MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

June 6, 2016
University of Missouri campus in Columbia hires black faculty at a slow pace

Today’s top colleges have a faculty corps that’s much whiter than the general population.

Students at MU and on campuses across the country are demanding that more minority faculty be hired.

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

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In the last two academic years, the University of Missouri campus in Columbia has hired 451 faculty members.

But on a campus that has been torn by protests over a lack of diversity and an oppressive racial climate, just 19 were African-American.

Data obtained by The Star through a Freedom of Information Act request show that in the last two years the Columbia campus hired more than 13 times as many white professors as African-Americans.

While just about 4.2 percent of the hires were African-American, 262 — more than half — were white.

In that time, MU also hired 61 Asian professors, 12 Hispanic professors, three American Indians and two Pacific Islanders.
The remaining 92 hires did not define their racial identity. Doing so is optional, university officials said. But even if half of those hires were African-American, the campus would still come up well short of meeting any standards proposed to ensure a diverse faculty.

The campus now has 1,973 ranked faculty members. Just 55 — about 2.8 percent — are black. There are 1,476 white faculty members, 64 Hispanic and 259 Asian.

At universities nationwide, about 6 percent of faculties are African-American. Even Yale, with a hefty bankroll to put into boosting African-American numbers among its faculty, is struggling to make any significant change.

The minority faculty gap is so large, and the pace of change so slow nationally, that Robert Bruce Slater, managing editor of The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, makes a startling point:

“We find that blacks in faculty ranks will not reach parity with the black percentage of the overall American work force for about another 140 years.”

African-Americans are 13 percent of the national population. They are 11.2 percent of Missouri’s. The Association of American Colleges and Universities says campuses should hire faculty to better reflect the surrounding population.

Concerned Student 1950, the predominantly black student group that last November led campus protests, called for MU faculty to be 10 percent black by 2017. Several attempts to reach members of Concerned Student 1950 were not successful.

MU has not set a goal for how many more African-American faculty it would hire in the coming years or how quickly the campus would see the percentage grow.

“But do we want to increase our number of minority faculty? You bet we do,” said Christian Basi, an MU spokesman. “Are we taking steps to make that happen? You bet we are.”

The numbers “are not great,” said Ben Trachtenberg, president of MU’s faculty council. But the task, he said, “is daunting. I hope we do better in the future, and that is not a crazy hope. But it won’t happen by accident. It has to be dealt with on a campuswide level.”

The university’s hiring numbers indicate how slowly the racial complexion on campus can change. The Star requested two years of data — the academic year before the campus became embroiled and the year the racial strife peaked — to try to determine any trend.

Of the 19 African-American professors hired, just three were hired last year. However, there were fewer hires overall that year — 324 in the previous year and 127 last year.
Trachtenberg and others point out that hiring trends will be influenced by which departments have vacancies. Hiring committees in each department govern the process and don’t take into account how the overall campus is doing.

Basi also said laws don’t permit a public institution such as MU to create specific hiring goals for any individual ethnic group — such as the demand presented by Concerned Student 1950.

“Quotas are not legal,” Basi said.

What is less clear, said Pauline Kim, a law professor at Washington University in St. Louis, “is whether a university such as University of Missouri could say, ‘We are going to recognize the diversity makeup of our faculty in our hiring and make it a priority to take race into account.’ ”

Easier said than done

The Concerned Student 1950 group pushed the issue of low minority faculty numbers into the light last fall with a tent city occupation, a student hunger strike and the football team’s threat to boycott a game.

The protest, which led to the resignations of the university president and the Columbia campus chancellor, set off a national debate and movement on campus diversity and inclusion.

Since the protest, MU has set up a task force; hired a vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion; and begun requiring diversity training for students, staff and faculty.

This month, the University of Missouri System hired a Massachusetts company, Interactive Business Inclusion Solutions, to conduct an audit of diversity and inclusion at its four campuses.

MU isn’t the only school moving to hire more minority faculty members. Universities and higher-education experts across the country acknowledge that campuses need more faculty of color, but they also agree that noticeably increasing those numbers, especially for black faculty, won’t be easy.

A lot stands between intent and action.

For starters, it’s expensive at a time when budgets are tight. Few African-Americans hold doctorate degrees, so competition for them is high. At some schools, experts say, bias knit over time into the processes and functions of the system blocks faculty committees from choosing black candidates.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 80 percent of full-time faculty members at degree-granting colleges and universities were white in 2013, the most recent federal data available.
Among minority ranks in addition to the 6 percent that are black, 5 percent are Hispanic and 10 percent Asian or Pacific Islander.

Closer to home, the percentage of black faculty at campuses on the largest four-year public universities — the University of Missouri at Columbia, the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City — is below the 6 percent national average.

Kansas State’s, at 2.4 percent, is even lower than MU’s 2.8 percent. KU has 2.9 percent. But the black population in Kansas, at 6.3 percent, is much lower than its neighboring state’s.

Faculty demographics
Only 6 percent of the faculty on the nation’s college campuses are black. That compares with 13.2 percent of the general population being black. The disparity is worse at our area schools in Missouri and Kansas.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Missouri in Columbia</th>
<th>Kansas State University</th>
<th>University of Kansas</th>
<th>University of Missouri-Kansas City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black: 2.8%</td>
<td>Black: 2.4%</td>
<td>Black: 2.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White faculty: 74.8%</td>
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<td>Asian: 13.1%</td>
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<td>Other: 7.5%</td>
<td>Other: 5.9%</td>
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<td>Hispanic: 3%</td>
<td>Hispanic: 3.1%</td>
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*Other includes American Indian, Native Hawaiian, nonresident aliens, two or more races and unknown.
Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; the universities

Five percent of the faculty at UMKC are black.

“Universities are not proud of their numbers,” Slater said. “Some of them are embarrassed at their low levels of black faculty.”

MU administrators make the point that as a research institution, MU is a member of the Association of American Universities. At universities considered research institutions, the highest percentage of black faculty is 6 percent, the lowest is 1.28 percent.
“MU sits in the middle,” said Ken Dean, MU’s senior associate provost.

“It is a challenge not only for us to recruit and retain black faculty, but it is a challenge for all the major research institutions in this country,” he said. “We are all running the same race, and everyone that we are competing with is trying to find the edge.”

MU officials said they are trying such tactics as training faculty search committees in how to diversify the pool of applicants and how to deal with implicit bias and be more inclusive and culturally competent when looking to fill faculty positions.

The school also has fine-tuned its faculty mentoring program so that senior faculty consider cultural issues that may be important to junior faculty and make the difference in whether they would stay on at the Columbia campus.

“Training we started for faculty hiring this year has not had a chance to work,” Trachtenberg said. “It could be another year before we see its fruits.”

For more than a decade, MU has had an incentive program called the Faculty Inclusion and Excellence Fund, used to help departments make offers to top minority faculty more attractive so they will consider coming to MU in the first place.

To “sweeten the deal, so to speak,” said Noor Azizan-Gardner, chief diversity officer at MU. The fund could boost a hire’s salary or increase research resources, she said.

“We are trying to run this race as fast as we can,” Dean said.

But even offering potential hires financial incentives may not be enough, Dean said. Some don’t want to be so far from a major city, some prefer living on a coast, and sometimes, he said, “another institution will make a counteroffer so staggering to any counteroffer MU could ever make.”

The schools dangling the biggest paychecks, usually the elite schools such as Columbia, Brown and New York University, private schools with big budgets, get first crack at the top-notch black faculty, said Amilcar Shabazz, faculty adviser for diversity and excellence in the chancellor’s office at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

But even Yale, where just 2.9 percent of the faculty is black, has been slow to increase its black faculty numbers. It recently pledged to spend $50 million to diversify its faculty over the next five years.
But a recent report says plans to increase minority faculty have been raised before on the nation’s campuses, then shelved without follow-through until the next time the issue gets pushed to the forefront.

MU would have to hire about 150 more black faculty to hit the 10 percent mark demanded by Concerned Student 1950. And that level would still be below the 11.2 percent black population in the state.

“Even if resources were not an issue, hiring 150 black faculty by 2017 is not likely to occur no matter how much money we have,” Dean said.

Joe Moore, a second-year journalism doctorate degree candidate, finds the low number of black faculty at MU “alarming but not surprising,” he said.

“We have known for some time that the numbers are low, lower than they should be,” said Moore, who also is outreach officer for the Coalition of Graduate Workers at MU. Moore’s group also launched protests on campus last fall and supports, Moore said, Concerned Student 1950’s demand for a more diverse faculty.

“I know the university has made statements that they are going to do something about this,” Moore said. “But it remains to be seen if their actions are serious enough and meaningful enough to address what is really a serious problem.”

Students are not the only ones concerned about the lack of diversity among the faculty. A fair number of faculty also want to see some real improvement in the numbers.

“I think it is extremely important that we increase the black faculty,” said Angela Speck, a physics professor who is white and also chairs the Faculty Council’s committee on diversity enhancement at MU.

“We should be able to reflect the black student population if not the black population at large.”

Speck said she has tried to change the way her colleagues review an applicant’s credentials — to consider varied types of experiences — so that more minorities get included in the candidate selection process.

“But as soon as you try to bring people’s attention to this idea of implicit bias that they don’t know they have, people get upset, angry even. They have a hard time accepting that.”

Clovis Semmes, who has been a professor of black studies at University of Missouri-Kansas City for seven years and has sat on several faculty search committees, supports advertising jobs in periodicals for black organizations, “like with the association of black engineers, or black
psychologists ...,” to attract candidates. “But there has to be a commitment for that from the top.”

Semmes and others say a financial investment in the effort would be a critical step forward for Mizzou. The university is now using savings to help cover a $22.9 million building renovation effort that includes upgrades to its administrative hall and a complete renovation of Swallow Hall, which houses the museum of anthropology.

But a recent report in The Chronicle of Higher Education questions whether even a substantial amount of money can create diversity.

The average salary of full-time, teaching faculty at Ph.D.-granting public schools in 2013 and 2014 was $85,900; at private schools, $101,700.

But some argue that increasing black faculty is more than dollars and cents.

“We seek more than money. We want to be where we can work.” said Jennifer Hamer, a professor of American studies at the University of Kansas and president of the Black Faculty and Staff Council.

“If you want to increase diversity, then have a program specific to increasing diversity,” Hamer said. “Don’t leave it to chance.”

She said schools must change campus climate so faculty of color feel welcome, are given a voice in the campus community and have a committed pathway for advancement.

Speck agrees. “Some black faculty are treated so abysmally it’s a wonder they stay,” she said.

Speck recalled stories told to her by black faculty at MU, who said some students had refused to call them professor, telling them that to do so “would mean you are better than me.”

Faculty want to teach where they are comfortable.

Jannette Berkley-Patton, an associate professor of applied behavioral analysis at the UMKC School of Medicine, said she turned down a “lucrative” endowed chair at Michigan State University to stay in Kansas City, where she was born and raised.

“My story is very home-centered,” Berkley-Patton said.

At one point her UMKC office overlooked her old inner-city neighborhood including 48th Street and Benton Boulevard. “I could look out my window and see Paseo High School, my high school.”
The recruiting problem goes deep, Berkley-Patton said. Professors need a doctorate degree. To get more African-American faculty to pick from, schools first must graduate more African-Americans with doctorate degrees.

Slightly more than 52,700 doctorate degrees were awarded by American universities in 2013. And according to a federal study that year on the number of doctoral graduates in the U.S., Asian-Americans received 8.9 percent of all doctorates awarded. African-Americans received 6.4 percent, Hispanics 6.2 percent and whites 72.9 percent.

In some fields, though, particularly among the hard sciences, the number of potential professors of any race graduating with doctorate degrees is small and the African-Americans among them are less than a handful.

“We have to pump the pipeline,” Berkley-Patton said.

University police arrest suspect in campus gunfire incident

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Friday, June 3, 2016 at 9:28 am

University of Missouri police on Thursday arrested a 22-year-old Columbia man suspected of firing a gun May 6 during a celebration on campus.

Officers contacted Tyree J. Reed while he was at work at Walgreens, 222 E. Broadway, shortly before 2 p.m., MU police Maj. Brian Weimer said. Reed was arrested at the police station shortly thereafter on suspicion of armed criminal action and unlawful use of a weapon. He was being held at the Boone County Jail without bond.

Reed was an MU student at the time of the incident but is not currently enrolled, Weimer said. He would not say whether Reed consented to an interview with investigators or whether he implicated himself in the gunfire at MU’s Carnahan Quadrangle last month. He said he did not want to release many details so investigators can verify eyewitness accounts. Police hope more witnesses come forward and offer information.
Reed is the only suspect in the case who has been identified; Weimer declined to say whether police think more people were involved or might be arrested in the future.

“As more information may come available in the future, we will evaluate that and handle it accordingly,” he said Friday.

Columbia and MU police responded to the quadrangle near Traditions Plaza at 10:15 p.m. May 6 after a disturbance during an end-of-semester celebration. Someone fired two to three shots into the air at the event, witnesses said at the time.

Police confirmed two shots had been fired on campus.

MISSOURIAN

**Arrest made in May 6 shots fired incident on MU's campus**

KELSEY HURWITZ, Jun 3, 2016

COLUMBIA — A Columbia man was arrested Thursday afternoon in connection with a May 6 shots fired incident on MU's Traditions Plaza at the northern end of Carnahan Quadrangle.

No one was injured in the incident.

Tyree J. Reed, 22, was arrested by MU Police at about 2 p.m. Thursday on suspicion of unlawful use of a weapon and armed criminal action, Maj. Brian Weimer said.

A news release from MU Police said Reed is "currently" not a student. He still appears in MU's online directory as a junior in general studies. MU spokesman Christian Basi said that Reed was enrolled in the spring semester but that he told police at the time of his arrest that he was no longer a student.
Weimer said he did not know exactly when the incident occurred, but MU Alert originally reported the incident at 10:49 p.m.

The investigation is ongoing.

**MISSOURIAN**

**MU committee releases draft of free expression policy**

ANNA SUTTERER, Jun 3, 2016

COLUMBIA — **If the "Policy on Use of University Facilities and Grounds," a proposal written by an MU ad hoc committee, were fully adopted, students would no longer be able to sleep on campus grounds. They would no longer be able to use bull horns to shout solidarity messages without approval. They would no longer be able to "substantially" disrupt speakers on campus.**

These acts, however, are already against university policy.

Using any amplification device on any university site, without approval by the Auxiliary Service Operations office, is prohibited by Section 6.052 of MU's Business Policy and Procedure Manual. The MU Systems' Collected Rules and Regulations states that no university building or grounds may be occupied as a living room or bedroom.

If policies like these were enforced last fall, protests on campus could have looked much different. A tent encampment would not have dominated Carnahan Quadrangle for eight days. Jonathan Butler's shouts through a megaphone would not have echoed through the graduate student walkout in August.

Ben Trachtenberg, the MU Faculty Council chair, said last fall's events helped show that existing rules concerning public space and free expression were too difficult to access. Some statutes are
buried in the UM Systems Collected Rules and Regulations. Others are in the MU Student Code of Conduct, the M-Book.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech and the Press was created in January by Trachtenberg and Interim Chancellor Hank Foley to suggest ways the university could better regulate public spaces and diffuse future conflicts over the use of those spaces.

The committee sent its draft policy proposal to Foley and Trachtenberg on Monday, and it was released to MU students, staff and faculty via an email from the chancellor on Thursday.

Any changes to university policy would need to be approved by Foley. The UM Systems General Counsel office is reviewing the proposal to determine which policies, if any, would change the university system's current rules and regulations. Any changes to system policies would then have to be adopted by the Board of Curators.

“At this campus, everybody ultimately answers to the chancellor in one way or another,” Trachtenberg said. "My strong hope is that he will approve something that the Faculty Council are in favor of, and that there has been significant student buy-in.”

Two students were involved in the policy discussions: recent graduate Samantha Frank and doctoral student Evonnia Woods.

Frank, who was a part of the 2015 Missouri Students Association cabinet as director of student services, said her biggest concern was that the committee's policies would prevent future protests.

Her fear diminished after she worked with several of the faculty on the committee, particularly law professor Christina Wells and law and journalism professor Sandy Davidson.

"There have been a couple of times this year where it was really unclear what the rules were," Frank wrote in an email, "and that made things both difficult and potentially dangerous. Now,
with this in place, students have something to react to, something to work with. That's invaluable in planning any kind of movement.”

According to the policy draft, continuing to engage in prohibited behaviors will lead to disciplinary action. The MU Office of Student Conduct would oversee students in violation of the policy, and MU Human Resources would oversee staff.

MUPD has the authority to declare behavior a violation of university policy and is allowed to call in outside law enforcement if the department thinks it is necessary.

Committee chair Bob Jerry said having clearer regulations and policies about what can be done in specific spaces on campus is one way to solve conflict. He also said students who were protesting in violation of a policy would first be asked to move before any disciplinary action was taken.

"We recommend the campus as a whole talk about this," Jerry said, "because these are important issues, and we all need to understand them better if we are going to have productive, civil conversation on the campus.”

The draft was released to the public for students, staff, faculty, legislators and members of the public to review and give feedback to the committee or Foley, Trachtenberg said.

He added that public meetings will be held in the fall for further discussion.

**DEAR READER: You can't tell the MU leadership without a scorecard**

TOM WARHOVER, Jun 4, 2016

I discovered Sporcle on Friday. It was for work. I promise.
Sporcle is one of those silly and slightly addictive online games that tests your ability to remember things like where states lie on a map and whether you can pick the romantic comedy movie from its poster.

These are the kinds of things I’m lousy at. Then again, I often have a hard time remembering which tree name goes where in downtown streets. Is it Cherry then Locust then Elm? You’d think I’d have a pretty good idea by now after working for 15 years in this forest.

**But this was research. I wanted to know whether we should “do a Sporcle” on MU’s administrative transitions, what with all the interims and about-to-be retirees and the those who have just plain quit.**

There are a baker's dozen of deans on the campus. In the span of a week, three announced their departures from dean-dom.

On Wednesday, College of Arts and Science dean Michael O’Brien announced he was heading south for a provost’s job at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. The previous week, Tom Payne said he would retire as head of the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources in December. Gary Myers, dean at the Law School, will become just plain professor Myers in August.

My boss, the dean of the School of Journalism, started work here about 11 months ago. He’s practically an old-timer now on the Council of Deans.

Things aren’t a whole lot different at the vice chancellor level. The music hasn’t stopped in this game of moving chairs.

It’s hard to keep up. I imagine you’re just as bewildered.

So, under the guidance of city editor Katherine Reed, we’re putting together a complete chart of MU administrators and their status. I imagine you’ll see categories like “about to be gone,” “gone from this job but sticking around for another” and “who knows?”
It will be informative to see all the pieces together in one place. Expect to see the chart in the next few days.

Unfortunately, I couldn’t figure out how to turn this turnover into a Sporcle game. That would be informative and entertaining.

Maybe I should check into baseball cards for MU. I hear rookie cards can be worth a lot.

Global graduates set to travel for university high school ceremony

By Roger McKinney

Friday, June 3, 2016 at 2:00 p

Yearam Tak and Jacob Hollis are part of an interesting class of high school graduates.

They are among the 150 students to graduate this year from University of Missouri High School. They also are two of only 14 graduating seniors who plan to be in Columbia next Saturday for the commencement ceremony on campus.

The accredited high school is operated through Mizzou K-12 Online, part of the MU College of Education.

Kathryn Fishman-Weaver, academic affairs director for Mizzou K-12, said the high school has students from all 50 states and 65 countries. She said more than 6,000 students take classes online through MUHS.

The school is able to serve as a solely online option for individual students or as a blended model, with online teachers working with educators in classrooms both in the United States and across the world. The course offerings include 10 Advanced Placement courses.

“Kids come to us for a variety of reasons,” Fishman-Weaver said. “They may earn their whole high school diploma or take a class or two.”
She said some students are in military families that are stationed abroad, while others might be world travelers.

She said international students are excited by the opportunity to earn a diploma from a high school in the United States. Students who are home-schooled are another segment of the student population.

Graduates from MU High School get an official diploma from an accredited U.S. high school rather than a high school equivalency diploma, she said.

Fishman-Weaver described the school as a descendant of the College of Education’s Laboratory School. The high school was in operation until 1973, according to online university records.

Karen Scales has taught English at the school since 1994. Scales works with a college preparatory high school class in Brazil, partnering with a teacher there.

She said the classes can be customized to meet the individual needs of students.

“The opportunity to earn an accredited American high school diploma is opening up opportunities for them,” she said. “It gives students control of their education.”

The cost is $500 per course, but a 50 percent tuition scholarship rate is available for students with a permanent Missouri address and domestic students admitted into the diploma program.

Tak, 18, was a standout student at Francis Howell High School in St. Charles. Her various academic accolades allowed her to meet President Barack Obama twice. While in the St. Louis area, she started a not-for-profit organization that provides volunteer mentors and peer tutors for disadvantaged and homeless students.

For the 2015-16 academic year, she moved with her parents to Seoul, South Korea — the family’s homeland they left more than a decade ago.

She said her guidance counselor at Francis Howell connected her with MU High School. Tak described it as a strong academic program, noting she will graduate after passing nine Advanced Placement courses.

She is as “ready and motivated as I can be, and I hope I’ll be a better version of myself tomorrow,” Tak wrote in an email. “I’m blessed to have an opportunity to finish my exciting and thrilling secondary experience at the University of Missouri High School.”

She’s working as an intern in a biological engineering lab in South Korea. She also has established a branch of her not-for-profit organization in Seoul.

Hollis, 18, lives in Columbia but was enrolled in a different online high school before his family moved to Missouri from California.
He started attending classes at MU High School after the move. He said he appreciates the flexibility online classes afford him.

“When you do it in the day is up to you,” he said. “It also teaches you responsibility. It’s ultimately up to you to do the work.”

He said his experience has been “perfect” and praised the educators who teach the online courses.

“These teachers are the best of the best,” he said. “I haven’t had any experience with better teachers anywhere.”

He said he plans to attend MU in the fall to study mechanical engineering.

The commencement ceremony is set for 2 p.m. June 11 in Stotler Lounge in the Memorial Student Union, 518 Hitt St. Fishman-Weaver said some graduates planned to travel from Saudi Arabia and Thailand to attend.

Adjuncts are unionizing, but that won’t fix what’s wrong in higher education

Higher education’s adjunct professor crisis is well known by now: Struggling per-course instructors are teaching the majority of college courses for minimum wage, with little stability and few benefits. Adjuncts at many campuses see unionization as the answer to their troubles, and thousands have voted to unionize over the past several years. Duke University’s 6-to-1 adjunct union win was announced March 18. Tufts University’s adjunct union collective bargaining agreement, negotiated in fall 2014, has served as the gold standard; adjuncts now earn a minimum of $7,300 per course and become eligible for one-year contracts starting in 2017.

But despite these and other individual gains, unionizing adjuncts has done nothing to meaningfully change the contingency nature of adjunct employment.

Recovering adjunct professor here, with eight years as a higher-ed contingent worker. Between the low pay and semester-to-semester uncertainties, conditions that are outward manifestations of an entire university system that’s broken, I couldn’t make it work. Adjuncts are admirably trying to improve their circumstances and continue to rally behind unionization efforts. However, this system of adjuncts carrying higher education on their backs needs a complete overhaul, and it will take more than the incremental improvements that union organizing can achieve.
The Service Employees Industrial Union (SEIU), also the force behind the Fight for 15 movement, has mobilized adjuncts in such spots as Washington, Boston and Los Angeles. During this past semester alone, according to the SEIU, adjuncts at 11 schools have ratified or agreed on union contracts. While there have been short-term gains, the deeper we become entrenched in adjunct unions, the more we are locked in an educational structure that shortchanges students by skimping on teaching.

Adjuncts comprise the biggest chunk of those teaching at the college level. The Education Department’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System shows that the ranks of adjunct professors, those teaching technically part time and paid per course, increased from 25 percent of the higher-ed teaching workforce in 1975 to 41 percent in 2011.

Only one-quarter of those teaching at the college level have job security — those on the tenure track. The other three-quarters are either part-time per-course adjuncts or the full-time non-tenure trackers (35 percent), who have lower salaries than tenure-trackers and no long-term contracts.

Pay increases usually top the unionizing agenda. Since adjuncts nationwide average per-course pay of $2,700, with some paid as little as $1,000, any raise is an improvement. Adjuncts at the College of St. Rose in Albany recently negotiated a union agreement with administration after a year of collective bargaining. Many adjuncts have spent hours they can’t spare devoted to this admirable effort and are excited about the pay bump. A closer look, though, shows they’ve won an increase from $2,400 to $3,225 per course, over three years. Even with this bump, teaching eight classes per year (more than many full-timers teach) would equal a grand total of $25,800, which is close to minimum living wage in Albany if you’re single but far from it for those with families.

Two weeks ago at Boston University, one of the places I taught, adjuncts voted on a union contract. Terms stipulate minimum per-course adjunct pay of $5,100 this fall. Those above the minimum will see increases of 2.5 percent in 2016 and 2 percent in 2017 and 2018; if I were still teaching there, my per-course pay would increase by a mere $150 in the fall.

The disruption and distraction of constant job-hunting aren’t disappearing with union contracts either. Living semester-to-semester left me in a continuous panicked state, in an endless search for classes across departments and universities. The verbiage in BU’s tentative agreement allows for semester, multi-semester (one-course minimum, two semesters in a row) and recurring appointments (one-course minimum, two or more years). It also states that “part-time faculty members shall be notified of open non tenure-track salaried positions,” as if this and the multi-tiered appointments will provide permanence.

Union contracts just can’t make schools hire adjuncts full time. At St. Rose, adjuncts teaching for two consecutive years will get one-year contracts. This type of improvement is of little help to a former colleague of mine, an adjunct of 10 years who teaches on three campuses — the best he could hope for now under similar terms is to bounce from two-year contract to two-year contract. Though unions are asking for longer adjunct teaching contracts, school administrators have claimed that since contract length isn’t a mandatory subject of bargaining, they don’t have
to address the request. And that’s exactly how administrators have responded at such places as
the state university system in Pennsylvania.

The university system has gone the way of Walmart, profiting from the continued manipulation
of the lowest rung. However, these customers aren’t shopping for $2 T-shirts but for an
education. You can give that lowest rung more pay and say it’s better than nothing, but a 50
percent raise on low pay still equals low pay, and one-year contracts don’t provide stability.
These conditions affect the courses that college students and their parents pay huge bucks for,
thanks to astronomical tuition rates now averaging $35,000. For one of the courses I taught last
spring, the school collected $105,000 in student tuition — more than 16 times what I was paid to
teach said class.

Over the past few years, full-time non-tenure track professors also have started organizing
efforts, voting to unionize at Tufts last year and notching a big win at Boston University on April
8. So now you’ve got three disparate groups in the teaching hierarchy: tenured and tenure-track,
full-time non-tenure track, and part-time adjuncts, each with its own agenda. And it’s not like
tenured and tenure-track faculty have it easy, either. In fact, on May 12, the faculty union at the
City University of New York (CUNY) announced that it had voted to authorize a strike, after six
years with no pay raise and five years without a contract. Ninety-two percent of the 10,000
filling out ballots voted yes, meaning that faculty will strike in the fall if a mediator does not
reach a deal with the administration.

Non-tenure-track faculty at the University of Illinois went on strike at the end of April, and other
adjuncts at places like Northeastern University threatened to strike earlier this year. Adjunct
protests took place on several campuses on April 14 and 15. I respect those speaking up against
university administrations when administrators have so little respect for them, and their union
wins are certainly moral victories. However, the cracked framework of the college system
persists even after these protests end and union contracts are ratified, and administrators continue
to fill adjunct spots with little difficulty. When the University of Missouri football team went
on strike last fall, people paid attention and the president was ousted. Football players
aren’t dispensable, as adjunct professors seem to be.

Organizing adjuncts “gets you a seat at the table,” as a number of labor organizers have said to
me.

They’re right, but it seems as if it’s a seat at the wrong table.
St. Louis County Library expands its free summer meals program for children

The director of St. Louis County Library kept one letter, written by a mom who wanted to thank her for the free lunches she received for her two children at the Weber Road branch during summer 2014.

“My children and I visited almost daily when I realized it was OK for my family to attend. I was unsure because both my husband and I work, and my children are 15 and 12,” she wrote. “Even though we are both working, money is tight. This program really helped us out.”

During the school year, the federal school lunch program provides nearly 356,000 needy children in Missouri with free or reduced-price meals each day. But when summer comes, they are left without this important and easy access to healthy food.

To help vulnerable children when school is not in session, the government funds a summer nutrition program that provides weekday meals at sites such as recreational centers, churches and parks located in school districts where more than half the students meet the poverty level that qualifies them for help with paying for lunch. All children under the age of 18 are welcome.

Many, however, are not getting the free summer meals. Recent figures show only about 38,000 Missouri children — just over 10 percent using the school-year program — make it to the sites, according to the Food Research and Action Center. The state ranks 40th in its rate of participation.

Reasons include lack of transportation, working parents wanting older children to stay in the home with their siblings and lack of knowledge about the program, said Sunny Schaefer, director of Operation Food Search, which provides food and personal items to more than 200,000 people a month in 32 counties in Missouri and Illinois.
“The need is quite great,” especially for families with more than one child who also use school break programs, Schaefer said. “During the summer, a family’s food costs inflates an average of $300 a month because kids aren’t receiving school meals. This is an added drain on the family’s resources and presents difficulty over the summer months for those families who struggle to feed themselves.”

While the 10 percent summer participation rate is low, figures show the numbers have been increasing.

Operation Food Search serves as a “sponsor” for the summer nutrition program. It helps recruit agencies to serve as distribution sites and secures the meals, which must meet nutritional guidelines. More agencies are stepping up to participate, Schaefer said, which are helping serve more children.

“Our vision at operation food search,” she said, “is to eliminate childhood hunger, and this is one of the ways we can do that during summer months.”

HIGH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COSTS

**Missouri families are the hungriest they have been in decades, according to a University of Missouri report released in April.**

Nearly 17 percent of Missouri households faced food insecurity last year, compared with 14 percent nationwide, placing it among the top 10 worst states, the report showed. Food insecurity means they worry about not being able to put enough food on the table. They avoid hunger by eating a less nutritious diet and relying on assistance.

Those unable to avoid hunger make up 8 percent of households — or about half a million Missourians. That number has more than doubled in the past decade, the highest increase in the country.
The economic and social costs are high. Studies of children show that food insecurity and hunger are big predictors of chronic illness, low school performance and developmental problems.

St. Louis County Library officials say they plan to more than double the number of meals the library serves to children this summer — from 6,000 to 14,000 — by adding two of its busiest branches that had been closed because of construction to its list of sites. In total, six branches will provide meals.

“We just feel like it’s time to expand the program,” said director Kristen Sorth. “There’s a real need in Missouri and also in St. Louis.”

To help attract more children, Sorth said the six library branches are using donations to host free pizza parties on Fridays, which will also include fruits, vegetables and fig bars from Nature’s Bakery in Hazelwood.

“We just thought it would be a great addition to the program,” Sorth said, “to do something special for the kids and have something fun for them on the day before weekend.”

Sorth said libraries serve as ideal locations for providing summer meals, because they serve families of all income levels. People can visit without fear of embarrassment.

“Libraries are the great equalizer,” she said. “Everyone can come here, no questions asked. There’s no stigma.”

Libraries can also help prevent the learning losses children experience over the summer. Sorth said. Along with the meals, volunteers will provide board games, crafts and story times. Staff will sign families up for library cards and summer reading programs.

“We are introducing the kids to all the library resources,” she said, “and we are providing them with a lunch.”
"Grime" fighters bring joy to children in hospital

Last fall, for the first time, employees of Springfield-based company Class Glass were asked to dress as superheroes while washing windows.

The job was at the children's hospital in Columbia. With limited time to prepare, the employees obtained outfits from a rental shop near the University of Missouri campus.

"You can imagine they were kind of frat-quality costumes," Class Glass owner Justin Hess recalled Tuesday.

On Thursday, Class Glass was back on the job. But Hess had planned ahead and ordered online.

"This time, we kind of went a little further and got theater-quality outfits, to better play the part," he said.

Employee Niall Tucker became Spider-Man.

Jacob Stockstill gave way to Batman.

David Franklin was suddenly Captain America.

And Hess transformed into Superman — something of a practical decision.

"To be frank, I do powerlifting," Hess said. "I'm bigger than average for costumes. It was the only thing I could find that would fit me."

The four spent Thursday morning visiting about 30 kids in the hospital and autographing pictures.

Beforehand, Hess estimated the job would take about five hours. He said he'd been workshopping a line: "When we don't have crime to go fight, we fight grime." He said his wife told him it was cheesy.

Class Glass was founded in 1981. Hess, after working for the company for years, purchased it in late 2015.
When asked, Hess admitted superhero costumes are a little bulkier — and thus hotter — than ideal for a late May job. But he didn't want that to come across as a complaint.

When Class Glass was at the MU Women’s and Children’s Hospital last fall, Hess said, the kids were "just excited." The window washers were a brief break from reality.

"Whatever they had going on in the day, good or bad, was just forgotten," he said.

Hess — who has a 4-year-old and a 7-year-old himself — also found himself looking at the parents that day. He saw the same relief there as well.

"They weren't thinking about what was wrong with their kids for that moment," he said.