Mizzou: Behind Closed Doors

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Columbia, Mo. - The nation saw the protests at the University of Missouri. Students demanded changes in what they believed to be a racist institution.

Then, it saw the football team threaten to take a knee and the leadership unravel.

One part of the story you may not have seen, is the paralyzing power struggle happening behind closed doors. ABC 17's Marissa Hollowed met with insiders to hash it out.

"The things that were going on had nothing to do with the protests," said dean of the MU School of Veterinary Medicine, Neil Olson.

"It looks like you are dealing with big social issues, but you're not. You're just dealing with campus politics," said former chair of the MU Faculty Council on University Policy, Craig Roberts.

As students filled the quad fighting racial injustice in November of 2015, the faculty was waging war of its own.

"It was really a toxic environment," said Barton Wechsler, dean of the MU Truman School of Public Affairs.

That inner struggle was between the deans and then, chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

On November 9th, 2015, all sitting deans wrote a letter demanding Loftin's removal.

"There were nine of us and we just decided things on the campus got to a point and someone had to deal with it," said former dean of the MU College of Arts & Science, Mike O'Brien.

"We just said enough is enough," said Olson.

Loftin told ABC 17 he felt "blindsided" by the letter.
"Everyone has their opinion here, they never came to me about this," said former chancellor Loftin.

The dean's say Loftin had a list of failures.

One of those was how Loftin addressed the issues with racism on campus. A meeting was held in 2014, after the grand jury's decision not to indict the officer who shot and killed Michael Brown. Students shared personal stories of racism and Loftin was criticized for being aloof.

"You can't sit there when a student is talking and look at your cell phone the whole time... People are going to notice that. People know when you really care and when you don't," said O'Brien.

"I wasn't on my phone at all. I texted my boss one time to tell him I would be late for a meeting. But, I was really busy with my iPad trying to capture what students said," said Loftin.

"In the case of racial strife, if people would have listened, and took the concern seriously, not just listening, but actually doing something," said Olson.

Loftin says he was doing something.

"I was in meetings almost every single day about these types of problems," said Loftin. "We worked diligently for almost a year trying to address the concerns of our students here and made some progress, by no means what they wanted."

In August of 2015, Loftin suspended the graduate student's health insurance. After outrage and protests from those students, he reinstated the benefits until the end of this academic year. This was another failure the deans name.

"If the grad students had been treated with respect... This would, may have been different," said Wechsler.

"I didn't understand all the pieces at the time, that's my fault," said Loftin.

Some of the deans may have had problems of their own.

"Some of the reasons for going after Loftin... Loftin was auditing them and if you see the paper, you can see the results of those audits. That's probably all I should say," said Roberts.

An audit for the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) released in June 2016, found a $743,000 embezzlement by an employee over 15 years. It also gave CAFNR the highest risk level rating.

Loftin says the reason for inquiring about the financial state of the colleges was, "a matter of reporting, a matter of oversight, a matter of trying to move the campus for fiscal responsibility in every level."
The 2016 audit says the dean along with the CFO of the college are “responsible for all financial activity occurring within the college.”

According to UM system data, the College of Arts and Science was in about $8 million dollars of debt.

Dean Thomas Payne (CAFNR) announced his retirement May of 2016. He'll be leaving in December 2016.

Mike O'Brien, the dean of the College of Arts and science left Mizzou in July 2016.

These aren't the only two deans leaving.

Here is a look at the deans that have left or are leaving since November 2015:

CAFNR - Payne
Arts & Science - O'Brien
Education - Clay
Law - Myers
Public Affairs - Wechsler

Here are the deans that are currently serving as interim:

Arts & Science - Okker
Business - Ferris
Human Environmental Sciences - Rikoon
Law - Dean

The dean of the med school left and then came back.

"The med school dean issue for many of us was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Wechsler.

Patrice Delafontaine was brought in from Tulane to be the med school dean and increase Mizzou's standing in the American Association of Universities (AAU), a group that ranks the top 62 universities in the U.S. and Canada.

"Acting on advice, I asked him for his resignation and he gave it to me," said Loftin.

ABC 17’s Marissa Hollowed asked Loftin, "Did this cause animosity?" To which Loftin responded, "Of course in the medical school and with the deans I'm sure, yeah... The information I had at the time was quite compelling."

Hollowed then asked, "Can you tell me about that?"

Loftin replied, "No."
Delafontaine was hired back as dean just 5 months later.

"There was a tendency to blame other administrators for things," said Olson about Loftin.

"There were issues that required strong, productive, positive leadership and we weren't getting it," said Wechsler.

"I said to the deans, which probably got me in trouble with them, was this place has no term limits for deans... We had deans that have been here for 20 years. They are appointed for life as far as they are concerned, I guess," said Loftin.

Loftin is most likely referring to 2 of the longest serving deans. Thomas Payne served 18 years. Mike O'Brien worked at MU for more than 40 years.

Tim Wolfe is another player in this game. He resigned as system president on November 9th, 2015. Afterward, Wolfe sent out a confidential email that was leaked. In the letter, Wolfe claims Loftin shifted the focus of the protesters from himself to Wolfe after Loftin realized his job was in jeopardy.

"That surprised me a great deal. I had no idea he believed that about me, that I somehow engineered students turning on him. That was the last thing I'd think about doing," said Loftin.

There is one group Wolfe did not mention in the letter.

"The only people he didn't bad mouth were the deans. The deans were not implementing the plan that he demand be implemented," said Roberts.

ABC 17 has reached out to Wolfe a number of times, but he has yet to speak publicly on any of these issues.

The University of Missouri system is working to move forward and make strides to improve the environment on campus and internally.

The system is searching for a permanent system president and chancellor as it works to fix a noticeable drop in enrollment.

Tuesday, ABC 17 will be asking more questions of system leaders at a news conference.
Mizzou med school at risk of losing accreditation

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri School of Medicine is at risk of losing its accreditation.

According to a report done by a national group that accredits medical degree programs, the university needs to address issues within two years to maintain its accreditation.

The School of Medicine was judged on 95 accreditation elements set by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. It was found to be in compliance with 91 of them, and out of compliance with four.

The committee found in a 497 page report that the school noncompliant regarding diversity programs, student mistreatment, curricular management and affiliation agreements.

The University said in a statement to ABC 17 News, "The school is actively working on a comprehensive action plan to make improvements in the identified areas that will be submitted to the LCME."

In 2015 data show levels of student mistreatment are above the national benchmarks. 43% of Missouri's students said they had experienced public humiliation at least once, compared with the national average of about 19%.

22% said they have been subjected to offensive or sexist remarks at least once, compared with a national average of about 14%.

The committee met with administrators, faculty and students during a visit to the medical school in January.

The dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, Patrick Delafontaine, told ABC 17 News in a statement, "We were aware of many of these issues before the LCME team arrived and had already taken steps to put new programs and policies in place to address them. We take the LCME's recommendations very seriously."

The medical school has assembled a task force that comprises medical students, faculty and staff to help make the specific quality improvements cited in the survey.
Delafontaine must submit an action plan to the committee by December 1st, 2016.

MU School of Medicine Could Lose Accreditation

Watch the story:  http://mms.tveyses.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=4deec187-b851-446a-8140-8cd012ab0f4
COLUMBIA — **MU custodial workers waited until early Monday morning to clean up trash from Saturday’s Mizzou football game.**

Tailgate garbage will no longer be picked up on the weekends because of budget cuts.

Tailgate garbage from Mizzou football games is now being picked up on Mondays instead of Sundays to save on overtime pay.

MU officials cut more than $5 million from their budget on July 1 that eliminated more than 50 custodial jobs. MU custodians reported to work for their normal shift on Monday from 4 a.m. until noon. MU officials said most of the game garbage from Saturday was cleaned up before the end of Monday morning’s 8 hour shift.

Campus Facilities Spokeswoman Karlan Seville said, “It looks great. The campus looks really good. We’ve had a lot of compliments. We’re just encouraging people to do their part by cleaning up outside of their tailgate before they go to the game.”

Six campus facilities floor crew workers normally work from 9 p.m. on Sunday until 5 a.m. on Monday. That floor crew will now spend the last 3 hours of their Monday morning shifts picking up garbage after game days instead of cleaning floors and carpets throughout the MU campus.

Seville said, “We have 180 custodians but I wouldn’t say all of those were cleaning. About 150 people, I would think, were involved in the clean up.”

This year’s MU budget cuts have landscapers trimming sidewalk edges only twice a year. The cutbacks will also cause slower snow removal on the Mizzou campus this winter to cut back on overtime pay.
MU Campus Facilities officials said the Eastern Michigan football game was like a practice run for next weekend’s home game against Georgia University. Clean up crews expect larger crowds next weekend with larger amounts of trash.

MU officials said they are trying to overcome a $32 million shortfall because of declining enrollment and new commitments.

**Budget Cuts Affect Game Trash Pick Up**


**MU hosts Safe Mizzou Week highlighting various issues**

COLUMBIA - Safe Mizzou Week is expanding this year, and the list of events covers everything from concussions to active threat procedures.

Back on the first day of classes, MU held an active shooter training. KOMU 8's Tyler Emery reported in-depth on the training.

On Monday, MU PD officer Zachary Chinea held another public active threat forum, this time at Jesse Hall. The course is called Citizens' Response to Active Threats or C.R.A.T. and highlights the best advice for how to handle an active threat situation.
Another C.R.A.T. training will be held Tuesday night at 6 p.m. in South 016 Memorial Student Union.

The week also touches on personal safety issues.

Christina Walls is one of the coordinators for Campus Activities and helped plan the events for Safe Mizzou Week. She wants the take away from the events to be a safety first attitude.

"Make smart decisions, always be conscious of what's going on around you. And if you see something, say something," Walls said.

One of the familiar Safe Mizzou Week events, the Annual Fire Factor and Room Burn, will happen Wednesday.

The event involves starting a prop dorm room near Speaker's Circle on fire to show how quickly a room can burn up.

The Green Dot campaign against sexual violence is holding an event for it's National Day of Action on Sunday.

The MSA/GPC Department of Student Activities is sponsoring a free showing of the film *Concussion*.

The film is based on the findings of Dr. Bennet Omalu, who will speak at an event on Wednesday night at 7:30 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium.

For the full calender of events, visit MU's page for Safe Mizzou Week.

Mizzou hosts Active Shooter Training

COLUMBIA — Today the University of Missouri hosted an active shooter training in the Jesse Hall Auditorium.

School officials spoke to a crowd of mostly Mizzou faculty about how to react in the event of a violent attack.

University police stressed the importance of "Run, Hide, Fight". The three choices you can make when in an active shooter situation.

Advances in technology have probed MU emergency management specialist Eric Evans to keep a watchful eye on social media platforms.

"We've been very lucky in working with our partners to reach out when someone creates a threat, Evans said. "So we can get warrants for those types of things and we can pursue those people. We've been very successful in doing that."

In the wake of racial demonstrations last November, former Mizzou student Hunter Park posted on the anonymous social media app "Yik Yak" that he was going to kill black people on MU's campus.

University police were able to locate and arrest the 19-year-old one day later.

Evans says they will continue the strict cyber-security procedures they have set in place.

Safety Week Kicks Off at MU