Language at 3 predicts 3rd grade depression risk

Generated from a News Bureau press release: Early-Life Language Stimulation, Skills May Prevent Childhood Depression

The level of language skills young children possess early in life can predict their likelihood of experiencing depression later, a new study suggests.

Childhood depression can lead to social, emotional, and academic setbacks during childhood and later in life. Until now, though, little has been known about what contributes to a child’s developing depressive symptoms.

Children who experience low levels of language learning stimulation beginning at three years of age are more likely to experience language delays by first grade and are three times more likely to develop depression by third grade, says Keith Herman, a professor in the College of Education at the University of Missouri.

“It is clear that the amount of language that children are exposed to early on is very important for their development. Whether it is through preschool classes, interactions with parents and siblings, or through consuming media such as television and books, exposure to greater amounts of language and vocabulary will help prepare children to succeed socially and academically when they begin school.

“If children already are experiencing language and subsequent social and academic deficits by the first grade, chances are they will continue to fall further behind in school each year, which can lead to negative self-perceptions and depressive symptoms by third grade.”

For the study, published in Prevention Science, researchers examined data from 587 children and households in Hawaii. The data included children’s language skills and exposure to language stimulation in the home beginning at age three. The children were tested on their language skills in the first grade and then tested for depressive symptoms in the third grade. Children who had higher language exposure and stimulation as three-year-olds were more likely to have adequate to better-than-average language skills in first grade.
They also were much less likely to experience depression by the third grade. Children who did not receive adequate language stimulation early in life were much more likely to have poor language skills and ultimately experience depression.

“These findings are important because we have been able to identify key stages of child development that can help determine the mental health of children later in their academic careers,” Herman says. “By understanding that the amount of language a child is exposed to early in life is important, we can create interventions and programs that can help parents and childcare providers improve language exposure during this critical development age.

Also, we can identify first graders who may lack language skills and give them extra attention to help catch them up academically and socially before they develop depression.”

How to Raise a Genius: Lessons from a 45-Year Study of Supersmart Children

On a summer day in 1968, professor Julian Stanley met a brilliant but bored 12-year-old named Joseph Bates. The Baltimore student was so far ahead of his classmates in mathematics that his parents had arranged for him to take a computer-science course at Johns Hopkins University, where Stanley taught. Even that wasn't enough. Having leapfrogged ahead of the adults in the class, the child kept himself busy by teaching the FORTRAN programming language to graduate students.

Unsure of what to do with Bates, his computer instructor introduced him to Stanley, a researcher well known for his work in psychometrics—the study of cognitive performance. To discover more about the young prodigy’s talent, Stanley gave Bates a battery of tests that included the SAT college-admissions exam, normally taken by university-bound 16- to 18-year-olds in the United States.

Story continues.

Quote from MU:

“The education community is still resistant to this message,” says David Geary, a cognitive developmental psychologist at the University of Missouri in Columbia, who specializes in mathematical learning. “There’s a general belief that kids who have advantages, cognitive or otherwise, shouldn’t be given extra encouragement; that we should focus more on lower-performing kids.”

For the full story: How to Raise a Genius: Lessons from a 45-Year Study of Supersmart Children
Search committee wraps up two days of interviews for University of Missouri president

ST. LOUIS — The University of Missouri Presidential Search Committee wrapped up two days of interviews Wednesday but is revealing very little about the candidates to take over the four-campus system.

Search committee co-chairs Cheryl Walker and Jim Whitaker, in a joint interview when the all-day closed session concluded after 6 p.m., declined to say how many candidates were interviewed or any information about them.

“Candidate confidentiality is at the utmost, so we are not discussing anything about demographics, gender or number of people we talked to,” Walker said. “The process continues so we are just not going to share that detailed information.”

The meetings began at 7:45 a.m. Tuesday and Wednesday at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel. The committee interviewed semi-finalists and intends to meet again for another round of interviews before voting on finalists, Walker and Whitaker said.

The finalists will return to Missouri for another round of interviews and the committee will make recommendations to the Board of Curators, UM System spokesman John Fougere wrote in an email. The finalists will not take part in any public forums or other events to be seen and heard before the final choice is made by the board, he wrote.

The decision to keep every part of the process confidential was made on the recommendation of Isaacson, Miller Inc., the search firm hired by the curators to assist in finding a new president.

The curators formed the 16-member search committee in February to provide faculty, staff, student and alumni input into the selection of a permanent president. The committee includes the nine curators, the student representative to the board, two faculty representatives, a second student representative and a staff representative, with Walker and Whitaker representing alumni.

A projected timeline presented to the board in February anticipated a decision by late November or December. On Jan. 9, a new governor will be inaugurated with power to appoint five of the nine curators, a majority who will have the power to start the search process anew.
That possibility is not going to cause the committee to rush, Walker and Whitaker said.

“We are working diligently,” Walker said. “We see our jobs as finding the best person to fill the shoes. Whenever that happens we will feel as if we have done our job, the committee will have done its job and I would say we are making great progress toward that, but not commit to a deadline, one way or the other. The job is not completed until it is done.”

The presidency came open Nov. 9, when Tim Wolfe resigned amid racial protests on the Columbia campus. Wolfe had been weakened by internal fighting with then-Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and campus leadership was in turmoil over graduate assistant labor issues, a rebellion among deans against Loftin’s leadership and other issues.

Interim President Mike Middleton, called from retirement to take over after Wolfe resigned, has said he does not want the job on a permanent basis.

The committee has not decided how many finalists it wants to interview or whether it will make a single recommendation to the Board of Curators, Whitaker said.

“I think that has yet to be determined,” he said.

Search committee continues meeting to interview University of Missouri presidential hopefuls

ST. LOUIS — The University of Missouri Presidential Search Committee labored diligently to maintain a cloak of secrecy over its work as it met for about 10 hours Tuesday at a hotel near Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

While members of the 16-person committee entered the meeting room at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel through a hallway obscured from view by a curtain, candidates for UM System president arrived by a car service at a back entrance.

To prevent photos, the car service loaded and unloaded in a sally port a few steps from the rooms where the committee was meeting.

The meeting, which began about 7:45 a.m. with a short open session, continued until after 6 p.m., UM System spokesman John Fougere wrote in a text message.
The closed meeting continued Wednesday and was expected to conclude sometime in the afternoon, Fougere wrote.

Interim President Mike Middleton, who took over after the Nov. 9 resignation of Tim Wolfe, has said he does not want the job on a permanent basis.

Search committee co-chairs Cheryl Walker and Jim Whitaker declined a request for an interview about the committee’s work.

Wolfe resigned Nov. 9 amid racial protests on the Columbia campus. Wolfe had been weakened by internal fighting with then-Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, and campus leadership was in turmoil over graduate assistant labor issues, a rebellion among deans against Loftin’s leadership and other issues.

The search committee was formed in February by the Board of Curators to provide faculty, staff, student and alumni input into the selection of a permanent president for the four-campus system. The committee includes the nine curators, the student representative to the board, two faculty representatives, a second student representative and a staff representative, with Walker and Whitaker representing alumni.

When the committee was created, the board also approved a projected timeline to select a new president by November. All 16 members of the committee will vote to narrow the list of candidates to finalists.

The committee was placed in charge of the search because of lingering resentment of the way Wolfe was chosen in December 2011. The curators created an advisory panel for that search, but members were kept in the dark until two finalists were chosen. Before the committee could be informed of the choices, one of the candidates withdrew, leaving Wolfe as the only name to be considered.

Since the University of Missouri expanded to four campuses in the 1960s, the average tenure of a permanent president has been about five years. Wolfe and his predecessor, Gary Forsee, were the first presidents since the expansion who did not have an academic background.

The timeline prepared for the curators in February included plans for campus visits by finalists before the curators make a selection.
COLUMBIA — The number of MU School of Medicine students who have reported experiencing gender discrimination is twice as high as the national average.

Student mistreatment is only one area the medical school must address within two years to maintain its accreditation, according to a June report by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, which accredits medical degree programs.

The school was deemed noncompliant in the areas of diversity programs, student mistreatment, curricular management and affiliation agreements, according to a 497-page report obtained by the Missourian through a Sunshine Law request.

The committee also determined that the school needs monitoring in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, student observations, building renovations and assessments.

The committee could put the school on probation if it doesn’t make progress toward the standards within a year. If it doesn’t make progress within two years, the school could lose its accreditation. Normally, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education operates on an eight-year accreditation cycle.

In a written statement about the report, Medical School Dean Patrice Delafontaine said the school had already been aware of many of the issues before the report was created and that he is immensely proud of the school for receiving full accreditation.
"We take the LCME's recommendations very seriously," Delafontaine said. "To that end, we have assembled a task force comprised of medical students, faculty and staff that is dedicated to continuous quality improvement in general, as well as to making specific quality improvements cited in the survey."

Delafontaine was unavailable to talk about the report until the first week of October, a spokeswoman for MU Health said.

**Student mistreatment**

The committee visited the medical school in January and met with administrators, faculty and students to gather information.

The members found that School of Medicine students experience gender discrimination, public humiliation and offensive remarks far more frequently than the national average, according to the report:

- About 14 percent of MU medical students said they had been denied opportunities based on gender at least once, according to data from the Association of American Medical Colleges. The national average is about 6 percent.

- About 43 percent of students said they had experienced public humiliation at least once. The national average is about 19 percent.

- About 22 percent of students said they had been subjected to offensive or sexist remarks at least once. The national average is about 14 percent.

Students' specific examples of mistreatment were redacted from the report by the university.

MU Health spokeswoman Diamond Dixon said the school was aware of the complaints and is encouraging students to report incidents.

"The medical students' concerns about treatment by faculty and the learning environment have been an issue that has been taken seriously," Dixon said.
The medical school created the Committee on Civility and Respect in the Learning Environment last fall to review mistreatment reports. The committee will make an annual report of its activities and share it with the dean, faculty and students, Dixon said.

The report also noted that the school doesn't have a specific code of professional conduct for faculty-student relationships and uses the general university policy instead. Students and residents said they weren’t aware of any standards for these relationships, according to the report.

**Diversity**

The committee also expressed concern about the medical school's lack of diversity among faculty and students, which isn't a new problem.

When the committee evaluated the school in 2008 and granted it full accreditation, the school was deemed non-compliant in diversity. There were no black students in the first-year class, no strategic plan for diversity and no administrator in charge of the issue.

In response, the school hired a senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion to focus on recruiting and retaining diverse students and faculty. The number of black and Hispanic faculty has increased since then.

However, the number of black students in the medical school has dropped from 5 to 3.3 percent. Over a third of students said they weren't satisfied with the school's student diversity, according to the report.

The few black students in the school often face challenges and racism, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Ontario "Terry" Lacey, the only black man in his School of Medicine class, told the Missourian in 2014 that he was insulted in the school for his appearance, clothing and body language. He said he didn't believe white America was ready to have black physicians.
"They perceive me one way, and that's totally different than what I do," Lacey said.

Faculty and students also expressed concern about the impact of MU's culture on diversity recruitment, according to the accreditation report, specifically mentioning last fall's race-based student protests that led to the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Overall, the committee determined that the school's diversity was unsatisfactory because of the longevity of the diversity problem and lack of progress.

"While efforts are being made, the School of Medicine has yet to deal with the barriers that inhibit the enrollment of students and the hiring of faculty in the full range of diversity that the school seeks in order to maintain a quality learning environment," the report states.

Other issues surface

Neurology, pharmacology and anatomy instruction in the school have been problems since 2008, according to the report. All three remain problematic for different reasons, the new report says.

The committee said students identified the length of the two-week neurology clerkship program as inadequate. The school said it would make the program four weeks long instead.

Eight years later, the program is still two weeks long because there aren’t enough faculty. According to the report, the lack of improvement indicates an ineffective curriculum management system.

"The absence of improvement in these courses suggests inadequate authority or resources or both," the report reads.

Medical schools are required to have written agreements with the facilities that they work with for students' clinical experiences, and the report found that some of MU's were inadequate.
Information was missing in the agreements with Mercy Hospital St. Louis, Mosaic Life Care and Freeman Health System-Joplin, according to the report. The school didn't give sufficient details on the affiliates' learning environment and faculty appointments, among other areas.

The school also did not provide an affiliation agreement for MU Health Care, which is run by the UM System.

MU's medical school has received citations in the past. In 2009, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which accredits medical schools' residency and fellowship programs, put the school on probation.

The council was concerned about the number of hours medical residents were working, according to previous Missourian reporting.

The school made changes in the management and oversight of the residency program, and the probation status was lifted nine months later.

Delafontaine must submit an action plan to the committee by Dec. 1, including a letter and detailed list of the steps that will be taken for each element. Dixon said Delafontaine hadn't yet met with the committee for a required consultation.

University of Missouri to Hold Safety Week

*Generated from News Bureau media advisory*

Fewer season ticket holders at the MU football games

COLUMBIA - There may be fewer people at the Mizzou football game this Saturday. After a 5-7 season last year, there are fewer fans renewing their season passes according to Chad Moller, associate athletic director, strategic communications for MU football. He said he is not surprised there were fewer people buying passes.

"Historically, when we have a losing season, sales go down the following year. To compare apples-to-apples, the last time we had a losing season was 2012, when we also went 5-7. The next year, our renewal rate for 2013 was 85%. Point being, the renewal rate this year is very comparable to that scenario," Moller said.

Katie Laughlin said she did not buy passes this year because she felt it was a waste of money.

"Last year I did get the student pass and the thing with it was I didn't go to a lot of the games and it felt like a big waste of money and that was because we usually just went to the tailgates," Laughlin said.

Still one student, Elizabeth Spiegel, said she's excited for the upcoming season and plans to attend the games.

"I am a freshman here at Mizzou and I've never been to a football game before so I just can't wait for that college tailgate and game experience this year," Spiegel said.

Moller said he still believes the stands will be full of fans.

"Keep in mind that when you sell fewer season tickets, you have more single-game inventory to sell, and we do anticipate being up with our single-game sales over last year. Of course, you don't know those figures until the season is over, but that is our goal certainly," Moller said.
Mizzou football season ticket sales, renewal down this season

Just days away from Mizzou's first home football game, officials confirm season tickets are down for the 2016.

According to Mizzou spokesman Chad Moller, current season ticket sales are closing in on the 40,000 mark.

In an email to KRCG13 Wednesday, Moller said the team sold 45,000 season tickets for the 2015 season, the second highest amount.

The renewal rate also declined from last year. Officials said as of Wednesday night, the renewal rate stood at 82%. Officials say the on an average year, the renewal rate is around 90%.

"One important perspective to keep in mind is that we are coming off a 5-7 season last year, and historically, when we have a losing season, sales go down the following year, said Moller." "To compare apples-to-apples, the last time we had a losing season was 2012, when we also went 5-7. The next year, our renewal rate for 2013 was 85%. Point being, the renewal rate this year is very comparable to that scenario."

Moller said that with fewer season tickets sold, the team has more single-game inventory.

"We do anticipate being up with our single-game sales over last year," said Moller.
Odom's Mizzou contract includes unique language

By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 8 hrs ago

Nine months after he was named Missouri’s football coach, Barry Odom’s contract was finalized Aug. 30. Odom’s five-year deal, obtained by the Post-Dispatch through an open records request, includes some unique language about the treatment of players that wasn’t part of former coach Gary Pinkel’s contract or the contracts of current Mizzou coaches in other sports, including men’s basketball coach Kim Anderson.

“With the cooperation and assistance of University, the employee shall engage in (and encourage that every coach under employee supervision is engaging in) fair, safe and responsible treatment of student-athletes on the football team,” the contract states, “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. The employee acknowledges that the above obligations are generally encompassed in the overall performance expected of the coach.”

“If employee is found by the University, and its reasonable good faith discretion, to have clearly mistreated a student athlete, engaged in significant or repetitive violations of NCAA rules and/or regulations, or to have failed to report a violation that he knew about or if he has failed to stop a violation that he knows about, he will be subject to disciplinary or corrective action pursuant to university guidelines, including suspension without pay, or termination of employment for cause with no further monetary obligation by the university.”

Odom’s five-year deal, for a guaranteed $2,350,000 per year, runs through Feb. 28, 2021, but on or around Jan. 15, 2018 Mizzou and Odom may review his contract and agree to a two-year extension. Odom can make up to $1,525,000 in performance incentives, including bonuses for
winning eight or more games in a given season, $100,000 for winning an SEC championship and $250,000 for winning the national championship. Odom can also earn permanent bonuses that will be paid annually through the remainder of his contract if he wins an SEC title ($250,000) or leads MU to a one of the six New Year’s bowl games ($250,000).

Odom’s guaranteed salary is the lowest among SEC head coaches at the league’s 13 public universities.


University of Missouri Professor Addresses Issues of Political Endorsements

MoDOT prepares for game day traffic

COLUMBIA – MoDOT will have extra staff members working Saturday due to MU’s first home football game of the season.

MoDOT said the extra workers will be around the stadium area on Columbia roads and highways to handle emergency maintenance issues or to help the Highway Patrol control traffic.

MoDOT has been monitoring traffic signals in Columbia for many weeks to make sure they are working properly so the extra traffic does not get too backed up.

Sally Oxenhandler, MoDOT’s Central District communications manager, said game days are always big for Columbia.

“Of course, people will be traveling from all over the state to get there,” she said. “We try and get ready knowing that we’re going to have a lot of visitors to the Columbia area and a lot more travelers on Missouri interstates and major roads.”

Oxenhandler said the best thing for travelers to do is to allow plenty of time for traveling.

“That always helps kind of reduce the tension and stress,” she said.

She also suggested that travelers look at MoDOT’s traveler information map that shows road conditions and real-time traffic flow. Oxenhandler said drivers who have concerns while traveling can call the department’s toll-free phone line, which is staffed 24/7.

MoDOT always encourages people not to drink or text while driving and to wear their seat belts, but the department is stressing it even more with all the football fans in town.

In addition to safety preparation, Oxenhandler said MoDOT has been working to “spruce up the area” with mowing, repainting curbs and sidewalks and clearing debris from highways and intersections.

Oxenhandler hopes all travelers take the necessary precautions so they can enjoy the game.
A member of the Tiger Claws pep squad first donned a cloth and papier-mache tiger costume in the 1940s. By the 1970s, MU had two tiger mascots: a female "Lil Tiger" and a male "Big Tiger."

Deb Snellen played "Lil Tiger" during her junior and senior years at MU in the 1970s. Snellen is now a director at MU's Office of Advancement.

As Lil Tiger, Snellen visited MU's children's hospital with Missouri football players. Kids' faces lit up when they saw the tiger, Snellen said.

Snellen is a Columbia native and acted as Kewpie, Hickman High School's mascot, when she was a teenager. She knew during her freshman year that she wanted to play the tiger at MU.

"Being the tiger helped shape who I am and how much I continue to do for the university now," Snellen said.

In 1986, Missouri cheerleaders held a contest to give the tiger an identity. They settled on Truman, after President Harry S. Truman, who was born and lived in Missouri.

The name stuck, and Truman the Tiger will turn 30 on Sept. 13.

Birthday celebrations are in full force. The MU Alumni Association will host a campus birthday party on Friday in the MU Student Center. On Saturday, 25 alumni who played Truman will
few concepts in academe have been dissected, debated, mocked, and defended in recent months as much as the "safe space."

The term has cropped up repeatedly in campus protests, and as the discussion has become more polarized, the safe space has become a political football — social-media grist that offers each side a chance to see what it wants to see.

Observers inside and outside academe often seem to talk past one another: Either safe spaces are essential sanctuaries for members of historically marginalized groups, or they reflect a troubling desire to escape the rigorous intellectual inquiry that college should be all about.

Devoid of context, a meltdown over insensitive Halloween costumes at Yale University or the creation of a room with Play-Doh and coloring books for sexual-assault victims at Brown University can seem silly. And the broader trend those episodes seem to point to can appear problematic: college campuses filled with overly
sensitive students who find course assignments and dissenting viewpoints traumatizing.

The latest national slugfest over safe spaces emerged after John Ellison, dean of students at the University of Chicago, warned incoming students that the institution would not condone "the creation of intellectual ‘safe spaces’ where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own." Some welcomed his opening salvo; others complained that it distorted what activists were trying to accomplish.

Mr. Ellison’s letter once again left many scratching their heads about what a safe space even means: Is it a physical place? An intellectual state of mind? Or both? Has the free-speech-vs.-safe-space debate been blown out of proportion?

Some supporters of safe spaces fear that the public debate has become a distraction. "I worry that the term has taken on such a negative connotation that it might deter universities from creating safe spaces for people who need them the most," says Liz High, a senior at Appalachian State University and an intern at Campus Pride, a national group that supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students.

"This isn’t about me leaving the room to crawl into a little space and cry about my hurt feelings," she says. "It’s about creating an atmosphere where we can express opinions freely without being harassed or judged."

**Campus Roots**

The term "safe space" can be traced back decades, though it’s not clear exactly when it was first used. Vaughan Bell, a neuroscientist and lecturer at University College London, wrote a blog post last fall suggesting that safe spaces initially cropped up in the late 1940s, as sensitivity training gained traction in corporate America.

Several scholars say the term was commonly used in activist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The LGBT community considered safe spaces to be physical locations — for instance, gay and lesbian bars — where sexual minorities could be themselves without fear of discrimination or prosecution under anti-sodomy laws. The women’s-rights movement also sought to carve out safe spaces — both physical and intellectual — where feminists could gather free from the influence of what they deemed patriarchal thought.
Mention of safe spaces first appeared in research literature in the mid-1990s, in the context of "safe zone" programs through which faculty members could learn how to support the LGBT community, says Donna Braquet, an associate professor and biology librarian at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and former director of the campus’s Pride Center. The workshops are popular today on many campuses, where rainbow-colored stickers emblazoned with phrases like "safe space" adorn the office doors of employees who complete the programs.

While campus centers for women, LGBT students, and racial-minority students weren’t specifically called safe spaces at first, Ms. Braquet says, "the idea of safety was wrapped up in those places."

Students today often use the term "safe space" to describe such centers. Stephanie Greene, a senior at the University of Chicago, says the campus’s Center for Identity and Inclusion "self-identifies as a safe space." There she can seek help from supportive staff members and find community among other black students.

Activists have also embraced the importance of safe spaces for sexual-assault victims, says Mahroh Jahangiri, executive director of Know Your IX, a network of victims and advocates whose name refers to the federal gender-equity law known as Title IX. Carving out concrete areas on campuses, she says, allows them to work through their trauma in supportive environments on their own time, increasing the odds that they’ll graduate.

In many of those cases, a "safe space" means a physical place. But the term can also refer to intellectual safety. In the early and mid-2000s, Ms. Braquet recalls, it was used to describe efforts to make students in underrepresented groups comfortable participating in classroom discussions.

Anne McClintock, a professor of gender and sexuality studies at Princeton University, says that when she was a graduate student at Columbia University, in the 1980s, the Barnard Center for Research on Women across the street served as both a physical and an intellectual safe space. "Challenging issues like pornography, rape, racism, sex work, and queer sexualities — typically taboo at Columbia — were openly discussed in messy, complicated, and exhilarating ways," Ms. McClintock wrote in an email.

It’s that intellectual component of safe spaces that often draws the most public reproach. But it hasn’t always been a campus hot button. Debate over safe spaces seems to be mostly limited to a few elite institutions like the University of Chicago, Ms. Greene says, but even there, "it hasn’t really been that contentious in the past."
Christopher Ferguson, a professor of psychology at Stetson University, hasn’t seen much demand for safe spaces on his campus, in Florida. "I talk to students about safe spaces and trigger warnings, and 90 to 95 percent of them think the whole thing is ridiculous," says Mr. Ferguson. "They don’t feel like they need to be sheltered."

Safe-space discourse becomes problematic, he says, "when professors are expected to start censoring what we say because it might be upsetting to someone." That happens rarely, he says, and no more today than when he started teaching, 20 years ago.

**A Year of Controversy**

Sometimes, though, it seems as if the safe space is all people talk about. That was the case last September at Wesleyan University after a group of students, alumni, and staff members petitioned to defund the Connecticut campus’s newspaper, *The Argus*, for publishing an opinion essay that criticized the Black Lives Matter movement. The newspaper, the critics wrote, "neglects to provide a safe space for the voices of students of color."

The newspaper responded with a **front-page apology**. That set off free-speech alarms in some quarters and prompted Wesleyan’s president, Michael S. Roth, to publish a **blog post** in which he encouraged students who were angry not to shut off debate or "demand ideological conformity."

Despite **that controversy**, Mr. Roth says, he has never heard a student at Wesleyan ask for an intellectual safe space. "The idea that a safe space is a corridor for intellectual isolationism is a fantasy," he says.

"What is being served by the nostalgia about the good old days when gay people and people of color were systematically marginalized?" Mr. Roth asks. He says he’s puzzled about the national furor over students’ supposedly thin skins. "Why are people so freaked out about this?"

Mr. Roth says a new student whose gender and ethnicity weren’t immediately clear recently approached him and thanked him for defending safe spaces. "This person has a lot of risks going on and simply wants places like us white guys have always had, where they can kick back and not feel the need to defend or explain themselves."

Religious groups, fraternities, and sororities have long been places where students from similar backgrounds congregate, safe-space supporters point out. They are rarely
criticized for encouraging self-segregating, as programs for minority or other underrepresented students frequently are.

A few months after the Wesleyan controversy, further tension about safe spaces and free speech erupted. This time, it was at the University of Missouri at Columbia, where students protesting the campus’s racial climate tried to ban reporters from their tent encampment as they celebrated the announcement that their activism had succeeded in ousting the president and chancellor.

Protesting under the name Concerned Student 1950, the students declared their encampment, in the middle of the main quad, a "safe space" that was off limits to reporters. The protesters’ rationale — that they needed a space to protect themselves from the "insincere narratives" of a predominantly white news media — was a new and, to some, troubling twist on the concept of safe spaces. The controversy was inflamed when a Missouri faculty member, Melissa A. Click, tried to evict a student journalist who was attempting to film the encampment.

At Claremont McKenna College, in California, student activists last fall demanded a safe space in the form of "a resource center for students of color." The final proposal for the resource center, drawn up this past spring by the college’s steering committee on diversity and inclusion, calls the center a "space for expression, study, dialogue, and exploration of our intersecting social identities," but does not include any references to "marginalized students," which the activists had considered a priority.

Hiram E. Chodosh, Claremont McKenna’s president, and Peter Uvin, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty, sent a message last week to the campus in response to the University of Chicago letter. The officials noted that the college’s faculty and Board of Trustees had endorsed Chicago’s free-speech principles, as a number of other institutions have done.

"We teach sensitive material. We do not mandate trigger warnings. We invite controversial speakers," they wrote. The new resource center, they continued, "is equally resolute in its commitment to inclusivity, openness, and pluralism."

‘Every Story Has Its Context’

How has the debate over safe spaces reached such a fever pitch? Conservative scholars who feel that their views are being stifled are among the harshest critics of safe spaces and trigger warnings, says Kevin M. Gannon, a professor of history and
director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Grand View University, in Iowa.

One incident many critics seized upon was a series of chalked messages supporting Donald J. Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, that appeared at Emory University and dozens of other colleges this past spring.

One student told The Emory Wheel, a student newspaper, that the messages had made her feel unsafe. Others suggested that Emory officials should investigate and punish those responsible because Mr. Trump’s name had become synonymous with racism.

It seemed that some students wanted to censor views they didn’t like, says Alexander (Sasha) Volokh, an associate professor of law at Emory. "That is a restriction on speech," says Mr. Volokh, who is the incoming chair of Emory’s committee on open expression.

"I don’t have any huge problem with the concept of safe spaces as long as we’re constantly out there insisting that people not use terms like ‘unsafe’ when they’re faced with political, intellectual, or social disagreements," he says.

Still, "every story has its context," says Mr. Gannon. "What might look like a silly bunch of self-entitled brats might be part of a broader context we aren’t aware of."

It was easy to ridicule the Emory students, he says, but the chalkings might have been the final straw for black students who were upset about feeling unsupported on the campus. Critics of safe spaces sometimes take a seemingly ridiculous example of political correctness and "wield it like a club to beat the other side over the head with," he says.

‘Not a Day Care’

One college president — Everett Piper, of Oklahoma Wesleyan University — seized on what some would see as an extreme example of hypersensitivity. After a student complained that a sermon on love had made him feel victimized because the student himself didn’t show enough love, Mr. Piper wrote a strongly worded blog post. "This is not a day care. It’s a university," Mr. Piper wrote. The Christian university, he added, "is not a ‘safe space,’ but a place to learn."

Mr. Piper says that the response to his post was overwhelmingly positive. "Even people who disagree with my worldview affirmed the need for this kind of message," he says.
Others argue that older academics who complain about coddled millennials probably attended colleges that, in their day, were less ethnically and sociologically diverse. As the range of student experiences has broadened, so have the strategies needed to promote learning, says Mr. Gannon.

Still, given how polarized the debate over safe spaces has become, some have suggested moving away from the phrase altogether. "The term has become so loaded, and has so much politics around it, that it almost detracts from what we’re trying to do," says Anthony Martin Gacita, a student at Northwestern University’s medical school. He is involved in the medical school’s "safe-space training program," which helps faculty members make their classrooms more supportive of LGBT students.

Teresa Mastin, the school’s director of diversity and inclusion, refers to "brave spaces" where difficult discussions take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. "When students don’t feel comfortable in a space where they’re supposed to be learning, that’s a problem," she says.

Ms. Jahangiri, of Know Your IX, prefers to try to create "safer spaces." Violence against women and other students can occur even on campuses that seem friendly, she says. "There are no safe spaces on American college campuses."

Meanwhile, college presidents across the country are continuing to weigh in with their own spins on the advice given to students at Chicago. Clayton S. Rose, president of Bowdoin College, in Maine, used his blog to urge new students to be "intellectually fearless."

When you’re in class, the dining hall, or the dorm, "and you hear something that really pushes your buttons, that makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up, you should run to it, embrace it, figure out why you are uncomfortable, unsettled, offended, and then engage with it," he said. Then he added a plea: "Engage with it in a thoughtful, objective, and respectful way."

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The Campaign and Science
Clinton offers detailed plans and pledges to listen to researchers. Trump hasn't offered plans and has questioned scientific consensus on key issues.

AAU Mentioned, No MU Mention

In developing a platform on science, Hillary Clinton has promised increased support for federal agencies that support research, improvements in science education, a major push to expand computer science education in high schools and an additional $2 billion for Alzheimer’s research.

Her rival in the presidential race, Donald Trump, has meanwhile offered plans off-the-cuff when he has been pressed on policy stances. And his position on many issues remains a mystery. More troubling to many observers is how he has disregarded scientific facts and evidence in many of his public pronouncements.

Highlighting the contrast between them, Clinton declared in her convention speech accepting the Democratic nomination, "I believe in science."

It's a dynamic that sets 2016 apart from previous election cycles and has made it a challenge for advocates, government relations types and journalists to project how the outcome of the campaign will impact not only basic research funding but issues like regulation as well.

The two campaigns are distinguished by the level of detail the candidates are offering as much as the actual positions they are taking. Clinton’s website includes a detailed set of priorities on science and technology. Trump’s position page makes no mention of science or research issues. And it’s unclear to even those plugged into the Washington policy world who is shaping the positions of the Trump campaign.

“It certainly is different than what we have seen the last few election cycles,” said Tobin Smith, vice president for policy at the Association of American Universities.

Normally, Smith said, individual policy experts emerge in campaigns whom interest groups can communicate with about the candidates’ positions. Advocacy organizations say finding anyone with that role in the Trump campaign has been difficult and the candidate’s frequent off-the-cuff statements haven’t helped establish where he stands on many issues.
The AAU has released a set of four basic policy areas it hopes to see addressed by both campaigns this fall, including innovation, efficiency, college affordability and access to talent.

A growing area of concern for the organization is protecting innovations in research by addressing intellectual property and law, Smith said. The group also wants to see regulations across government agencies “harmonized” or streamlined -- universities, where most basic research takes place, must comply with rules from multiple agencies. Presidents can have their largest impact on science policy with whom they appoint to key cabinet and advisory positions. President Obama in 2009 nominated Francis Collins as director of the National Institutes of Health. Collins has received praise for working with both Democrats and Republicans in Congress. Obama has also appointed figures with strong science backgrounds to other key positions, including Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, a nuclear physicist who previously served on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Rush Holt, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said the president’s role in science has as much to do with the values that guide the federal government as specific policies.

“ A president’s attitude toward science is much more than funding for research or universities, more than the budgets for NASA and NIH,” he said. “ Yes, those are important, but it really has to do with questions of whether evidence is brought to bear in making policy decisions.”

Many observers have found the Trump campaign lacking in that regard. Scientific American magazine went so far as to issue a statement criticizing the Republican candidate’s lack of respect for science -- a first for the magazine, which drew headlines and put a spotlight at one more way this election has gone off the rails.

And Wired magazine made an endorsement of Clinton, saying, “She is the only candidate who can assess the data, consult with the people who need to be heard and make decisions that she can logically defend.”

As for Trump, there was his allegation that global warming is a Chinese plot, or his threat to back out of the Paris climate agreement. And Trump has given oxygen to discredited theories linking vaccines to autism.

Scientific American editors acknowledged that science has not played a prominent role in many recent policy debates.
"The current presidential race, however, is something special," they wrote. "It takes antiscience to previously unexplored terrain."

Executive editor Fred Guterl said there is no recent example in the magazine’s history when its editors took such a stand on a candidate.

“We felt that Trump’s statements were outrageous enough that we needed to go on record as saying that he just is not very respectful of science. And that’s a disturbing thing when you look at how many of the world’s problems would be better dealt with with an appreciation of what science can tell you,” he said.

The magazine has joined a number of organizations, including AAU and AAAS, in calling for the campaigns to address 20 scientific questions generated through a crowdsourced effort by ScienceDebate. Among those questions, the candidates are being asked to describe their views on climate change, their plans to protect biodiversity and their strategy for the country’s energy future. Begun in 2008, the campaign aims to gather the responses of the candidates to those questions and post them online.

The Scientific American editorial highlights the concern of many that statements from the Trump campaign have been divorced from facts and evidence in an unprecedented manner and could have a long-lasting impact on national politics. Smith, from AAU, said that this campaign is reflective of long-term trends in Congress.

“I would say that the campaign is symptomatic of the issues that we face in a Congress that is deeply polarized,” he said. “You’re seeing this polarization carried into a presidential election in ways that we haven’t seen, where the divide between the candidates is so significant.”

But Hudson Freeze, president of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, said there have been encouraging signs of bipartisan support for science in Congress. He cited a $2 billion increase in funding for the NIH approved by the Senate and a $1.3 billion increase approved by the House. Those funding increases were backed by Republicans -- Missouri Senator Roy Blunt and Oklahoma Representative Tom Cole.

“So there is a separation there,” he said. “Republicans [in Congress] are on the side of scientific research. That is very gratifying.”

Freeze said it is important that the next Congress and president keep momentum going on funding basic research. But while Clinton has talked about Alzheimer’s research and endorsed the Obama administration’s “cancer moon shot,” Freeze said, similar priorities haven’t been forthcoming from Trump.
Jennifer Poulakidis, vice president for congressional and governmental affairs at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, said it’s rare that presidential campaigns place a heavy emphasis on directly addressing issues of science. “In that regard this campaign isn’t that different,” she said. “But we’d love for science to have more of a role in the forefront of the overall national discourse.”