Nixon withholds money for MU commission

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 14 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — A commission set up by Republican legislative leaders to review policies and procedures at MU will not get any state funds this year.

Gov. Jay Nixon announced Wednesday that he is withholding $750,000 in state funding set aside for the University of Missouri System Review Commission. It was part of $115.5 million in funding restrictions Nixon announced to balance the state's budget.

The Missouri legislature created the commission when it passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 66 in May in response to a perceived lack of university leadership. The resolution was sponsored by state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia.

“The rules have gotten so out of balance. Many poor decisions were made,” Schaefer said in a news release at the time, a reference, in part, to the events that led to the resignation of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

“The commission will serve as an outside voice and give some much-needed feedback on how to ensure the long-term survival and growth of the institution,” Schaefer said.

Under the resolution, the commission was charged with conducting "a thorough review" of the UM System and recommending changes. The extent to which the UM System adopted and implemented the recommendations would "be considered by the General Assembly during the appropriations process."
A list of its tasks include analysis of various aspects of the university system including administrative and campus structures, rules and regulations, degree programs, research activities and diversity programs.

The $750,000 appropriation would have reimbursed member expenses, paid staff and helped hire consultants. The commission is working under a Dec. 31 deadline, but it will not be funded until after Nixon leaves office in January.

The Democratic governor had no input on the panel's membership. The first four commission members were appointed on June 16 by Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin. His appointments included radio personality Renee Hulsholf; Neal Bredehoeft, a farmer in Alma and former MU student; Legacy Pharmaceutical Packaging Chairman Dave Spence; and Michael Williams, a partner in the law firm of Williams, Dirks and Dameron.

The last four members of the commission were named June 29 by Missouri House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff.

They include former UM System President Gary Forsee; Pamela Washington, an adjunct professor at Maryville University; Robert Duncan of St. Joseph, former vice chancellor for research and now vice president for strategic research initiatives; and Jeanne Sinquefield, who served on the MU Steering Committee and is a board member of the "All We Call Mizzou" committee, which raised $1 billion in five years for scholarships.

According to previous Missourian reporting, at the time of the last appointments, state Rep. Jacob Hummel, a Democrat representing Missouri's 108th district, criticized the appointments as chosen solely by Republican legislative leaders and "geared toward advancing a Republican political agend
Nixon restricts $115.5 million in new or increased state spending

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) - Gov. Jay Nixon withheld $115.5 million in new or increased spending for several programs in an effort to balance the budget.

The restrictions for spending in southwest Missouri include $1 million for Ozarks Technical Community College to establish a campus in Republic and $2 million for Greenwood Laboratory School at Missouri State University. Also on the list of expenditures for southwest Missouri is $350,000 for the Missouri Department of Transportation for a railroad crossing project in Greene County.

The governor's office said Wednesday that the spending restrictions will not affect funding increases in the fiscal year 2017 budget for K-12 classrooms, higher education and a nearly $200 million increase for the Missouri Department of Mental Health. The fiscal year started July 1 and ends next June 30.

The withholdings, however, do include a $5 million planned increase for school busing (Foundation School Transportation program).

The budget withholdings affect 131 new or existing programs, including many university programs, law enforcement, social services and medical initiatives. In the past when the governor has withheld funds, he has released some of the funds later in the fiscal year when enough revenue arrived to cover the expenses.

Nixon said in a news release that further budget restrictions might be necessary if the legislature overrides his vetoes of three tax breaks. He said that would reduce the state revenues by more than $60 million a year.

A spokesman for OTC said the college plans to start building a campus in Republic in 2017 on eight acres donated last year by the Bussey, Cox and Lipscomb families. OTC hopes the
governor will release the $1 million appropriation later in the fiscal year. The spokesman said those funds are for site development and street and utility improvements at the site.

The $2 million budgeted for MSU’s Greenwood Lab School would pay for planning, design and construction of an addition and renovation of older areas of the school.

"We were disappointed in the withholding although we understand the necessity given the revenue shortfall. We were appreciative that the governor didn't restrict our core appropriations, which allowed us to hold undergraduate in-state tuition flat and remain hopeful the Greenwood money will be released in time given the importance of that project," said MSU President Clif Smart in an emailed statement.

The withholdings include $750,000 for a commission set up by Republican legislative leaders to review policies and procedures at the University of Missouri. The commission formed after demonstrations rocked the Columbia campus last fall. The Democratic governor had no input on the panel's membership.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports no commission meetings have been scheduled. The appropriation would have reimbursed member expenses, paid staff and helped hire consultants. The commission is working under a Dec. 31 deadline, so it will not be funded until after Nixon leaves office in January.
Members of the commission held conference calls Wednesday with legislative leaders, with the Senate-appointed members talking with Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, and House-appointed members talking with House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff.

Neither meeting was posted but neither meeting had a quorum of the whole commission and no notice was required, Senate Republican spokeswoman Lauren Hieger said.

Shortly after the Senate call, Nixon said he was restricting the $750,000 set aside to support the commission’s work.

“It’s pretty sad given that the only thing this commission is doing is trying to suggest improvements and improve accountability for the university system,” said commissioner Dave Spence, Nixon’s GOP opponent in the 2012 election. “There is plenty of money down there and he is just playing games. But why would I expect anything different at this point?”

Nixon announced his budget actions the day after final revenue figures showed state tax receipts increased by an anemic 0.9 percent during the year that ended Thursday. Nixon did not restrict basic support for schools through the foundation formula or aid to support general operations of state colleges and universities, instead targeting smaller items throughout the budget for cuts.

Nixon withheld $12.45 million set aside for other University of Missouri projects, including $2 million for construction of a new building at the MU Research Reactor, $1.5 million to expand the MO Telehealth Network and $7.3 million from re-appropriations for construction projects.

Nixon also said he was withholding $750,000 of a planned $1 million increase in funding for the State Historical Society of Missouri.

The university administration will work with the campuses to keep the projects moving, UM System spokesman John Fougere wrote in an email.

For the commission, he wrote, “the Board of Curators and leadership of the university remain committed to transparency and intend to cooperate with the commission as it goes forward.”

The commission was created amid calls for cuts to state support for the university after administrative turmoil and campus protests resulted in the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia and sponsor of the resolution creating the commission, warned during the session that future funding would depend on whether the university accepts its recommendations.

Under Schaefer’s resolution, there was no requirement for partisan balance, with Richard and Richardson appointing four members each. Nixon, a Democrat, had no input on the panel’s membership, and critics have accused the GOP leaders of stacking it with conservatives hostile to public education.

Schaefer was not available for comment Wednesday.
The commission was directed to study the university’s collected rules and regulations, administrative structure, campus structure, auxiliary enterprises structure, degree programs, research activities and diversity programs. The appropriation was intended to reimburse member expenses for attending meetings, pay staff salaries and expenses and give the commission the ability to hire consultants.

Commissioner Renee Hulshof, a Columbia radio host, said she is willing to work while legislative leaders sort out financial issues.

“We can meet and we plan to,” she said. “You tell me legally how we handle this and I will say thank you very much.”

Along with Hulshof and Spence, the members are former UM System President Gary Forsee; major MU contributor Jeanne Sinquefield; Pamela Washington, an adjunct professor at Maryville University; Robert Duncan, former MU vice chancellor for research now employed as the vice president for strategic research initiatives at Texas Tech University; Neal Bredehoeft, president of Bredehoeft Farms Inc.; and attorney Michael Williams of Kansas City.

One possibility is finding money in the House and Senate’s own appropriations. Another possibility is a 2014 constitutional amendment that gives lawmakers power to overturn a governor’s decision to restrict spending in any line of the budget.

“We are reviewing our options at the moment,” Hieger said.

The review commission is working under a Dec. 31 deadline. If lawmakers do not overturn Nixon’s withholding, he can keep the panel from being funded because the restriction would stay in place at least until Nixon leaves office in January.

“We will figure it out one way or another,” Spence said. “We are not going to let petty politics get in the way. We are not going to let the governor’s financial games get in the way of progress.”
Governor Nixon works to balance 2017 fiscal year budget

JEFFERSON CITY - Gov. Jay Nixon announced actions he plans to take to balance the budget for 2017's fiscal year Wednesday. Nixon restricted $115.5 million in new or increased spending, but protected multiple education programs.

Nixon said he focused on the planned increase in spending on education throughout the state. The budget has four major increases for different education groups in Missouri.

"Among the historic investments that will not be affected by these actions: a $70 million increase, record funding, for K-12 classrooms. A more than $50 million increase for our colleges and universities ensuring that students don't pay a penny more for tuition this year, and that Missouri remains a national leader in college affordability" Nixon said.

The governor also went on to describe the $7 million increase for scholarship programs and a $200 million increase for programs benefiting people with mental illness and developmental disabilities.

Nixon said the state is trending in the right direction financially but there is a need for adjustment.

"For the fiscal year that ended June 30, revenues grew but at a more modest pace than projected. Which means we have less revenue than what the legislature assumes when it passed the budget for fiscal year 2017," Nixon said.

Nixon also withdrew $750,000 from the UM Review Commission. The $750,000 was taken out of the proposed $1 million budget for the commission. Also speaking about the UM System, the governor said the university would benefit from the money he allocated to keep tuition at the current rate.

Gov. Nixon does not want the General Assembly to override his vetoes of three tax breaks. If the General Assembly does in fact override the vetoes, Nixon said he would be forced to introduce further restrictions, which could reduce revenues by more than $60 million annually.

The governor said the spending restrictions are necessary because the state experienced a 35 percent decrease in net corporate income taxes.

KOMU reached out to members of the Republican party over the phone, but was unable to obtain a statement.
COLUMBIA — MU’s top financial leader told staff and faculty in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources on Wednesday that they need to be more conscientious about approving university spending.

“Your name is your integrity,” Rhonda Gibler, vice chancellor of finance, said. “You should never sign something that you aren’t absolutely confident in.”

Gibler answered most of the questions at a meeting of CAFNR employees called for by Dean Tom Payne. The purpose was to talk about a $700,000 embezzlement recently made public, findings from two audits related to the embezzlement and methods to prevent stealing of university money.

Gibler said the university is working with its insurance company to see if it will cover a portion of the stolen funds. She said at most, insurance will cover $100,000. The university also will have to pay back stolen federal funds, she said. That totals almost $38,500 in grants from two arms of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Payne, Gibler and Marc Linit, senior associate dean of CAFNR's Office of Research and Extension, led the hourlong meeting, which drew several dozen people to Jesse Wrench Auditorium in Memorial Student Union. In the future, the attendees were told, a good portion of the responsibility for misspending will fall on the person who signs off on the expenses. Expect to be accountable, Gibler said.

One response came from a man who raised his hand and said that "99 percent of the time" he has no idea what he’s signing. Heads nodded throughout the room, and a wave of "uh-hums" sounded after he was done speaking.
Another man said he has repeatedly asked for explanations of the university’s fiscal codes and reports but has never received an understandable one.

Gibler said the university intends to increase fiscal training, though she was not more specific about what that training would entail. She said she wants to make it more routine to serve as a refresher for employees. But theoretically, she said, there is no way to prevent all theft.

“No amount of training can address all the things that could happen,” Gibler said.

On June 6, a former administrative assistant with the Southwest Research Center in Mount Vernon, Missouri, a unit of CAFNR, pleaded guilty to embezzling more than $700,000 from the center.

Carla Rathmann, 54, was able to steal university money, including federal and state grant money, by making unauthorized purchases on her university credit card and faking invoices and bills to pay herself via shell companies created in her name, according to a University of Missouri System audit of the center. She was employed at the research center from January 2000 to September 2015.

The audit, released the same day Rathmann pleaded guilty, found that her financial misappropriations played a key role in the center’s need to discontinue its dairy operations in spring 2015. The audit also found that Rathmann stole grant money from three federal and state sponsors: $35,116 from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and $3,330 from Agricultural Research Services, which are part of the USDA, and $3,158 from the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

Two weeks later, another UM System audit was released, this time of the entire College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. That audit gave the college a 4 out of 5 in terms of financial risk, with five meaning it had the highest possible risk. The audit stated that responsibility for handling of federal and state funds between CAFNR and MU Extension was “not always clearly understood” and noted that the college repeatedly violated university policies.

Payne, who will retire at the end of December, said the university’s processes and protocols are not the problem; rather, it's that some people haven’t followed protocol.
As of June 6, the college’s business office reports directly to Gibler. This will remain in place until after she completes a top-to-bottom analysis of the college’s financial processes. So far, Gibler said, she has not found any major issues in those processes.

Gibler said a number of things related to the embezzlement could have been prevented if people were more conscientious about what university spending they approved.

“"If you sign something you shouldn’t have," she said, "that’s on you.”

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Mizzou looking overseas to boost enrollment
By Koran Addo St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Generated by: **International Expansion of University of Missouri High School Could Enhance Mizzou’s Enrollment and Diversity Efforts**

As the University of Missouri-Columbia braces for what could be a fairly painful enrollment decline this fall, one bright spot campus administrators have identified is the recent expansion of the University of Missouri High School.

The hope is that significant numbers of students taking courses through Mizzou’s high school program will one day land at the university as college students, enhancing the international flavor of the campus while also boosting its enrollment.

Enrollment is one of the most pressing matters on campus at the moment.

Last week, interim University of Missouri System President Michael Middleton described Mizzou’s freshman enrollment outlook as “grim” for the coming school year.
University administrators are expecting to see roughly 2,600 fewer students on campus in the 2016-17 school year, including 1,500 fewer freshmen.

As a result, the campus is bracing for a $30 million drop in revenue.

When universities begin anticipating enrollment decreases, a common strategy is to cast a wider net — expanding outreach efforts to markets previously untapped by recruiters.

In Mizzou’s case, administrators are cautiously optimistic that its high school, which has been quietly branching out to foreign countries over several years, can continue to fulfill its broader academic purpose while also creating a path for increased enrollment at the university in these dire times.

As dean of Mizzou’s College of Education, Kathryn Chval oversees the high school and its 6,000 students.

In addition to training future teachers how to conduct online courses and relate to foreign students, Mizzou is providing quality high school education to people around the world, Chval said.

The bonus is the potential influx of new students.

College leaders generally welcome diversity on a campus as a way to enrich the experiences of the entire student body. To that end, Mizzou has stepped up its international recruiting over the last decade. Mizzou’s 2,500 international students made up 7 percent of the university’s 35,400 students last year. Ten years ago, Mizzou had 1,370 international students, making up 4.9 percent of its student population.

“Within a few years, we could potentially have hundreds of new international students bolstering Mizzou’s enrollment numbers and diversifying our campus in amazing ways,” Chval said.

Mizzou’s high school traces its roots to the early 1900s, when universities stepped in to provide high school education to rural students who couldn’t travel long distances to schools each day,
as well as the medically homebound, and people who couldn’t take time off from their jobs to attend school on a regular schedule.

Those early correspondence courses, for which students and teachers communicated through the mail, eventually gave way to today’s online courses and so-called “blended” models in which students complete classes through a mix of online learning and face-to-face instruction.

Mizzou’s high school offers both.

Mizzou offers online classes and full diploma programs in all 50 states and around the world.

More noteworthy, the university has partnerships with brick-and-mortar high schools in 65 countries, including China, Brazil, Thailand, Honduras, Tanzania and Serbia.

What it means is that a gifted student in Detroit whose high school doesn’t offer certain advanced classes can take them through Mizzou.

Additionally, a student enrolled at a private school in Brazil can sit through a Brazilian curriculum in the morning, then switch to an American curriculum in the afternoon on his or her way to earning dual diplomas.

In that scenario, the Brazilian student might learn lessons designed by local teachers as well as instructors at Mizzou. And while the local teacher might handle the face-to-face classroom instruction, an instructor at Mizzou would grade the essays and exams. Both would provide feedback to the student.

Zac March manages many of Mizzou’s high school operations. He explains that students can choose from dozens of different courses at a cost of $500 each, or $250 for in-state students.

Students who complete an approved graduation plan, maintain a satisfactory grade-point average and meet enrollment requirements, are pre-admitted to attend the university through a program established last year called MizzouDirect.
Although the university hopes MizzouDirect will help boost enrollment, March said it wasn’t created specifically for that purpose.

“It was something that had been talked about for a while,” March said. “The university process is slow. We had to get all sorts of approvals.”

There are currently 850 students in the MizzouDirect program — 750 in Brazil and 100 in Vietnam.

Much of the optimism at Mizzou comes from the Brazilian partnership. Nearly half of the high school’s student body — 2,500 students — is in Brazil.

“Brazil was looking for a partnership, and they saw us as an attractive option,” March said. “All of those students have the option to end up on our campus one day because of MizzouDirect. Eight hundred and fifty kids in the pipeline is tremendous. It could make us a different campus.”

K-State was wrong to not investigate rapes at off-campus frat houses, federal government says

Kansas State has said it’s not responsible for investigating off-campus sexual assaults against students

Two students sued the university for not investigating reports they were raped at fraternity houses

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

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Two women suing Kansas State University for refusing to investigate complaints that they were raped in off-campus fraternity houses now have the federal government backing them up.

In court documents, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Education say a K-State policy to not investigate complaints of student-on-student rape when the attacks occur off campus is wrong.

In separate lawsuits filed in April in U.S. District Court in Kansas, students Sara Weckhorst of Doylestown, Pa., and Tessa Farmer of Overland Park accused K-State of violating Title IX, the federal gender discrimination law that protects students against sexual violence and harassment. The departments of Justice and Education share responsibility for enforcing Title IX.

Cari Simon, the attorney representing the two women who are suing the university, said Weckhorst and Farmer “filed the lawsuit to stand up for victims of rape on college campuses and are thrilled to see the U.S. federal government out in support of the law.”

In both cases, the students told the university about rapes that allegedly occurred at different fraternity houses. But according to their suits, the students were told that the school would not investigate because the fraternities where the alleged rapes occurred were located off campus.

K-State later argued that the lawsuits should be dismissed, saying the university is not legally responsible for reports of student-on-student rape at off-campus frat houses or events.

But the federal government, in a court brief referred to as a “Statement of Interest,” said that “K-State is incorrect” and suggested the court deny the request that the suits be dismissed.

University officials were not available to comment Tuesday on the government statements — one for each student’s lawsuit. Officials from the two federal departments also were not available for comment.

In the statements, the federal departments say that “Title IX text, case law, regulations, and guidance clearly instruct that a university-recognized fraternity is an education activity.”

Their statements say that K-State policy acknowledges that sex discrimination that occurs under any of its programs or activities is covered by Title IX. Title IX is in place to assure that gender discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, does not interrupt a student’s ability to get an education.
“The continuing effects of a student-on-student rape, including the constant fear of exposure to one’s assailant, can render a student’s educational environment hostile,” the government filings said. “Thus, a school must respond to allegations of sexual assault in fraternity activities to determine if a hostile environment exists there or in any other education program or activity.”

The K-State suits are being handled by the Fierberg National Law Group in Washington, D.C., which specializes in campus-related rape cases.

In a document filed with the court Friday, the Fierberg National Law Group said that “despite outcry from the student body and student leaders, including the presidents of every K-State fraternity, the University steadfastly stands by its ‘off-campus, not our problem’ position.”

The law group also makes note of federal guidance on Title IX that in 2011 told universities that Title IX required them to investigate complaints of off-campus sexual violence against students. That same guidance made specific mention of off-campus frat houses.

Campus sexual assaults — and universities’ responses — have been pushed to the forefront nationwide in recent years.

Two lawsuits were filed recently by two female athletes against the University of Kansas for how it responded to reports of alleged rapes that occurred in a dormitory on the Lawrence campus.

The Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights has more than 200 Title IX investigations open at colleges and universities examining claims that the schools mishandled sexual assault cases. Two of those cases came out of KU. One involves Missouri University of Science and Technology, and another involves William Jewell College, in Liberty.

K-State currently is under federal investigation for how it handled four different Title IX cases, including the rape complaints from Weckhorst and Farmer.

In her suit, Weckhorst says that as a K-State freshman she was raped multiple times by two K-State students during an April 26, 2014, fraternity event and later the same evening at a frat house. The suit says Weckhorst was intoxicated, confused and at one point blacked out.

The Farmer suit says she was raped by an unknown K-State student at a frat house on March 6, 2015, after a night of partying with friends. Farmer became very intoxicated, the suit says, and sometime after 2 a.m. went with an old high school friend to his fraternity house.

There, according to the suit, she was left alone in his fraternity room and allegedly raped by another K-State student and fraternity member who had been hiding in a closet.
Her case is still under investigation by Riley County police. County prosecutors, however, are not pursuing the Weckhorst rape claim.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Impact of bias on access to mental health services gets attention**

ALEX EDWARDS, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — Although you can't always see it, bias is pervasive.

And when it comes to mental health, that can result in people not getting help.

That was the main finding of a new study published in the June issue of the American Sociological Association's "Journal of Health and Social Behavior." It showed that race and class discrimination can affect a patient's access to psychotherapy.

The study, titled, "'Sorry, I'm Not Accepting New Patients': An Audit Study of Access to Mental Health Care," randomly selected 320 licensed psychotherapists in New York City and had a diverse group of patients request an appointment. Whether they were given one or not depended upon how their race and class were perceived.

The study found that "the results exposed a subtle avenue through which providers discriminate against a vulnerable population who already suffer from the disadvantages of being black and working class in American society."

*Actions based on "partiality" are more likely to be triggered in high-stress environments, so it's important for workers in health care to be aware of their implicit biases, said Stan Hudson, associate director of the Center for Health Policy in MU's School of Medicine.*
Diversity in the mental health industry on campus came to the forefront in November during the Concerned Student 1950 protests. One of the group's demands was that more counselors of color be hired. According to previous Missourian reporting, at the time of the protests, 20 percent of MU's mental health professionals were not white.

Heather Kugelmass, the author of the study, said that her data did not include the race of the psychotherapists, "though national statistics would suggest that it's the vast majority of them." Regardless of their race, Kugelmass said her results show that the racial and class-based stereotypes held by Americans are strong.

Through diversity training and guest speakers, professionals in the mental health industry at MU are trying to raise consciousness of inclusivity in classroom and clinical settings.

Hudson said that growing up, children are oblivious to racial stereotypes but begin to adopt them over time.

"It's only when you get those first messages from family members, friends or loved ones that you start to get those biases ingrained in you," Hudson said, "and then those are further reinforced by what you see in schools, churches, institutions and the media."

Hudson is a health literacy expert and is certified to provide inclusion and diversity training to students, faculty and staff across the health systems on campus. He said he stresses that bias-forming is a natural part of evolution and the cycle of socialization.

"There are just these subtle messages that create associations in our mind," Hudson said. "And so ... you have to become aware of them so that when something does come up, then you can do something to mitigate that bias and control it."

**Raising diversity awareness**

Recognizing that students seeking help come from a broad range of backgrounds in race, religion, culture and gender identity, both the MU Student Health Center and the MU Counseling Center have implemented diversity awareness programs for staff.
Susan Even, the executive director of the MU Student Health Center, said the center has had a variety of consciousness-raising programs for its staff since 2007. The goal is to increase understanding "of where our pitfalls can be."

Even said an executive team that reports to her directly has met weekly for the past five years to try to find new ways to improve the staff's ability to work with diverse populations. Because of the variety of student backgrounds, she said it's important to discover ways to make them as comfortable as possible.

Recently, the staff has been working on the importance of recording preferred names when helping transgender, international or other students. Even said her staff also is being trained by a team from the Center for Health Policy on how to ask questions that provide the most accurate demographic information for electronic medical records. That's important for when the student is registering or coming in for the first time and includes asking questions about a patient's racial and cultural background and gender identity.

"I think bias is part of when we don't realize that we're making certain assumptions," she said. "So we need to become more aware of all the different demographics and things to address in the correct setting."

In January, the members of the MU Student Health Center's diversity committee and the executive team participated in a training called "Interrupting Racism," which was conducted by the National Conference of Community and Justice. In February, the staff participated in a diversity lecture series through the School of Medicine. Most of the staff also has completed the Diversity 101 program, a four- to five-week online course that explores diversity issues and applies them to the workplace.

"In the last year, we’ve begun working with a coordinator at the Multicultural Center who has done two programs for our staff to try to help us get a common foundation in terms of looking at our own identities, looking at diversity and looking at ways that we have privilege that we may not be aware of and how that can put us in a situation of bias," Even said.

Staff at the MU Counseling Center also are encouraged to attend conferences and seminars to continue their education on diversity issues.
Unconscious bias and patient access

Jenny Lybeck-Brown, one of the associate directors and a licensed psychologist, is in charge of the training and supervision of the advanced psychological trainees at the MU Counseling Center. She said internal staff development through informal consultations among peers is one of the ways the group works together to raise awareness of diversity issues.

"We have a strong team focus at the counseling center, and we really work internally to promote healthy relationships among the staff," Lybeck-Brown said. "This is so that we can have these conversations with each other and help each other see our own blind spots and grow personally and professionally, which is one of the most important things in terms of avoiding discrimination and being aware of bias."

All prospective staff members are screened on their awareness of diversity issues and their interest in working with diverse clientele before being hired. Trainees are given numerous opportunities to get training in cultural variables in therapy. Lybeck-Brown said it's most important for staff members to examine their own cultural backgrounds and listen to those with different experiences to increase personal awareness.

"I think it's especially important for people representing majority cultures, in other words people privileged, to be courageous enough to look themselves in the mirror and examine their own biases," Lybeck-Brown said. "In this way the unconscious can become more conscious, and then steps can be taken to understand how this might be impacting our choices, our relationships and basically how we interact with the world."

Diversity includes economic differences.

In the study, which compared middle-class and working-class patients, those that were middle class were offered an appointment three times more often. In the middle class category specifically, race came into play with 28 percent of whites and 17 percent of blacks receiving appointment offers.

For both black and white working-class patients, averaged across gender, the appointment offer rates were only 8 percent.
“It is striking that discrimination toward black and working-class therapy-seekers occurred even though all therapy seekers had the same health insurance and were contacting in-network providers,” Kugelmass said in a news release from the American Sociological Association.

Kugelmass, a doctoral candidate in sociology at Princeton University, conducted the study based on her interest in racial inequalities in various realms. Her dissertation is on disparities in access to mental health care providers.

*No reply*

One of the results she was surprised by was the low overall callback rate.

Both middle-class blacks and whites received a response about half of the time after calling a therapist and requesting an appointment, with whites at 51 percent and blacks at 49 percent. In comparison, working-class whites received a call back 45 percent of the time with working-class blacks at 34 percent.

“There isn’t a lot of previous research that would tell us what to expect as a baseline,” Kugelmass said. “As consumers or potential consumers of mental health care, we’d like to think that at least everyone deserves the courtesy of a response, but at least in this particular population of mental health care providers, psychotherapists in New York City, that wasn’t the case.”

Kugelmass pointed out that for a working-class black man to make the phone call at all to a mental health professional, he had to overcome the stigma associated with seeking care, have mental health coverage for therapy, consult the insurance directory to choose a psychologist or psychiatrist and then leave the phone messages.

And then only one-third of the therapists returned his call. Only one of the 80 therapists offered him an appointment on a weekday evening, the scheduling he requested.

As the study concludes, "this is time and effort that those suffering from mental illness — especially those of low socio-economic status — do not have to spare."
When requesting an appointment for the same time slot, 20 percent of middle-class white women were given the spot.

"It certainly shows that the racial and class-based stereotypes that Americans hold are strong, they're pervasive, and mental health care providers aren’t immune to them," Kugelmass said. "This is reinforcing in yet another sphere the way in which white middle-class privilege is reproduced."

All of the MU Counseling Center's staff, including those who answer the phones and schedule the appointments, are screened during interviews about their experience with diversity and inclusion and undergo an orientation that includes learning about using inclusive language and preferred names of clients. All staff members also have a yearly performance assessment and get feedback about their openness to diversity.

The counseling services at the center are available at no additional charge to all enrolled students, so Lybeck-Brown said race and socio-economic identification don't play a role in a student's ability to make an appointment.

"The heart of the study was about discrimination, which is something that everyone, as humans, need to actively work to combat," she said.

"I think everyone has bias, that's a result of living in a world where stereotypes and oppression exist, and the most important thing, as psychologists, to do is the hard work of examining and confronting our own biases so that we aren't blind to them."

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Student Activists Bring Demands to the Table. Not Everyone Leaves Satisfied.**

**No MU Mention**
When Patrick Elliott came to Claremont McKenna College last fall for his freshman year, tensions at the private liberal-arts institution were reaching a boiling point. In November protests over the college’s racial climate — including two hunger strikes — erupted on the campus, eventually leading to the resignation of the dean of students.

Those efforts "sparked a ton of conversation," said Mr. Elliott, a rising sophomore who is now chair of the diversity and inclusion board for the student government, the Associated Students of Claremont McKenna College. "It sparked a lot of dissent, but it provided CMC with the catalyst to have these conversations."

Mr. Elliott is a member of a steering committee for the college’s Personal and Social Responsibility Initiative. He and other students on the committee — which also has representatives from the faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees — work with administrators to develop new diversity projects on the campus.

Now the administration is confronting the challenges of meeting student demands. While administrators stress the importance of compromise, patience, and careful planning, some students say there isn’t enough communication on what the college is doing to promote inclusivity.

Claremont McKenna is far from the only campus that is grappling with months-old student demands; dozens find themselves in similar situations. But the small Southern California campus was one of the first to begin responding to its students’ cries for better inclusivity. The slow negotiation that ensued illustrates just how difficult it will be for students and administrators across the country to satisfy everyone involved.
In April 2015 student activists at Claremont McKenna submitted to the college president a list of demands for new measures to promote diversity. They included a general-education requirement focused on diversity issues; institutional funds for cultural-affinity groups; mandatory racial-sensitivity training for faculty members; and greater diversity in speakers brought to the college for special lectures.

Some of those measures — including the creation of a student-resource center and a position focused on diversity in the office of the dean of students — were being discussed among college leaders before the protests, said Hiram Chodosh, the college’s president.

"Those were very important moves for us, but moves that were not initiated by the events of mid-November but rather through our own engagement with students long before that, as well as our own planning efforts," Mr. Chodosh said.

Nyree Gray, the college’s chief civil-rights officer, was given the additional title of assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion in March. She is also a co-chair of the steering committee for Personal and Social Responsibility, or PSR.

"We’ll see with some schools that they’ll do initiatives, but the initiatives only last for the duration of that committee or that group or when that group is there," said Ms. Gray. Changes like creating her new position, she said, show that Claremont McKenna "really wants to make sure that goes into the framework of the institution."

The new student-resource center, which was a key demand of the student activists, is being temporarily housed in a "modular space," a small trailerlike structure, and will move this fall to the second floor of Heggblade Center, above the dean of students’
office, Ms. Gray said. But so far, the resource center has not fulfilled all students’ expectations.

Michaiah Young, a rising junior and co-president of the Black Student Alliance, said that student activists had envisioned the center as a safe space for students whose identities have historically been marginalized, "where you can get away from people who refuse to acknowledge aspects of your identity."

Ms. Young added that such a space could have provided LGBT students with a place to decompress after the mass shooting at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla., last month.

Austin Gosch, a rising junior and a member of the college’s Sexuality and Gender Alliance, said that the steering committee’s proposal for the resource center had disregarded students’ opinions.

"They took out all words pertaining to marginalized identities and just said it’s a resource center for all students, period," Mr. Gosch said.

"We’re all going into this space next year not really knowing what it’s capable of doing or what it’s allowed to really do," said Casey Garcelon, a rising senior and one of the students involved in designing programming for the resource center.

Ms. Gray said that the resource center, which has not yet been given an official name, will connect students with assistance involving financial aid, counseling, and other needs. And, she said, "marginalized identities or people who feel underrepresented in the community will feel supported in that space."

"But as far as creating a space that’s exclusive," she added, "it wasn’t the intention of the college to create any space that’s exclusive to any one group or particular group on campus but a place that’s supportive for the entire campus."
Some compromises had to be made in planning the resource center for the sake of feasibility, Mr. Elliott said. For example, rather than providing designated meeting spaces for cultural-affinity groups, the center will use a "rental" model in which space can be reserved for certain time periods by any student group.

"A lot of people are going to be looking at it with very, very high critiques, which I actually think is a good thing with it being in its inaugural year this coming fall," Mr. Elliott said. "You want to test its stability if this is something that’s going to be here for a long time and going to be presented as one of CMC’s foundational attributes."

‘It’s on the Agenda’

Another major demand from student activists was the general-education requirement centered on diversity issues. Such a requirement has yet to be adopted by the college.

"It’s very important that whatever we do not be done simply as a response to get the problem to go away, or to appease, or anything like that," said Peter Uvin, dean of the faculty and a co-chair of the PSR steering committee. "It’s very important that whatever we do will be a deep understanding of what as a college we need and what we stand for in the long run."

Mr. Gosch, who is on the student government’s diversity and inclusion board, said the board had been advocating for a new diversity-centered requirement. "And a lot of the time, the CMC administration just kind of brushed it off," he said.

Ms. Gray said that the administration wants to review all of the college’s general-education requirements in order to determine what a new requirement might look like and what goals and objectives it would meet. The college has been surveying existing courses that deal with topics like race and inequality, she said.

"If, after looking at that, we see, yeah, some type of requirement on diversity and inclusion would be impactful and necessary, I’m sure that’s the direction in which the
college would go," Ms. Gray said. "But if we look at it and see actually a lot of people are taking these classes already and maybe we need to develop a different way to achieve those goals, we would invite students to be a part of that process as well."

Mr. Elliott said he had been working to refine a proposal for a new general-education requirement. Under the plan, students would be able to take existing courses that cover diversity issues like privilege and inequality and that can also satisfy other general-education requirements.

The plan is "nowhere near its final form, but it gave us a launch pad," Mr. Elliott said. "It gave us something that we were able to talk about and we’re able to speak on."

To take effect, any proposal would have to be adopted by the college’s curriculum committee, the faculty, and the Board of Trustees.

"Clearly, stuff like that isn’t stuff that happens very rapidly," Mr. Uvin said. "Fact is, it’s on the agenda. It’s being talked about, and that’s a good thing, I think. Fact is, it will take time."

This month Claremont McKenna is bringing in two new administrators to help lead student-affairs and diversity efforts. Sharon Basso, who was dean of students at Lehigh University, in Pennsylvania, is Claremont McKenna’s new vice president for student affairs and dean of students, and Vincent Greer, who was an assistant dean at DePauw University, in Indiana, has been named the college’s new assistant dean of students for diversity and inclusion.

During the spring semester, candidates for both positions gave open presentations in a lecture hall on the campus, so students could meet them. The candidates also sat down for lunches and dinners with student groups like the diversity and inclusion board and the executive board of the student government.
The college then sent out anonymous surveys to collect the students’ opinions of the candidates.

Ms. Garcelon said that although the college had collected student feedback, there could have been more communication about the hiring process. "There wasn’t much conversation with students and student organizers on why that decision was made, and there wasn’t any feedback that was made public to see what everyone was saying about these candidates," she said.

Mr. Uvin acknowledged the difficulties of maintaining open communication with students. He said that although he understands students’ desire to be abreast of the administration’s diversity and inclusion efforts, it is sometimes necessary to keep discussions contained in committees.

"When it comes to certain things that are more sensitive — like, say, the creation of the resource center before we had some type of an agreement — you’re better off to maintain that conversation in a smaller group in order to have a fair degree of trust and capability for people to speak their minds honestly and openly and not feel that everything will right away be publicly discussed by everybody else," Mr. Uvin said. "Some kind of more quiet work can be justified in order to get things done, in order to learn together and progress together."

Mr. Chodosh, the president, said it is very difficult to communicate information to the public about proposals that have not yet been finalized.

"We’d all like to see the product of our work done yesterday or today or maybe even tomorrow," he said. "But to do an assessment well, and to interpret the data, to develop a good job description, to create the framework for a resource center of this ambition, takes time and energy, and the professionals and the committees that are working on it need that time in order to be able to do that job well."
Mr. Elliott said he believes that since the protests in November, both administrators and students have been working to improve the relationship between the two groups, even if both sides are not quite satisfied.

"No matter what side you’re standing on, I think it’s really important to promote conversation," he said. "Students created an environment where these conversations can happen, and I don’t think that would have taken place on its own."