspicion of three counts of possession of child pornography. As of 4:15 p.m., bond on two of the counts, both class B felonies, hadn't been set. Bond was set at $4,500 for one of the charges, a class C felony.

As of 4:15 p.m., Becker was being held at the Boone County Jail.
**18-year-old living on MU campus accused of child pornography**

COLUMBIA - **A Columbia man who lived on the University of Missouri campus was arrested Wednesday after sheriff’s deputies served a search warrant for suspected child pornography at his residence.**

The Boone County Sheriff’s Department Cyber Crimes Task Force said 18-year-old Aaron Becker uploaded child pornography to a Google account in February. Deputies received a tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in March saying a suspect was in possession of pornography.

Investigators said they were then able to identify Becker as the account holder. Becker was living on MU’s campus when the child pornography was uploaded. After further investigation, authorities said they learned that Becker had used the account to store and transfer child pornography for several years.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Former MU physician, supporters refute stalking charges**

RACHEL TREECE, 11 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **With family and supporters by his side, a former MU Health Care physician spoke to a small crowd Monday afternoon to deny stalking claims raised against him in early April.**
Gregory McClain, 43, formerly a surgeon at University Hospital, was said to have made threatening phone calls to a former coworker and her supervisor multiple times between December 2014 and March 2015, according to previous Missourian reporting. The coworker was granted a protection order against McClain in February 2015, and it has been renewed twice. A little over a year after the phone calls ended, Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Richardson filed the aggravated stalking charges against McClain in early April.

McClain, a black man, said during a news conference Wednesday outside of Truman Veterans' Hospital that the stalking accusations — which were made by a white woman — are driven by racism and the desire to get payments from the university.

McClain started the conference with a prayer, followed by a speech from his wife, Sybil McClain. She discussed the impact the stalking charges have had on her family as a whole. McClain's five children also attended the news conference.

"For the better part of 16 months, I have been a silent warrior ... while all along hearing day by day, week by week, month by month that the justice system would work for us," Sybil McClain said.

She said that as the wife of an African-American man, she wanted to believe that racial injustice in the news media and in the criminal justice system were "rare and disappearing."

"But these last few months, especially these last few weeks, have caused me much doubt," she said. Sybil McClain said the family is being "wrongly attacked."

Since the charges were filed against her husband three weeks ago, "malicious, fabricated and erroneous" information had been shared about him in the community and in the news media, she said.

"My husband's name in the newspaper negatively is not the norm — it never was," Sybil McClain said. "(His) reputation being ruined is not something we are going to allow. It is not something that I am going to stand for."

Former Missouri NAACP President Mary Ratliff also spoke on Gregory McClain's behalf.
She said that when she learned of the charges, she was very disturbed because she believes McClain is a reputable man.

"It is unbelievable to me that this physician could be prosecuted based on the information that had been given," Ratliff said. She said that there was not enough evidence in McClain's case to justify ruining his reputation.

"It's very strange and very discouraging to me that when we bring African-American professionals to (MU) they come here with bright, bright reputations," Ratliff said. "And they leave here scarred."

McClain said he was not in the country at the time the phone calls were made. When asked if he believed the victims ever received any harassing phone calls, he said that "they may very well be victims in this case. They are not my victims."

He described himself as a God-fearing family man, stating the stalking accusations "don't make sense."

McClain left his job at MU Health Care for reasons not related to the stalking charges. McClain said that he has sought legal counsel who will announce at a later date whether or not he plans to take legal action against MU.

However, McClain said that people in "very high places at the university" have offered him support. In an interview after the press conference, McClain declined to name those people.

On Monday afternoon, his bond was reduced to $25,000. His original bond was set at $100,000 cash-only. As soon as Gregory McClain learned what the bond was reduced to, he paid the bond immediately so he would not have to go to Boone County Jail.

Parking and Transportation Office to use paperless parking system
The system is online-based, with all of the parking registration information stored in a digital database, and it allows students to pay tickets electronically.

**Students will no longer have to buy physical parking passes or pay paper parking tickets when MU implements a new parking enforcement system in the fall.**

MU will adopt the NuPark system, which is online-based and completely paperless, used by several universities around the country, MU Parking and Transportation Director Michael Sokoff said.

The system currently requires in-person staff to go around and check the tags on vehicles in parking garages, and then issue tickets accordingly. The new system will consist of vehicles with mounted cameras that will patrol garages and meter areas on campus, and cross reference the license plate data from the camera feed against all registered permit holders at MU.

Students who commit parking violations will receive an email from Parking and Transportation with the specific violation, the time, date, and GPS-coordinated location of their vehicle, Sokoff said. The GPS location is taken from the parking system’s vehicle, not student vehicles. They will also be emailed two photographs: one of their vehicle’s license plate and a context photograph showing how exactly they committed a parking violation.

Campus enforcement staff will then begin the process of verifying the information and issuing a ticket if necessary.

“We support them and will work with the new process,” MU Police Department spokesman Maj. Brian Weimer said.

The NuPark system itself will cost approximately $250,000 and the office has budgeted for it for a number of years, Sokoff said. The Parking and Transportation Office is an auxiliary of MU and receives no funds from the state or the university.

“We hope to call it Tiger Park,” Sokoff said. “Our idea is to name it something that is recognizable.”

The change is projected to add new revenue of $66,000 to $132,000 per year to the Parking and Transportation offices because of an expected 5–10 percent increase in permit sales. The new system will also allow all parking tickets to be paid electronically.

Sokoff also said that this system is much less labor intensive on his staff, and will eliminate the need for students to line up outside the parking office to pay their fees.

“It’s not so much about cracking down,” Sokoff said. “We are simply managing the parking scheme of the university.”
The NuPark system was brought to the attention of MU Parking and Transportation when communicating with other universities. Baylor University, University of Kansas, Stanford University and Texas Tech University all use the system.

“This particular system that we are going to be using was developed at Texas Tech around 2010,” Sokoff said. “We had heard about this, and then started to think about updating our technology.”

Before this new system, MU’s Parking and Transportation office was behind the curve by about 10–15 years, but the new technology is “cutting-edge,” Sokoff said.

This system also helps with Parking and Transportation’s data collection.

“Right now we do manual lot counts, so I’ll have two of my enforcement staff physically count how many open spaces there are at 10 on a Wednesday morning.” Sokoff said.

With the NuPark system, Parking and Transportation will be able to acquire real-time data on parking availability from structure to structure. Accurate, real-time data will help their offices manage the placement of their enforcement staff and will allow them to operate more efficiently.

**Pedestrians, drivers misusing crosswalks**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - *It's been less than a year since the University of Missouri installed two crosswalks on College Avenue on the east side of campus.* They were a combined effort between the school, the City of Columbia, and MoDOT. The total cost was more than $800,000.

But there have been complaints the pedestrians as well as drivers do not know how to properly use the crosswalks.

Our ABC 17 News crews spent an afternoon on College Avenue and saw many students not properly using the crosswalk. Students often would hit the button but not wait for the walk signal while others did not hit the button at all.

Some students we spoke with say the signal takes too long so they just wait for a clearing in traffic.

The crosswalks are also an issue for the drivers on College Avenue, some who say they aren’t sure what the signals mean.
Before opening the crosswalks, the University of Missouri sent an email to students about the light system. The University said the HAWK (High-intensity Activated crossWalk) were supposed to reduce pedestrian accidents.

According to the release by the University, the light system starts with flashing yellow lights that alert drivers to slow down. Then solid yellow lights appear followed by solid red lights. At the solid red lights, drivers should be stopped. The red lights will then start flashing and drivers are allowed to drive through those lights, after stopping, if there are no pedestrians crossing.

MU nabs notorious awards for stifling freedom of expression

Thomas Jefferson Center hands university dubious honor for actions of Melissa Click

Missouri state Sen. Kurt Schaefer was a runner-up for his attacks on Planned Parenthood

The Star’s Editorial

The Thomas Jefferson Center every year hands out its Jefferson Muzzle awards, recognizing the worst affronts to free speech. We doubt many winners display them on the mantle or in the trophy case with pride.

Maybe the University of Missouri should start looking for a dark, dusty corner with some empty space because a 2016 “award” is heading its way from the Virginia-based, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

In addition, Missouri state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican, narrowly avoided having to decide where to place a Muzzle this year, though not for lack of trying.

MU was hardly alone in being cited because campuses across the nation earned dubious recognitions this year.
“Never in our 25 years of awarding Jefferson Muzzles have we observed such an alarming concentration of anti-speech activity as we saw last year on college campuses across the country,” the Jefferson Center announced.

Instead of the usual rogues gallery of about 10 individuals or institutions worthy of recognition, this year the center is giving Muzzles to 50 colleges and universities across the nation where free speech took it on the chin in 2015.

The event that won the University of Missouri such unwanted attention shouldn’t be hard to guess.

In a video that ended up being replayed endlessly last November, an assistant professor of mass media studies was captured asking for “some muscle” to help get a reporter removed from the site of a public protest during last year’s Concerned Student 1950 controversy.

Melissa Click, who was fired by the university system Board of Curators, became the face — fairly or unfairly — of the unwise attempt to shield student protesters from the media, even when they were in public places.

That wasn’t the only incident that won the school notice from the Jefferson Center. The center also cited a short-lived social media policy adopted by the School of Law Student Body Association and an email from campus police asking students to report “incidents of hateful and/or hurtful speech.”

Ironically, Thomas Jefferson’s original tombstone is on the Francis Quadrangle on the Columbia campus just west of the chancellor’s residence. It’s near a life-size bronze statue of Jefferson seated using a quill pen to write the Declaration of Independence.

When heirs of the nation’s third president replaced his tombstone at Jefferson’s Monticello estate, they decided to give the original one to the University of Missouri, the first public university in the Louisiana Purchase Territory, which Jefferson is credited in acquiring from France in 1803. The monument arrived at MU in July 1883.

As for Sen. Schaefer, surely he owes Mizzou a thank you card for diverting attention from his own antics.

He won only a dishonorable mention for his attempt to block a University of Missouri student’s dissertation about the effect of a state law mandating a 72-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions.
Schaefer wrote a letter to MU’s chancellor warning that the university would break a law prohibiting the use of tax dollars to encourage a woman to have an abortion if the student were allowed to complete her research.

As the Thomas Jefferson Center noted, “The lawmaker’s assertion raises so many questions it is hard to know where to begin. One that comes to mind is how does he know the effect or impact of a dissertation that hasn’t even been written yet?”

Missourians should demand better from one of their flagship institutions of higher education than succumbing to the “epidemic of anti-speech activity” at American colleges and universities that compelled the academic focus of this year’s Muzzles.

Indeed, the greatest shame of all is that so many schools went so far to suppress free speech. College should offer a time when students are exposed to a wide variety of ideas and expression, learning both to navigate their own thoughts and opinions, and how to respond to countering notions.

On second thought, perhaps MU should display its Muzzle prominently so it remembers that lesson and doesn’t win another.

**The Surprising Way Colleges Are Helping Their Students Sleep More**

The whole point of this class is to fall asleep.

04/20/2016 08:21 am ET, Sarah DiGiulio Sleep Reporter, The Huffington Post

Multiple studies have shown adequate sleep for college-age students is about eight hours a night, yet as many as 70 percent of college students don’t get that much shuteye.

Experts and students agree the trend is not good — and there’s plenty of research to back up that claim. In response, some institutions are putting sleep on the curriculum with classes designed to teach students the basic neuroscience behind sleep and how it affects both
physical and mental functions of our well being in our daily lives. It’s a growing trend that includes the University of Missouri, Stanford University, and New York University.

While some of the classes are recent — NYU first started offering their sleep course in 2012 — others are older. Stanford’s course, “Sleep and Dreams,” was one of the first of its kind in the country and has been offered since 1970. (It’s worth noting, though, that the demand for Stanford’s course has grown so much in recent years that it is now taught twice a year and is capped at 210 students per session, said instructor Rafael Pelayo, a clinical professor in the Stanford Sleep Disorders Clinic at Stanford University School of Medicine. “We have a waiting list of students.”)

Students want to learn about sleep

“Sleep behavior is inherently interesting. Students want to learn about it — even though they do it every night, it’s a mystery to them,” said Dennis Miller, an associate professor of graduate and undergraduate studies in the department of psychological sciences at the University of Missouri who teaches a course called “Sleep and Sleep Disorders.” “Students learn a lot about themselves through the class; they gain insight into their own sleep behavior and about managing their daily lives better.”

Missouri offers the sleep class as an online course to any undergraduate student enrolled at the school and students enrolled in one of the university’s web-based Mizzou Online degree programs. The course is designed to teach students about the science of sleep, as well as its applications to students’ daily lives, Miller explained. Students learn what happens to the brain and the body when we sleep, what common sleep disorders are, and how sleep disorders are managed and treated.

Students learn about sleep science, hygiene, evolution, and dreams

NYU’s sleep course, “While You Were Sleeping” was inspired in part by the success of the course at Stanford, said Jess Shatkin, a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry and pediatrics at the NYU School of Medicine. In addition to covering the science of sleep and how
students can better manage their own sleep, Shatkin’s course also touches on the evolution of
sleep, sleep disorders and treatments, and dreams, he explained.

“I wanted to build a class that was solid academically, but still fun,” Shatkin said. The course is
structured so that students first learn about the science of sleep, then they learn about what
happens to the body during sleep and the consequences of going without. Then, later in the
course, they learn about sleep hygiene — and everything they can do to actually get better
sleep, he said.

“We talk about everything from caffeine use and the role of exercise to what temperature your
bedroom should be,” Shatkin explained. “And we teach relaxation exercises — meditation and
breathing techniques — to help them fall asleep.”

“I learned basically everything about sleep”

Cynthia Haddad, who graduated from NYU in 2015 and took the course over the summer of
2013, signed up because it was cross-listed under a minor she planned to pursue.

“I leaned basically everything about the significance of sleep,” Haddad told HuffPost. “We
learned about how sleep affects our bodies. … We learned about how sleep affects us in our
waking hours — the brain, the body, emotionally.

The course absolutely changed my sleep habits Cynthia Haddad, former student of NYU’s
“While You Were Sleeping” course

“The course absolutely changed my sleep habits,” Haddad added. “I learned the following and
try to keep to these rules: Do not use devices up to an hour before bed; no caffeine past noon;
and use the bed only for sleep and sex — so that when you get into bed, your body knows it
wants to sleep.”

Students sleep 22 minutes longer

Haddad was not the only one who slept better after the course. To determine how effective the
lesson plans were in actually improving sleep quality among students in the course, Shatkin and
his colleagues compared sleep quantity and quality between NYU students enrolled in the class in the fall 2014 semester and NYU students enrolled in coursework other than the sleep course. They found sleep for the students taking “While You Were Sleeping” did, in fact, improve.

Students enrolled in the sleep course slept 22 minutes longer per night on average two months after taking the course compared with their sleep before the course, and the students fell asleep nine minutes faster per night after the course, according to the findings, which were presented at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry’s annual meeting last year. And better sleep hygiene for all of the students was associated with fewer depressive symptoms — meaning the results imply that the course, by improving sleep, could also help decrease depression and anxiety, Shatkin said.

Based on these findings, Shatkin and his colleagues hope to design a four-hour workshop that will focus on a similar teaching objective, but in a condensed format that can also help students improve their sleep.

The semester-long version of the class is planned to continue regardless. It is offered once a year, open to all undergraduate students, and typically enrolls between 150 and 250 students, depending on the number of seats in the lecture hall available, Shatkin said.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

One University’s Response to Students’ Demands on Race: Radical Transparency

No MU Mention

When student protesters first issued a list of demands they said were needed to improve the racial climate at Emory University, Ajay Nair didn’t want to think his campus had a problem. But Mr. Nair, Emory’s senior vice president and dean of campus life, recalled what it was like to be a student of color at a predominantly white institution. It wasn’t easy.
As he spoke with the young activists, "I felt like I had failed," Mr. Nair says. Without systemic change, he imagined, a very similar set of demands would hit his desk in a few years, followed by another variation on the same frustrations a few years after that.

So simply dedicating more money to the diversity programs Emory had in place wouldn’t be enough, he decided. The university needed to make every one of its students’ 13 demands a priority.

Following several months of similar student activism, colleges and universities have taken a range of approaches to dealing with demands like those at Emory. Some institutions, like Oberlin College, have simply refused to negotiate. Others, like Yale and Princeton Universities, have hired diversity deans but done little to lay out how they will address students’ specific concerns. But what does it look like when a university painstakingly goes through the students’ list, demand by demand?

It looks like Emory’s Racial Diversity Initiative.

Last fall, after the Black Students of Emory issued their demands, Mr. Nair’s office created working groups to pick apart each one. Each group is made up of about a dozen people, including students, faculty members, and administrators — many of whom were selected by the provost, Claire E. Sterk, because their work pertains to specific demands. Members of the student government were also asked to participate, and many activists and other students volunteered to join the groups.

The groups met several times, starting in January, before more than 100 members convened the following month at a "racial-justice retreat." Their task: to come up with a set of recommendations for how to address each concern.
‘Finally, Someone Is Listening’

P. Faith Singleton, a sophomore at Emory, was a member of the protest group that drafted the original demands. Now she serves on one of the working groups. The climate on the campus has improved since the process began, she says. "We were like, Finally, someone is listening."

The university has been very public as it digs into the demands. A website created by administrators shows the demands, the response given by the university in a campus wide email in December, and preliminary recommendations from each working group. Members of the Emory community, including alumni and parents, can also give feedback.

As conversations have unfolded in the working groups, some demands are already being answered. One called for the university to replace a mentorship program to support first-year students in the sciences that had ended in December. That program had closed when a grant had expired, and university officials simply spread the news that a new program, set to start this summer, was already in the works to take its place.

But the steps that can be taken to address other demands haven’t been so clear-cut. In some cases, working groups have pivoted completely away from the students’ original requests. Take the demand to ban Yik Yak, for example.

Is Yik Yak the Problem?

The call to create a "geofence" to keep students on the campus from using Yik Yak, the anonymity-granting social-media platform, was one of the more unusual demands at Emory.

For Maxwell L. Zoberman, who is president of the Student Government Association and a member of the working group, the app had quickly turned from "silly gossip and jokes" to a platform on which students of certain gender and racial identities were targeted. He believes it’s the university’s responsibility to fence out the yaks. But doing so poses challenges.
In March, when students at Illinois College demanded that the app be blocked on the campus wireless network, the president, Barbara Farley, did so. But it didn’t quite work as she — or the protesters — had intended. The block didn’t keep students off the app; it just forced them to use it through their own network data plans.

So when the Emory working group got together, its facilitator, Edward W. Lee, executive director of the Barkley Forum Center for Debate Education, asked two questions: Why is a geofence on the table? And what is the primary issue we are trying to resolve?

Mr. Lee says he structured the conversation without a predetermined outcome, allowing everyone a chance to say what they felt about the app before any rebuttals could be made. Group members, including students in the Black Student Alliance, administrators in the communications department, and information-technology officials, raised doubts about whether banning the app would work. The group ultimately concluded that a ban would be more symbolic than useful.

Its members settled on a recommendation that had nothing to do with Yik Yak: to establish a student-led hate-speech rapid-response team.

The story continues: http://chronicle.com/article/One-University-s-Response-to/236187