Social relationships may affect children's physical health, study says

Vikki Ortiz Healy Contact Reporter

As the parent of a preschooler, I often see my daughter facing social situations she doesn't know how to handle. Whether it's knowing who to play with at school when her best friend is absent, figuring out what to say when a classmate mocks her letter-tracing or confronting the kid on the playground who pushed her, my parenting approach has been to listen, offer suggestions — but ultimately let her handle her own interactions.

I figure that's a whole lot more acknowledgment than what was offered by my parents, who were great, but hardworking immigrants who didn't trouble themselves with preschool drama. It also seems like the right way to balance my Mama Bear instinct to protect with the importance of allowing my child to develop important social skills for herself.

But recent research on the stress caused by social relationships in children is causing me to re-evaluate.

According to a study recently published in Social Neuroscience, researchers at the University of Missouri have found that children and adolescents have physical reactions to the social networks they perceive. And the quality and size of the social relationships nurtured in childhood may have an impact on the physical and mental health of children, the study says.

"Those children that are in a difficult social environment and are not figuring out ways to navigate those problems, that can be tough on them and it certainly can have health consequences," said Mark Flinn, director of the department of anthropology at the University of Missouri and one of the study's authors.
For the study, Flinn and his team interviewed 40 children, ages 5 to 12 and living on a small island in the Caribbean, about their social networks. The children represented 80 percent of the children on the island and were asked to talk about their understanding of their friendships, as well as their friends' networks, while researchers measured the amount of cortisol and salivary alpha-amylase — a hormone and enzyme in the body secreted in response to outside pressure or tension.

Researchers found that children who had bigger groups of friends and more awareness of whom other children considered friends showed lower stress levels at the time of the interview. Those who had smaller groups of friends and less awareness about peers' friendships measured higher amounts of stress, either because their relationships caused them stress, or the interview itself was a stressor, Flinn said.

Stress leads to other problems, Flinn added. After studying the Caribbean village for almost three decades, he said his team has found evidence that people who go through a heightened stressful event are more than 2 1/2 times more likely to get a cold in the week following that incident. They're also susceptible to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, he said.

"You're taking resources away from your immune system, and other means that your body has, to focus on these stressful social situations," he said.

Thankfully, just as I was starting to feel like a completely insensitive mom for not taking my daughter's preschool woes more seriously, Flinn added that stress isn't always a bad thing. Just as your body increases stress hormones to give you the surge of energy needed to run away from a tiger, stress can be what is needed to get through life's complications.

"Physiological stress response is an evolved system, and it's designed to help us cope with these everyday ups and downs, focusing our attention on things that are important," Flinn said.

So how much should a parent intervene to ensure her child's social well-being?
Leandra Parris, assistant professor of school psychology at Illinois State University, who is both a researcher and a school psychologist, said the answer varies depending on a child’s temperament, but she offered a few universal guidelines to help.

Young children need concrete examples of what to do. In her work in bullying prevention, Parris spends a lot of time with preschool-aged children practicing phrases that help children express how they feel from unpleasant social interactions. Parents might try role-playing with a child to walk him or her through how to respond in uncomfortable social settings, she said.

By the time a child gets to fourth or fifth grade, stressful friendships can be managed by helping young people understand different levels of friendship. At this stage, parents and teachers can explain that quality is more important than quantity in social networks, and that if a couple of people are close friends that can be trusted, the rest — who may be causing stress — can remain on the periphery, Parris said.

And by high school, children need the most support in understanding cyberbullying and social media friendships. Parents must work hard to be sure their children understand online identities, friendships and safety, Parris said.

She added that in each of these stages, one of the most important things a parent or teacher can do is make sure to find an approach that a child is comfortable with, not just one that sounds good or that someone with another temperament would execute.

"We tell them, here's what you should do," Parris said. "We forget to ask them, how comfortable do you feel doing that?"

The advice couldn't have come at a better time for me and my 4-year-old, who stayed up late on a recent night brainstorming ways she could tell her classmate to stop saying it looks like scribbles when she writes her name. I still expect my daughter to handle the interaction herself.

But at least now I know she's comfortable doing it, and that she has concrete examples of what to say.
A Better Fix for Torn ACLs

A new technique to treat ACL injuries may be on the way. In today's Academic Minute, the University of Missouri's James Cook describes how this new technique could lead to a more active lifestyle for those with repaired ACLs in their knees. Cook is the William and Kathryn Allen Distinguished Professor in Orthopaedic Surgery at Missouri's School of Medicine. A transcript of this podcast can be found here.

Lawmakers: Relationship remains strained as University of Missouri school year, legislative session end

By Rudi Keller

Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 12:00 am

The University of Missouri’s top leaders said last week that the worst has passed for the system’s fractured relationship with lawmakers, but members of the Boone County delegation said they have seen no evidence that is true.

A fall semester marked by administrative turmoil, graduate student unrest over employment issues and protests over racial issues led to a legislative session with numerous bills aimed at UM and efforts to cut state support in the budget. During the February meeting of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, interim President Mike Middleton made a grim report.

“I can tell you it is not pretty down there,” he said. “What I have gathered, in fact most of what I have heard, is blame.”

Lawmakers concluded their session Friday as the Columbia campus began commencement ceremonies to award more than 6,000 degrees. In an interview Wednesday, Middleton said he believes the university has regained most of its reputation with lawmakers.
“I think we were able to convince them that we were handling the situation, we were moving forward with some positive approaches to issues and solving those issues and they came to their senses, as normally happens,” Middleton said.

Proposals for annual audits by the state auditor, an independent board to oversee teaching waivers and mandated professional diversity on governing boards, among others, went little further than committee hearings. Large cuts to the UM budget proposed in the House were tempered in the Senate, and the UM System ended the session with a net budget increase.

But the university didn’t emerge completely unchastised. The UM System administration took a $3.8 million cut in its allocation of state support, and over the next seven months, an eight-member University of Missouri Review Commission, yet to be named, will be able to look deep into university business and has a $750,000 budget to do it with.

To help repair the relationship, the curators hired Andy Blunt, son of U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt, for $10,000 a month to bolster lobbying. Curators Chairwoman Pamela Henrickson said the board will have to review whether the money was well spent.

“That is something we should probably war game after it is over and consider,” she said. “I don’t have an opinion at this point.”

The six members of the Boone County delegation are the most sympathetic to the university, but none of them said the relationship had healed.

“I don’t think that any of the stakeholders in the university have any more faith or trust in the administration now than they did several months ago,” state Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, said. “That would include legislators, students and MU employees.”

State Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, said the relationship is better but not fixed.

“There is still a lot of stuff they need to do yet,” Basye said. “I think it will work out in the long run.”

The system administration will absorb the $3.8 million cut without resorting to taking money from the four campuses, Middleton and Henrickson said Wednesday.

“We are working on that right now, and the plan is to absorb all of that at the system level,” Middleton said. “The campuses have suffered enough.”

The relatively benign outcome doesn’t mean the university has repaired fractured relationships, state Rep. Caleb Jones, R-Columbia, said. Jones passed legislation repealing MU Health Care’s exemption from review for new construction and a measure to require spouses of full-time employees at higher education institutions to report institution-paid out-of-state travel costs to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

At times, he said, university leaders seem to invite legislative wrath.
“I think it is disheartening, disingenuous and shocking that the chancellor would say that politicians are using Mizzou as a political football,” Jones said.

During a budget forum Wednesday, interim Chancellor Hank Foley said some lawmakers were more willing to compromise than others on the university’s funding.

“We’re a wonderful political football for them, and they love to use it,” Foley said.

That comment “causes great concern for the legislature with the leadership at Mizzou” about whether “they are actually doing what is right for the students,” Jones said. “More importantly, the relationships down here are non-existent.”

State Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said he has a more optimistic view but that it is up to the university to figure out how to make things better.

“A lot of that is internal, it has nothing to do with us,” Rowden said. “I just hope we can partner with them in whatever capacity necessary to make sure we do get back to normal at some point.”

The review commission might have defused some of the support for specific proposals to direct university management. Sponsored by Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, the commission will have four members named by Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, and four named by House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff.

The resolution establishing the commission puts the university on notice that its state support could be on the line if the recommendations are not adopted. It is evidence of legislative wariness that the university might be trying to wait for anger to subside rather than make needed changes, Schaefer said.

“I don’t think that’s going away, and before the legislature makes long-term decisions that affect the fiscal and otherwise just the existence of the university and its well-being, we need to have objective information,” Schaefer said.

The curators support the commission because it can look at major issues while the board is busy with a presidential search and other business, Henrickson said. She hopes the commission’s work will produce recommendations that can improve the university system.


“My biggest concern is that it turns into a witch hunt that continues dragging the University of Missouri through the mud in” the Capitol, Kendrick said.

That would reignite anger that remains below the surface, he said.

“I think there are still a lot of people in this building who are angry about what happened at the university, and I don’t think it has changed,” Kendrick said.
COLUMBIA — Before he addressed the graduates at the MU Honors Convocation on Saturday morning, honorary degree recipient Shawn Askinosie had one "housekeeping measure" to take care of: snapping a selfie.

He turned his back toward the graduates and faculty members on the floor of Mizzou Arena, held up his smart phone and smiled as he captured a photo. The audience laughed and cheered.

"I've read the Kim Kardashian book on how to take selfies," he joked, referencing her book "Selfish."

Askinosie is an entrepreneur and philanthropist. He earned both his undergraduate and law degrees from MU and practiced law for almost 20 years before deciding to launch Askinosie Chocolate in his hometown of Springfield. The company's business model, based on social responsibility, has gained national attention.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley presented Askinosie with a Doctor of Human Letters at the ceremony.

Pocketing his phone, Askinosie spoke to graduates about finding their vocation. Askinosie said commencement speakers often tell graduates to follow their dreams. His dream was to be a lawyer, but when he received low LSAT scores, he was extremely disappointed.

"I thought they'd made a mistake, so I turned it upside down, thinking that they had transposed the numbers," he said. "I was devastated."

Askinosie thinks the word "dream" should be substituted with the word "vocation."
"Your vocation is the intersection of your talents, what the world needs and your passion," he said.

He gave students three steps. The first step is to get a job, he said. After being rejected from law school, Askinosie worked in real estate. The second step is to become a student of what the world needs. The final step is to figure out what you are passionate about.

"It would be unusual at your age to know what your passion is," he said. "And, by the way, you can't Google it, and Siri is of no help."

Askinosie did end up going to law school. After working as a criminal defense lawyer, he was ready for a new vocation. He began volunteering at a palliative hospital, a medical center for people with serious illnesses. He said it's through working for others that you find your passion.

"Our passion will only paradoxically emerge when we create some space by serving someone other than ourselves," he said.

In addition to Askinosie, the ceremony recognized students who were graduating with honors certificates, departmental honors, divisional honors, university honors and Latin honors, along with their faculty mentors. Foley said 1,462 students were honors graduates.

Throughout the weekend, more than 5,000 students will receive degrees. MU will grant 6,229 degrees in total as some students will receive more than one. MU graduation ceremonies started Friday and are scheduled to continue through Sunday.

University of Missouri to award more than 6,000 degrees this weekend

By Alan Burdziak
After this weekend, about 350,000 to 360,000 students will have graduated from the University of Missouri in its 178-year history.

MU is expected to award 6,229 degrees to 5,606 students, including 4,603 bachelor’s, 949 master’s, 321 doctorates and 113 law degrees over the weekend. University spokesman Christian Basi said in an email that the university marked its 200,000th graduate in 1989. Since then, its graduation output and student body have increased quickly, with between 150,000 and 160,000 students receiving degrees in the past 27 years.

As MU has expanded in the modern era, so has online education at the state’s flagship university. Mizzou Online, MU’s internet program, this weekend is doling out degrees to 300 students from 34 states and three countries. Fewer graduates are expected in future years though, as officials have said a combination of factors including demographics, protests in the fall and administrative infighting will reduce enrollment next year by about 2,600 students.

At commencement ceremonies Friday afternoon for the College of Engineering, Dean Elizabeth Loboa told graduates to be ready to change the world. Loboa said engineers are in a unique position to move mankind forward and help solve problems like global warming and increase infrastructure quality and safety.

“We know they will be important to the future of our state and our nation,” she said.

While the United States has long been known for its dominance in science, technology and engineering, only 7 percent of college students in America study engineering, compared with about 40 percent in China, Loboa said.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley in his remarks lauded the college’s 85 percent one-year retention rate and 71 percent six-year graduation rate.

Jim O’Neil, president of Boeing BDS Development, the company’s senior St. Louis executive and an MU graduate, gave the keynote address to the engineering students. “Follow what inspires you,” he told the several hundred graduates at Mizzou Arena.

Engineers will have a hand in improving access to clean water, combating cyberattacks and slowing climate changer, he said.

“We are depending on you to find your niche and help us solve some really big problems,” O’Neil said.
Three sisters get 'serendipitous,' simultaneous MU graduations

By Alan Burdziak

Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 12:00 am

As the daughters of public school teachers, it was no surprise that twins Anna and Nora Mosby and their sister, Lacy Peterson, decided on public service careers.

Over the weekend, the sisters were all receiving master’s degrees from the University of Missouri. On Saturday, Nora Mosby graduated with a public health degree and minor in global health as Peterson got her master’s degree in public policy. Anna Mosby on Sunday will walk in the School of Health Professions commencement for her occupational therapy degree.

They decided to return to school about three years ago after their parents, Kathy Peterson and Dan Mosby, offered to help financially if they wanted to further their educations. The women jumped at the chance, choosing to go into fields related to public service because of their upbringing.

“It was something our parents instilled in us from an early age,” Lacy Peterson said.

Late last year, with her sisters set to graduate the same weekend, Nora Mosby realized that if she went full-time at MU for her last semester, the three of them would get to graduate together.

“I just felt like that was a really significant opportunity and a moment I couldn’t pass up in our family’s history,” she said.

After graduation, Lacy Peterson plans to continue her work at the St. Louis Circuit Attorney’s Office conducting research for an alternative sentencing program for first-time felony offenders caught with guns. Many of them don’t have violent tendencies and don’t deserve to have a felony conviction barring them from future opportunities, she said.

“I was really drawn to this project because it is something that uses data and policy to make better decisions and improve the overall outcome in the city of St. Louis,” Lacy Peterson, 27, said.
Anna Mosby, 34, said her next move is to take board exams for occupational therapy while she continues to work at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. She called it “serendipitous” that she and her sisters graduate at the same time because her program was about a year longer, and she added that it wouldn’t have been possible without the influence and help from their parents.

“We couldn’t have done it without them,” Anna Mosby said.

On Monday, Nora Mosby, 34, will leave Missouri for Turkey, where, with other students in her program, she will study the country’s health system for two months.

When she and her husband offered to help the sisters go back to school using money from selling their St. Louis-area home, Kathy Peterson said, she didn’t think they’d sign up for classes. The sisters did so the next week.

“I don’t know if it’s so much proud, but I’m just so affirmed that they’re living out my values” of education and public service, Peterson said.

She and her husband still live in greater St. Louis, and their daughters all plan to use their education to help the area where they were born and raised. Peterson said she was especially proud because her daughters were able to get their advanced degrees while continuing to hold jobs.

“They’ve all worked really hard at this,” she said. “As a mom, what more could you ask for?”

19-year-old among weekend graduates at University of Missouri

By Roger McKinney

Friday, May 13, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Adam Gadbois took five years to earn his bachelor’s degree at the University of Missouri, which is not so unusual.

What is not exactly typical is that Gadbois, 19, started his university studies when he was only 14.

“I definitely am a perfectionist at times,” he said of his accelerated education.
He is the son of Mary and Tony Gadbois, who own Cherry Hill Dental in south Columbia. He plans to become an orthodontist at his parents’ practice.

Adam Gadbois will be among the 5,606 students receiving degrees at MU this weekend, though he said he does not plan to participate in commencement ceremonies.

Gadbois said he started taking classes at MU when he was in ninth grade at what was then West Junior High School. He wanted to be part of the school’s basketball team, but he said a university class he was taking prevented him from playing.

Michelle Baumstark, Columbia Public Schools spokeswoman, said Missouri State High School Activities Association rules might have been involved in the decision, but she was not familiar with the circumstance.

Once basketball did not work out, Gadbois decided to apply to MU. He was accepted as a student based on his ACT score of 25; he took the standardized test in seventh grade.

His mom, Mary Gadbois, said Adam easily became bored in school and supplemented his schooling at the Kumon Math and Reading Center of Columbia.

She said Adam always has been ambitious. When he was being assessed for kindergarten, school officials asked whether he could count to 10. His answer: “In what language?”

Adam said he knew some Spanish as a child.

For the first couple of years, he was limited in the number of courses and hours he could take because he didn’t have a high school diploma. He initially was considered a non-degree-seeking student.

“It was frustrating being restricted in hours,” Gadbois said. He was able to get his high school equivalency degree when he was 16, which allowed him to increase his course load.

Gadbois said he had an easy time fitting in as an MU student. He continued to live at home with his parents while attending the university.

“He was really tall,” Mary Gadbois said. “Nobody thought he was 14. That’s one of the things he was worried about. He doesn’t think of himself as smart. He’s not socially awkward.”

Adam Gadbois said he remained friends with a number of his classmates at West Junior High School who became freshmen at MU this year.

His bachelor’s degree is in general studies, but his emphasis was in pre-dental and computer science. Gadbois said he will finish his studies at MU with a 3.983 grade point average. He said the computer science courses were mostly for fun. He said he’s working to develop an iPhone application.
Gadbois said he has four years of dental school and three more years of study planned to become an orthodontist. That time frame is pretty inflexible, he said, and he likely will not have an opportunity to finish earlier this time around. He will be studying at the Touro College of Dental Medicine at New York Medical College in Valhalla, N.Y.

“I’m super proud of Adam,” Mary Gadbois said. “He’s a really good kid. He has a huge heart.”

College graduates will have more job opportunities this year

COLUMBIA — Good news for the class of 2016 college graduates: there’s a better chance you'll get hired than in years past.

Employers are expected to hire 5.2 percent more graduates this year compared to 2015.

The increase in expected hires is actually down from the 11 percent increase employers expected in November 2015, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employer's Job Outlook 2016 Spring Update report.

The change from 11 to 5.2 percent is because one-third of employers said they do not want to hire as many graduates as previously stated.

One graduating engineering student, James Clynes, said he accepted a job with MODot in Jefferson City to design new bridges that are built in Missouri.

"I thought it was a great opportunity for me, and I really liked what the company had to offer me," Clynes said. "They said, 'You'll have a lot of fun here, and it seemed like a really nice environment. So, I decided to take the chance and go with it.'"

Clynes said most of his friends are taking jobs in Kansas City because it has a lot to offer engineering majors, but he decided to stay in mid-Missouri to be closer to his family.
"I think its a good distance away to where I can do my own thing and still be able to travel home in about an hour, an hour and a half, and see my family," he said.

The Mizzou Alumni Association reported 12 percent of MU graduates decide to stay in Boone County, which is almost 30,000 out of the more than 150,000 alumni in Missouri.

These students stay for various reasons: good job opportunities in the area, continued education and close family members.

Mizzou softball coach calls for end to protest
By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 14, 2016

COLUMBIA, MO. • Embattled Missouri softball coach Ehren Earleywine threw a curveball on Friday.

The subject of an internal review by his own athletics department, Earleywine has asked his players to end their protest and allow MU's administration to complete its investigation of his softball program. Earleywine sent the following message to three media outlets, including the Post-Dispatch:

The support from my team over the past couple of weeks has been the greatest compliment I’ve ever been paid by my players in 23 years of coaching. I am beyond grateful for those who were/are in my corner and will never forget what they did on my behalf.

Now that the administration, media and public know the facts and their stance, I would like for them to end the Protest and allow Mack Rhoades and his staff to do their job uninterrupted.
I do understand that the players not only have a constitutional right to their opinion and freedom of speech, but they also have a lawyer that is working with them to insure a fair and just process. I would also ask that the lawyer “stand down” until a final decision has been made from our Administration.

I, like most Missourian’s, am frustrated with all of the negative media that has surrounded Mizzou over the past year or two and instead of being a part of the problem, I want to be a part of the solution.

I hope the players and their lawyer will honor my request so that the administration can do their job and we can focus our energy on playing softball and representing our state and this University to the best of our abilities.

And players - if you don’t do what I say, I may have to physical and emotionally beat you up...again J

Earleywine later clarified that the J at the end of his final comment, presumably made in jest, was supposed to be a smiley face emoji that didn’t translate from his computer to text messaging.

As reported Thursday, the softball team’s unity council issued new statements detailing the timeline of the athletics department’s investigation into the softball program and continued to lob attacks at Rhoades for his handling of the situation.

Friday's message from Earleywine signals an attempt to end the rhetoric from his team, distance himself from their attacks and, possibly, salvage a working relationship with his bosses. Earleywine, the winningest coach at Mizzou with 451 victories in 10 seasons, has two years left on his contract.

On Sunday, the Tigers will learn if they’ll host an NCAA regional next week for the ninth consecutive season.
MU softball coach calls for end to players’ protest against athletic administration

Softball players upset with investigation into coach Ehren Earleywine

In text message, Earleywine asks for players, lawyer to “stand down”

“Allow Mack Rhoades and his staff to do their job uninterrupted,” he writes

BY TOD PALMER
tpalmer@kcestar.com

Missouri softball coach Ehren Earleywine called Friday for an end to his team’s protest of the Tigers’ athletic department, which is investigating several allegations from inside and outside the program against him.

In a text message to The Star and other media outlets, Earleywine wrote that the support from his players was “the greatest compliment I’ve ever been paid ... in 23 years of coaching,” then he publicly asked his players to end a protest that started Saturday and to “allow (Tigers athletic director) Mack Rhoades and his staff to do their job uninterrupted.”

Earleywine has been under investigation by the Mizzou athletic department for more than a month for alleged verbal abuse of players. Rhoades told KTGR (103.1 FM) in Columbia on Thursday that the investigation was ongoing.

The Tigers’ players went public in denouncing the investigation last weekend, passing out a statement in the University Field press box in Columbia before the penultimate game of the regular season.

Rhoades reiterated that the investigation centered on “serious” allegations from inside and outside the program.

“We have a responsibility to investigate what was brought to us ... not by just one person, not just two people, but several,” he said.
The athletic department did not immediately reply to Earleywine’s statement Friday afternoon.

On Thursday, the softball team’s unity council, comprised of one freshman, sophomore, junior and senior player, released two documents that expanded on why the team decided to protest the administration’s investigation of Earleywine. The unity council claimed allegations of abuse against Earleywine were made by players disgruntled with their performance and playing time.

In the documents, the unity council also references a complaint that Earleywine “is sexist or disrespectful to women,” an allegation it called “absolutely absurd.”

The unity council — identified by Earleywine as senior shortstop Sami Fagan, junior left fielder Natalie Fleming, sophomore infielder Paige Bange and freshman infielder Jolie Duffner — acknowledged contacting an attorney to communicate with the university on its behalf after the players took part in mandatory interviews with three members of Missouri’s staff, which they described as contentious and akin to “interrogations.”

Earleywine called for a ceasefire Friday, writing that he was “frustrated with all of the negative media that has surrounded Mizzou over the past year or two and instead of being a part of the problem, I want to be a part of the solution.” Earleywine is a Jefferson City native.

Earleywine also asked the players’ lawyer to “stand down.”

He ended his text message with what was meant as a joke but has been received by many as in poor taste: “And players — if you don’t do what I say, I may have to physical and emotionally beat you up ... again J”

Earleywine clarified that the J was supposed to be a smiley face, but it did not appear as an emoticon to some text-message recipients.

Here is the full text message from Earleywine:

“The support from my team over the past couple of weeks has been the greatest compliment I’ve ever been paid by my players in 23 years of coaching,” he wrote. “I am beyond grateful for those who were/are in my corner and will never forget what they did on my behalf.

“Now that the administration, media and public know the facts and their stance, I would like for them to end the Protest and allow Mack Rhoades and his staff to do their job uninterrupted.

“I do understand that the players not only have a constitutional right to their opinion and freedom of speech, but they also have a lawyer that is working with them to insure a fair and just process. I would also ask that the lawyer ‘stand down’ until a final decision has been made from our Administration.
“I, like most Missourian’s, am frustrated with all of the negative media that has surrounded Mizzou over the past year or two and instead of being a part of the problem, I want to be a part of the solution.

“I hope the players and their lawyer will honor my request so that the administration can do their job and we can focus our energy on playing softball and representing our state and this University to the best of our abilities.

“And players - if you don’t do what I say, I may have to physical and emotionally beat you up...again.”

Earleywine calls for ceasefire

By Blake Toppmeyer

Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 12:00 am

Missouri softball Coach Ehren Earleywine has called for a ceasefire.

Earleywine, in his 10th season at Missouri and the subject of an internal review that’s been ongoing for more than a month, sent a text message to reporters Friday thanking his players who have supported him but calling for an end to protest movements by the softball team’s unity council.

The unity council, in two statements of protest, has blasted Athletic Director Mack Rhoades and the investigation.

“The support from my team over the past couple of weeks has been the greatest compliment I’ve ever been paid by my players in 23 years of coaching,” Earleywine said in his text message. “I am beyond grateful for those who were/are in my corner and will never forget what they did on my behalf.

“Now that the administration, media and public know the facts and their stance, I would like for them to end the protest and allow Mack Rhoades and his staff to do their job uninterrupted.

“I do understand that the players not only have a constitutional right to their opinion and freedom of speech, but they also have a lawyer that is working with them to insure a fair and just process.
I would also ask that the lawyer ‘stand down’ until a final decision has been made from our Administration.

“I, like most Missourians, am frustrated with all of the negative media that has surrounded Mizzou over the past year or two and instead of being a part of the problem, I want to be a part of the solution.

“I hope the players and their lawyer will honor my request so that the administration can do their job and we can focus our energy on playing softball and representing our state and this university to the best of our abilities.”

Earleywine closed his message with an attempt at humor.

“And players — if you don’t do what I say, I may have to physical and emotionally beat you up … again J,” Earleywine said, before quickly clarifying in a follow-up message that the ‘J’ at the end was supposed to be a smiley-face emoji that didn’t properly transfer from his computer to text message.

The softball team’s unity council — a player-elected group that includes one team member from each class — doubled down on its protest efforts in documents released to the media Thursday. Earleywine said Sunday that the unity council consists of senior Sami Fagan, junior Natalie Fleming, sophomore Paige Bange and freshman Jolie Duffner.

The protest movement started when a statement of protest was distributed in the University Field press box by a Missouri player about 45 minutes before Saturday’s game against South Carolina. That protest statement revealed that a review of the program was occurring. Two hours after the initial protest launched, the athletic department confirmed in a news release that an internal review was ongoing of the softball program after complaints had been received from “both inside and outside the program.”

In the unity council’s Thursday letter of protest, it stated that it had been in discussion with a lawyer.

The Tigers are ranked 17th nationally and have a 39-14 record. They await selection Sunday for the NCAA Tournament. It would mark their 10th consecutive NCAA appearance under Earleywine, who has a 450-152 record at Missouri.

MU braces for 2,600 fewer students in the fall, $46 million budget shortfall
MU will be expecting the smallest class since 2006 with about 1,500 fewer freshmen than last year’s freshman class in addition to an even larger budget shortfall. Vice Chancellor for Finance Rhonda Gibler told the Columbia Daily Tribune on Wednesday that the total decrease in students is closer to 2,600 — 1,400 fewer freshmen and 1,200 other students — a larger number than anticipated earlier in the semester.

On May 1, as seniors across the country finalized their college decisions, a memo from Barbara Rupp, interim vice provost for enrollment management, was sent to campus administrators detailing the latest enrollment figures. The memo noted first-time freshmen deposits were down by 1,470. The memo said that the new numbers “confirmed” that the entering class would be smaller than 5,000 students.

MU’s largest school, the College of Arts and Science, received 1,038 fewer first-time college student applications and 520 fewer deposits, according to Rupp’s memo. While not every school and college had a decrease in applications, all have had a decrease in deposits ranging from four fewer to as many as 520 fewer deposits.

In comparison to one year ago, MU received 69 fewer applications and 214 fewer deposits from first-time black college students. This is a decrease in deposits since a similar memo from Rupp in January, when deposits from black students were down by 79.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said there are three specific reasons for the decline in enrollment: last fall’s protests, fewer high school seniors, and greater competition in MU’s main recruiting areas such as Chicago and St. Louis.

“We know that the events of last fall had an effect because of anecdotal evidence from [conversations with] prospective students and their families about their perceptions of this campus,” Basi said.

Gibler told the Tribune that with the lowered enrollment comes a larger budget shortfall. Originally, MU had lost about $20 million in tuition revenue alone from the decline in enrollment, and with even fewer freshmen, MU is losing an additional $16 million. The total budget shortfall will be $46 million, larger than the $32 million figure interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced in March.

Gibler said that for every 100 fewer in-state undergraduates, MU loses $1 million in tuition. For every 100 fewer out-of-state students, the university loses $2.5 million.

With the $32 million shortfall, Foley announced departments across MU would have to make a 5 percent cut for fiscal year 2017 in addition to a hiring and salary freeze. Now, Gibler told the Tribune, there will be 2 percent cuts for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 as well, though it’s too soon to know if that number will stay.

“We won’t know for some time if 2 percent is a solid number,” Gibler told the Tribune. “It is probably not; it will probably be something different from 2 percent.”
In addition to new state funding of about $9 million, which will help offset the shortfall, Gibler said, the UM System Board of Curators is being asked to increase tuition for out-of-state and professional students, which would raise an additional $5 million. This comes after administrators from universities across Missouri agreed to not seek an increase in tuition.

Gibler also told the Tribune that there will be an even larger percentage of in-state students this fall. Normally, 60 percent of students are in-state and 40 percent are from outside Missouri; now, 67 percent will be in-state students.

---

**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

MAY 14, 2016 1:10 PM

**Check out Missouri’s productive lawmakers in 2016 (yeah, we’re kidding)**

Legislators spent too much time discussing and sometimes passing unproductive bills. In the end, they approved gun bills Gov. Jay Nixon should veto.

And voters ought to kill an unneeded voter ID constitutional change later this year.

Setting the right priorities and passing reasonable laws that affect 6 million Missourians has never been the strong point of the General Assembly.

Some things never change, as the just-concluded 2016 session clearly showed.

In their defense, lawmakers did avoid doing some absolutely stupid stuff.

They didn’t kill Kansas City’s 1 percent earnings tax.

They didn’t approve a discriminatory bill regarding same-sex marriage, which Kansas City area businesses forcefully opposed.

But the legislature did waste too much time on those and other pet projects. Too many unfortunately got through in the end.

**Clinging to their guns**

Lawmakers had one thing (guns) on their minds (guns) before Friday’s (guns) adjournment.
Hiking the state’s absurdly low gasoline tax to rebuild miles of crumbling roads!

Nah, just joking.

It was guns.

The assembly passed a “Stand Your Ground” law that does nothing but guarantee a fatal firearms-related tragedy in the future.

The members also absurdly approved a bill making it legal to carry a gun without a permit.

Gov. Jay Nixon should veto both ideas.

**Show us your papers**

The lawmakers proposed a voter ID constitutional change that would do nothing to prevent fraud at the polls, which studies have shown doesn’t exist anyway.

But the laws would make it harder for 200,000 people to exercise their constitutional rights to vote.

Meanwhile, taxpayers would be on the hook for millions of dollars to provide the required documents to people seeking to abide by the new rules.

Missourians have good reasons to reject voter ID when it’s on the ballot later this year.

**Ethics, smethics**

Missouri lawmakers patted themselves on the back for a new law that will ban them from taking lobbyist gigs for six whole months after leaving office.

What they didn’t do: Put a needed cap on campaign contributions to politicians, something every other sane state in the nation has done. This failure means St. Louis multimillionaire Rex Sinquefield and other rich guys and gals can continue to buy political favors in Jefferson City.

Members of the General Assembly also didn’t ban lobbyists gifts to themselves. But now we’re just dreaming.

**Uber defies KC, and loses**

Uber — the friendly, modern ride-for-hire company that’s turned into a bully around the nation — hired a dozen or so lobbyists in Jefferson City with one goal: Pass more lenient statewide rules to govern its industry.
That would have eliminated Kansas City’s tougher regulations, which Mayor Sly James and Uber officials had cobbled together after public spats in early 2015.

James was livid at the end-around in the Capitol, especially because the city had worked out a deal to pull in for a one-year checkup on the deal with Uber sometime in mid-2016.

With help from GOP Sen. Ryan Silvey of Kansas City, the statewide rules died.

**Abortion in the spotlight**

How’d we get this far without mentioning GOP Sen. Kurt Schaefer of Columbia?

**The publicity hound is running for attorney general, so that meant he had to ratchet up unfair attacks on Planned Parenthood and put the pressure on University of Missouri officials to go along with endangering the right of women to legal abortions in mid-Missouri.**

In the end, Schaefer’s witch hunt against a few Planned Parenthood officials fizzled out.

But he and the General Assembly did pass a budget that irresponsibly turns down $8 million in federal funds for Planned Parenthood.

**Gas tax dies on side of road**

Legislators failed to pass a measure that would have let voters decide whether to raise the state’s gasoline tax by almost 6 cents a gallon.

Trucking companies, gas station owners and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the idea, which would have boosted Missouri’s 17-cent fuel tax.

But lawmakers were more concerned about their re-elections later this year — afraid of even putting a tax increase on the ballot — than they were about improving the sad state of Missouri’s roads.

**Odds and ends**

The legislature did not take a final vote on a bill that would have allowed Kansas City Public Schools to ask voters to approve a property tax to pay for universal preschool. It’s a worthwhile endeavor and needs to be pursued more.

Legislators properly backed off their threats to punish the University of Missouri system with deep budget cuts.
The General Assembly barely sustained a correct Nixon veto of a bill that would have placed more restrictions on public employee unions.

Finally, the best news: The lawmakers adjourned on time, at 6 p.m. Friday.

Who’ll be back for the 2017 session? Voters will decide that this fall. Here’s hoping they examine the records of their House and Senate members on key issues before casting those ballots.

Missouri lawmakers pass ethics laws but fail on gift ban

Ban on gifts from lobbyists failed

UPDATED 4:24 PM CDT May 14, 2016

Lawmakers passed the state's first-ever waiting period for lawmakers and other public officials seeking to become lobbyists, approved a ban on legislators and statewide elected officials hiring each other as political consultants and required elected officials to get rid of their campaign money before becoming lobbyists.

But two of the most sweeping proposals -- a ban on gifts from lobbyists to lawmakers and campaign contribution limits -- both failed. Republican legislative leaders didn't set limiting campaign contributions as a priority, but Richardson said he's upset the session ended without action on lobbyist gifts.

"There are some things that didn't get across the finish line that we're a little disappointed in," Richardson said. "But we'll be back to work on those next year."
Work to clamp down on the state's loose ethics policies has failed for years, but proponents' efforts gained momentum following a series of recent scandals that marred the Capitol's reputation.

The last legislative session ended in turmoil when Richardson's predecessor, Republican John Diehl, stepped down as speaker and admitted to exchanging sexually suggestive texts with an intern.

Since then, two other lawmakers have resigned amid accusations of inappropriate behavior. Paul LeVota, a former Democratic senator from Independence, left office months after Diehl amid allegations that he sexually harassed interns, which he denied. Republican Don Gosen left the House under pressure in February when word spread that he was having an extramarital affair.

In response to resignations last year, the House enacted new rules that all members and staff must complete annual sexual harassment training. In addition, more employees are now mandated to report harassment.

A new law set to take effect Aug. 28 will require lawmakers, statewide elected officials and gubernatorial appointees that need Senate confirmation to wait six months after their terms end before they can be paid as lobbyists.

The policy would have stopped another former House speaker, Perryville Republican Steve Tilley, from resigning in August 2012 and then taking a job as a paid lobbyist for clients including construction companies. Former Independence Republican Rep. Noel Torpey quit in December 2014, months after winning re-election and weeks before the start of the 2015 legislative session, to take a job with a group that has lobbied the Legislature on utility issues.

University of Missouri law professor Richard Reuben said closing the revolving door of elected officials immediately leaving office to lobby their former colleagues is a step forward, but said lawmakers dodged the ethics issue if that's the only progress that's made.

"Whether this starts or ends the conversation is really going to be the decisive factor in terms of whether there's going to really be ethics reform in the Missouri Legislature," Reuben said.
Gov. Jay Nixon also has signed bills that will require candidates to dissolve campaign funds before becoming lobbyists and a ban on lawmakers and statewide elected officials hiring each other as political consultants.

Tilley, who accrued hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign funds that gathered interest during his time in office, held on to that money for years while working as a lobbyist until he closed his campaign in October. One of his last, largest single donations was $562,500, which went to a GOP political action committee called Missouri Majority PAC.

Republican Rep. Justin Alferman said of all the proposed changes to ethics, the bill he sponsored to ban lobbyist gifts "was the biggest one."

The House in January passed a ban on most gifts overwhelmingly, but the Senate proposed watering down the bill to limit each lobbyist to spending $40 per day, per lawmaker on meals.

Under that proposal, legislators could still eat breakfast, lunch and dinner for free courtesy of different lobbyists.

The bill's failure means lawmakers still can receive unlimited tickets to baseball games, concert tickets, spa services and steak dinners.

"People outside of this building would assume that that would have been the easiest one to get done," Alferman said of the bill to limit gifts. "Unfortunately, it's the hardest one to get done."

Richardson said the first bill the House will pass next year will limit lobbyist gifts. If that's not successful, both Richardson and Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard said they'll consider changing internal House and Senate policy to cut down on gifts.

Efforts to put caps on campaign donations, which are unlimited in Missouri, also failed.

"It's a joke to pretend that campaign contribution limits are not what is actually wrong with the Missouri Legislature," House Minority Leader Jake Hummel said. "Any time you have someone that's writing $1 million campaign checks and pretending that is not what influences you, that is a lie to Missouri voters."
Current law allowed wealthy political activist Rex Sinquefield to write a $1 million check in 2014 to Republican candidate Bev Randles' campaign for lieutenant governor.

Contribution limit supporters are trying to get a proposal on a ballot this year to set caps.

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Auditing Diversity**

When Davenport University, in Grand Rapids, Mich., conducted its first "diversity audit" six years ago, officials there made several encouraging discoveries. Among them: Most students — no matter their race, gender, or age — had a positive view of the university’s diversity and inclusion efforts. But faculty and staff members, particularly women and minorities, were skeptical. Many believed that employees who weren’t white men faced a glass ceiling, and that the university’s leadership was an old boys’ club.

A closer look at the data revealed that student responses weren’t all rosy, either. Many students said they weren’t familiar with Davenport’s policies and procedures on discrimination and harassment. Students who took classes online or at a satellite campus felt isolated. And others said they wanted more meaningful interaction with students who were different from themselves.

Davenport has sizable diversity among its 8,400 students: 28 percent are from minority groups, more than half receive financial aid, and the average age of undergraduates is 28. Those figures made it especially important for officials to formally evaluate how they could better serve diverse needs, says Richard J. Pappas, Davenport’s president.

Nearly 2,500 students and employees across five of the university’s 11 campuses participated in a focus group, an online survey, or both during the spring of 2010. The consultants overseeing the audit then made recommendations to Davenport’s administration: Create an office of inclusion and equity. Establish an inclusion council. Host a guest-speaker series focused on multicultural and global topics.
Mandate diversity training for all employees. Reform the hiring process to ensure that all search committees have diverse representation.

Nearly six years later, Davenport officials have done all of the above, and more. "It wasn’t just a nice thing to do," Mr. Pappas says. "It was critical if we were going to be successful in what we were trying to achieve." Within the next couple of years, he says, the institution will probably do another audit. He won a 2016 leadership award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine for his efforts.

While diversity audits have existed in higher education and other workplace settings for decades, interest in such assessments is rising as officials strive to show that they are committed to diversity. A recent survey of college presidents by the American Council on Education reflects that trend, Mr. Pappas says, particularly with respect to race: More than half of four-year-college leaders responded that the racial climate on their campus was a bigger priority now than it was three years ago.

The assessments come with drawbacks, though. They’re not cheap, and it can be difficult for colleges to tell what, exactly, they’re getting for the money. Davenport’s audit took just over six months and cost $46,000, "but it was well worth it," Mr. Pappas says.

While the findings weren’t earth-shattering, the assessment forced officials to be introspective about their commitment to diversity and to pinpoint which efforts to tackle first, he says. For instance, based on the consultants’ final report, Davenport has expanded its outreach to the Hispanic community — which currently makes up just 3 percent of the student body — and has established goals to recruit, retain, and graduate more Hispanic students by 2020.

Moreover, the audit started critical conversations on the campus about embracing difference, Mr. Pappas says.
Why might a college do a diversity audit? Momentum typically starts from the top, or it must at least have the support of senior administrators, says Myra Hindus, founder and principal at Creative Diversity Solutions, a consulting firm that helps colleges assess and improve their diversity.

A chief diversity officer might take the initiative, or a president might spearhead such a review as part of an institution’s strategic plan. At Davenport, it was the latter. "Planning for diversity and equity is not separate from the overall vision for the institution," Mr. Pappas says. He has led three other colleges and conducted a diversity audit at each.

Some reviews are the result of campus crises or student complaints. The University of Missouri system is doing a diversity audit as its campuses try to resolve racial tensions at its flagship, in Columbia. Student protests of the administration’s handling of racist incidents there helped force the system’s president and the flagship’s chancellor to resign last fall. The assessment is part of a list of recommendations issued by the system’s Board of Curators shortly after the administrators stepped down.

Some people are concerned the audit could further tarnish the university’s reputation, says S. David Mitchell, associate dean of academic affairs and an associate professor at Missouri’s law school. "It takes a great deal of courage to do an audit, to engage in this process, to reveal things that might be uncomfortable," says Mr. Mitchell, who is chairman of the system’s diversity task force, formed last fall to look at Missouri’s policies and suggest reforms. Moreover, he says, when people think of an audit, "they think of a tax audit, which is a terrible thing. You don’t want to be audited." However, "they don’t recognize that audits can illuminate things that are going well."
His role as chairman of the task force will involve whittling down the consultants’ recommendations into a handful of priorities and gathering comments from students, faculty and staff members, and alumni.

Ask college officials and others about what the audits should cover, and most stress that assessing all aspects of diversity — beyond race and gender — is the best approach. In Missouri’s case, though, Mr. Mitchell says racial tensions were the primary impetus for the audit, and will receive special attention.

Initially, the Missouri audit was to be narrowly focused, covering just system-level policies and programs, and completed within a couple of months. "It was quick because it needed to be responsive," Mr. Mitchell says. But the audit was soon expanded to include the four campuses. Audits conducted in part or entirely by an outside consultant can take from three to eight months, depending on the institution’s size and the audit’s scale, says Ms. Hindus, the consultant. (Some institutions take more time; the University of Denver, for instance, spent all of 2013 on its most recent diversity audit.)

Most colleges Ms. Hindus has worked with have had active committees that collaborate with her on the audit. "I can’t come in as an outsider and just start working," she says.

Many administrators say bringing in an outside consultant is key for a successful audit, but not all colleges can afford that option. Austin Community College, in Texas, couldn’t, so two administrators — Connie P. Williams, manager of one of the college’s testing centers, and Marcus Jackson, director of institutional planning and evaluation — are doing an in-house audit, the first ever at the college. They say one motivation for the review was a perception that most of the college’s diversity efforts were focused on students, and not faculty and staff members.
But doing the audit isn’t their full-time job, so it’s taking significantly longer. Gathering information from surveys, student-success reports, and other assessments, crafting an evaluation template, and filling it in took more than a year. Then Ms. Williams and Mr. Jackson began to analyze the information: Which offices and centers on the campus do diversity-related work? How many personnel are devoted in some capacity to diversity and inclusion? They will soon present a final report to the college’s administration, and they hope nearby colleges will use their template to conduct similar diversity assessments.

Hodges University, in Florida, will try a hybrid approach, using a consultant for some of the work when it begins a diversity audit next year. "Everything that we can do ourselves, we will," Gail B. Williams, the chief diversity officer at Hodges, says of the audit. "But sometimes it’s really best if someone from the outside comes in and works with me across campus to do interviews and to analyze with an unbiased eye." She estimates the consultant could cost a minimum of $10,000.

Racial diversity among students isn’t a problem for Hodges, where 42 percent of students are Hispanic and 13 percent are black. Ms. Williams’s goals for the audit are to show how diversity helps the university and where limited resources can best be used.

There are also a number of tools colleges can use to self-evaluate, such as the Equity Scorecard developed by the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California.

Data collection — both quantitative and qualitative — is one of the most concrete results of a diversity audit, Ms. Hindus says. Data might answer such questions as: Are you recruiting but not retaining minority students? Are there enough affinity
groups for underrepresented students? Is there a perceived bias in college policies? In some audits, colleges compare themselves to peer institutions.

The reviews can also solve a persistent problem with diversity efforts in higher education: Each department on a campus often has no idea what others are doing. "So many of our efforts are fragmented," says Austin Community College’s Ms. Williams. She hopes the audit will help the college coordinate its diversity activities more purposefully.

Ultimately, officials must have buy-in for diversity programs across an institution to become truly inclusive, says Dave Veneklase, executive vice president for organizational development at Davenport. Diversity, he says, "couldn’t be seen as someone else’s responsibility. It needed to be truly integrated into all of our work." That’s something the audit helped emphasize.

There’s evidence that skeptical faculty and staff members are gaining confidence in Davenport’s commitment to diversity. The university’s annual employee-satisfaction survey asks respondents to weigh their agreement with the following statement on a scale of 1 to 5: "This institution values diversity of thought, people, and ideas." In the last five years, the average has gone from 3.49 to 3.74.

"Is it as high as we’d like? No," Mr. Veneklase says. "Are we moving in the right direction? Absolutely.”

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**How Do You Create a Diversity Agenda?**

Colleges have been roiled in recent months by students demanding more diversity on campuses. Their concerns are far from new. Diversity has been a hot-button topic
since federal desegregation efforts began more than 50 years ago. Yet efforts to increase the numbers of minority faculty, staff, and students on campuses, create inclusive communities, and infuse the curriculum with diverse perspectives have met with limited success.

It’s not for lack of trying — on paper, at least. So how do colleges make sure they live up to their promises? In short, how do you create an effective diversity agenda?

Scholars who study diversity in higher education say colleges keep making the same mistakes, even as they ramp up the rhetoric around diversity. From the civil-rights protests of the 1960s to the debates on affirmative action of the 1990s to the broadening of diversity to include sexual orientation and gender identity, colleges have often been reactive, not proactive, experts say. Planning is assigned to ad hoc committees, strategies are designed by small groups of people, and results are expected of those who often lack the authority and resources to produce them. Meanwhile, most people on campuses are left out of the conversation.

As a result, agendas are frequently disjointed, failing to connect different parts of a campus — from admissions to student life to human resources and beyond. Yet to diversify a campus means to transform it, experts say, and that sometimes also means throwing away long-held assumptions about how admissions, hiring, and curricular development function. And that is hard work.

If they continue to fall short on diversity efforts, colleges risk disconnecting from the larger culture. By 2020, minority students are expected to account for 45 percent of the country’s public high-school graduates, up from 38 percent in 2009.

Many colleges fail to reflect those changing demographics. Nationally, three-fourths of full-time faculty members are white, according to Education Department statistics. Only 5.5 percent are black, and 4.2 percent are Hispanic. Black women far
outnumber black men in the professoriate, and faculty members across all minority
groups are less likely than their white counterparts to be full professors.

And while 40 percent of college students are minority-group members, they are more
likely to attend two-year colleges. They are underrepresented at the most selective
institutions, which is where many of the recent protests have taken place. Minority
students there say they often feel marginalized and isolated. They want colleges to put
more resources into recruiting and supporting students and faculty of color, to
provide spaces and programming for students from underrepresented groups, and to
ensure that their complaints about racism or bias are responded to swiftly.

Following are some methods diversity experts suggest to help overcome common
challenges in designing an effective agenda.

**Take ownership.**

*Too many college leaders presume that their campuses operate well, until it
becomes obvious that they don’t. When student protests occur, presidents often
seem stunned by the depth of anger. Timothy M. Wolfe, the University of
Missouri system’s former president, perhaps best embodied that dynamic when a
student video captured him staring ahead as student protesters, disturbed by
what they saw as the administration’s ineffective response to racism on the
campus, blocked his car during homecoming last fall. "I was caught off-guard in
that moment," he later said, explaining his reaction. "Nonetheless, had I gotten
out of the car to acknowledge the students and talk with them, perhaps we
wouldn’t be where we are today."

Similarly, Purdue’s president, Mitch Daniels, faced a backlash when he issued a letter
to the community last fall saying the campus stood in "proud contrast" to Missouri
and Yale University, both of which had been rocked by protests. Students quickly*
pushed back with a list of demands, including that he apologize for minimizing their experiences.

A recent survey by Inside Higher Ed and Gallup brought home that widespread confusion: 84 percent of college presidents said race relations on their campus were "excellent" or "good." Yet only 24 percent said race relations on college campuses nationwide were good. In other words, these were other people’s problems.

Why is that? For one thing, most college presidents are white and came up through predominantly white institutions. So it’s no surprise that they may have little experience dealing with the complex problems of race and ethnicity, says Walter M. Kimbrough, president of Dillard University, whose research focuses on historically black colleges, like his, and black men in college. When diversity problems come to their attention, they may opt for the simple way out — hire a chief diversity officer and delegate responsibility.

"Presidents don’t view being chief diversity officer as their job," says Mr. Kimbrough. "That’s for some black person to do. That’s for some person of color to do."

Diversity leaders say that when you get endorsement from people at the top, longer-term commitment is more likely to happen. Gregory T. Vincent, vice president for diversity and community engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, has worked with two presidents since arriving there, in 2005. Each has supported the development of his division, which encompasses a broad array of programs, such as academic support for underrepresented and first-generation students and a campus-climate team that responds to bias incidents. "Everyone has to strap in," he says, "and say, OK, this is going to be at least a decade-long initiative to get going."

Involve the entire faculty, not just the usual suspects. Typically, a diversity plan is hammered out by a small set of people. It often includes a disproportionate number of
minority faculty members, who may not have seniority, along with the same set of white faculty members who have championed this cause for years. The problem is that this small group doesn’t have the power to execute a campus wide vision. Yet the faculty as a whole probably has the most power on a campus to make changes, diversity experts say. Administrations change, and students come and go. Meanwhile, faculty members are the gatekeepers in hiring and, at the doctoral level, admissions. And they design the curriculum.

"Professors don’t want to be racist," says Shaun R. Harper, executive director of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. "Nor do they want to create classroom environments that are alienating to most people. But if the diversity agenda-setting doesn’t involve most of them, they inadvertently do the things that students of color and faculty of color complain about for years."

That point hit home, he says, during a recent campus visit in which he held a forum with faculty members about diversity in recruitment, classroom culture, and a host of other issues. He found them "delightfully open" to what he had to say. Yet they told him this was the first time they had been given a chance to weigh in on the diversity discussion on their campus.

Late last year, Brown University released a comprehensive diversity and inclusion plan that involves all departments. Christina H. Paxson, Brown’s president, says the decision to push responsibility for diversity down to that level came out of conversations about why certain diversity goals set in earlier years hadn’t been met. "If faculty don’t own an issue, it’s impossible to make progress on it," she says. "If there’s one lesson for college presidents, it’s that."
Eduardo J. Padrón, president of Miami Dade College, a predominantly Hispanic community college, says buy-in to a diversity agenda should start during the hiring process and continue once faculty members are on the campus. As a result of that happening at Miami Dade, he says, the college has become increasingly diverse and has built stronger ties to the community. "There’s a lot of dialogue and conversation and reaching consensus about what’s best for students," he says. "It’s been a very deliberate conversation, not because of my position, but because people have bought into my agenda."

**Engage students.** Presidents have sometimes avoided or dismissed student demands if they seem antithetical to how the college operates. Some student groups, for example, have demanded that their institutions fire or grant tenure to specific people, that faculty evaluations by students include open-ended questions about whether they had made racist remarks, or that tuition and fees be eliminated outright. But taking those lists at face value misses the point, says Ajay Nair, senior vice president and dean of campus life at Emory University. "Their demands are often jarring, but they’re meant to force a conversation," he says. Unfortunately, he adds, "we are not very good as higher-education institutions at listening very carefully to our students’ concerns."

Emory recently tried to do things differently. After students issued a series of demands last fall, Mr. Nair established working groups around each point, to get students and others together to figure out how to address them. One thing he learned, he says, was to look at the underlying issues. For example, the demand for a mechanism to report bias in the classroom turned into a discussion about how to better prepare faculty members to handle controversial issues in teaching.

As Emory’s experience illustrates, when colleges really listen to students, they often change or refocus their priorities. A recent American Council on Education survey,
for example, showed that presidents are putting more emphasis on diversity-related curricular reforms because students say that is important to them.

Deborah A. Santiago, a diversity consultant and chief operating officer of Excelencia in Education, a nonprofit organization that supports Latino success in higher education, says that while black students’ protests have highlighted their concerns in particular, a well-thought-out response can benefit all students, including Latino, gay and lesbian, and other groups. The real challenge, she says, is to juggle the quick win — changing the name of a dorm, for example — with more-significant plans. "The value-added of student voices, especially black students, is it’s bringing media attention, which means institutions can’t dismiss it as readily."

At the same time, it’s unlikely that colleges can give minority students everything they want — especially if their demands involve a rapid increase in the number of minority students and faculty. Mr. Kimbrough, of Dillard, thinks some minority students on predominantly white campuses are being unrealistic. "It riles me when students say, I want black faculty, black curriculum, black living spaces. I have all that. It’s called Dillard University."

**Have the tough conversations.** Fostering diversity and inclusion is not an act of celebration. It’s hard work. Just look at some of the debates taking place on campuses today. If you create housing for minority students, does that create safe spaces or promote self-segregation? Where is the line between free speech and hate speech? If you want to recruit more minority students, should you change your admissions standards? And in hiring and promotion, are professors unconsciously biased toward institutions and activities that benefit white candidates?

Those are complex conversations, says Mitchell J. Chang, a professor of higher education and organizational change at the University of California at Los Angeles.
who studies diversity initiatives on college campuses. Yet too often, he says, the people charged with developing a diversity plan lack the expertise needed to direct those conversations. He recommends inviting in diversity experts, or hiring people who have expertise in the field. There is a lot of good research out there, he says, if people know where to find it.

He also recommends conducting evaluations to help the campus determine where it needs to focus its efforts. A number of universities, including Brown and the University of Texas at Austin, have started campus-climate surveys that allow them to measure progress.

**Hold people accountable.** Too many diversity plans fail to achieve their goals, yet rarely is anyone held responsible for failure. "There aren’t any other areas where you would establish the degree of effort we put forth without accountability, except for diversity," says William B. Harvey, a distinguished scholar at the American Association for Access, Equity, and Diversity. "We pat ourselves on the back, say we gave it a good try, and move on."

Brown has tried to avoid that endless cycle by building in review procedures and accountability processes without being overly rigid. "It’s not set in stone, and we have a lot of things we think will be effective, but maybe they won’t," says Ms. Paxson. "The broad goals will be the same, but the tactics might change."

Accountability will become increasingly necessary as the diversity agenda evolves, placing responsibility on a wider set of actors. Lorelle L. Espinosa, assistant vice president at the American Council on Education’s Center for Policy Research and Strategy, says she sees colleges moving away from thinking of diversity strictly in terms of numbers. Colleges are now moving toward more structural changes, like
curricular and pedagogical reforms, emphasizing the experiences students and faculty members have once they are on a campus.

While Emory is just beginning to craft its new diversity agenda, Mr. Nair says the university hopes to create a continuous loop of conversation and action. On a new website, Emory Campus Life Dialogue, anyone can respond to the working groups’ suggestions. "We’re creating an incubator," he says, where people "can feed ideas to us, for action and implementation.

"This is just the beginning."

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Demand Surges for Diversity Consultants**

To promote diversity, many colleges turn to an outsider — a consultant who offers to help them remedy inequities or reduce discrimination.

The Boston University Medical Campus, for example, recently hired Cook Ross, an international consulting firm, to help it recruit students and faculty members who better reflect the urban community served by its hospital. Howard J. Ross, a founding partner of the firm, led three days of workshops focused on making administrators and faculty members more aware of any unconscious biases they might have. In one exercise, they reviewed fictitious job applicants and learned how much their willingness to offer an interview was shaped by an applicant’s name, gender, and photo.
Although colleges have been using diversity consultants for decades, demand for such services has surged in the past year, as a wave of student protests over racial or gender discrimination has generated awareness of how unwelcoming many colleges remain for much of society.

"What we have been doing for the last 20 years hasn’t worked," says Emelia J. Benjamin, the medical campus’s assistant provost for faculty development. By hiring Cook Ross, she says, officials there hoped "to really shift the culture," with the goal of having a much more diverse faculty and student body five or 10 years from now.

**Other colleges hire diversity consultants not to plant seeds, but to put out fires.**

**Last fall’s turmoil over race relations at the University of Missouri and Claremont McKenna College led both institutions to ask current or former diversity officers from other colleges to help them deal with students’ demands.** Claremont asked Mariana M. Cruz, a former director of the Multicultural Resource Center at Amherst College, who has since opened her own diversity consulting business, to set up such a center on its campus in response to protesters. She says she is optimistic about her fledgling firm’s prospects, given the pressure on colleges to adopt policies and programs "grounded in student advocacy and students’ requests."

Campuses that have maintained calm are looking for consultants to help them keep things that way. EAB, a consulting firm that conducts best-practices research for colleges, lists bias prevention, diversity promotion, and the handling of student protests among the top issues it has been asked to study this year. Colleges "want to get out in front of these issues," says Mauricio Velásquez, president of the Diversity Training Group, a Virginia firm that counts colleges among its clients. He predicted that demand for such services will grow in response to the animosities being laid bare.
in the current presidential campaign. "Drumpf has been fantastic for my business," he says.

Diversity consultants offer colleges not just specialized expertise, but also the voice of a detached third party whose recommendations are likely to be received with less skepticism than those of administrators on the defensive. "Everything is political — let’s be honest. Every decision you make impacts people," says Archie W. Ervin, chief diversity officer at Georgia Institute of Technology and president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, or Nadohe.

Like many administrators who hold similar positions, Mr. Ervin serves as a diversity consultant to other colleges. Because he offers up recommendations both to "people who understand what you are doing, and people who don’t," he says, "you want to have a high degree of objectivity assigned to the work you are doing."

At Claremont McKenna, where faculty participation in diversity-related workshops is voluntary, "the people who need the training most don’t come," says Frederick R. Lynch, associate professor of government there. Mr. Lynch is the author of The Diversity Machine: The Drive to Change the ‘White Male Workplace,’ a 1997 book critical of the diversity-consulting industry. He says colleges hire such consultants mainly for the public-relations value, "as a means of showing you are doing something."

Consultants focused on diversity differ greatly in how they operate, a reflection of disagreements over strategy. Colleges lack an easy way to measure such consultants’ impact, and the effectiveness of one of their most common services — diversity training — remains in dispute. Although the diversity-officers group has adopted professional standards for its members, there are no commonly accepted standards for the consultants who advise them.
"People need to do due diligence in terms of who they invite onto their campus," says Mr. Ervin, president of the group, which is considering whether to develop, for referral purposes, a list of member diversity officers who provide consulting services. The quality of consultants’ work "can make or break" colleges’ efforts to promote diversity or inclusion, he says.

Mr. Ervin says evaluations of policies, practices, and programs account for the largest share of consultants’ work at colleges — about 40 percent. The rest consists of education and training, research to help identify and eliminate bias in personnel or admission decisions, and campus-climate assessments, in which consultants examine the experiences of women or minority groups. Costs range from a few thousand dollars for a one-day workshop to $50,000 or more for a climate assessment in which a team of researchers spends weeks or months studying the institution.

Cook Ross, the firm hired by Boston University Medical Campus, provided an array of services, including training and strategic-planning advice, to more than two dozen colleges last year. It encourages clients to adopt sophisticated metrics to measure their progress, tracking, for example, not just how many minority members apply for their open faculty positions, but how many end up being hired or remain on the job after a period of time. Using such measures "allows them to focus on where the breakdown is occurring, rather than throwing stuff on the wall and seeing what sticks," Mr. Ross says.

Dialogues on Diversity, a Cambridge, Mass., company that works with about 100 colleges a year, offers diversity training and specializes in staging highly theatrical sessions. "We try to bring humor and wit and light to topics that are often rife with heat and tension and awkwardness," says Ron Jones, the company’s executive director. When the consultants visited the University of Michigan’s School of Information last month, they used an old card game for an activity that conveyed how it feels to be on the receiving end of bias. Each of the school’s staff members was
instructed to hold a playing card against his or her forehead so that its rank was visible to everyone but the holder. Then the players were asked to respond to one another based on the value of a person’s card, giving deference, for example, to someone holding a face card.

"People are still thinking about it and talking about it," says Judy Lawson, the school’s assistant dean for academic and student affairs. She says it is now up to people there to make what they learned "part of the fabric of the institution."

Rankin & Associates Consulting, a Pennsylvania firm, focuses on conducting climate assessments for higher-education institutions and has a long list of college administrators on its staff. It examines the persistence rates of various minority student populations, the promotion rates of different subsets of the faculty, and staff members’ perceptions of how valued they are, and then guides people on campus in fashioning ways to make improvements in such areas. Its president, Susan Rankin, an associate professor of education and senior research associate at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Pennsylvania State University, says she prefers to work on campuses that are not experiencing strife, because "it is best to try to do an assessment when you are not reacting to something."

Hackman Consulting Group, which works with about six to 12 colleges a year, resists the label "diversity consultant," preferring instead to characterize itself as focused on promoting equity. Heather W. Hackman, its president, dismisses short-term training programs as ineffective and works exclusively under long-term contracts. She analyzes how bias affects clients’ decisions on hiring, promotion, and the distribution of resources, and then works her way down through the organization’s ranks. She tries to get people to look at the world and their jobs in ways that make their institution "more accessible to a broader range of people," she says.
Ms. Hackman "really was an important catalyst," says Janet Handler, provost of Mount Mercy University, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where the consultant tailored workshops to various constituencies on campus throughout the 2014-15 academic year. The university has since established a steering committee and annual summer retreats to help it continue to follow Ms. Hackman’s guidance. Says Ms. Handler: "We continue to see her influence here."

University of Missouri pilots beekeeping program

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri is piloting the Certified Master Beekeeper program at several sites across the state.

The program aims to help educate anyone already interested in beekeeping as well as promote awareness of the dangers facing pollinator populations and how people can help.

Scientists warn that the steady decline of bees will eventually have major consequences for American agriculture. Bees pollinate some of the highest-demand produce like apples and cucumbers.

Without enough bees to pollinate and promote growth, consumers could see supermarket staples disappear.

The University’s program is still being tweaked with help from local beekeepers and associations who are eager to offer their advice and make sure the program does more good than harm.

Jim Duever, president of the Boone Regional Beekeepers Association, maintains several beehives on the property he owns with his wife, Valerie Duever, president of MO State Beekeepers Association.
The bee-loving pair are co-owners of Jim ‘n’ I Farms, Inc. out of Auxvasse.

Jim Duever’s main concern about the classes is that people who are serious about owning and maintaining hives should understand the challenges of having bees.

“It is a long term commitment,” he said. “You don’t just buy a package of bees, install them, and walk away.”

He said people who do not want to actually maintain bees on their property can plant flowers and pollinator habitats. The Duever’s property is filled with bee-friendly plants.

Jim Duever said loss of habitat is one of the main reasons bee populations are dwindling, along with disease and poison by pesticides.

At Jefferson Farm in Columbia, one of the sites for the beekeeping classes, only one of two new hives survived the winter.

The farm has since incorporated several more hives in preparation for the upcoming beekeeper classes.

Its first class, for beginners, is May 14.

“This class will cover some of the basic fundamentals of beekeeping, such as honeybee biology, what kinds of equipment is needed for beekeeping, what’s to be expected, and plant and pollinator relationships,” program director Amy Dooley said.

Jim Duever said he believes the disappearing of bees could be reversed, but the only permanent solution would come from conservation efforts.

“Eventually the bees will survive and come back, and we don’t want to go back to our old ways,” Duever said. “We got to keep moving forward and not only protect the bees but all the pollinators.”

For more information on MU’s beekeeping program, contact Amy Dooley at 573-239-6134.