MU expert thinks first debate will play pivotal role presidential election


A University of Missouri professor thinks Monday night’s debate will likely influence the outcome of the Presidential election.

MU Communications Professor Mitchell McKinney’s been studying presidential debates since the late 1980’s. He advised the Commission on Presidential Debates in 1992, helping develop the “town hall” format. And he’s conducted extensive research of each candidate’s debate performances in this year’s primaries.

McKinney thinks Donald Trump will have to change his approach from the earlier battles when he attacked his opponents as well as the moderators, and often seemed to say whatever was on his mind. “We’re now at a point where I think some voters are expecting, does he have the ability to be more sober, serious, comport himself with a presidential demeanor” said McKinney. “We’ve seen him, I think, more disciplined of late, even on the campaign trail. So I think that’s a challenge for Donald Trump in this debate.”

McKinney also says Trump will have to further develop his responses in a one-on-one setting, versus the primaries when ten candidate were on stage. “We’re going to see, is there substance there. He really can’t sustain an entire debate with, sort of, a one liner with a humorous remark, with sometimes remarks that are really nothing more than self-praise.”

As far as Hillary Clinton goes, McKinney says she needs to avoid getting bogged down explaining scandals which have dogged her. “If she spends the entire evening either based on a moderator, a journalist or her opponent calling her to account for emails, Benghazi, whatever the scandals, whatever the past actions, that’s going to put her very much on the defensive.” McKinney thinks Clinton needs to work to try to change the perception she’d not trustworthy during the 90 minute event, which she won’t be able to do if she’s constantly dealing with the scandals surrounding her.

McKinney says the debate could influence the election’s outcome because there’s still a large number of undecided voters, and because the race has gotten tighter in the past couple of
weeks. “If this race remains as tight as it is now, certainly trying to reach a segment of those undecideds could tip the balance.” Polls show undecided voters compose between 3 and 10 percent of the electorate.

McKinney says his historical research points to Monday’s debate being consequential November’s outcome. “In my previous analysis I’ve found that debates were influential in other close presidential contests, including the elections of 1960, 1976, 1980 and 2000”.

Monday’s debate is the first of three scheduled presidential face-offs between Clinton and Trump. It’ll take place at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, just outside New York City.

The 2nd debate scheduled for October 9th at Washington University in St. Louis will be conducted in the “town hall” format, which McKinney was instrumental in introducing in 1992.

Presidential debates on "This Week"


Watch the story: [http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=5cf76e8a-eb12-498b-ba1e-d7eab834a184](http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=5cf76e8a-eb12-498b-ba1e-d7eab834a184)

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The first presidential debate is scheduled for Monday, September 28.

University of Missouri political communication professor Dr. Mitchell McKinney discusses some of the basic points of these candidate exchanges.

I start our conversation on “This Week” by asking Dr. McKinney how important it is for a candidate to "win" the first debate.

Watch our full conversation by clicking on the video above, or read some of that conversation in the transcript below.

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: We usually look at a series of debates where the first debate is the most important in terms of it will have the largest amount of viewers. Many folks will tune in for that first debate, and think that they got it all, there's no need to tune in for the subsequent debates. So
it generally the case the first is right off the bat very important. We have seen instances of where candidates have floundered a bit in their first debates. Four years ago barrack Obama in his first debate with Mitt Romney was not on his usual game, and even many of his supporters thought that he did not do very well, and that then made the second debate more important for him. So this one, Monday night, is going to very important for both candidates.

Joey Parker: The topics include America's direction, achieving prosperity and securing America. Do you think that voters will get anything out of those topics, or do you think they will even stick to it?

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: Well, certainly they sticking to it is depended upon whether the candidates will address the question raised by, I believe it is Lester Holt who is the moderator for the first debate Monday night. Those are general enough topics that there are a lot of questions that could come under any of those. But certainly it seems like that though as you look as those, there could be a mix of foreign policy, national security questions, domestic issues, issues related to budget. So I think there is a wide variety of things that could happen.

Joey Parker: how much of responsibility is it to do the fact checking if you are the moderator for the debate.

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: You know this notion of really fact-checking the candidates has really come into play four years ago. We saw moderators, candy Crowley comes to mind, in midstream, in the debate, and at that point it was mitt Romney making a statement that she felt was not factual.

Joey Parker: She got a lot of blow-back for that,

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: She did and some moderators, Chris Wallace I think in this round suggests that it is not his job to fact-check. Other moderators have journalists who participate in the debate have suggested that maybe there needs to be some level of calling the candidates into account on the claims that they make, that may not be factual or may be contradictable to things they have said earlier in the campaign. If there is not fact-checking by the journalists, that puts more responsibility on the candidates. If ones opponent that is just simply has no basis for fact or reality, then that candidate, it is there job to call their opponent on it. This is what we saw four years ago in that first debate. Where many people felt that Barack Obama did not do any fact-checking of his opponent, and he then came back in the second debate and was ready to do that. So it really is, the job of the journalist especially over past several election cycles has certainly come into question. Are they partisan? Are they in the tank for one or the other of the candidates? We heard already some working of the refs if you will. Particularly I think Donald trump has suggested that some of the moderators that he does not find completely fair or they perhaps won't give him a fair shake. We heard some of that in the primary season in the primary debates. In some ways that is a strategy going into the debate to set up the expectation that if one doesn't perhaps perform very well there is a scapegoat or it was the journalists fault because we previewed that going into the debate.
Joey Parker: How can the average smart voter, figure this out on their own. They don't have a staff of journalists or researchers that can fact check everything that's there. Is there a way for just the average person to figure this out, maybe a site they can depend on and trust that is non-partisan.

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: You know I generally say, Joey, that the viewers, the voters at home, they get it. They understand what is going on. One on the level did this candidate respond to the question or did they evade. Did they simply ignore and go on to something else. In terms of the answers, because there are so many outlets of information from news from political from traditional news from social media through entertainment venues. When candidates misspeak, clearly in attempt to deceive in their debate responses we are going to hear about it. And we are going to understand that something was said that was not quite factual. I think that at the end of the day, the viewers, the votes get it and understand what is going on.

Joey Parker: After the debates on Monday night, maybe we will hear a little more from you.

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: Well I am looking forward to it.

Joey Parker: Alright we look forward to having you to talking to you again, Dr Mitchell McKinney, thank you very much for joining us.

Dr. Mitchell McKinney: Thanks.

**New AD Sterk moves Mizzou's agenda forward**

By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sep 23, 2016

*COLUMBIA, MO.* • Growing up on a dairy farm in rural Washington, Jim Sterk knows physical labor. Chores began at 5 a.m. before school and lasted into the night after football practice in the fall, basketball in the winter and baseball in the spring. His older brother was tasked with milking the cows while Sterk did the dirty work: feeding the calves, cleaning up stalls, shoveling silage.

As Missouri’s athletics director, Sterk, 60, faces challenges in his new role — perhaps more than most of his peers in the Southeastern Conference — but nothing that compares to life on the farm.
“I enjoy what I do and don’t consider it hard work,” Sterk said Thursday. “Hard work is the physical labor that people are getting up in the morning and doing. Those are harder jobs.”

Less than a month into his new job since leaving San Diego State, Sterk has already produced results in areas where his predecessor stalled. Two weeks ago Mizzou received a $10 million donation earmarked for a new football team facility attached to the south end zone of Memorial Stadium, a project first conceived by former football coach Gary Pinkel then scrapped by former AD Mack Rhoades. With an estimated cost at $75 million, the project is on the docket for discussion at next month’s Board of Curators meeting in Kansas City. Sterk plans to formally introduce the proposal for approval in early 2017. Missouri is about $20 million away from having the resources for the project.

“We’re in a good place,” said Sterk, who met with a select group of reporters for an hour-long interview at Mizzou Arena. “Hopefully in the next few weeks ahead and months ahead we’ll announce more gifts that help support that.”

From there, Missouri plans to raise funds for a new 100-yard indoor practice facility — estimated cost, $24 million, Sterk said — that will free up the Devine Pavilion for other Mizzou teams to use.

As the Tigers (1-2) continue their first season under coach Barry Odom, football is clearly the priority for Sterk, though not without its challenges. The aftershocks of last year’s 5-7 season and team boycott were on display at Memorial Stadium the last two Saturdays: Attendance for the Sept. 10 game against Eastern Michigan (51,192) was MU’s lowest for a home opener since 2006, while Saturday’s crowd against Georgia (57,098) was MU’s smallest for a home SEC game, more than 14,000 short of the stadium’s capacity. A drop in attendance was expected considering season ticket sales are down about 12 percent from last year, but Sterk described the situation as “an opportunity.”

“We really haven’t been aggressive on the outbound sales side of things from a ticket standpoint,” he said. “I think there’s a huge upside to what we’re doing here.”
“We won’t see any benefits probably until next season,” he added, “but we’re well on our way to changing that and being more aggressive going after people and letting them know, you can go to the game, here’s the price, it’s affordable.”

Part of that strategy, Sterk said, will be reconnecting with former season ticket holders who didn’t renew their tickets this year.

“We won’t give up on them,” he said.

In other football discussions, Sterk believes Mizzou can push for a neutral-site game in St. Louis quicker than Kansas City because of the Rams’ departure, but he’s sensitive to taking a home game away from the local market.

“There’s a lot of infrastructure (in Columbia) that football supports,” he said. “The economic impact here, I’ve heard, is over $200 million as far as athletics and 87 percent is probably football. So it’s a big deal to move a game. It has to make sense from that standpoint.”

Looking ahead to future schedules, Sterk was surprised to see MU’s previous regimes scheduled series that required road trips to several non-power conference schools — at Wyoming in 2019, at Memphis in 2021, at Middle Tennessee in 2022, at Miami-Ohio in 2025 — and indicated he wouldn’t pursue such arrangements in the future.

As for Kim Anderson’s men’s basketball program, Sterk will use the upcoming season to evaluate the staff’s future — with less emphasis on the coach’s nine- and 10-win seasons the last two years.

“The past two years you kind of set it aside,” he said. “It’s there, but … I can look at it with a fresh set of eyes of what’s happening this year. What’s going on? Where does the program go from here? It was an unfortunate situation he inherited. So, I think he feels really good about his
team that he has. … I look at it as, is there progress being made? What direction is the program going? Is it going up or going down?"

As he settles into his new role, Sterk has made a point to "calm everyone down" in a department that’s been rocked by turbulence the last two years, including Rhoades’ surprising departure for Baylor after just 14 months on the job. Sterk has rearranged some duties within his senior staffers but has kept the core intact.

“We need to focus on our jobs,” he said. “I’m not a Queen of Hearts (saying), ‘Off with their heads and we’re moving on.’ I’m not that way. We’ll be strategic about what we do.”

**Epidemic of Racist Incidents**

A year ago, racial incidents and lingering tensions on many campuses turned into protests in October that spread nationally in November.

This year, incidents have multiplied at the very beginning of the academic year. And so have protests. Some of the incidents are closely tied to campus issues. But many reflect the protest movement -- which extends well beyond campuses -- against police shootings of unarmed black men.

Many students are joining that movement, and in particular the calls of some not to stand during the playing of the national anthem before athletic events. And some of the racist incidents involve attacks on Black Lives Matter, frequently invoking the name of the movement along with racist images.

Here are some of the incidents:
At the University of North Dakota last week, students posted photographs of themselves in blackface to social media twice in a 48-hour period. In the image at the top of this article, the students added a reference to Black Lives Matter. The university is investigating whether the posts violate any rules. Mark Kennedy, president of the university, issued a statement that said in part: "I am appalled that within 48 hours two photos with racially charged messages have been posted on social media and associated with the UND campus community. It is abundantly clear that we have much work to do at the University of North Dakota in educating our students, and the entire university community on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and respect for others."
Also this month, Kansas State University and Quinnipiac University students posted photographs of themselves in blackface, prompting campus debates and denunciations.

At the University of Mississippi, students on Friday held a sit-in (at right) for several hours in the main administration building to demand a reaction from the university to a student's tweet in response to the protests in Charlotte, N.C., over the police shooting of a black man. The student tweeted of those protesting: "I have a tree with room enough for all of them, if you want to settle this Old West Style." Chancellor Jeffrey S. Vitter, whom some students criticized for not immediately calling the tweet racist, issued a statement late Friday that said in part: "To be clear, we condemn the recent social media post by one of our students that referenced lynching. In light of our country's history, that comment can only be seen as racist, offensive and hurtful, especially to members of our African American community. There is no place in our community for racist or violent acts."

San Jose State University officials are investigating two incidents involving graffiti with swastikas and "hateful language" in two separate incidents in dormitories. One of the swastikas was drawn next to the words "Admit One Jew." Mary Papazian, sent a message to the campus condemning the incidents and outlining a series of meetings being held about what had happened.

At Ohio University, a "free speech" wall where students may write what they want was the site of controversy last week when students found on the wall the words "Build the Wall" (an apparent reference to one of Donald Trump’s campaign promises) and a drawing of a person hanging in a noose from a tree. Photos of the wall (at right) quickly spread on social media. Under university policy, the wall is "unregulated" unless there is "a specific threat of physical harm." The university issued this statement about the images that appeared last week: "Paint may be able to cover offensive messages and reprehensible images, however, it will never conceal our underlying societal problems. We must purposely work to understand and accept one another in order to address conflicts. Our most fundamental responsibility as an institution of higher education is to promote inquiry and learning. It is our intent that the Graffiti Wall will continue to teach our university community that words and images are powerful."

At the University of Dayton last week, a racial slur appeared on the door of a room of two black students. Eric F. Spina, the president, condemned this action. In an email message to the campus, he said that "this behavior is simply not acceptable and will not be tolerated." He added that "we will continue to investigate and will hold those responsible accountable for this action."

At the State University of New York at Brockport, officials are investigating how the words "niggers deserve to die" were written on a whiteboard in a dormitory that houses many minority students. In response, Heidi Macpherson, the Brockport president, sent a message to all students and faculty members condemning what had happened, reporting that an investigation was taking place, and saying that campus discussions would be scheduled to discuss hate speech.

A freshman at Belmont University ceased to be enrolled last week -- after he posted a racist photo on Snapchat, labeling three National Football League players with the N-word.

At American University last week, hundreds of black students held a protest over racist incidents. The rally was organized after two black women reported incidents involving bananas -- one thrown at a woman and one left outside the door of a woman. Students carried signs saying "Racism at AU Is Bananas."
At Eastern Michigan University, the letters KKK and racial slurs were found on several buildings last week, prompting protests and condemnations by university officials.

**Protests During Athletic Events**

Eastern Michigan students took to the field Friday night at a home football game to continue the protest over the racial slurs.

James M. Smith, president of Eastern Michigan, issued a statement after the protest defending the right of students to rush onto the field after the game. He noted that university had worked to make sure this could happen in a secure way for the students in the protest and for the athletes and others on the field. "We have great respect for our students engaged in the constructive efforts underway to address the issues we face, and we strongly defend and support the right of students to peacefully demonstrate about issues important to them," Smith said.

In recent weeks, college athletes and cheerleaders have joined the movement started by Colin Kaepernick, the National Football League quarterback, to drop to one knee during the national anthem, seeking to draw attention to cases of racial oppression and police brutality.

At Southern Methodist University, several African-American members of the band -- while playing the national anthem -- dropped to their knees. Some students watching the game did the same.

On Saturday, football players at both Michigan State University and the University of Michigan (in separate games) raised their fists during the national anthem.

Several football players at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln took a knee during the national anthem before their game.

And on Saturday, members of the Black Student Union at Temple University declined to stand during the national anthem at the university's football game, and said that they would not do so for the rest of the season. A statement from the group said that their refusal to stand reflects "our discontent with the justice system and the state of our country."

Many fans and students at the football game of Morgan State University, a historically black institution, either sat or raised their fists during the national anthem.

**Flags and Marches**

Several campuses have been taking steps to try to express solidarity with those protesting the police shootings of black men.

The University of Vermont, at the request of the student government there, on Friday put up a Black Lives Matter flag, along with the flags of the United States and Vermont. A statement from the student government president, Jason Maulucci, said that the flag was meant as gesture of solidarity at a time that "so many are struggling with the violence and search for justice in this country."
The university posted the photo at left to Facebook, where many posted comments that were highly critical of UVM, calling it, for example, "a college with a majority of self-loathing white students."

Some expressed shock at how much criticism the university received (although many of the comments appear to come from people with no connection to the university). And some praised the university. "Thank you for having the courage to support communities of color," wrote one person. "At a time when so many are feeling increasingly vulnerable to violence, it makes a difference for UVM to be actively creating a safe space and necessary dialogue. Communities are in pain. Empathy goes a long way towards building understanding."

Many of the protests have demanded more participation from administrators in the cause of racial justice. At Elon University on Friday, the Black Student Union organized a silent march, in which participants marched through the campus, not saying a word, to protest the recent police shooting in Charlotte, N.C., and other such shootings of black men. Many white students joined the march, as did President Leo Lambert, Provost Steven House and several other senior administrators.

**More Attention -- on Campus and Off**

In an interview, Shaun R. Harper, executive director of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania, said it was important to remember that racist incidents on campus -- just like police shootings of black men -- are not new.

Harper's center conducts interviews with students -- of all races and at all kinds of colleges -- about race relations. "The racial ugliness on campuses and on social media in recent weeks are not new," he said. "White students did not just suddenly start painting the N-word and other racial epithets on black peers' residence hall doors and on ethnic cultural centers. This has been occurring for many, many years."

What's different, he said, is that students are using social media and other creative forms of protest to attract attention. Similarly, he said, the Black Lives Matter is using video and social media to draw attention to police shootings of black men -- also something that has been going on for a long time.

Students have learned from the movement, he said. "Students on predominantly white campuses can now distribute their own photos and videos for the world to see," he said. "They no longer have to wait for their campus newspapers to publish stories that may only get local coverage."

Kimberly A. Griffin, an associate professor of higher education at the University of Maryland at College Park who studies the campus racial climate, agreed that these incidents are not a new phenomenon (even if social media has changed the way people experience and spread the word about campus racism). "I think it's really important that
folks know that we have a couple of decades of research that shows that the stereotyping, the name calling, the doubts of their academic abilities, the questions about whether racism really exists," Griffin said via email. "These things have been consistent and persistent in the lives of students of color."

At the same time, however, Griffin added that "I do think that this is a unique moment." She explained: "Our national narrative is that the U.S. is a fair place where everyone has an equal chance to be great. What we are seeing on TV and on our computer screens is almost the exact opposite of what we say we are. While racism and violence against black bodies aren’t new, I think that social media and technology are forcing people who may have thought that people were making up or overstating their experiences to actually see what is happening. At the same time, college campuses are getting more and more diverse, and students of color are demanding that these spaces be welcoming and inclusive for them. Again, these are things that student activists have demanded for decades, but perhaps larger populations of black and brown students and access to technology and social media make these demands feel louder than they have been."

New overtime laws could mean pay raises at some area colleges

By Ashley Jost • St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 4 hrs ago

ST. LOUIS • With under three months remaining until new rules take hold, private and public sector workplaces are scrambling to determine how many of their employees will fall under the revised guidelines for overtime pay.

Higher education institutions are no exception.

“If you’re working more than 40 hours, it makes sense that you are paid overtime,” says Paul Zinck, vice chancellor of finance and administration at St. Louis Community College. “You should be paid for the time you work.”
In general, the rules governing overtime pay are universal, although at least one key category for higher education — teaching — is not affected.

The changes are the result of a May edict by President Barack Obama’s administration that doubled the salary threshold for overtime to $47,476 per year from $23,660.

Beginning Dec. 1, employees earning under $47,476 are therefore guaranteed overtime pay. The Missouri Department of Labor estimates 85,000 workers fall into that category statewide.

For St. Louis Community College, it’s a little more than 100 people.

“We don’t expect it to be a large financial impact,” said Zinck. “Higher education as a sector probably is not hit as ferociously by this like the retail industry, for example.”

Because teaching is not included in the new federal guidelines, faculty are not affected, regardless how much money they make. The positions that fall below the new threshold are mostly staff members.

For St. Louis Community College, Zinck said those who work more than 40 hours typically do so on a seasonal basis. For example, enrollment employees are more likely to earn overtime around the beginning of the semester.

Very little changes for employees who are moving into nonexempt status under the new salary threshold, aside from now having to monitor their hours. The new rules also will not affect day-to-day operations at area colleges and universities.

At Washington University, about 850 people are affected. Being a research institution, the law impacts people working in laboratories as well as those in academic support offices. It’s split between people getting raises and those who are changing status.

“We’re trying to make consistent, fair decisions about (whether people get a raise or are switched to nonexempt),” Legail Chandler, vice chancellor of human resources, said. “We did try to look at the nature of the work someone is doing and take into account market data and think
about parts of the organization where they have funds available to make moves. For the most part, I would say we were driven to stay consistent.”

More than 2,000 people are affected throughout the four University of Missouri campuses and the system office. At the St. Louis campus, it’s about 180 employees.

Jim Hertel, executive director of human resources at UMSL, said 37 people are getting a salary increase to the threshold. The other employees are transitioning to a nonexempt, hourly employee status.

Because of recent budget issues, UMSL has already been conservative about overtime, and that likely won’t change, he said.

Hertel, who came to UMSL this year from a corporate human resources position where he also dealt with this labor law change, said the law can be hard on morale at first.

“In terms of the impact of the employees, anytime employees moved from exempt to nonexempt, there’s always this status behind being salaried,” he explained. “The intent was giving more access to overtime, but in reality people start to feel like it’s about status, like having lower status if I have to track all of the hours that I work, which obviously isn’t true.”

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Missouri’s Public-Health Enemy No. 1: a Gun in Every Pocket

By Lise J. Saffran

My husband and I work at the University of Missouri at Columbia where, last fall, following widespread demonstrations against racism, a student from another campus in the state threatened on the anonymous social network Yik Yak to "shoot any black people" he saw.
The day after the Yik Yak threat, a black undergraduate stopped by my husband’s office to say that she was interrupting her education and going home. Her parents thought she’d be safer there. She had spent the night, she said, hiding in her bathtub.

One of my public-health students, who came to Missouri from Mongolia, where a third to a half of the population is nomadic and gun ownership is far from the norm, had ended up in the emergency room the next day with a panic attack. She, like her classmates from Botswana and India and Indonesia and Niger, had come to mid-Missouri to learn how to prevent disease and injury, in many cases to take those skills back to their homelands. Now they were struggling to make sense of life in a country in which firearm-related deaths are 10 times more likely than in any other industrialized nation, in which a student’s social-media post could empty out their classrooms and the student union and make students sleep in their bathtubs.

The Missouri legislature voted last week to override the governor’s veto and allow an extreme loosening of the gun laws in the state. The law eliminates requirements that individuals obtain training, education, a background check, and a permit to carry a concealed firearm. Research suggests that more people will be shot as a result, and I suspect that more people will be sleeping in their bathtubs trying not to be.

If it’s hard to do public-health work in Missouri — the state ranks above only Nevada in per capita public-health funding — it sometimes seems even harder to teach it, particularly with developments such as these.

This year’s discouraging news on guns precedes the annual meeting of the Missouri Public Health Association in Columbia by only a few weeks. As the director of a master of public health program, I urge students to attend the meeting every year and mingle with working public-health professionals from around the state. As a result, one of my annual tasks is to reassure them after the workshops and the plenaries are over, when the posters are taken down.

I would often find them standing in worried knots, anxiously asking themselves and one another what they were thinking to pursue a career in public health — in this state; in these times. They would have just spent three days listening to tired administrators of rural health departments talk about the lack of funding for vital services, growing disparities between the poor and the middle class and a worsening political environment. The students have invested money in their degrees because they want to improve children’s nutrition, women’s health, prevent HIV. Their eyes are haunted.

I have a spiel by now, but it’s one I believe. I tell them that working in tough circumstances is not inconsistent with a rewarding career. I suggest that if they stay in
Missouri and fight for sane public policy they will be able to move mountains if they someday end up in, say, Hawaii, which is ranked at the top of U.S. states for a variety of positive health outcomes, including preventable hospitalizations, smoking and obesity and also happens to rank at the other end of the scale with regard to per capita public-health funding. I tell them that change is incremental and that there is no work that is more important.

This year, I find my well of optimism has run dry. In an environment of increasing hostility and violence, lawmakers in my state have empowered people to shoot if they feel threatened and claim self-defense. I’m dreading the inevitable moment with the students both because I anticipate that their despair will be deeper than usual and because, in my own mind, I’m not sure what I’m going to tell them.

I’m going to have to find something to say, though, because of that student who cut short her education to go home and because these other students are showing up from as far away as Indonesia and India and from nearby Missouri counties to learn how to prevent disease and injury, if they can. They are showing up, these people just beginning their careers, to learn this in a state where the legislature voted to allow domestic abusers to carry concealed weapons.

I’ve been doing this work for most of my adult life, and I have never lacked for reasons to keep going, keep teaching, keep reminding students that it’s hard work but it’s exciting work, too, and you can make a difference. I’m coming up blank at the moment, however. The meeting is just days away, and I’m going to have to think of something to say.

_Lise J. Saffran is director of the master of public health program at the University of Missouri at Columbia._
MU researcher hopes to study benefits of cats for children with autism

HANNAH BLACK, Sep 25, 2016

COLUMBIA — The MU Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction is raising funds for a research project called Feline Friends to study the possible benefits of placing adoptable cats in homes of children with autism.

Children with autism who have pets exhibit greater social skills than those without pets, according to a 2015 study by Gretchen Carlisle, a post-doctoral fellow at the research center. The objective of the Feline Friends project is to give families of children with autism better research-based information about choosing a pet for their home.

The goal of the campaign is to raise $29,000, which would allow researchers to go into animal shelters and identify cats that would do well in homes of children with autism. The money also would help families that participate in the study pay for supplies such as food, toys, a litter box and a crate.

It's always 'dog, dog, dog'

The study of human-animal interaction is a relatively new field of research. People who may benefit from the research often hear about it over social media instead of from a medical professional, Carlisle said.

"In social media, people just hear this — dog, dog, dog," Carlisle said, gesturing toward a photo in her office of a dog in a red collar sitting obediently.

Dogs may not always be the best companion animal for children with autism, though. Some children with autism have a sensory sensitivity to noise, for example, so a dog's sudden barking
can be more upsetting for them than for a child without autism. Dogs can also be more "in your face," Carlisle said, and are often much larger than cats.

The decision about what kind of animal to bring into the home of a child with autism should be deliberate. That's one of the goals of the research — to enable families to make more informed decisions, Carlisle said.

"It’s really important for (children with autism) to get that match," Carlisle said. "We want the benefits to outweigh the burdens (of having a pet)."

In Carlisle's study of families of children with autism, researchers found no statistically significant evidence that having a dog in the home improved social interaction scores of the child. But when families of children with autism who had any kind of pet were surveyed, improvements in the child's social interaction scores became statistically significant. Carlisle wondered if cats, another common pet in U.S. households, could be "tipping the scales."

Families that include a child with autism are under a lot of stress, Carlisle noted, and that makes them "more prone to grasp onto things that may or may not be true or helpful, so we want to provide them more scientific evidence to help them make a better choice."

Cat criteria

So how does a parent figure out what kind of cat to bring into a home where there's a child with autism? The behavior of cats that come from shelters can be unpredictable, and that's an undesirable characteristic for an animal living in the home of a child with autism. For that reason, the research center will measure the behavior of the cats before they use them in the study to make sure they're calm enough.

James Ha, an assistant clinical professor at the University of California, Davis, created the Homeward Pet Cat Temperament Survey, meant to measure a cat’s outward behavior. The survey measures aspects like a cat’s playfulness, vocalness and hostility toward humans and other cats.
Researchers plan to use Ha's survey as one tool to predict whether a cat adopted from a shelter would be a good match for a child with autism, Carlisle said.

The age of the cat can also make a difference. Referencing the experiences of Leslie Lyons, a professor of comparative medicine at MU's College of Veterinary Medicine, Carlisle said cats between the ages of nine months and three years would be optimal for the study. By the age of nine months, cats' temperaments "even out" and become predictable. Cats under the age of three years are often more playful and adapt more easily to a new environment.

As of Saturday, about $120 had been raised toward the $29,000 goal.

**New York Leads the Nation in Corruption, Highlighted by Recent Scandal**

*References Study from MU Expert: Public Corruption by Officials May Not be as Rampant as Reported*

Man accused of breaking into MU sorority house

COLUMBIA - A 23-year-old man is accused of breaking into the MU Alpha Chi Omega sorority house Thursday.

John Arthur Taylor faces charges of second-degree burglary and property damage.

Another MU sorority, Phi Mu, emailed its members with details of the crime.

That email said the suspect did not enter the house by force, but waited until a member opened the door and went in the house behind her. He then went to the third floor and spray-painted house property, according to the email, and no one was hurt.

Taylor's bond is set at $5,500 with the conditions that he is not allowed on the premises of 900 Richmond Avenue.

Man Arrested for Vandalizing MU Sorority House

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=852b123c-1438-4ccb-a23a-27142435cb0e
Analysts say large number of university students skews Columbia's income data from census

It was big national news when the U.S. Census Bureau released information Sept. 13 that median household income increased by 5.2 percent between 2014 and 2015.

It was the first annual increase in median income since 2007.

But in Columbia, the median household income went down in the same period. The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey shows a 5.28 percent decline in the median household income in Columbia — from $46,624 in 2014 to $44,160 in 2015. Median household income increased slightly in Boone County.

Before the most recent data was released, the median household income had been rising in Columbia since 2012.

But two sources who analyzed the census numbers say it’s not as bad as it looks.

The percentage of Columbians living below the poverty level fell slightly from 24.9 percent to 24.6 percent. In Boone County, the poverty rate dropped from 20.7 percent in 2014 to 18.5 percent in 2015, according to census data.

“Some of the differences in the 2014 and 2015 estimates are nothing more than noise,” said William Rogers, associate professor of economics at Lindenwood University in St. Charles. “The existence of” the University of Missouri “makes the estimates noisier, especially for Columbia.”

Rogers said the American Community Survey is designed to describe the household mix of an area but the high proportion of non-households represented by university students causes the estimates to be off. He said the Census Bureau does not have the resources to accurately survey the county every year.

“To my eye, there’s nothing going on here year-to-year,” Rogers said.

Tracy Greever-Rice, director of the office of social and economic data analysis at the University of Missouri, said the American Community Survey is just a survey, a random sampling.
“All of the changes in Columbia are within the margin of error,” Greever-Rice said. “They’re not statistically significant changes.”

Greever-Rice also said Columbia has an additional poor demographic in its university students, who tend to be cash-poor.

Unemployment also was up in Columbia, based on the American Community Survey. The unemployment rate in the city increased from 3.5 percent to 4.8 percent. In the county, it dropped from 4.2 percent in 2014 to 4 percent in 2015.

Greever-Rice said it would be a mistake to equate the census unemployment figures with that produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is much more thorough.

“It’s a completely different measure,” Greever-Rice said. “The census unemployment data has very high margins of error. That itself dismisses its value.”

The BLS average unemployment rate for the Columbia metropolitan area in 2015 was 3.5 percent, down from 4.2 percent in 2014. One possible reason for the difference between the census data and the BLS data is the census only shows information for within the city limits of Columbia, while the BLS takes in all of Boone County as part of the Columbia metropolitan area.

Greever-Rice said a decrease in the number of owner-occupied housing units and an increase in the number of renter-occupied housing units in Columbia might show a slowing of the economy. The number of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units increased in Boone County from 2014 to 2015.

Regardless of the accuracy of the census numbers, officials at social service agencies said their services always are in demand.

“We certainly haven’t seen any reduction in our requests for services,” said Nick Foster, director of the Voluntary Action Center.

“Our Harbor House emergency shelter has remained full for the summer months,” said Maj. Nancy Holloway, Mid-Missouri area coordinator for Salvation Army. “We’re seeing more people coming in for our community meals. Our food pantry is in constant use.”
Confucius Institute celebrates five years at MU with several events

Generated from News Bureau media advisory.

The Confucius Institute is celebrating its five years at the University of Missouri with a week of events.

On Friday, Columbia Public Schools students watched traditional Chinese dance and music performed at the Missouri Theatre. Students at Jefferson Middle School also saw performances and a martial arts demonstration in the afternoon.

The Confucius Institute is funded by the Chinese Ministry of Education.

“Our main mission is to promote Chinese language and culture,” said Sang Kim, interim director of the Confucius Institute. He said it does that by hosting cultural events and celebrations and by placing teachers in classrooms to teach Chinese language.

As a reward for receiving an “A” in Chinese language, Kim said, 10 high school students had an expense-paid trip to Shanghai.

Shanghai Normal University is a partner with the Confucius Institute and Columbia Public Schools.

“We are making a difference little by little,” he said. “We are a culture that is vastly different. It’s not an easy task. We are making a difference, and we’re trying to enhance our visibility.”

He said the Confucius Institute each year also has a Chinese New Year celebration, a Dumpling Festival and a Lantern Festival.

He said the Confucius Institute has nine Chinese language teachers in Columbia Public Schools.

Suzanne Yonke, CPS coordinator of world languages, said all sixth-graders receive three weeks of Chinese language instruction, three weeks of Spanish and three weeks of French.

He said the Chinese language partner teachers are in the classrooms with the regular classroom teachers.
“We offer six languages starting in the seventh grade,” Yonke said. “We have quite a unique program.”

Participating in the event at the Missouri Theatre was Liu Jun, vice consul general with the Chinese consulate in Chicago. He encouraged the students to continue to learn Chinese. He said about 1,500 CPS students are studying Chinese language.

“It’s important for you to learn Chinese well and to visit China,” he said. “You have made a very smart choice to learn the Chinese language.”

He said knowing English and Chinese would allow the students to communicate with people all over the world because there’s a high volume of trade between the two countries.

The celebration began Thursday with a China forum in Stotler Lounge at Memorial Union. There will be a Chinese arts performance at 3 p.m. Sunday in Jesse Hall, presented by a troupe from Shanghai Normal University.

The Confucius Institute also will be represented at International Day at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Lowry Mall on the MU campus.

MU Family Weekend to boost tourism

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=5aec2e6-8445-4bba-b08d-774c054f0add

COLUMBIA - It’s Parents' Weekend at MU which means more parents around town and more money coming into the area.

There are two big weekends for the school and city, according to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, with more than the normal amount of visitors.

These weekends are homecoming and parents’ weekend, and sometimes more visitors than the city can hold show up.

“One of the things we try to do is stay in really close touch with our hotels so that we know who has availability. So, there are people calling right up to this afternoon who are still looking for a
place to stay or who didn’t realize they needed to get a hotel so far in advance,” bureau Marketing and Communications Manager, Megan McConachie, said.

One MU parent agrees that there is some difficulty getting hotels on a weekend like this.

“Yeah, it was difficult, I mean, it’s to be expected with parents’ weekend,” MU parent, Martin Casper, said.

However, more people means more money, and that’s something Columbia is understanding more and more, according to the bureau.

“Getting people to embrace the fact that we have people from out of town coming in, and so that’s something that we work really hard on is that these people who are coming in, they’re spending money, and so they’re really helping support our community and our quality of life,” Megan McConachie said.

With extra traffic there are some areas residents might want to avoid to make it easier to get where they’re going.

“Definitely getting around easier would be, you know, kind of avoiding that Stadium and Providence intersection. Kind of maybe going around where that would be and then also helping to keep I-70 and Highway 63 clear for traffic that’s going to be coming in especially in the early morning,” Megan McConachie said.

She also advises for people to be more patient, leave early and take more time since it will be one of those weekends with more people than normal.

**MU Health Care hosts screening event for risk of falls**

COLUMBIA – **MU Health Care provided free fall prevention screening services to the community on Friday.**

The event was held just a day after the National Council on Aging’s ninth Annual Falls Prevention Awareness Day.
“September, we kind of do a pun on the first day of fall, we do a ‘fall free’ event,” physical therapist Evan Prost said. “So we do fall risk screenings for older adults who live in the community.”

Falls are the second biggest reason people go to the trauma center at University Hospital, according to outreach coordinator Kassie Campbell.

She said the center sees around 300 falls a year.

The event provided information on fall-related issues like hearing and balance and vision.

MU Health Care specialists from departments of ophthalmology, physical therapy and otolaryngology were present.

Residents participated in a variety of tests.

“The CDC has a collection of evidence-based tests which we perform for the individuals, things like how you walk, how you get up and down from a chair, how your balance is standing on one leg,” Prost said. “All these things collectively tell us if you have a risk for falling.”

Using the tests, specialists like Prost decide whether or not the participants should talk about their risks with a doctor.

“Once we find that out, then we make a recommendation, give that piece of paper to the person to take to their physician the next visit,” he said.

MU Children's Hospital teams up with the tigers

COLUMBIA — MU Children's Hospital held a tailgate for the MU vs. Delaware State football game Saturday.

With help from the MU Athletic Department and Veterans' Hospital, the Children's Hospital organized a tailgate for sickle cell and cancer patients and their families.
The tailgate, which began at 1 p.m. in the Veteran's Hospital parking lot, included food, drinks, t-shirts, activities and giveaways.

The MU Athletic Department provided 175 tickets for the patients and their families. LeAnn Reeder, a child life specialist at MU Children's Hospital, said all the tickets were used.

"This is an event for our patients and families to get out and enjoy things outside the hospital. They don't have to worry about, think about their disease today," Reeder said.

This is the 16th year that MU Children's Hospital has hosted the football event, which is a part of Childhood Cancer and Sickle Cell Awareness Month.

Nine year old Natalia Frock, an Astrocytoma brain cancer patient, has been going to the event for five years with her father Matthew Bruce.

Bruce and his girlfriend Natasha Cole said Frock loves the Missouri Tigers.

"Before her first time coming here, she was so pumped. She still has her MU foam finger from the first time she came," Cole said.

'Black Lives Matter' at Admissions Meeting

No MU Mention

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Fallout from a controversial statement was on full display Saturday at the annual membership meeting closing the National Association for College Admission Counseling's 2016 national conference.

The organization’s outgoing and incoming presidents both made a point of saying that black lives matter, a move coming two days after the outgoing president, Phillip Trout, drew criticism for saying “all lives matter” during the conference’s opening general session. Several commenters shared their feelings on the events. Some debated the way the comments were discussed critically on social media.

Trout, a college counselor at Minnetonka High School in Minnesota, handed over the presidency Saturday to Nancy Beane, a college counselor at the Westminster Schools in Georgia. First, he presided over the membership meeting, opening with his second public apology in two days.

“At Thursday's opening general session, I wanted to acknowledge all the violence occurring in our communities along with a statement of sympathy and solidarity for all
those affected that should have used the words ‘Black Lives Matter,’ ” Trout said. “I regret that my insensitive statement caused hurt and offense and that the impact of my message of inclusion and respect actually had the opposite effect. I am sorry to have hurt the feelings of so many people, and I offer you my sincerest apology.

“Let me restate,” Trout said. “Black lives matter.”

Trout had issued an apology in a statement Friday that did not include the words “black lives matter.” His remarks Saturday were delivered to a large meeting hall filled with hundreds of people.

The Thursday comments generated negative responses on social media, although much was said to be posted privately on Facebook. Supporters of Black Lives Matter say that they value the lives of others as well, but the phrase "all lives matter" has become widely associated with those seeking to minimize the issue of police killings of black men and women.

When NACAC CEO Joyce Smith took the podium Saturday, she addressed the social media climate. She mentioned difficult and uncomfortable situations. Then she said several words drive her in her work -- integrity, transparency, accountability and trust. Smith went on to talk about respect, adding that she hoped the ideas she outlined resonated with attendees.

“I hope that all of us do think about our use of social media and the immediacy of the message, whether it’s in organizing something important or communicating with large groups outside of the conference,” she said. “Your words have power. But also know that we’re listening, and we will acknowledge when and how we can to make sure that you have an answer.”

Some in attendance did not fully agree with that message. Brandi Smith, a NACAC director and the assistant dean of admissions at Emory University, spoke during an open forum. She explained that she was speaking for herself, not in an official capacity. “Earlier today, some comments were made about how we need to be transparent about what we are doing as an organization, and we should be careful about what we say on social media,” Brandi Smith said. “While I agree with that to an extent, I think it’s important to note that even as leaders, we must adjust to the times that we live in, and people will oftentimes find places like social media as an opportunity to have a voice.”

It is difficult to stand and speak in a large room filled with people like the one on Saturday, Brandi Smith said. Doing so can put a target on the speaker’s back.

“For some people, the comments that were made on Thursday were incredibly hurtful,” Brandi Smith said. “We can’t dismiss the feelings that people have. Their feelings are valid. The emotion is valid.”

The idea that speaking up is unacceptable is akin to victim blaming, Brandi Smith said.
"We are hurting, and many of us are trying our best to be positive," Brandi Smith said. "But we are not necessarily living in a world or profession that always makes that very easy for us to do, and I think that is worth saying."

Smith went on to call for cultural competency training and other work to move forward. Objections to the phrase “all lives matter” often center on the idea that it minimizes the Black Lives Matter movement. Rakin Hall, an associate director of multicultural recruitment at the University of Southern California, stood Saturday to talk about the phrases.

"All life is precious," Hall said. "Regardless of your political affiliation, regardless of your religious stance, your gender identity, all life is precious."

But it’s important to note why the rallying cry is “black lives matter,” Hall said. He listed the names of several black Americans killed recently.

“We’re crying out because blood is in the streets,” he said. “Men are laying died, women are laying dead, unaccounted for. We are better than this, and as leaders of our institutions within this academe, please, keep fighting the good fight.”

Hall noted that NACAC’s members can have a major influence over students who will become leaders in the future.

When Beane officially took over the presidency and gave remarks, she also addressed the issue.

“It’s important this afternoon to say black lives matter, because they do,” she said. “Racism has been so deeply embedded within the fabric of this country from its early days, and it is a cancer which we have not yet seemed to eradicate.”

She went on to call for a way forward.

“We have to listen,” Beane said. “We have to forgive one another. WE have to keep working. I feel strongly that this is a crucial time in our country, as many of you this afternoon have referenced. While we can’t control or fix everything in the world, imagine what we can do."