Bias training aims to improve MU executive, department searches

COLUMBIA — Everyone has biases, whether we know it or not. Some are good, some are bad, but we all have them. They make us who we are. But sometimes these biases can stand in the way of improvement. In searches for a more diverse MU faculty and staff, bias training is meant to change this.

For a year now, MU has required an unconscious bias training module for everyone involved in selecting candidates for faculty and academic positions within each college and the university as a whole. The training is used for searches both big and small, ranging from searches for high-ranking leadership positions to specific faculty positions within a certain college or department.

The training is important when dealing with the many interim positions in MU’s leadership.

As of December, four of the 13 deans were interims, in addition to five positions in the chancellor’s staff that are either vacant or have an interim appointee. This does not include the chancellor position itself, which has been held by Hank Foley since November 2015 after R. Bowen Loftin stepped down.

The unconscious bias training was implemented to improve the candidate pools for filling vacancies. The goal is to get search committee members to actively think about every step in the recruiting and hiring process.

“We all make biased decisions,” said Noor Azizan-Gardner, assistant vice chancellor for admission in the Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. “Sometimes it’s based on shortcuts; sometimes it’s because we want to hire someone just like us.”
Garnett Stokes, the MU provost, is responsible for the hiring process for the searches for both university and academic leadership positions.

“What I love about the training is it is entirely research-based,” Stokes said. “It is built on what we know to be best practices in doing the most unbiased searches possible.”

The online training module uses examples and situations to show how the search process should be conducted and what may be issue areas within the process. It also includes links to the studies cited and used to create the methodology behind the training. The module concludes with a survey that allows participants to share what they thought was helpful and informative.

Noel English, manager of Faculty and Staff Engagement and Success for the Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, said requiring the training was not a direct response to student demands and was in development before the protests. The information had started being compiled several months prior, but it was not organized into a usable training program.

“We were working on the education module for time and hoped to get it ready by fall semester when recruiting is in full swing,” English said in an email. “The timing of the provost’s requirement I think had more to do with the release date of the training module.”

The training is one step in the much larger process of faculty and administrative searches. Each search committee is different yet is still made up of similar parts.

Diversity in the hiring process

Both Stokes and Azizan-Gardner said the hiring process is critical because having a diverse faculty creates the best learning environment for students.

“I think one of the most important best practices that we know is the value of a diverse search committee in terms of creating a more diverse pool of applicants and a more unbiased process in evaluating applicants,” Stokes said.
According to a 2011 study by Forbes, acquiring a diverse workforce fueled innovation and creativity within the 321 large companies surveyed.

Azizan-Gardner said this study confirmed what she already knew.

“Innovation requires creativity, and creativity requires diversity,” she said. “It’s all linked together, but we’ve known this for quite a while in the business community.”

The diverse faculty Azizan-Gardner envisions does not refer only to race or ethnicity but includes aspects such as religion and socioeconomic background. She emphasized the importance of having faculty with whom students could relate.

“If you are a first-generation faculty member, you understand the challenges a student faces if they have no role model at home who has no way to ask a parent, ‘How do I do this?’” she said. “We should have faculty that can reflect the diversity of our student body in the many, many dimensions of diversity that we should have.”

**Administrative searches**

All faculty or academic administrator searches start with finding the search committee members. For academic administrator searches, potential committee candidates are selected through nominations that are reviewed personally by the provost.

“I wanted a good balance on gender and, to whatever extent possible, people of color on the committee,” Stokes said.

The ideal search committee, Stokes said, is made up of faculty, students and alumni of the hiring school and the school’s different departments. In an ideal search, a current dean of another college within the university heads the search committee, she said.

In the recent hiring of Ajay Vinzé as dean of the Trulaske College of Business, Stokes said, she wanted to have representation from all departments within the college. Neil Olson, dean of MU’s College of Veterinary Medicine, served as the chair.
After the committee in an academic administrator search has been formed, the committee begins to do a number of things:

First, search committee members are required to take the online training module. After they have completed the online training, Azizan-Gardner and her staff conduct trainings in person to ensure the material online was clearly communicated.

“What the module does is to guide the search committee members and the departments to have a process that is equitable that reflects the best practices and ask them to think about a rubric for evaluation,” Azizan-Gardner said.

This includes advertising for the available position. Azizan-Gardner said the diversity in the search committee is crucial at this stage, as the members’ different backgrounds allow the committee to widen its search to areas others might not be aware of. Depending on the school or position that is available, an executive search firm can be used to promote the available position. For the College of Business, executive search firm Isaacson, Miller was used to aid the search process.

After the committee has received applications, members begin to hold “airport interviews” at remote locations, airports or otherwise. This round is supposed to have a secretive tone to protect the identity of the candidates. Often, that’s because the search committee does not want to let candidates’ current employers know about their interest in the MU position unless they are selected as a finalist for the job.

“They go to great measures to prevent people from running into each other,” Stokes said.

Following these interviews, the search committee then chooses a handful of candidates to come to campus to interview with students, faculty and alumni. Candidates also meet with other deans and leaders on campus. The provost also interviews every finalist in academic administrator searches.

Stokes said this stage of the process typically involves three to four candidates. This is typically the stage in the search in which the candidate’s information becomes public. For the Business School dean search, four candidates were brought to campus for interviews, and each had forums open to the public.
“When the candidates come to campus, they meet with a large number of groups,” Stokes said. “They meet with faculty groups, student groups and with various groups like staff and alumni.”

She said anyone who attends these events has the opportunity to provide feedback, via a questionnaire, which she then sees.

After the candidates have been interviewed and evaluated, the search committee is brought together with the provost once again and evaluates each candidate, spelling out their strengths and weaknesses compared to other candidates.

“After gathering all that information and all of that feedback, I then decide who I want to make an offer to,” Stokes said.

**Faculty searches**

In searches for faculty members, the training and process is similar. Completing the online module is required for everyone on the search committee, but the in-person training is only for departments that seek out the assistance.

“Our goal is to help academic departments actualize their diversity priorities through planning and hiring,” English said in an email.

Azizan-Gardner said the same hiring rubric for administrative searches is used on the faculty level. It has five steps, starting with identifying the open position itself and what it entails. The worksheet is meant to establish the process of interviewing, scoring and hiring before interviews begin. It acts as a guide for committees to plan their search process, gather interview questions and create a system to rank the prospective candidates.
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COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

MU professor files for Fifth Ward council seat

By BRITTANY RUESS bruess@columbiatribune.com | 815-1722

With a week left until filing closes for the Columbia City Council, a University of Missouri professor is the first person to file for the Fifth Ward seat.

Art Jago, a management professor in the College of Business, submitted his petition with 61 signatures to the city clerk’s office Tuesday morning. Columbia City Clerk Sheela Amin said the signatures still need to be verified with the Boone County Clerk’s Office. Council candidates need at least 50 signatures from registered voters in their wards to be placed on the ballot.

In a phone interview Tuesday morning, Jago said he has lived in Columbia and worked for the university for 22 years. Jago has served on the city’s personnel advisory board for four years as one of seven board members appointed by the council who hear concerns raised by city employees.

Jago said he has not set his platform yet but noted he will have more opportunities to describe his positions after finding out who else files for the Fifth
Ward seat. He said he agrees with the priorities in the city’s strategic plan and said the Columbia Police Department is understaffed.

“I just want to continue to see the city provide responsible city governance,” Jago said when asked about his motivation to run. “I’d like to be a part of that.”

The only contested race so far remains in the First Ward, between incumbent Clyde Ruffin and challenger Pat Kelley, co-founder and president of the Ridgeway Neighborhood Association. Ruffin has sat on the council for two years, finishing out the term of Ginny Chadwick, who resigned.

He said in an interview last week that he is running for re-election to see through several projects he helped start, such as the capital campaign for the Boys & Girls Club, restoration of the J.W. “Blind” Boone Home and the African American Heritage Trail. Ruffin said he also wants to continue the city’s work on social equity, which touches on areas such as neighborhood infrastructure and economic development.

Kelley previously said she would promote an affordable housing policy, increase community policing and advance the city’s strategic plan, which focuses on underserved parts of the city. She has filed notice of a committee with the Missouri Ethics Commission, and her campaign treasurer is John Clark, who unsuccessfully ran against Ruffin in the April 2015 special election to replace Chadwick.


No one has filed for the two open seats on the Boone Hospital Center Board of Trustees. Boone County commissioners will need to appoint someone to the seat of now Southern District Commissioner Fred Parry, who was the chairman and a longtime board member.

The seat of trustee Treasurer Bob Wagner also is open. Wagner, 75, said in an interview Tuesday morning that he is considering whether to run for another five-year term. He said health and family issues will play into his decision.

Three seats also are open on the Columbia Board of Education. Incumbents Paul Cushing, Helen Wade and Jonathan Sessions have filed to be on the April 4 ballot.
The filing period for school board candidates ends Jan. 17. Candidates must file in person at the Columbia Public Schools administration building, 1818 W. Worley St., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Leadership Changes, Highs and Lows Define Mizzou Sports in 2016

In 2016, University of Missouri Athletics experienced a wide range of successes and failures. The year also featured instability, as five different people (Mack Rhoades, Wren Baker, Hank Foley, Sarah Reesman and Jim Sterk) served as the university's athletic director.

Following the departure of long-time football head coach in 2015, and the football team's role in the November 2015 protests on the MU campus, Missouri Tiger fans have not appeared to support the football program as much as years past.

“There are sections, total sections, at Memorial Stadium that are empty,” said Todd Donoho, who worked for the Tiger Radio Network. “And it’s not because the team was coming off a 5-7 record. Missouri has had losing seasons before and the fans still supported, but they still have a very bitter taste in their mouth as to what happened from the fall of 2015.”

The MU football team finished 4-8 in 2016 under first-year head coach Barry Odom, marking the first time the football team had back-to-back losing
seasons since 2001-02. The average attendance for home games was 52,235, including a 50,234 showing for the October 29 matchup against Kentucky, the lowest attendance for a home conference game since 2005.

ABC 17 Sports Director Austin Kim said there is still a large gap between fans and the administration stemming from the 2015 boycott.

“They buried everything,” Kim said. “They thought everything would go away. They thought time would pass on the boycott and the protest and thought everything would be fine. Clearly it’s not, and when winning doesn’t happen, things start to get overblown and they start to linger a little bit more.”

It also did not help that the MU men’s basketball found little success on the court. As the program faced self-imposed sanctions resulting from an NCAA investigation into Frank Haith’s tenure as head coach, current head coach Kim Anderson’s team finished 10-21 and served a one-year postseason ban.

After the poor finishes from the football and men’s basketball teams in 2016, this is the first time in school history that both programs finished with back-to-back losing seasons in the same two years.

“The image of the athletic department and its popularity with University of Missouri alums and fans rests with the men’s football program and the men’s basketball program, and both of those programs right now are down,” Donoho said.

**Rhoades’ departure**

The image was affected once again on July 13 when then-Athletic Director Mack Rhoades announced he was leaving MU to take the athletic director position at Baylor University.
In addition to being in charge during the football boycott, Rhoades also hired replacements for two long-time head coaches: football coach Gary Pinkel (15 seasons) and baseball coach Tim Jamieson (21 seasons).

But after just 14 months as AD, Rhoades’ resignation left many around MU in shock.

“You just don’t expect somebody after 14 months to just up and leave,” said MissouriNet Sports Director Bill Pollock. “That’s really rare.”

Kim said people around MU felt cheated after Rhoades’ short tenure as AD yielded few positive achievements.

“It’s a poor reflection of Missouri because things were so bad, but it’s also a poor reflection of Mack Rhoades where he basically gave up,” Kim said. “A lot of people didn’t feel they knew Mack Rhoades a lot.”

From July 13-Aug. 31 the interim athletic director position changed hands three times. On Aug. 9, MU announced the hiring of former San Diego State University Athletic Director Jim Sterk, who took over at MU on Sept. 1.

Since Sterk’s hire, the athletic department has received over $20 million in donations toward a renovated south end zone facility at Faurot Field. He has not made many public statements other than his official introduction and the donation announcements.

“Everybody that I’ve talked to say Jim Sterk is not a knee-jerk reaction type of guy,” said Pollock. “He lets things play out.”

Kim said Sterk has mostly been silent during his first few months in Columbia.
“I think there is a little bit more of a connection with Jim Sterk than there was with Mack Rhoades, and I think that kind of tells you a little bit about Mack Rhoades,” Kim said.

**Earleywine investigation**

Rhoades left in the middle of an internal investigation involving head softball coach Ehren Earleywine. The nine-year head coach was investigated for months by the athletic department and Missouri’s Title IX office for alleged verbal abuse of players during practices.

A number of Earleywine’s players supported their coach by playing a regular season game on May 7 under protest of Rhoades and the athletic department for their handling of the situation.

“I think the fans were very much in support of Ehren Earleywine,” Donoho said. “He’s been a very popular coach because the women’s softball program has been one of the best, if not the best, most consistent program that Mizzou has.”

During the investigation, Earleywine said he saw a psychologist within the athletic department to go over his recent conduct.

“I think there were a lot of people that also felt that perhaps he needed to change his ways and the ways he gets his message across,” said Pollock.

With the many changes in the athletic director’s office, the investigation dragged into August, and eventually Earleywine was cleared of all wrongdoing and kept his job as softball coach.

Kim said the player protest was a real shock to the general public, but it also saved Earleywine’s job.
“Because it was so public, the Title IX investigation happens and it’s dragged out, Mack Rhoades says ‘peace,’ goes to Waco [Texas], Jim Sterk comes in, and that limbo saves that job,” Kim said. “I can’t tell you how close he was to being fired.”

**On-field successes**

Despite its off-field issues, the MU softball team was one of a few athletic programs that earned NCAA tournament berths in 2016. Their tournament run ended in the NCAA Super Regionals where they were eliminated by Michigan.

The MU volleyball team captured its second SEC title in four years after finishing 27-6 overall and 16-2 within the conference. Head coach Wayne Kreklow’s group fought to the “Sweet 16” round of the NCAA tournament before their tournament defeat at the hands of Minnesota.

While the MU men’s basketball team struggled, the women’s basketball program started to rise after many years of disappointment. Led by freshman guard Sophie Cunningham, the team earned its first NCAA tournament berth in 10 years and won its first NCAA tournament game since 2001 by upsetting the BYU Cougars in Austin, Texas.

Kim said many MU fans bought into the women’s basketball program because of its local talent.

“Sophie Cunningham is one of the first players in a very long time that Mizzou fans could really rally around,” Kim said. “They understood who she was and where she’s coming from because everyone saw her play at Rock Bridge [High School].”

Other athletes stood out from MU’s Olympic-sport programs in 2016. This was the first time in school history that the university claimed three different
national championships in one year. Junior swimmer Fabian Schwingenschlogl claimed the 100-meter breaststroke national championship on May 6 and junior cross-country runner Karissa Schweizer won the 6,000-meter championship on November 19.

But junior wrestler J’den Cox stole most of the headlines with his 2016 performance. The Hickman High School graduate claimed his second-career NCAA championship in the 197-pound division on March 20. He then went on to earn a bronze medal for the United States at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

“The one thing you can really sell on this university is J’den Cox,” said Kim. “There probably won’t be another wrestler like J’den Cox to come through that wrestling program. He handles success so much better than even most pro athletes do.”

The road ahead

While 2016 featured successes from some MU athletic teams and athletes, Pollock said the harsh truth is that the image of MU athletics will still be defined by its two most popular sports.

“You’re judged as a whole based on how you do as a football and men’s basketball program,” Pollock said.

With Sterk as the department’s new athletic director, Donoho said the focus in 2017 should be on making the football and men’s basketball teams viable on a national scale.

“I think most Missouri fans would like to see ‘true sons’ like Barry Odom and Kim Anderson succeed,” Donoho said. “But they have some uphill battles. They’re in a hole right now, and it’s a pretty sizable hole.”
“A 20-win season in basketball and a nine or 10-win season in football would cure a lot,” Donoho said.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Labor, education, ethics reforms are priorities for Republicans in the legislature**

COLUMBIA — Missouri Republicans swept the state in the 2016 election, which may mean broad reforms in education, labor and ethics in the upcoming legislative session.

Since 2008, one major roadblock to some Republican legislators' key priorities was Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon and his use of the veto. Although Nixon earned a reputation as one of the most overridden governors in Missouri history, the fact that it required a two-thirds consensus of the General Assembly to overcome his veto kept some legislation off the books.

With the election of incoming Republican governor Eric Greitens, GOP lawmakers will be renewing their efforts in areas where they have failed in the last eight years. They point to labor, education and ethics reform as some of the priorities they will champion in the legislative session that begins Wednesday.

"So far, we have every indication that the governor-elect will be very engaged with the assembly," said Sen. Bob Onder, R-St. Charles. "The governor intends to work really closely with the legislature to enact reforms that are needed to get the state going again."
Missouri Democrats, who saw losses in all statewide races, will be left to work with Republicans in areas of common ground to push their priorities, especially in a focus on ethics reform, which was championed by Greitens on the campaign trail.

But lawmakers from both parties also will have to wrestle with a tight budget, which will create challenges for funding new initiatives.

**Labor reform and right-to-work**

Right-to-work is a term conservatives across the country have used to describe legislation that would outlaw mandated union dues.

Missouri Republicans say that such laws would make unions more accountable to workers and the state more attractive to business.

Unions vehemently oppose such legislation, saying it saps their power by reducing funding needed to negotiate on behalf of their members.

House Speaker Pro Tem, Rep. Elijah Haahr, R-Springfield, believes that Greitens' campaign promise to support such legislation has all but sealed the deal.

"There's going to be a lot of noise and headlines by the unions," Haahr said. "But we now have a governor that's willing to sign it."

Greitens' office declined to comment for this story.

Several area Republicans support the right-to-work effort.

"With right-to-work, Missouri will become a more attractive state for many businesses to operate in," said Caleb Jones, who served in the legislature since 2011 and was re-elected this fall, but will instead join Greitens' as the governor's deputy chief of staff. "The right-to-work law will protect workers' freedoms, as right to work prevents unions from forcing workers to pay dues as a condition of holding their job."
Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, the minority House whip, said Democratic leadership will remain opposed.

"They’ll likely bust unions sometime within the first couple months" of the legislative session, Kendrick said of Republican lawmakers. "We’ll do our best to prevent it, but at this point we don’t have the numbers to do it."

Labor leaders are looking outside the legislature for possible help. Mike Louis, head of the Missouri AFL-CIO, has filed several petitions that would amend the constitution if passed by voters in 2018.

"No existing or future law shall impair, restrict or limit the ability of employees to negotiate, enter into and enforce any collectively bargained agreement with an employer that provides financial support for the representational services their collective bargaining representative performs," proposed language says.

**Accreditation and charter schools**

Another effort that has been stymied by the Nixon veto is changes to education. After the Normandy School District in St. Louis lost accreditation in 2014 — joining the ranks of the Kansas City, St. Louis and Riverview Gardens school districts — a fierce debate on how to save the districts has produced several bills.

The current state statute forces unaccredited school districts to pay the tuition for students transferring out of the district. This has left Normandy facing bankruptcy, further exacerbating the problem.

To address the issue, Republicans, with some bipartisan support, have pushed legislation that would accredit schools on a building-by-building basis and institute tuition caps. That would allow students to transfer out of failing schools within their district and help alleviate financial stress on unaccredited schools.
Additionally, Republicans have offered private options — charter and virtual schools — as an alternative to public education.

The push for privatization has been the greatest point of contention. Nixon vetoed both bills that came from this process.

The latest effort to address the transfer was met with the veto pen because, according to Nixon, the bill failed to address the school transfer problem and created new problems.

“In its original form, HB 42 focused on the well known problems of the school transfer law,” Nixon said in his veto letter. “By the time it got to my desk, it mandated expensive voucher schemes, neglected accountability, and skirted the major, underlying difficulties in the transfer law.”

A number of educators across the state hailed the veto as a victory for public education.

And many school districts, including Columbia's, oppose any legislation that would divert funds from public schools.

Jonathan Sessions, a member of the Columbia School Board, said socioeconomic factors, not faculty, play a larger role in achievement.

"You can't necessarily judge individual schools on the metric of test scores because individual schools have different students and needs," Sessions said. “Transfers take power away from the local school districts that can better address these disparities."

Rep. David Wood, R-Versailles, who sponsored the 2015 transfer bill, said transfer laws and privately run education are distinct issues. The bill he has pre-filed, HB 118, contains no language pertaining to charter or private schools.

“There doesn’t have to be a connection between the two,” Wood said. “I believe they should be separate discussions.”
Wood does say, though, that bills concerning private options for education will most likely get attached. He also says that Greitens is much more likely to sign the legislation as opposed to Nixon.

**Ethics reform**

Among members of both parties, ethics reform has been a widely discussed topic leading up to the session.

"Eric Greitens, I and other Democrats all agree that we need to root out corruption," Kendrick said in an interview shortly after the election. He said he pushed for ethics reform during his first two years in the House. "We will do everything we can to hold the majority party accountable and work with them to make sure we get substantive ethics reform this year."

Several bills have been pre-filed in both houses for ethics reform, including bills such as banning gifts from to members of the General Assembly, extending the time public officials have to wait before becoming lobbyists and allowing the Missouri Ethics Commission to make financial interest statements available to the general public. Other bills have also been filed that would give the Missouri Ethics Commission more power.

"I think one of the things that both parties campaigned on is ethics reform," said Rep. Martha Stevens, D-Columbia. "We really need to make it a priority. It’s time to deliver."

Sen. Ed Emery, R-Lamar, opposed some ethics reform bills in the last session.

"I think that it’s somewhat naive to say that we should put government in charge of government," Emery said. "(Ethics bills) put more laws and more regulations on top of the laws that the governing elite aren’t following."

Emery believes that the people should be in charge of ethics reform.

"The people who pay attention in elections should be in charge of ethics, rather than putting the government in charge," Emery said.
State budget woes

The state budget will continue to be a priority for both parties as a combination of lower than projected revenues and tax cuts tighten funding.

Currently, revenue is sitting at a 2.6 percent increase, according to a report by Nixon's budget office, although the fiscal 2017 budget was drafted with revenue growth projected at 4.1 percent.

Of the tax cuts, the income tax cut passed in 2014 is the largest. It is projected to cost $620 million over five years starting July 1, 2017.

In response, Gov. Nixon has already blocked $200 million in funding from the current budget by withholding money set aside for certain programs at the beginning of the fiscal year. Funds for public defenders, transportation, Medicaid and education have been withheld in Nixon's attempt to balance the budget.

Greitens and state legislators will need to cut more after he takes office in January, and nobody has offered definitive answers.

"All we can do is have our Budget and Appropriations Committee sit down and look for places we can cut," Haahr said. "Everybody think's their money is essential, but we have to prioritize."

Kendrick believes higher education will take the brunt of some of Greitens' budget cuts. But, he said, "We’re going to work against any additional tax cuts that basically diminish our ability to fund our priorities in the state."

Several Mid-Missouri lawmakers pledged to look out for the University of Missouri's interests as budget cuts are considered.

"I’m going to do everything I can to get MU funded as well as possible," said Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport. "It’s going to be a tough year, and we’ll do everything we can to make sure MU is treated fairly."
Not many state departments can claim they have felt the budget squeeze more than the Missouri Department of Transportation, which, in response, features a presentation on its website called "a citizen's guide to transportation funding in Missouri."

Since 2009, MoDot has seen a $600 million cut in its average $1.2 billion operations budget. This money is spent by the department on major construction projects: large road repair, bridges and interchanges. Due to the cuts, 1,200 employees lost their jobs, and the department sold 124 buildings and 752 pieces of equipment, MoDoT spokesman Bob Brendel said. While money from welfare benefits such as food stamps have been diverted to transportation, it's only enough to maintain roads that are open.

"At our current funding levels, we are able to maintain our roads system as is," Brendel said. "But we can't improve the conditions of the roads."

Missouri bridges are no different. Eight hundred bridges are deemed to be in poor condition, meaning that the department has to inspect them frequently due to structural or surface issues. Sometimes, these bridges fail inspection and are closed. Low funding means it may take years to replace them.

"We're just treading water on bridges," Brendel said. "Every time we replace a bridge, we have to close another."

**Social issues**

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle also are proposing changes on social issues, from abortion to racial profiling.

Onder has pre-filed a bill modifying abortion laws; it includes provisions that would prohibit donating fetal remains and would require the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct annual inspections of abortion facilities. Such measures have been strongly opposed by abortion-rights groups.
"A couple of relatively modest legislative reforms need to be made in that area to make sure that women’s safety in clinics is protected and that fetal remains are accounted for and not trafficked for profit," Onder said.

Democrats have pre-filed bills addressing other social justice issues. Sen. Maria Chappelle-Nadal, D-University City, filed a bill that would require police officers to report certain information in vehicle stops, an attempt to combat racial profiling. Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, D-St. Louis filed a bill that would create a grants program to combat homelessness in Missouri.

Stevens, a Democrat, said she will be watching out for efforts that "stand in the way of addressing social, economic justice issues."

"Until the session starts and we see what bills are moving quickly, we won't know the true priorities of leadership," she said. "I just know what I’m going to fight for and what I’m going to fight against."

**Free Tuition Idea Revived**

New York's governor wants to make public higher education free for most students, setting off new debate on the concept.

By Rick Seltzer

January 4, 2017

The drive for tuition-free public college experienced a rebirth Tuesday, rising from the ashes of the 2016 presidential election to re-emerge at the state level.
New York’s governor, Democrat Andrew Cuomo, delivered the latest version of the idea at LaGuardia Community College in Queens, flanked by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. Cuomo, already rumored as a future presidential candidate, unwrapped a proposal that in many ways looks like the plan his party’s nominee, Hillary Clinton, brought to the 2016 election -- with a few differences.

Cuomo’s plan, called the Excelsior Scholarship, would ensure free tuition at New York’s public two- and four-year institutions to students whose families make up to $125,000 per year. That’s the same income threshold Clinton used for her national plan after Sanders’s strong run for the Democratic nomination pushed her to adopt a tuition-free proposal. But Cuomo called for phasing in the program more quickly than Clinton -- over three years ending in 2019, instead of over four years ending in 2021.

The proposal for New York drew both praise and opposition within the state. Students and public higher education leaders backed it as supporting affordability for low- and middle-income families. But legislative Republican leadership balked at handing the bill to taxpayers. Meanwhile, the state’s private colleges and universities sounded a cautious note while awaiting more details. Many private college leaders strongly opposed the idea when it was pushed by Clinton and Sanders.

Sanders signaled a belief that New York will be the first of many states to roll out free tuition proposals. However, several national analysts remained split over whether free tuition would encourage more students to enroll and finish their degrees or whether it will amount to a regressive handout to middle-class and wealthy families who do not need it. Cuomo’s proposal, which will need to be approved by the state’s legislators, would cover students enrolled in two-year and four-year programs at institutions in the State University of New York and the City University of New York systems. In some ways, it’s a throwback for CUNY, which was long associated with tuition-free attendance until the 1970s.

Students will need to be enrolled full time to participate, a requirement the governor’s office said would encourage on-time graduation. The governor’s office also indicated that
the initiative is structured as a “last-dollar” program, paying after students receive other state and federal grants.

The new program would be rolled out over three years, starting in the fall of 2017. That year, state residents making up to $100,000 would qualify. The cutoff would rise to $110,000 in 2018, followed by $125,000 in 2019.

Cuomo’s office estimated that 80 percent of New York’s households make $125,000 or less. About 940,000 of them have eligible college-age children.

The program would cost about $163 million annually once it is fully phased in, according to estimates from the governor’s office. For comparison, New York has an existing Tuition Assistance Program for students that provides about $1 billion in grants annually. The state spent about $10.7 billion on higher education in 2016, including capital projects and personal service, according to its budget results for all governmental funds.

New York counted 573,555 full-time-equivalent students in public higher education in its 2017 budget. The average annual tuition for a bachelor’s program at SUNY institutions is $6,470, according to the governor’s office. It is $6,330 at CUNY institutions. Associate degrees at the respective institutions average $4,350 and $4,800. Cuomo made no mention Tuesday of the program covering room and board, but those costs vary widely in New York State, where some public institutions serve commuter populations, others serve residential populations, and other institutions fall in between. When introducing his proposal, Cuomo likened the push for free college tuition to the push generations ago to have the state pay for high school attendance.

“If you want to offer everybody a fair shot, then you have to get up-to-date, and you have to say what high school was 75 years ago, college is today,” Cuomo said. “College is a mandatory step if you really want to be a success. And the way this society said, ‘We’re going to pay for high school because you need high school,’ this society should say, ‘We’re going to pay for college because you need college to be successful.’”
Sanders argued economic changes have made postsecondary education necessary for success.

“The economy has changed,” he said. “Technology has changed. The global economy has changed. And if we are going to do justice to the working families of this country, to lower-income families, if we are going to have an economy that creates the kinds of jobs that we need for our people, we must have the best-educated workforce in the world.”

Many of New York’s higher education leaders offered support for the proposal. City University of New York Board of Trustees Chair William C. Thompson, a Cuomo appointee, spoke at the Tuesday announcement, saying steps are necessary to keep college in reach for everyone. SUNY’s chairman, H. Carl McCall, and chancellor, Nancy L. Zimpher, voiced support in statements focused on affordability.

The SUNY Student Assembly’s president, Marc J. Cohen, called on New York legislators to act quickly to approve Cuomo’s proposal. Barbara Bowen, the president of the Professional Staff Congress -- a staff and faculty union for CUNY -- called the proposal a “conceptual and political breakthrough.” Frederick E. Kowal, president of the United University Professions, a union representing SUNY faculty members, called it “the kind of positive, progressive change that UUP’s members would get behind.”

It might not be so simple, however. Matthew Chingos, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute, said the new proposal might not be as progressive as it seems, because New York’s existing aid programs cover many costs for low-income students when taken in concert with federal aid. Therefore, the state would be effectively spending more money on students from wealthier backgrounds.

“If SUNY tuition is $6,000 and change and the Pell Grant is $5,000 and change, and New York already has other need-based aid that already closes the gap, they’re basically just taking a world where tuition already is free for low-income kids and doing nothing more for those low-income kids -- and instead plowing millions of dollars into children from more affluent families,” Chingos said. “The change in expenditure is regressive.”
Chingos added, however, that the idea of free college for lower-income families can be a good idea. His main issues with the proposal are setting the income cutoff at $125,000 and not providing new resources to low-income students.

Stronger criticism came from New York Republicans. State Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb attacked the proposal in a statement.

“Governor Cuomo isn’t providing ‘free’ tuition, he’s simply telling New York taxpayers to write a bigger check,” Kolb said. “At the end of the day, someone has to pay the bill, and once again his political ambitions will be subsidized by the highest-taxed people in America.”

The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities in New York released a cautious statement saying it was waiting for more details. The question at hand is what is best for each state resident and taxpayers, said Mary Beth Labate, president of the organization.

“New York policy makers have long understood the critical role that the state plays in giving all families -- regardless of their financial means -- a choice in higher education,” Labate said in the statement. “The state’s major higher education financial assistance programs have always been available to all qualifying students. New York State’s private, not-for-profit colleges and universities are willing and seasoned partners and have long been committed to a public/private partnership that has served students and taxpayers well.”

CICU represents the leaders of more than 100 private not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York. Such institutions provided $5.1 billion in institutional financial aid in 2014-15, it said.

The proposal could very well spell trouble for some of New York’s many small private colleges and universities. The state is already an intensely hypercompetitive market because of the large number of institutions operating there, according to Ian Mortimer, vice president for enrollment management at Nazareth College in suburban Rochester.
Nazareth is a small fish, enrolling 2,159 undergraduates and 724 graduate students in the fall of 2016. It’s in a big pond -- Mortimer counts 38 baccalaureate-degree-granting institutions within a 120-mile drive of Nazareth’s campus.

But small private colleges and universities can argue that they’re in an entirely different cost market than New York’s public institutions. Nazareth students, for example, pay much more than students at public colleges. Nazareth’s advertised tuition is $31,024 for 2016-17, and its average net tuition for the class entering in the fall of 2016 notched $15,295. Compare that to average annual tuition reported in the low-to-mid-$6,000 range for SUNY and CUNY.

“I’m not entirely sure this would incrementally put more pressure on us,” Mortimer said. “It’s already apples and oranges in terms of cost.”

Mortimer voiced other concerns about the tuition-free state college program, though. New York’s public tuition rates are much lower than many other states’, he said. New York also has its Tuition Assistance Program and a two-year federal loan payment program.

Mortimer wonders if the money could be better spent on explicitly trying to improve graduation rates for those most at risk of dropping out of college, noting that degree completion generally means being better able to pay off college loans and secure employment.

“When you look at the demographics of the state, I can’t help but think that part of this is a competitive play for SUNY and CUNY,” Mortimer said. “If the governor has access to about $160 million, I do think it would be much more appropriately applied to [improving] graduation rates.”

Advocates maintain that tuition-free programs are better than an often-confusing mix of financial aid and loans. The simple idea of free tuition can be enough to encourage more students to enroll, said Morley Winograd, president of the Campaign for Free College Tuition.
“The reason you start with free college tuition, regardless of the requirements or eligibility issues that might be raised, is because the studies have shown that it drives enrollment up,” Winograd said. “Once you take the challenge of the cost of a college degree off the table, a lot more people will sign up to attend.”

Other analysts debated the proposal’s requirement that a student attend college full time. Mark Huelsman, a senior policy analyst at Demos, said he had mixed feelings. The goal should be to promote full-time enrollment while not ignoring students who need to attend part time, he said.

“We want to take care of the financial burdens that may be preventing students from going full time,” Huelsman said. “And we want to signal that the likelihood of completing increases a lot if you attend full time.”

When Sanders talked about free tuition in Queens on Tuesday, he said other states could follow New York’s lead if it enacts the legislation. But New York is not the only state to dabble with free tuition -- Tennessee and Oregon have both enacted forms of free community college programs, for example.

Still, the fact that Cuomo, the governor of the large and visible state of New York, promoted the free tuition idea in his first policy proposal of 2017 indicates the idea’s staying power -- particularly as Democrats seek to regroup from their 2016 setbacks. “This idea has legs,” Huelsman said. “It’s not going away.”
A Turning Point in the Campus Culture Wars? For Some, Trump Raises Hopes

By Peter Schmidt JANUARY 04, 2017 PREMIUM

WASHINGTON

The past eight years have been challenging for many critics of U.S. colleges.

The Obama administration has been unsympathetic to complaints that colleges are squelching conservative speech and scholarship, discriminating against white or Asian American applicants, and denying due process to those accused of sexual misconduct. Unable to enlist federal agencies to support their causes, groups that regard many colleges as hostile to conservative or traditionalist views have often found themselves lacking the political power to pressure such institutions to change.

What a difference an Election Day makes.

With Donald Trump’s pending inauguration as president and Republican dominance of Congress and most state capitals, the tide may have turned in the nation’s culture wars. Many advocacy groups and think tanks that accuse colleges of liberal excess are poised to go on the attack to try to regain lost ground.

"I am pretty optimistic that the Trump administration will be a constructive development for American higher education," says Peter W. Wood, president of the National Association of Scholars, a traditionalist organization that often criticizes colleges as promoting liberal political agendas.

"Right-leaning groups that focus on higher education are very optimistic about the future," says Frederick M. Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute. Under President Obama, "many of these advocacy groups felt like they were playing defense."

The advocacy groups and think tanks contacted for this article stressed that they did not formally endorse Mr. Trump or any other candidate for public office, because
their tax-exempt, nonprofit status precludes them from doing so. All characterize
themselves as nonpartisan, and a few, including the National Association of Scholars
and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, reject ideological labels such
as "conservative," even though they often clash with liberals or leftists in campus
debates.

Moreover, some remain uncertain whether President-elect Trump sides with them on
their key issues. He has, for example, dismayed opponents of race-conscious
admissions by speaking favorably of affirmative action, and has similarly
disappointed some religious conservatives by saying he accepts same-sex marriage as
a settled legal matter. Betsy DeVos, his pick for secretary of education, has said little
about her views on colleges and joins most previous heads of that agency in having no
higher-education track record.

On the whole, however, the political landscape has become much more hospitable
to those who challenge colleges from perspectives that are conservative, traditionalist,
free-market-oriented, or focused on civil liberties. Most of Mr. Trump’s picks for
cabinet positions are unabashed conservatives, and he will have the power to stack the
National Labor Relations Board — as well as, potentially, the Supreme Court — with
people who share his views. Along with keeping their majorities in the U.S. Senate
and House of Representatives, Republicans now hold the governorships and both
legislative chambers in 25 states. (Just six states are so solidly under Democrats’
control.)

The gains that such critics of higher education hope to make include:

**Scaling Back Title IX Enforcement**

Citing Title IX, the federal gender-equity law, the Obama administration
has pressured colleges to take steps that irked not just conservatives but also
advocates of due-process and free-speech rights.

Among groups in the latter camp, the Foundation for Individual Rights has argued
that the Education and Justice Departments have defined verbal sexual harassment
so broadly that they have pushed colleges to punish speech protected under the First
Amendment. The foundation also has protested that the Education Department’s
Office for Civil Rights is jeopardizing the due-process rights of students accused of
sexual harassment or sexual violence by pressuring colleges to conduct disciplinary
proceedings with inappropriately low standards for judging responsibility. FIRE
is backing a lawsuit against the Education Department by a University of Virginia law-
school graduate who says the agency’s guidance caused him to be wrongly found responsible for sexual misconduct there.

Joe Cohn, FIRE’s legislative and policy director, says his group wants to see such Title IX guidance scrapped "without the pendulum swinging in a way that compromises the ability of students to attend a school free of discrimination."

"We are hoping," Mr. Cohn says, "that this administration will present us with an opportunity to defeat some speech codes and implement meaningful due-process protections on campus."

Mr. Cohn says his group also sees the potential to win congressional passage of legislation — similar to state laws recently adopted by Arizona, Missouri, and Virginia — that prohibits public colleges from restricting campus protests to designated free-speech zones.

John C. Eastman, founding director of the Claremont Institute’s Center for Constitutional Jurisprudence, foresees shifts in federal spending priorities helping to limit the Education Department’s regulatory powers. To free up funds for more defense and infrastructure spending, he predicts, the Trump administration will shrink the size and power of the Education Department and, in doing so, structurally limit its ability to pressure colleges to promote political agendas.

Mr. Eastman, whose center frequently accuses the government of overreach in briefs submitted to the Supreme Court, argues that the Education Department "has done much greater harm than good in trying to create a centralized command and control of education in this country."

"Betsy DeVos understands all that," he says.

Ensuring Conservatives a Voice

During his campaign, Mr. Trump denounced efforts to limit speech on college campuses and pledged to "end the political correctness and foster free and respectful dialogue." Practically speaking, he will not have much power to do so, except by perhaps directing the Education Department to ease its enforcement of antidiscrimination laws or to begin treating conservative professors and students as in need of protection from hostile educational environments.
Nevertheless, Mr. Trump’s remarks were cheered by many who accuse colleges of seeking to silence certain points of view.

Casey Mattox, a senior counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative group that provides legal advocacy for Christians at colleges, says he expects Mr. Trump’s Education Department to encourage more dialogue on campuses "rather than a knee-jerk response of trying to stop student speech because people are offended." For the most part, however, state, rather than federal, lawmakers are the ones most likely to take up legislation protecting students’ rights to speech and association, Mr. Mattox predicts.

The National Association of Scholars has hailed Mr. Trump’s election as likely to have a big impact in one area: the debate over sustainability and global warming. The group strongly opposes higher education’s sustainability movement, arguing that it is driven by an underlying ideology that limits intellectual freedom and seeks to advance a leftist political agenda. The association has accused many in academe of trying to marginalize or silence anyone who disputes the idea that earth is undergoing anthropomorphic climate change.

President-elect Trump and many of his picks to lead federal agencies share the National Association of Scholars’ skepticism of climate-change research. Once they enter office, Mr. Wood says, "that debate will shift substantially, and it will shift in a direction of intellectual openness, vigorous debate, and scientific integrity."

Mr. Wood says Mr. Trump’s presidency could be good for higher education "even if he were not to pursue any more focused an agenda than pushback against the narrowing of debate on campus."

The American Council of Trustees and Alumni, which is similarly traditionalist on many higher-education issues, declined to comment.

**Fighting Race in Admissions**

Those who oppose colleges’ consideration of race in admissions have faced substantial resistance in Washington in recent years. Even the Supreme Court, with a conservative majority that such advocates had expected would be sympathetic, disappointed them last year by upholding the consideration of applicants’ race by the University of Texas at Austin. In that decision, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy abandoned his past disapproval of such policies and joined the court’s liberal wing.

As for the federal government’s executive branch, even under President Obama’s Republican predecessor, George W. Bush, the Education Department’s Office for
Civil Rights "was no help at all," complains Edward J. Blum, a longtime foe of such policies who organized the lawsuit against Texas.

In some respects, President-elect Trump has not offered such advocates much cause for optimism. He has declared himself to be "fine with affirmative action," adding, "We’ve lived with it for a long time." In her previous capacity as the chairwoman of Michigan’s Republican Party, Ms. DeVos, his pick to oversee the Education Department, opposed the 2006 ballot initiative that banned public colleges and other state agencies there from using racial preferences.

Mr. Trump could, however, produce a much more conservative Supreme Court if he has an opportunity to replace not only the late Justice Antonin Scalia, a harsh critic of race-conscious admissions policies, but other members of that panel. Although the Texas case is not expected to come back before the Justices again, other similar federal lawsuits, challenging race-conscious admissions at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, potentially could.

In addition, several of Mr. Trump’s cabinet picks, including Sen. Jeff Sessions, his nominee for attorney general, have expressed deep skepticism toward affirmative action and have otherwise taken conservative stands on racial issues. They could prove sympathetic to critics of race-conscious admissions and help steer the Trump administration toward opposition to such policies.

"I am hopeful that a nontraditional presidency will return the nation to more fundamental beliefs, such as in color-blind government," says Ward Connerly, president and founder of the American Civil Rights Institute, who has helped lead successful campaigns for state ballot measures that banned the use of racial preferences by public colleges in Arizona, California, Michigan, Nebraska, and Washington State.

Despite his past success at the ballot box, Mr. Connerly says he might eschew such costly voter initiatives in favor of appeals to Congress, state governors, and state legislatures to adopt similar bans. Mr. Blum, of the Texas lawsuit, says he may mount new challenges in state courts to race-conscious admissions policies.

The debate over such policies is likely to be complicated by the nation’s current political polarization and the emergence of outspoken white-supremacist organizations. All of the advocates interviewed for this article disavowed such groups, and several say they believe the media has exaggerated the groups’ prominence and impact to paint Mr. Trump’s supporters as racist.
"It makes it harder to have a nuanced debate, or nuanced policy proposals, when people are thinking very black and white right now," says Jenna Ashley Robinson, president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, formerly the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, a North Carolina think tank.

"I am extremely troubled by the rise of the white identity movement in conservative circles," says Linda Chavez, chair of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a leading opponent of race-conscious admissions and college policies that restrict certain programs and scholarships to minority students. "The point," she says, "is to become less race conscious, not more race conscious."