MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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Unusual provisions in Missouri coach Barry Odom’s contract

The contract between the University of Missouri and its new football head coach, Barry Odom, includes a pair of unusually specific job requirements that seem aimed at recent controversies involving coaches at Missouri and elsewhere.

One is related to the tone of Odom’s public statements, the other to his treatment of players. The details of the provisions are distinct not only from those in former Missouri coach Gary Pinkel’s contract, but also from those in most — if not all — contracts for head coaches at public schools in the NCAA’s Football Bowl Subdivision.

Lack of compliance with either provision could result in Odom being fired for cause, without further compensation from a five-plus-year contract currently worth $2.35 million annually, plus more than $1.5 million in potential incentives.

USA TODAY Sports obtained a copy of the agreement as part of the university’s response to an open-records request.

Last November, with then-university system president Tim Wolfe under criticism for his handling of racial incidents at the school, more than 30 black members of the football team announced they would not participate in football activities until Wolfe was removed from his job. A message then appeared on Pinkel’s Twitter account. It was a photo of players and coaches — white and black — with the caption: “The Mizzou Family stands as one. We are united. We are behind our players. #ConcernedStudent1950”. It concluded with “GP,” Pinkel’s initials.

Wolfe ended up resigning and Pinkel later said during a radio interview with Kansas City’s WHB that someone who handled his Twitter account made the posting and should not have included the hashtag that appeared to support the protest group.

Pinkel stepped down after the season because of health issues related to lymphoma.

Odom, who had been serving as Missouri’s defensive coordinator, was hired in early December, 2015, as Pinkel’s replacement. Odom’s basic employment terms were outlined
in a four-page memorandum of understanding that stated he would be subject to termination for cause for, among other actions, violating university policies or if he was found by the university “to have mistreated a student-athlete.”

The final contract was executed earlier this week.

“The University and Coach Odom agreed on these terms because we thought they’d help ensure success for everyone involved and respected everyone’s interests,” Chad Moller, Missouri’s associate athletic director for strategic communications, said via e-mail. “It’s my understanding that these types of provisions aren’t unique, but if ours are more detailed, it’s because we place a very high value on ensuring our student-athletes have the right environment and the kind of experience they deserve.”

Among 17 specific job responsibilities, Odom must: “Keep public statements complimentary to the athletic program and to the University and not engage in any business transaction or commerce, appear on any radio or television program, or in any public forum, or make statements to the media or in any public forum that is likely to bring undue criticism or discredit to the University, its curators, officers, employees or students”. (Missouri’s governing board is known as the Board of Curators.)

The equivalent portion of Pinkel’s contract said only that he must “Keep public statements complimentary to the athletic program and to the University”.

Odom’s failure to perform his job responsibilities would give the university the right to fire him for cause.

A separate provision of Odom’s deal, titled “Conduct of the Football Athletic Program,” addresses treatment of players.

“With the cooperation and assistance of the University, the Employee shall engage in (and encourage that every coach under Employee’s supervision is engaging in) fair, safe and responsible treatment of student-athletes on the football team, and avoiding behavior that could in any way jeopardize a student-athlete’s health, safety or welfare, or that could otherwise cause harm or risk causing harm to a student-athlete. …

“If Employee is found by the University, in its reasonable good faith discretion, to have clearly mistreated a student-athlete,” he is subject to disciplinary action, including termination for cause “with no further monetary obligation by the University.”

Pinkel’s contract did not specifically address his treatment of players.
The University of Illinois fired football coach Tim Beckman in August 2015 after school-hired investigators determined he mistreated players. The school initially said it would not pay Beckman the remaining balance of his contract, but later paid him $250,000, saying in a joint statement with Beckman that the settlement was “to avoid protracted and costly litigation” that would have involved players, coaches and other university staff.

Earlier this year, the University of Missouri’s Office of Title IX and Civil Rights and its athletics department investigated allegations of verbal abuse against softball coach Ehren Earleywine, according to multiple local news outlets. On Aug. 19, the athletics department announced that the investigations had been completed and Earleywine will remain as the team’s coach. In a statement, it said that under university policy, the details of the reviews were protected personnel files.

Executive associate athletics director Tim Hickman, who oversees the softball program, said in the statement, “We have had productive conversations with Coach Earleywine and he understands our expectations moving forward.”

Melissa Click Finds a New Job, at Gonzaga U.

Melissa Click, the assistant professor of communication who drew outrage last fall for her role in a protest at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and who was subsequently fired, has a new job.

Ms. Click is now listed as a lecturer on the website of the communication-studies program at Gonzaga University, a Roman Catholic institution in Spokane, Wash.

On the Missouri campus last November, Ms. Click was videotaped attempting to block a student journalist from filming anti-racism protesters, and calling for “some muscle” to get rid of him. She immediately was the target of a storm of criticism, even though she quickly apologized for her actions.
After an investigation of her behavior, and under pressure from state legislators, the university’s governing board dismissed her in February. The American Association of University Professors later criticized and censured the university for that decision.

Story also ran in numerous national and local media outlets.

University officials working to perfect MU Alert system

Watch the story: http://www.abc17news.com/university-officials-working-to-perfect-mu-alert-system

The University of Missouri is apologizing again for lack of information in its MU Alert system.

Around 8:30 Thursday night, the MU police department sent out an alert about a robbery on campus, but didn't specify where it happened.

“Last night, initial emergency text alerts sent by the University of Missouri Police Department did not include the location of the incident," said Gary Ward, vice chancellor for operations. “We apologize; this omission was due to human error, and we take full responsibility. We have identified the cause for the error, and it has been corrected. We will meet today, and those involved with sending alert messages will review the processes in an endeavor to prevent a recurrence of this error in future emergency alerts. Safety is the No. 1 priority on our campus.”

Christian Basi, a university spokesperson, said they're using a new software this school year for the alert system. He said it's the police department's responsibility to send out the initial alert message, which should include the location this year.

The university has received criticism from students in the past for not sending out alerts in a timely manner or for not sending alerts out to every single student.
Basi said this school year the MU Alerts will include a location in the alert message. The university will also send out an "All Clear" message when the scene is cleared.

MUPD, the Operations Department, and the Marketing & Communications Department met Friday to discuss Thursday night's incident and the alert system procedures. Basi said no changes were made to the alert system operations.

The University plans to test its alert system sometime during the week of September 12.

**MU police arrest delivery driver for alleged false armed robbery report**

By **RUDI KELLER**

Friday, September 2, 2016 at 2:00 pm Comments (26)

A delivery driver who reported being robbed Thursday evening as she was bringing food to Wolpers Hall at the University of Missouri was arrested and released with a citation for filing a false report, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

Courtney A. Chancellor, 23, was working for Jimmy Johns when she reported at 8:35 p.m. that a black man in his 20s, about 6 feet tall with facial hair and a shoulder-to-elbow tattoo, had robbed her at gunpoint. The MU Police Department responded, and the Columbia Police Department brought its canine unit to the scene to assist in the search.

The university posted a warning about the robbery on its MU Alert website at 8:54 p.m. and sent a warning text message to the campus. Video surveillance cameras that had recorded Chancellor, however, showed no robbery occurred, Basi said.

Chancellor confessed to officers she had made a false report, MU police Chief Doug Schwandt said in a news release. The release did not include speculation about Chancellor’s motive, and no one was available to speak to a reporter Friday morning at the police department.
At 9:45 p.m., police posted an update saying there was no evidence of a current threat to the campus. An alert that no robbery occurred and that Chancellor had been arrested was posted at 1:29 a.m.

“There was a substantial amount of resources, both from first responders and those who were assisting, with this false report,” Basi said.

The MU Alert system is designed to provide rapid warnings for potential dangers on campus. During the 2015-16 school year, there were some incidents that generated alerts that proved false and other incidents, such as shots being fired during a May event on Carnahan Quadrangle, where no alert was issued for more than an hour.

In the incident Thursday, the text messages about the robbery report did not include the campus location, an oversight that drew an apology Friday morning from Vice Chancellor of Operations Gary Ward.

“We apologize; this omission was due to human error, and we take full responsibility,” Ward wrote in a statement. “We have identified the cause for the error, and it has been corrected.”

A meeting will be held today to discuss how to prevent the error in the future.

The decision to send an alert is left to the officers responding to an incident, Basi said.

The chance that false reports can make people less attentive “is a very legitimate concern,” he said. “However, our police officers are going to be making a split-second decision about making that initial report about whether the campus needs to be notified. All indications last night were that the initial report indicated an alert needed to be sent.”

**MISSOURIAN**

**False robbery report at MU residence hall leads to arrest, charge**

JING YANG, Sep 2, 2016

COLUMBIA — MU police arrested a food delivery driver Thursday night in connection to a false report filed about a robbery near Wolpers Hall on campus.
According to a release by the MU News Bureau, Courtney A. Chancellor, 23, reported the robbery to police at around 8:35 p.m. She told police she had been robbed as she attempted to deliver food to the residence hall.

Campus police immediately sent a series of mass text notifications to the campus community about the robbery and began to investigate the report.

Chancellor's account soon unraveled, MU Police Chief Doug Schwandt said.

"Using evidence from surveillance cameras, we interviewed Courtney Chancellor, and she confessed that she had reported the crime falsely," Schwandt said in the news release.

Between 8:30 p.m. and 10 p.m., three MU Alert notifications were sent by text message and email about the incident.

The first two reported that a robbery had occurred on campus but gave no location. The third notification added Wolpers Hall as the reported location of the robbery.

At 1:52 a.m. Friday, the News Bureau released a report that Chancellor had been arrested for a false report in the robbery investigation. She was charged with one count of filing a false report, a Class B misdemeanor.

At around 10 a.m. Friday, Vice Chancellor of Operations Gary Ward sent a campus-wide email to apologize for the failure to provide the incident location in the initial mass notifications.

MU Alert has been criticized for releasing vague reports or general reports of incidents.

"We apologize," Ward said in the statement. "This omission was due to human error, and we take full responsibility. We have identified the cause for the error, and it has been corrected."

Ward said a meeting would be held Friday to determine how to avoid those kinds of errors.
The University of Chicago has issued a healthy warning to incoming freshmen: Get over yourselves. At long last, an institution of higher learning is reminding students that they are entering the real world, where people engage and debate and, yes, disagree fervently with each other.

University life is supposed to be about the free exchange of ideas. But in recent years, campus life has been smothered by self-appointed thought police who seem bent on enforcing political correctness at all costs.

At the University of Missouri last year, assistant professor Melissa Click came to embody that Orwellian view. She stood guard at the perimeter of a public space that protesters had declared a “safe space.” Anyone who didn’t think like them was not allowed in, as if it was their space to control.

Despite her role as an instructor in the Department of Communications, her most notable communication tactic was to call in “muscle” to interfere with a journalist covering the protest. The episode underscored how a warped mindset has taken hold at some campuses across the country.

Enough, says the University of Chicago. Administrators have correctly decided to take their campus back in the name of free thought.

“Once here you will discover that one of the University of Chicago’s defining characteristics is our commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression,” John Ellison, the university’s dean of
students, wrote in a letter to incoming freshmen. “Members of our community are encouraged to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn, without fear of censorship.”

Ellison emphasized the ongoing need for civility and mutual respect but warned that in the free exchange of ideas, there will be “rigorous debate, discussion and even disagreement. At times this may challenge you and even cause discomfort.”

These very words no doubt made some students uncomfortable. But it got worse: He advised them that the university wouldn’t support the notion of “trigger warnings” — statements alerting readers or viewers about upcoming content that might cause distress.

“We do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual ‘safe spaces’ where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own,” Ellison wrote.

Writing in The Atlantic this week, James Madison University religious studies professor Alan Levinovitz noted the concerns of some people that Ellison was playing to “crotchety elites” who have made up a “caricature of today’s college students as coddled and entitled” to hide their fear of empowered students. But no, Levinovitz wrote, the stifling effect of wanton political correctness is real.

It’s no caricature; we saw it played out on Mizzou’s campus. Students everywhere need to absorb Ellison’s message. Life is a messy feast. Toss gently, serve and enjoy.
Responding to college-cost audit, Nixon touts affordability

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — A recent state audit says Missouri is making in-state and out-of-state students bear more of the costs at public universities and colleges, prompting Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon to respond that the state is a national leader in college affordability.

Nixon touted Missouri’s lowest-in-the-nation in-state undergraduate tuition increases since 2008. He says including money for scholarships and capital improvements, state spending on higher education went up 3.9 percent between fiscal years 2009 and 2015.

Auditor Nicole Galloway confirmed Missouri's rank as top in the nation for keeping in-state undergraduate tuition down. But noted that funding per full-time student, both in-state and out-of-state, dropped
19 percent and net tuition and required fees for all students went up 25 percent between fiscal years 2009 and 2015.

Missouri ranks toward the bottom nationally in terms of spending per full-time student and spending per $1,000 in personal income.

**The means to succeed: Lower incomes result in fewer educational opportunities for children**

By **ROGER MCKINNEY**

Sunday, September 4, 2016 at 12:00 am

*Generated from News Bureau press release: "Negative Attention from Teachers Can Lead to More Negative Student Behaviors"*

The achievement gap has a direct link to the income gap.

Children from wealthier families have opportunities that those from low-income families do not have, education researchers say, and children from families with the lowest incomes have the most obstacles. Experts and advocates say the differences in wealth among families contributes to the problem known as the achievement gap — the difference in educational achievement between students from low-income and minority families and students from higher-income, usually white, families.

However, education experts and school districts are identifying and taking steps to mitigate the effects economic differences can have on educational opportunity and outcomes.

Greg Duncan is an education professor at the University of California, Irvine. Richard Murname is a professor of education and society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Together, they edited “Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools and Children’s Life Chances” in 2011.
In 2014 they wrote a follow-up book, “Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education.”

Their books note that in early childhood, parents with higher incomes spend more time talking and reading to their children and spend more money on books, trips, computers, tutoring, camps and other enrichment activities.

Using consumer spending data, they found that in 2005-06, high-income parents spent $7,557 more on educational enrichment for their children than low-income parents did. High-income parents spent $8,872 on educational enrichment per child, while low-income parents spent $1,315. Duncan said he and his co-author looked at the top 20 percent of income earners and the bottom 20 percent.

“That’s a pretty shocking figure,” Duncan said of the high-income family spending. “That’s about what public schools spend on children every year. Parents are spending as much outside of school. The challenge that public schools face is to ensure that all students receive a good education.”

The impact on children from low-income families might go beyond what parents spend on them. A recent study by researchers at the University of Missouri found that students who received negative interaction from a teacher at the beginning of the year had behavior problems at the end of the year and that teachers more frequently directed negative comments toward black students, boys and students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals. The researchers said teachers often weren’t aware of the nuances of their brief interactions with students.

MU researchers predict senior citizens’ falls through Xbox Kinect devices

By using Xbox Kinect, researchers hope to help nurses and caretakers better prevent senior citizens from falling.

Generated from News Bureau press release: Sensor Systems Identify Senior Citizens at Risk of Falling Within Three Weeks

Video game consoles and your grandmother don’t normally mix. But researchers at MU are using video gaming sensors to search for new ways to predict falls with senior citizens before they happen.

According to a study by The Center for Eldercare and Rehabilitation Technology, researchers are using a Xbox Kinect to help predict when falls can occur. The Kinect acts as a sensor to detect falls.

The sensor acts as a new technology to trace an outline of the patient's body. These kinetics helped as “they were able to track different parameters such as velocity, how long your steps are [and] variability in some of the gait parameters, which all can be indicative of issues,” clinical professor Carmen Abbott said.

Kinect has the capability for using facial ID technology, but the researchers opted not to use it because they said people do not want necessarily to be recorded. Dr. Abbott said that patterns in stride length through algorithms in the Kinect help identify people already without the facial recognition, so to maintain confidentiality and privacy, the Kinect displays only silhouettes.

The Center for Eldercare and Rehabilitation is also using nontraditional research methods when it comes to falling.
“You may look at a person who’s falling and count their falls after a certain treatment or over the course of a year and look at other characteristics specific to each participant in a study,” associate professor Lorraine Phillips said.

In this specific study, the center looked at “the actual fall event and the gait speed surrounding that fall event.”

By using a video gaming console, the center found that differences in variation in stride length, variation and slower movement over time are tell-tale signs that a fall can occur within a three-week period.

Phillips said this can help nurses take better care of patients.

“If they notice a decline of certain magnitude in walking speed, they can go visit the person, arrange a person to visit their provider, get evaluated,” Phillips said.

The only retirement home that participated in the study is TigerPlace. TigerPlace describes themselves on their website as an “independent living [facility] … developed by Americare in affiliation with the MU Sinclair School of Nursing.”

Abbott said TigerPlace was used for a variety of reasons.

“The school of nursing already had TigerPlace,” Abbott said. “The idea of that is to use it as our real-life setting to try out some of the technology that was developed in the group to see how it worked to identify changing health conditions over time to try to identify falls.”

Phillips said using TigerPlace also allows researchers to carry out new studies in their pilot stages.
COLUMBIA — An MU student was killed in a motorcycle crash on Stadium Boulevard Friday afternoon after a truck failed to yield on a left turn.

Tyler Romaker, 22, was riding a 2008 Suzuki motorcycle through the intersection of Stadium and U.S. 63 shortly after noon when he crashed into the side of a 2004 Dodge Dakota, according to a news release from the Columbia Police Department.

Abilene Gatson, 19, of Vandalia, Missouri, and the driver of the truck, failed to yield to Romaker, who had the right of way.

Romaker was taken to a local hospital with life-threatening injuries. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

He was wearing his helmet during the incident, according to police. Gatson was wearing a seat belt and was not hurt in the crash.

Romaker, from Warrenton, Missouri, was a U.S. Army ROTC cadet, a member of Delta Chi fraternity and played in Marching Mizzou.

Everyone liked to be around him, said Gary Kerr, a professor of military science.

"He was a super good kid," he said.
Mizzou student killed in motorcycle crash

Friday, September 02, 2016 3:48:00 PM CDT in News
By: Katie Pylipow, KOMU 8 Digital Producer

COLUMBIA - A motorcyclist died following a car crash Friday afternoon at the intersection of Highway 63 North and Stadium Boulevard, the Columbia Police Department said.

22-year-old Tyler Romaker of Warrenton died from injuries sustained when another driver failed to yield when turning left onto Highway 63 northbound from Stadium Boulevard, police said.

He was taken to the hospital with life threatening injuries and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

Romaker went to the University of Missouri where he was involved in Marching Mizzou, ROTC and Delta Chi fraternity.

Police identified the other driver as Abilene Gatson, 19, of Vandalia. He was not injured in the crash.

Kander speaks to MU students about student debt, millennial stereotypes

RENEE HICKMAN, Sep 2, 2016

COLUMBIA — In a Friday address to an MU political science class, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Jason Kander asked students to raise their hands if they have student loans.
At least half the hands in the room shot up.

Most of the hands stayed up after Kander asked if students' family members would also feel the effects of their student debt.

"It seems to me that a lot of people in public service and in politics ... talk about (student debt) only in terms of the way they think you'll view it — the way it affects yourself exclusively," Kander said. "They view you as millennials as inherently selfish. I don't believe that that's true."

Kander, who is currently Missouri’s secretary of state, stopped by the class as part of his campaign for Senate. He addressed about 500 students at MU’s Anheuser-Busch Natural Resources building.

Kander spent about 20 minutes talking to the students. He discussed student loan debt, noting that, on average, each student takes on almost $26,000 of debt.

Kander denounced politicians who claim student debt is a result of students living lavishly while in college.

"Raise your hand if it is the extra bowl of ramen in the microwave that is causing you to have debt," he quipped.

Kander did not mention his Republican opponent, incumbent Sen. Roy Blunt, by name, but a spokesperson from Kander’s campaign said he was referring to remarks made by Blunt in 2015.

A spokesman from Sen. Blunt's office said in an email that Blunt was seeking information about expenses other than tuition that contribute to student debt.

Kander also said people unfairly stereotype the millennial generation as selfish. Kander, who is an Army veteran, said he’d served with millennials in Afghanistan who acted selflessly.

"I served with an awful lot of folks from the millennial generation who weren't forced to be there — they volunteered," he said.
In an interview after the class, Kander called himself the first millennial elected to a statewide office.

Jasmyne Boggs, a student in the class, said she liked that Kander told the class to reject stereotypes about millennials.

"I thought he connected well with the crowd and the generation he was speaking with," she said.

William Horner, the professor of the class, said he asked both Blunt and Kander to speak to his class.

"To me, the most important thing about this class is getting young people interested in politics and excited about politics," Horner said. "I wanted students exposed to a campaign. It's a big-deal campaign this year, nationally."

Horner said Blunt will also speak to his class before the election, though a date has not been picked yet.

Kander promises to make college more affordable

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=56f846bf-b6f2-4185-8ec7-faa57e21178b

COLUMBIA, Mo. -
Earlier today, Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander spoke with a University of Missouri class about student debt.

He explained to the students that he plans on making college more accessible and more affordable.
Kander compared his initiatives to loaning a car or a house. He wants to allow students to refinance their student loans and to create a limit for federal student loan interest rates.

Kander will be running in the November election.

MU dedicates bridge to 99-year-old biochemist Boyd O'Dell

MEGHAN LALLY, Sep 2, 2016

COLUMBIA — Most birthday celebrations have a birthday cake. Dr. Boyd O'Dell received a bridge.

The University of Missouri's Department of Biochemistry celebrated its 40th anniversary along with the upcoming 100th birthday of one of its prominent professors and researchers on Friday by dedicating a bridge in his name.

Dr. Boyd O'Dell has spent more than 75 years at MU as a student and professor, and 80 years as a biochemistry researcher. During his time at the university, his research played a major role in synthesizing studies and disciplines between the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the MU School of Medicine. His work contributed to the formation of the Department of Biochemistry, which is part of CAFNR.

It was announced at the ceremony that a bridge built in 2008 connecting Schweitzer Hall and the Schlundt Annex will bear a plaque with O'Dell's name and contributions to symbolize his work with the college and the school.

The plaque will read: "Professor Boyd L. O'Dell dedicates his life to the betterment of the human condition through scientific studies at the University of Missouri. This brass plaque is composed of copper and zinc, two essential micronutrients central to his life's work in nutritional biochemistry."
O’Dell transferred to MU in 1937 from the University of Central Missouri. He received a chemistry degree in 1939, and then went on to earn a master’s and a doctoral degree in agricultural chemistry.

His accomplishments came from hours of work, according to biochemistry Professor Frank Schmidt, who said O’Dell worked tirelessly in the lab.

“That of us who came to MU worked really hard, but we didn’t work any harder than Boyd,” Schmidt said. “I would come back to lab after supper; he would be there. Those are the kinds of things that are inspiring to a scientist, and to a young scientist.”

Long after retirement, O’Dell still does part-time research and work in labs. Schmidt said O’Dell’s constant humility and kindness towards others is still inspiring.

“When I arrived Boyd was in his sixties. He had been president of a national society and was very prominent in his field,” Schmidt said. “He was always very kind and encouraging to those of us who were just starting out.”

Another colleague of O’Dell’s, Dr. Gary Weisman, a Curators' Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry, said O’Dell is always seeking to learn a new field of study. For instance, O’Dell worked primarily with copper and zinc through his biochemistry research, but recently gained an interest in Weisman's field of work, cell receptors. He started working with Weisman three years ago, despite knowing relatively little about the topic.

“At 96 he comes into the lab, and I wouldn’t call him a student, but he’s the young guy in the lab,” Weisman said.

O’Dell’s 100th birthday will be on Oct. 14.
The use of animals in scientific research is a hot-button issue that divides the medical community probably as much as it does the general public. We hate the idea but know that, in many circumstances, such research can save lives. Providing information to show that research animals are handled humanely is critical to gain support and answer the critics of animal experimentation.

The University of Missouri offers a good example of how not to handle the issue. It tried to charge excessively high public records fees, apparently to discourage inquiries by a California-based animal-rights group. The group sued, then discovered that six beagles had been used for experimentation, then reportedly killed, in a university research project.

The lawsuit didn’t get much notice until last week, when the Beagle Freedom Project used social media to expose the use of the beagles for treatments for corneal ulcers. The group contends the beagles in the study were purposely blinded for the project and euthanized after the experiment failed.

The university says researchers did nothing wrong and that the project followed rules established by the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology and was approved by the campus’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

If the university had provided records the group asked for in the first place, regarding 179 dogs and cats on Mizzou’s campus, the activists might not have scrutinized published research looking for a study they could exploit. Their lawsuit alleges the university charged more than $82,000 for public documents the animal-rights group requested. The organization says it uses such records to identify candidates for post-research adoption.
Activists subsequently uncovered the study about the eye research project, published in the 2016 Journal of Veterinary Ophthalmology, which showed that four researchers originally intended to use 24 dogs but determined it was “impractical given concerns of animal resources for this pilot study.” The sample size was whittled to six dogs.

The university said the dogs were anesthetized during the procedure in which the cornea in each dog’s left eye was damaged intentionally by a researcher. The university said the dogs were not in pain during the procedure and were given painkillers as needed afterward. The university also said the dogs received daily socialization and were well cared for.

By making public information too expensive and difficult to access, the university gave the impression it had something to hide. The published information was enough for the group to initiate a social media campaign, which got more than 1.5 million page views and was shared with 40,000 people on an email list where donations were sought to cover lawsuit expenses.

If universities and researchers have nothing to hide about their ethical treatment of animals, the only way to prove it is by sharing information openly.

Animal research foes target University of Missouri over beagles blinded, killed

By RUDI KELLER

Since the beginning of 2014, 242 dogs and cats used in research have been killed after their use in experiments at the University of Missouri. Another 155 dogs and cats have been adopted when their usefulness for research ended.

The fate of seven of those animals, beagles euthanized after being blinded to study the effectiveness of a medication, has MU on the defensive. Animal Rescue Media
Education, which is suing MU over access to records about individual animals, found the research in the February edition of Experimental Eye Research, complete with close-up photos of dogs’ eyes after they had been burned with an alkali solution.

Reporters seeking to talk to the researchers involved were diverted to the MU News Bureau, provided with a statement and asked to limit who in that office was quoted because of safety concerns. The statement assured the public the dogs were humanely euthanized, that the university follows ethical protocols for animal research and defended the research in general.

“Animal research is only done when scientists believe there is no other way to study the problem, and our researchers respect their research animals greatly and provide the utmost care,” the university stated.

The animal rescue group’s long-term goal is an end to animal research, said Jeremy Beckham, Identity Campaign Coordinator for what the organization calls the Beagle Freedom Project.

“We think a just-as-important intermediate goal is to save the lives of animals used in this practice,” Beckham said.

The university allows the adoption of as many animals as fit its policy, spokesman Christian Basi said.

“We do have a robust adoption program,” he said.

The animal rescue organization, based in the Los Angeles area, has rapidly increased its activities in recent years, going from $31,105 in revenue and $17,222 in assets in fiscal 2008 to $1.57 million in revenue and $1.65 million in assets in the year ending June 30, 2015. MU became a target after federal records showed it to be one of the biggest users of dogs and cats in research, Beckham said.

The 14 largest users were chosen out of 230 institutions using dogs and cats in research, he said.

A separate organization, Stop Animal Exploitation NOW!, in June called for MU to be fined for allowing a dachshund puppy and a boar to be killed when animals escaped adjoining pens.

The beagle project asks donors to select a dog or cat at one of the institutions, name it, and submit a records request. For a $50 donation, the project provided a form letter for the request, to be filled in with specifics, an envelope addressed to UM System Custodian of Records Paula Barrett, a stainless steel identity tag and an “adoption certificate.”
From July 1, 2015 to June 1, the university received 78 Sunshine Law requests from people across the country. Barrett quoted a price of $297 to $662.55 to each for completing the request, including an hourly rate of $100 or more for the principal investigator to locate records. None of the 78 requestors paid and neither did Animal Rights Media Education when it was told it would cost $82,222.23 to locate and copy records for 179 research animals.

The lawsuit filed in May over the cost of records searches is in its early stages.

The same tactics produced varied results from other institutions, Beckham said. About half have turned over records at little or no cost. Two, Texas A&M University and the University of Illinois, claimed the records are legally closed and, like MU, are being sued, he said.

“The University of Missouri is the only one that is charging exorbitant fees,” Beckham said.

The research that drew the group’s attention used seven female beagles about 1-year-old. Six of the seven beagles were used in two experiments. In the first, a small portion of the cornea was surgically removed to test whether a medication promoted faster healing. All six dogs were fully healed in four days and the medication was shown to have no significant effect.

In the second experiment, a small paper disc soaked in an alkali solution was placed on each eye of a beagle used as a control. The right eye was done first, then the left 14 days later, and natural healing was observed. Then six more dogs were given alkali burns on their right eyes, and for three dogs an acidic solution was used to test whether it reduced the fibrosis that leads to blindness. The other three dogs were treated with a saline solution.

The first project was to test the effectiveness of a veterinary treatment. The second had human as well as veterinary implications. Alkali burn injuries are common in industrial settings and there is no treatment, said J. Crawford Downs, vice-chair of research for the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Alabama-Birmingham and chair of the Animals in Research Committee of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology.

MU defended its research by stating it followed the association’s protocols.

To study the dogs’ eyes after the injury, the researchers had to surgically remove the eye. MU’s adoption policy does not allow dogs or cats to be adopted that have undergone experiments that have “detrimentally altered its anatomical, physiological, metabolic, or locomotor function.”

Killing an animal is not done lightly, Downs said.
“I guarantee you this researchers didn’t do it because they wanted to, they did it because it was the only way to get the answer,” he said.

A blind dog can have a good quality life, said Cathy Fege, a Wisconsin teacher who balked at paying $493.35 for records about a beagle she named Jebediah, “or Jebbie for short,” in her Sunshine request. After asking for a breakdown of the cost for her request — it included two hours for the principal investigator at $123.25 per hour — Fege asked to be put on a waiting list to adopt a dog.

The university turned down that request as well. In an interview Saturday, Fege said she had not kept up with the organization’s activities targeting MU since last year, when she abandoned her effort.

“I looked it up last night online, and I did see that they did sue them and I was glad,” she said.

At the time she paid $50 for the adoption kit, she wanted to rescue a dog to be a companion for an older dog that has since died, Fege said. It is immoral to hurt animals and to euthanize them, regardless the justification, she said, and was worth what she paid to make that point.

“Absolutely,” she said. “I don’t even think it was enough money.”
U. of Missouri defends study that led to beagles’ deaths

By Jim Suhr | AP  September 4

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The University of Missouri is defending its research practices after a national pet-adoption group publicly decried an experiment that led to six female beagles being euthanized.

The California-based Beagle Freedom Project, which is suing the university system over $82,000 in fees it says it is being charged for an open-records request, said it learned of the dogs’ deaths after happening upon a published study about treatment for damaged corneas.

As detailed in April in the Journal of Veterinary Ophthalmology, the study said roughly 1-year-old beagles had their left eyes intentionally damaged while they were anesthetized. Half of the animals then were given a topical acid treatment to determine if that healed the eye damage; it didn’t, and the dogs eventually were put to death.
Kevin Chase, vice president of the BFP, which rescues former research animals ranging from ponies to goldfish for adoption, called Mizzou's experiment “a colossal failure” and “cruel,” noting the “cornea’s top layer is filled with thousands of tiny nerve endings.”

“Caging dogs in a laboratory, intentionally damaging their corneas, and then killing them is about as ethical as picking people off the street and hitting them over the head with a pipe in order to test new concussion treatments,” Chase said.

Animal-rights groups widely say nearly 400 U.S. research labs use nearly 70,000 dogs each year, the vast majority of which are beagles, usually because of their docility.

The university issued a statement saying the beagles were anesthetized during the procedure and were given pain medications if any discomfort was evident. The research, meant to develop painless or noninvasive treatments for corneal injuries, “improves the quality of life for both animals and humans,” the university insisted.

“Animal research is only done when scientists believe there is no other way to study the problem, and our researchers respect their research animals greatly and provide the utmost care,” the statement read. “The animals were treated humanely and every effort was made to ensure dogs were as comfortable as possible during the tests to study the effectiveness of the new drug treatment.”

That statement did not say whether its research animals commonly are euthanized. In the study’s conclusion, the four researchers acknowledge the small sample size, saying it was determined before undertaking the study that two dozen of the dogs would be required to detect a significant difference in the healing rates.

The BFP successfully has lobbied for “beagle bills,” which essentially require healthy dog and cat test subjects to be offered up to rescue organizations instead of having them automatically euthanized. The Humane Society of the United States says such laws now exist in Connecticut, California, Minnesota, Nevada and New York.
The BFP sued the University of Missouri in May, alleging it violated the state’s Sunshine Law by charging more than $82,000 for documents that the group sought related to dogs and cats on the Columbia campus. Chase called the fees “exorbitant” and an effort to stymie disclosure.

His group routinely files open-records requests in search of post-research candidate dogs for rescue and was looking through previously published reports about University of Missouri animal research when BFP happened upon the study involving the beagles.

“Had they just given us the records for current protocols, we probably wouldn’t have dug that deep,” Chase said.

**Animal activist group: Mizzou overcharging for information**

**COLUMBIA, Mo. -**

Beagle Freedom Project, an animal activist group, is using a recent study to highlight the University of Missouri’s alleged sunshine law violations.

In May 2016, the group filed a lawsuit against the University.

The group says its goal is to raise awareness about medical testing on animals and wants to change standards for the practice.

Mizzou is not the only university the group has filed lawsuits against, but the group says Mizzou is blocking efforts to learn more about animal testing done at the school by overcharging for information.

The Beagle Freedom Project is now using a recent study to point out the importance of getting such records released.

The group told ABC 17 News the study ended unsuccessfully. Researchers reportedly euthanized six young beagles after they were blinded in one eye to see if a treatment could heal them.
The group said it thinks it was unnecessary to kill the dogs, they said they’re unsure if Mizzou did, in fact, violate any animal welfare law because they do not have the proper documentation.

Daniel Kolde, the Missouri Attorney for Beagle Freedom Project said, "They approved protocol, the care logs, a bunch of other records that the University should be maintaining under the Animal Welfare Act, and various other federal and state regulations and good scientific protocols, but we haven't been able to see those because we don't have $82,000 to give the University."

The University of Missouri defended its research on beagles Monday. It said the dogs were treated humanely and said such research, "improves the quality of life for both animals and humans."

ABC 17 News also asked Kolde about the status of Beagle Freedom Project's lawsuit with Mizzou. He said right now the group is in the discovery phase, meaning both sides are collection information before the case goes to court.

**Following death of six beagle puppies, advocacy group sues MU over animal testing records**

Six beagle puppies were euthanized after they were used as test subjects in a study done by researchers in the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, the university confirmed this week.

The study, which was published in April, aimed to verify a thought in the veterinary community that hyaluronic acid could speed up the healing process for eye injuries in dogs.

The Beagle Freedom Project, an animal rights advocacy group based in Los Angeles, filed a suit against the university in May after the university told them information they requested about MU's use of animal test subjects would cost more than $82,000, the group's director of operations, Kevin Chase, said.

“In other states, we were able to get all of the documents for under $100, and this seemed like a violation of state Sunshine Laws,” Chase said.

Sunshine laws require public institutions to disclose requested records and documents unless the record is specifically exempt. Often, processing fees are waived by the institution if the use of the record is determined to be in the public interest. Chase said
the Beagle Freedom Project requested public records at least 27 times and was denied a waiver. The records the group is trying to obtain discuss 179 test animals used by MU researchers.

Chase said the group often requests records to inquire about animal test subjects used for research at universities as a part of their Identity Campaign. The project seeks out test subject animals who could be put up for adoption after being used for research. Commonly, Chase said, animals are euthanized after they're used in studies.

In this case, MU was not forthcoming with its records, he said.

“Because we couldn't get any records from the school, we started combing through past published research from [MU], and that is how we stumbled upon this particularly gruesome experiment where they blinded and killed these nine-month-old puppies,” Chase said.

In the study, six beagles bred specifically for research use, between the ages of nine months and 1 year old, were used to measure the effect of the topical use of hyaluronic acid on the rate of healing injuries of the cornea, a part of the eye.

Researchers purposefully damaged one of each dog’s corneas while they were sedated and gave one test group a treatment that contained hyaluronic acid and the other a treatment that did not. After the data was collected, the dogs were euthanized.

The authors of the study have not responded to requests for comment.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the study's purpose was to develop a painless, non-invasive treatment for corneal injuries and that dogs are generally good test subjects for this kind of research.

“Since dogs share similar eye characteristics with people, they are ideal candidates for corneal studies, and veterinarians have provided vital information to physicians and veterinarians treating corneal injuries,” Basi said.

According to the study, the dogs were given daily socialization and were housed at the university during the trial. However, Chase said research institutions such as MU often do not find long-term homes for the animals they use as test subjects, even if they would be fit to become household pets.
“Research facilities like the University of Missouri, they're not kennels,” Chase said. “They are research facilities, and cage space comes at a premium. If they have a dog in a cage that can’t be recycled into another experiment and they don’t need them for anything else, they just kill them.”

The Chronicle of Higher Education

For Research Assistants, NLRB Decision Marks a Big Win

NO MU MENTION

By Vimal Patel SEPTEMBER 05, 2016 PREMIUM

The activities Scott Barish performs as a doctoral research assistant align with the goals of the federal agencies that sponsor his research and directly benefit his faculty adviser and Duke University. In short, Mr. Barish argues, he is providing a service in exchange for pay and, therefore, he is an employee. Last month, 42 years after deciding otherwise, the federal panel that oversees labor relations agreed. In a ruling involving Columbia University, the full National Labor Relations Board extended the right to collectively bargain not only to teaching assistants at private colleges but also, for the first time, to research assistants on externally funded grants, like Mr. Barish. Graduate unionization at public colleges is governed by state laws.

Activists cheered the new rights for teaching assistants, which they had been denied since 2004, under a ruling involving Brown University. But as important, union advocates say, is the reversal of an obscure 1974 decision involving a bid by 83 research assistants in Stanford University’s physics department to form a union to "improve wages and working conditions." In that case, the board held that the research
conducted by the graduate assistants was a requirement of their programs and "a part of the learning process." In other words, it was education, not employment.

Graduate students make a living while in their programs usually by serving as a teaching assistant, in which they work as instructors or assistants in undergraduate courses, or, in the sciences, as research assistants, in which they help their faculty advisers with research and work on their dissertations. The students are typically given a stipend for living expenses. Colleges call it financial aid. Students often call it pay.

About 30 graduate student unions exist at public colleges, according to William A. Herbert, executive director of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions. Several have unionized research assistants, including the Universities of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington. Unionized teaching assistants are more common, in part because the employment relationship is more visible: A graduate assistant teaching a class, for example, is filling a business need of a university in a way that is often clearer than the work of a research assistant who is making progress on a dissertation by doing work with an adviser on a federal grant.

The recent Columbia ruling deemed the conclusion of the 1974 board — that research assistants are "primarily students" — irrelevant. Instead, the board applied the same "common-law test of employment" that it did to teaching assistants on the question of research assistants: Does the employer control the work, and is the work performed in exchange for compensation? Yes on both, it concluded.

"Most of the research assistants I talk to feel the nebulousness of what our status is," says Mr. Barish, a fifth-year student in the biology department. "We acknowledge the reality that we are simultaneously learning and engaged in that process of education while also doing work and labor. This ruling puts legal concrete behind that."

At an Equilibrium

Opponents of graduate unionization say they worry about how colleges can separate labor from educational requirements such as work on a dissertation. The process would be burdensome, messy, and result in years of litigation, critics say. "By sweeping all research assistants into the embrace of this ruling," says Joseph W. Ambash, a lawyer with Fisher Phillips who successfully argued the 2004 Brown case, "the intrusion into higher education is unfathomable."

Some faculty members at public colleges have done more than just fathom it, however. They’ve learned to embrace the unionization of research assistants, despite
the occasional headache and transitional growing pains. At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, which has had unionized research assistants for 25 years, for example, faculty members report none of the major concerns often raised by graduate-union critics.

At first, faculty members found it shocking when they learned they would have to provide guaranteed raises to their research assistants, says Elizabeth A. Connor, head of the biology department. The contract the union bargained for created bookkeeping and financial challenges by mandating stipend increases, she says, which complicated the process of divvying up federal grants.

"Now that we’re all aware of the cyclical nature of that," Ms. Connor says, "it’s not as stressful as it was those first few years. It took a little time getting used to, but we’ve certainly been at equilibrium for a number of years."

At the University of Washington, which has 4,500 teaching and research assistants, administrators say they don’t get into the weeds of determining what counts as work. They set a limit on the hours a research assistant can work — 220 per quarter, or roughly 20 hours a week — and then leave the professor and student to work out the details. It’s a system that has worked with no major problems, says Peter Denis, Washington’s assistant vice president for labor relations.

The question of what’s personal research and what is research for the university can be complicated, but it’s a question administrators largely sidestep, Mr. Denis says. "What we’ve tried to do as an institution over the years is be mature about this and say: This is our expectation. If there’s a reason you can’t meet that expectation, we want to know about it and we’ll address it on a case-by-case basis."

_A Changing Relationship_

The labor board’s recent decision represents a recognition of the shifting nature of the work research assistants do, says Olga Brudastova, a graduate assistant in the civil engineering department of Columbia University. A dissertation in the sciences or engineering is often a series of three or more papers written on topics that help the student’s research adviser earn more grant money. "The work they produce is also covered by intellectual-property law and belongs to Columbia," Ms. Brudastova says.

Mr. Barish, from Duke, says the work he performs studying nervous-system development in fruit flies — which includes being first author for two papers in which his adviser is also listed as a co-author — directly helps his adviser, an assistant professor, make the case for tenure and win research grants.
A portion of those research grants is taken by Duke for overhead costs, meaning his work, he says, "contributes to sustaining the university."

The labor board’s ruling on research assistants could be a double-edged sword for union activists. Research assistants in the sciences tend to be less supportive of unions than teaching assistants in the humanities, and administrators sometimes encourage the inclusion of research assistants in proposed bargaining units with the belief that they’ll help defeat union elections.

But activists, including at Duke, where they are hoping to create a bargaining unit consisting of all of the university’s teaching and research assistants, say students in the sciences are just as much in need of support as humanities students. In the sciences, stipends tend to be higher because of access to federal grants, but being overworked and not having enough time off tend to be more prevalent concerns.

David Hoagland, head of the polymer science and engineering department at UMass Amherst, says the graduate union there has helped change the culture around labor relations in his department, which has only research assistants. Graduate students are working less than they used to. Professors no longer call their advisees on nights and weekends. And students report fewer problems with delayed paychecks.

Even so, Mr. Hoagland is rueful about the change in the relationship with his research assistants. It’s more "employer-employee than adviser-mentee" now, as opposed to 30 years ago. Mr. Hoagland, however, does not fault graduate students for wanting to collectively bargain.

"The academy brought this on itself by not being as sensitive to the needs of graduate students as it might have been," Mr. Hoagland says. "You have to suffer the consequences of your policies."

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