Editorial: Missouri should make higher ed more accessible, not less

By the Editorial Board

Take a look at Texas to see what happens when states lift the cap on tuition at state universities, a move that is being recommended by the Missouri Legislature’s University of Missouri System Review Commission. Tuition at Texas colleges rose 55 percent in the decade after lawmakers deregulated tuition and fees in 2003, putting some of Texas’ universities out of reach for many families.

Certainly a steep price increase isn’t the intent of the commissioners reviewing the university system in Missouri. They reason that the governing boards of each university should have control, and not be bound by state law. Outgoing Gov. Jay Nixon enacted four tuition freezes in the eight state budgets that he signed, bragging that Missouri led the nation in holding down increases in the cost of higher education.

If Gov.-elect Eric Greitens and the Legislature follow the commission’s suggestion to lift the tuition ceiling, state students, as well as those from out-of-state, could decide to look for a cheaper option, or forgo college altogether.

On the other hand, university administrators were skating on the frozen tuition pond. Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway’s report on public higher education funding and affordability in August said that the state’s 13 public colleges and universities had cranked up required fees by 138 percent to offset the clamp on tuition increase.

The bigger picture here is about state support for higher education. State appropriations for Missouri’s four-year public institutions decreased 9 percent from 2009 to 2015, while enrollment
grew 12 percent, according to Galloway’s report. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that Missouri’s per student spending decreased 22.2 percent from 2008 through 2016.

The study commission also suggests the universities charge higher tuition for more expensive majors, like engineering, than for less costly ones, like English. At a time when employers are looking for graduates in the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math, this would be counterproductive. Missouri lawmakers should be loath to jack up the price of any degree, but particularly the ones that bring more value to employers.

Availability of quality higher education is one of the best economic development strategies a state can have, doing more to lure employers and jobs than tax cuts and subsidies. But Missouri is facing a budget crisis, and college students may feel the pinch.

The commission was appointed following a fiasco in fall 2015 that resulted in the firing of Melissa Click, an assistant communications professor at UM-Columbia. The Legislature was outraged by racial protests on the Columbia campus, including a brief boycott by the Tigers football team. The incident led to the resignations of the system’s president and the Mizzou chancellor.

Making higher education more accessible would benefit Missouri more than another tax credit or break for special interests.

GEORGE KENNEDY: Hoping for the best in 2017

GEORGE KENNEDY, 1 hr ago

Wednesday’s Missourian asked readers “What are your hopes and fears for 2017?”
Like many of you, I suspect, I’ve been using the new year as an excuse to ponder that very question. So, just to give you something against which to compare your responses, here are a few of the things I’d like to see locally and statewide — and some I’m afraid we’re going to see.

Helpful as always, the Missourian provided a pretty good start for my list of fears with its front-page story in the same edition that previewed the legislative session now beginning. The Republican super-majority intends to focus, reporters Dylan Jackson and Lucille Sherman explained, on changes in labor, education and ethics laws, along with tax cuts and some social issues.

It was a fine story, I thought, with one exception: They described intended changes in labor and education law as “reforms.” A better word in those and other cases would have been “assaults.”

The legislators plan to weaken the already limited ability of workers to unionize in order to bargain more effectively for better wages and working conditions. The cliché is that “right-to-work” really means “right to work for less.” Remember that phrases usually get to be clichés because they are truths repeated.

On education, the likely direction will not be the major increase in funding our public schools need but instead a variety of proposals that would change accrediting standards and divert public money toward private and charter schools. The sponsor of one bill pointed out that Gov.-elect Eric Greitens probably won’t veto such legislation as Jay Nixon did.

And speaking of funding, you may recall the reports a couple of weeks ago of all the tax “reforms” proposed by Republicans. They all seemed to have two things in common. They would benefit some special interest group, and they would further reduce the already-inadequate revenue that is needed to improve our schools and universities, repair our crumbling infrastructure and assist the poor and hungry.

As to ethics, reform is certainly needed. Having failed to enact any despite their previous majority position, the Republicans are now being pushed by Gov.-elect Greitens to actually do something. Columbia’s own Kip Kendrick, one of the few Democrats in the House of
Representatives, already has a strong proposal. Maybe this will be an opportunity for bi-
partisanship.

That can be the segue to the “hopes” side, because we must hope that our new governor, about
whose plans and abilities we know nearly nothing, will be less ideological than many of the
Republican legislators and more responsive to the real needs of the voters who have taken a
change on him.

Closer to home, I see more cause for optimism.

For one thing, our university has a promising new president. Dr. Mun Choi seems to have
both a commitment to excellence and good political instincts. When I shook his hand
during his visit to campus last month, he also had the good judgment to note the high
quality of the School of Journalism.

The MU campus is also in better hands than it was a little more than a year ago. It seems to
me that the committee starting the search for a permanent chancellor could look farther
and do worse than choosing Dr. Hank Foley, who has done a commendable job in the
interim.

And in local government, we can anticipate livelier, and louder County Commission meetings
with the addition of new Southern District Commissioner Fred Parry.

I’ve known Fred since even before he sold ads for the Missourian. I’ve followed with
appreciation his career as magazine entrepreneur and public servant. I expect him to serve us
well.

We can only hope our leaders in Jefferson City and beyond will do the same, while we have to
fear that too much evidence so far points in the opposite direction.
Stress linked to gastrointestinal issues in children with autism

Generated from MU Health press release: Increased Reaction to Stress Linked to Gastrointestinal Issues in Children with Autism

COLUMBIA, Mo., Jan. 4 (UPI) -- Researchers pinpoint the increased reaction to stress as the possible cause of the high prevalence of gastrointestinal issues in children with autism.

A study from the University of Missouri School of Medicine found a link between gastrointestinal issues in children with autism and an increased reaction to stress in those individuals.

"We know that it is common for individuals with autism to have a more intense reaction to stress, and some of these patients seem to experience frequent constipation, abdominal pain or other gastrointestinal issues," Dr. David Beversdorf, associate professor in the departments of radiology, neurology and psychological sciences at MU and the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, said in a press release.

"To better understand why, we looked for a relationship between gastrointestinal symptoms and the immune markers responsible for stress response. We found a relationship between increased cortisol response to stress and these symptoms."

Researchers studied 120 individuals with autism. Parents of the participants filled out a questionnaire assessing their child's gastrointestinal symptoms, resulting in 51 patients with symptoms and 69 without.

Researchers tried to elicit a stress response in the study participants by giving them a 30-second stress test.

Cortisol, the hormone released by the body during stress, was measured from the participant's saliva before and after the test. One of the functions of cortisol is to prevent the release of cytokines, substances that cause inflammation. Cytokines have been associated with autism, gastrointestinal issues and stress.

Results showed that individuals with gastrointestinal symptoms had greater cortisol responses to the stress than participants without gastrointestinal symptoms.

The study was published in Brain, Behavior, and Immunity.
COLUMBIA — Since the August 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson and its aftermath, police departments nationwide have been at the center of discussions of race and racial profiling.

Race Matters, Friends in Columbia has pushed the community and Columbia Police Department to confront its own challenges.

At an Oct. 25 meeting between the activist group and members of the police department, Chief Ken Burton and Deputy Chief Jill Schlude both discussed police training to counteract implicit bias.

But the demographics of police departments that serve Boone County residents was not part of that discussion.

The Missourian has since compared the demographics of the Columbia Police Department, Ashland Police Department, Boone County Sheriff’s Department and MU Police Department to the communities they serve.

The departments, though diverse, do not perfectly reflect their communities. Each department mentions short staffing and recruitment problems as factors in the disparity.

Representatives of Columbia, Ashland, Boone County and MU police departments say they strive to foster healthy relationships with their communities and to recruit diverse applicants. But there are obstacles to reaching those goals.
Columbia Police Department

Columbia's police demographics don't match those of the city, but the department is working on improving relationships with the community through community-oriented policing, spokeswoman Bryana Larimer said.

The team, now called the Community Outreach Unit, originally consisted of a two-man unit in 2009 that focused on Douglass Park and other "hotspot" crime areas throughout the city.

"These officers (are) responsible for building relationships with residents in those areas and proactively identify problems before a crime occurred," she said.

The Police Department has also organized open forums, community town halls and neighborhood barbecues to strengthen the relationship between the department and the community. Larimer said those efforts have received positive feedback on social media.

"We are always looking for new ways to continue to build and foster healthy, successful relationships with the citizens we serve," she said.

But it is hard when the department is in need of about 50 more officers. In an ideal situation, Larimer said, an officer would spend one-third of his or her time responding to calls, one-third handling administrative tasks and another third building relationships with their communities.

"We do not have the resources to make this happen," Larimer said.

Meanwhile, the department is always actively recruiting officers. Larimer said the focus has been on several institutions in Missouri, including colleges that have many minority students.

The department recently hired four new officers who are undergoing training. All four are white.

Ashland Police Department
Two simple facts have stymied the Ashland Police Department's efforts to recruit non-white police officers, Chief Lyn Woolford said. First, the 13-person police department rarely has openings. Second, it's hard to attract new police recruits to a small, low-crime town.

Young officers are often looking for adventure, Woolford said. Ashland doesn't necessarily offer that.

Then there's the problem of limited department resources.

"What we battle is that agencies bigger than us pay more, might have better benefits...," he said.

It's hard to hire and maintain a diverse police department when the applicant pool is limited. "Our applicant pool leaves us little choices," Woolford said.

Woolford said that if Ashland grew and diversified, the police force would do the same.

Despite limited resources, Woolford said his department is also trying to improve its relationship with the community, especially with kids.

"The kids are important because they are going to grow up to be the adults, and they might stay," he said.

Woolford personally directs traffic around school entrances in the morning and afternoon to help put a face on his police force. He said officers also wave to residents as they pass each other on the street.

Ashland's sergeant is planning to coach football in his off time, Woolford said. The chief also encourages all the officers in the department to live in Ashland.

The diversity of law enforcement agencies is reflective of the applications they get, said Maj. Tom Reddin, chief deputy at the Boone County Sheriff's Department.
"Is that reflective of the Census Bureau ethnic ratios? No. But neither are the applications we receive," he wrote in an email.

The Sheriff's Department attends job fairs, law enforcement training academies and high schools, and it advertises employment opportunities on forums and job sites. Reddin said the department keeps an open door to all applicants, but it can't make people apply.

"This is not just a job; it's a calling," he said.

Officers also visit schools, participate in Neighborhood Watch programs and speak to community groups. The department offers ride-along programs to give citizens a close look at a deputy's day. Reddin believes all these efforts fortify a good bond with the community.

"Although there is always room to improve, the (Boone County Sheriff's Department) has a very good relationship within the community," Reddin said. The department routinely receives calls from residents complimenting and thanking employees for their performance, he said.

But continuing these efforts and forging relationships is difficult with staffing shortages, Reddin said. All law enforcement everywhere has a problem with staffing, he said.

Understaffing is a national problem, according to a study titled "The State of Policing in the United States, Volume 1," developed by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The pool of experienced officers and leaders is diminishing with the increasing rate of retirement for baby boomers, the report states. It did not provide any concrete retirement numbers.

Short-staffed departments have to work more overtime, deal with budget cuts and potentially end extra services such as community outreach. Reddin said the current attitude toward police doesn’t help either.

"The current climate where it's in vogue to injure and kill law enforcement officers does not help," he said.
The MU Police Department strives to reflect the people it serves. Officers reach out to minority groups on campus and to law enforcement academies, as well as posting job openings on various websites. Members attend job fairs at colleges and use word-of-mouth to encourage a diverse pool of applicants, spokesman Maj. Brian Weimer wrote in an email.

"We always strive for a diverse department that is similar to the campus we serve," he said.

Weimer said the department also reviews its recruitment plans at least once a year to ensure it is reaching out to the most diverse pool of potential officers possible. Internal reviews are also used to look into complaints filed by citizens.

MU Police embraces a community policing policy, Weimer said. Officers use bikes, carts and foot patrols to make themselves more approachable.

He is aware that many students, faculty and staff might have had negative interactions with law enforcement or have negative views of police based on stories they've heard. Weimer said officers are urged to make a conscious effort to counter those negative views by answering questions and talking with people.

"The department must enforce rules, ordinances, laws, which is not the most positive encounter with our community, but we do so in a professional manner treating everyone with respect and dignity," Weimer said.

**The Washington Post Chicago Tribune**

**Why did CNN air a documentary about the band Chicago produced by band members?**
CNN pre-empted its usual prime-time programming on New Year's Day for a special two-hour film: A retrospective on the long career of the pop-rock group Chicago. The film traced the group's arc from its humble roots to its induction in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame last year.

Only at the conclusion of the program did viewers get a subtle clue about the film's origins. A credit line read: "Produced by Chicago."

CNN, in other words, reserved two hours (plus two more for an immediate repeat) for a film about a subject made under the editorial control of the subject itself.

The network said it has no concerns about the film, called "Now More Than Ever: The History of Chicago." But experts in documentary filmmaking had a few.

At the very least, they say, the network should have disclosed upfront and more directly to viewers that the contents of the program were determined by the musical group, not by independent journalists at CNN. At the other extreme, CNN might have considered not airing the film at all, on the grounds that it could be interpreted as a promotional exercise highlighting the group's music just as it launches a new tour.

"Television news routinely tells us, as they should, when we see footage or other material not produced by the news organization's own editorial process. I think that's the sticky spot for CNN," said Stacey Woelfel, director of the Murray Center for Documentary Journalism at the University of Missouri. "I do believe they should be more transparent and explicit," perhaps posting a brief statement before and during the program explaining the film's origins.

CNN calls "Now More Than Ever" an "acquired" film, meaning the network's journalists weren't involved in its production. Its nonfiction film division, CNN Films, bought the broadcast rights from its distributor, FilmRise. The CNN division has acquired and aired other films, such as "Blackfish," an exposé about the treatment of captive killer whales, and "The Hunting Ground," about campus sexual assaults. Both were produced by independent filmmakers.
MU certified as a "Bee Campus USA" affiliate


COLUMBIA - MU recently joined the ranks of 16 recognized bee-friendly campuses across the U.S.

Bee City USA is a group of pollinator advocates that aim to raise awareness, enhance habitats and celebrate achievements of groups around the nation who protect bees.

The group also encourages college students to participate in these efforts by applying for the official Bee Campus USA designation.

MU student Megan Tyminski, who also works as a communications intern for Mizzou Botanic Garden, was in charge of spearheading MU’s application.

“We’re actually doing a lot of these things already as a University, so we might as well compile our accomplishments together and set a formal committee and apply to become one,” she said.

She said she was confident that MU’s sustainability efforts, environmental symposiums and guest speakers would distinguish the university throughout the process.

Tyminski said receiving the Bee Campus USA designation will be way to show the rest of campus just how invested she is in sustaining pollinator populations.

She said her interest in bees stemmed from observing their relationships with one another.

“I think they’re so altruistic and they’re considered a superorganism, so everything they do is for the good of the hive,” Tyminski said. "They have a lot of challenges facing them right now with climate change and misconception.”

Tyminski said bees are not the only organisms facing difficulties.

“Birds, bats, bees and butterflies all could use our help right now, which is actually one of the main goals of Bee Campus USA,” she said. “They focus on a lot of different pollinators besides honey bees.

Mizzou Botanic Garden Director Pete Millier said people may not realize just how important pollinators are to their lifestyles.

“A third of our diet comes from plants that are pollinated and have to have some sort of insect interaction to pollinate them,” he said.
Without these pollinators, Millier told KOMU 8 News our diets would be impacted.

“We would probably have an even higher rate of obesity, diabetes and all those chronic sort of conditions that diet drives,” he said.

For those interested in helping the bees and other pollinating species, Tyminski said it possible to do so.

“Anyone can get involved and plant pollinator friendly plants which have nectar and pollen-rich resources for them,” she said.

Now that MU has the official Bee Campus USA recognition, Tyminski said she believes this will inspire more action.

“I think the recognition will push us to do more and encourage people to also collaborate with us for new ways to sustain pollinator populations,” she said.

More information about MU’s pollinator protection efforts can be found on the Mizzou Botanic Garden website.

Mumps Outbreak Reaches University of Kansas

Watch the story: [http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=d16e9cf0-05f2-4641-8498-b7e1f6f5ef8e](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=d16e9cf0-05f2-4641-8498-b7e1f6f5ef8e)

*Similar stories ran on the following broadcasts:*

- WIBW CBS- Topeka, KS
- KSAS Fox- Wichita, KS
- KSNW NBC- Wichita, KS
When Colleges Rely on Adjuncts, Where Does the Money Go?

Study suggests the funds institutions gain aren’t going to instruction.

By Scott Jaschik

January 5, 2017

Colleges and universities of all kinds are increasingly relying on non-tenure-track faculty members. And administrators frequently defend their hiring choices by citing money. Since adjuncts are paid less than those on the tenure track (and frequently lack benefits), it costs colleges less to have a section taught by an adjunct than by someone who is tenured or on the tenure track.

But where do the savings go?

The American Institutes of Research released two studies Wednesday to answer that question. Both studies use data from the Delta Cost Project -- which is highly regarded for tracking how colleges spend money -- and both were sponsored by the TIAA Institute.

With regard to savings, the studies suggest that what colleges are saving on instructional costs isn’t resulting in more investment in tenure-track faculty, as some might hope. Rather, the savings appear to be showing up elsewhere, if at all.

Here are some of the key findings:
Private four-year colleges that use large proportions of non-tenure-track faculty members spend 37 percent less on full-time faculty members of all kinds than do similar institutions with small shares of non-tenure-track faculty members. But looking at spending on all categories of full-time employees, these institutions are spending only 19 percent less than those with small shares of non-tenure-track faculty members. So more spending seems possible on the administrative side of the house.

The same is true for public four-year colleges, although the spending gaps are 24 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Public four-year colleges are using the savings in instructional costs from relying on adjuncts to increase spending on other areas -- namely maintenance, administrative and student-services staff. Most of this spending is in recruiting, admissions, counseling, student organizations and athletics.

Community colleges and private four-year colleges also reduced instructional costs, but they didn’t add to expenses elsewhere, so costs do not actually shift due to increasing reliance on adjuncts.

The above findings come from one of the reports, "The Relationship Between Part-Time and Contingent Faculty and Institutional Spending."
The other report -- "The Shifting Academic Workforce: Where Are the Contingent Faculty?" -- provides data on the pervasive use of adjuncts.

Notably, the gains are significant throughout higher education. Community colleges saw relatively small increases in adjunct reliance during the 10 years studied, but that's because their use was already greater than in other sectors.

Between 2003 and 2013, the study finds, the share of faculty members who were off the tenure track increased from:

- 45 to 62 percent at public bachelor’s degree-granting institutions.
- 52 to 60 percent at private bachelor’s-granting colleges.
- 44 to 50 percent at public research universities.
- 80 to 83 percent at community colleges.

So what do these findings mean? Advocates for faculty members and adjuncts in particular said the findings vindicated points they have been making for some time.

Maria Maisto, president of the New Faculty Majority, which works on behalf of those off the tenure track, said via email that "the reports really show that the shift to a contingent academic work force was motivated by economic (and, I would argue, political) concerns -- disempowering the faculty by making them economically precarious of course reduces their influence and weakens shared governance, giving administrators more power."

She added that "the reports show what we have known -- that the shift to contingent faculty was not guided by research on quality of education and what actually works to enhance and support student learning. Economic concerns have always been primary, whether deliberate or in response to some imposed austerity."

John Barnshaw, director of research and public policy at the American Association of University Professors, said that he thought one of the most significant findings was that savings on instructional spending were being used at public four-year colleges to increase administrative spending.

"The AAUP has noted this for years," he said, even as many administrators have suggested otherwise. "It is nice to have longitudinal data to independently validate these prior claims."

Steven Hurlburt, an AIR senior researcher and co-author of the report, said via email that he viewed the reports as suggesting that colleges should consider carefully the impact of relying on non-tenure-track faculty members. He noted that the emphasis of this study was on costs and not on educational quality, a crucial issue for colleges. But he noted that not everyone is saving as much money as some would expect.

"I would suggest that colleges should perhaps exercise caution," Hurlburt said. "Relying more heavily on contingent faculty may not be the institutional cost-saving panacea many
colleges and universities may think …. While we found that colleges and universities with larger shares of contingent faculty had lower faculty costs, we did not see the same level of savings when looking at total compensation costs for all employees, due, in large part, to nonfaculty costs, particularly those related to benefits.

Can We Really Measure Implicit Bias? Maybe Not

By Tom Bartlett JANUARY 05, 2017

I harbor a moderate preference for white faces. You probably do, too: About 70 percent of people who take the race version of the Implicit Association Test show the same tendency — that is, they prefer faces with typically European-American features over those with African-American features. Since it first went online in 1998, millions have visited Harvard’s Project Implicit website, and the results have been cited in thousands of peer-reviewed papers. No other measure has been as influential in the conversation about unconscious bias.
That influence extends well beyond the academy. The findings come up often in discussions of police shootings of black men, and the concept of implicit bias circulated widely after Hillary Clinton mentioned it during the presidential campaign. The test provides scientific grounding for the idea that unacknowledged prejudice often lurks just below society’s surface. "When we relax our active efforts to be egalitarian, our implicit biases can lead to discriminatory behavior," according to the Project Implicit website, "so it is critical to be mindful of this possibility if we want to avoid prejudice and discrimination."

In other words, beware your inner bigot.

But the link between unconscious bias, as measured by the test, and biased behavior has long been debated among scholars, and a new analysis casts doubt on the supposed connection.

Researchers from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Harvard, and the University of Virginia examined 499 studies over 20 years involving 80,859 participants that used the IAT and other, similar measures. They discovered two things: One is that the correlation between implicit bias and discriminatory behavior appears weaker than previously thought. They also conclude that there is very little evidence that changes in implicit bias have anything to do with changes in a person’s behavior. These findings, they write, "produce a challenge for this area of research."

That’s putting it mildly. "When you actually look at the evidence we collected, there’s not necessarily strong evidence for the conclusions people have drawn," says Patrick Forscher, a co-author of the paper, which is currently under review at Psychological Bulletin. The finding that changes in implicit bias don’t lead to changes in behavior, Forscher says, "should be stunning."

Hart Blanton was not stunned. For the last decade, Blanton, a professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut, has been arguing that the Implicit Association Test isn’t all it’s cracked up to be. In a 2013 meta-analysis of papers, Blanton and his co-authors declared that, despite its frequent characterization as a window into the unconscious, "the IAT provides little insight into who will discriminate against whom, and provides no more insight than explicit measures of bias." (By "explicit measures" they mean simply asking people if they are biased against a particular group.)
The test works by measuring how quickly people can, for instance, associate African-American faces with positive words versus European American faces with those same positive words. In one round of the test, you’re instructed to press a particular key if a positive word like "pleasure" or "wonderful" flashes on the screen and to press that same key if a white face appears. Then, in another round, the program will tell you to press the same key for darker faces and positive words. It tracks how many mistakes you make and measures how quickly you press those keys, right down to fractions of a second. The site also offers tests that measure bias against other groups, including obese people, the disabled, and the elderly, though it’s the race results that tend to dominate the discussion.

It generally takes people longer to associate a positive word with an African-American face than a European-American face. What’s uncanny is that the test usually works even on people who, like me, know what’s being measured ahead of time and are doing their best to answer at the same speed so as not to be deemed biased.

But those results, Blanton has been saying in paper after paper, year after year, don’t tell us much, if anything.

For the record, Blanton is a 49-year-old white guy who considers himself a liberal and became a psychologist because of an early interest in social justice. A journalist once referred to him as a "conservative intellectual," which Blanton jokes is wrong on both counts.

Over coffee recently, he sketched out an analogy in his notebook. He drew a graph illustrating how high IQ scores tend to predict achievement, a claim backed up by reams of data. In contrast, the IAT — a sort of IQ test for bias — doesn’t reveal whether a person will tend to act in a biased manner, nor are the scores on the test consistent over time. It’s possible to be labeled "moderately biased" on your first test and "slightly biased" on the next. And even within those categories the numbers fluctuate in a way that, Blanton contends, undermines the test’s value. "The IAT isn’t even predicting the IAT two weeks later," Blanton says. "How can a test predict behavior if it can’t even predict itself?"
Anthony G. Greenwald doesn’t think much of Blanton’s critique — or, it seems, of Blanton himself. He is the co-author, along with Mahzarin R. Banaji, of the 2013 best seller *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People* (Delacorte), a book that’s based on the IAT, a test the two helped create. Greenwald, a psychology professor at the University of Washington, points to errors he found in a recent paper of Blanton’s as proof that his results are not to be trusted. Blanton, for his part, says that the mistakes were the result of a copy-editing error and that they didn’t affect the thrust of the article. The two engaged in a cordial email back-and-forth about the errors, though neither is impressed by the other’s rigor. "He’s not a great scientist," Greenwald says.

Greenwald also raised the possibility that Blanton and other critics of the IAT, which Greenwald has overseen for two decades, are motivated by the paid work they do as consultants in legal cases involving discrimination and implicit bias. Blanton said he’s worked as an expert consultant on two IAT-related legal cases over the years, and maintains that "the idea I started doing this in 2003 because I thought there would be some payoff is ludicrous." (Greenwald has taken consulting gigs as well, working on 20 or so such cases, he says.)

Banaji, a professor of psychology at Harvard, doesn’t question Blanton’s motives. She does, however, point to the multitude of papers that have made use of the implicit-bias measure, and the relatively few that have questioned its accuracy. In an email, she likened IAT doubters to climate-change deniers. "I’m sure Hart Blanton believes himself to be saving humanity from the dangers of the IAT," she wrote, noting that Blanton has "dedicated so many precious years of his career to improving our work."

You might forgive Banaji and Greenwald for sounding annoyed by Blanton’s quibbles and broadsides. They have been responding to them in peer-reviewed journals and with reporters since George W. Bush was in the White House. And, in fairness, Blanton has been known to toss off some barbed remarks about the test to which they’ve dedicated so many precious years of their own careers. When we met, Blanton compared the IAT to a Facebook quiz that tells you which Disney princess you’re

What’s striking, though, is how, in some respects, their conclusions about the IAT don’t seem all that far apart. Greenwald acknowledges that a person’s score can vary significantly, depending on when the test is taken, and he doesn’t think it’s reliable enough to be used to, say, select bias-free juries. "We do not regard the IAT as
diagnosing something that inevitably results in racist or prejudicial behavior," he says.

Everyone agrees that the statistical effect linking bias to behavior is slight. They only disagree about how slight. Blanton’s 2013 meta-analysis found less of a link than a 2009 meta-analysis by Banaji and Greenwald. Blanton sees the correlation as so small as to be trivial. Banaji and Greenwald, in a 2015 paper, argue that "statistically small effects" can have "societally large effects."

The new analysis seems to bolster Blanton’s less-sanguine take. It found that the correlation between implicit bias and behavior was even smaller than what Blanton had reported. That came as a surprise, the researchers write.

Another surprise is that one of the co-authors of the paper is Brian Nosek, who is — along with Greenwald and Banaji — one of the three founders of the IAT. Nosek, best known these days as the director of the Center for Open Science and an advocate for better research practices, is well aware that this paper will provide aid and comfort to critics of the test he helped create. "It sometimes shocks people when I say that the two people I have disagreed with most in my career are Mahzarin and Tony," Nosek wrote in an email.

He does defend the IAT, noting that it’s engaged millions of people in a conversation about the science of bias. He points to the test’s successes, like experiments that show how it can predict who someone would favor in a presidential election by tracking their associations. But what he calls the "very weak overall" connection between implicit bias and discriminatory behavior should, he believes, put researchers on notice. "You would think that if you change the associations, and the associations predict behavior, then the behavior would change too," Nosek says. "But the evidence is really limited on it."

Patrick Forscher, who shares the title of first author of the paper with Calvin Lai, a Harvard postdoc, thinks that there’s been pressure on researchers over the years to make the science of implicit bias sound more definitive and relevant than the evidence justifies. "A lot of people want to know, How do we tackle these disparities?" says Forscher, a postdoc at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "It makes us feel important to say, Aha, we have these measures that can tell us what the problem is, and, not only that, we can tell them how to fix the problem."
That’s essentially Blanton’s argument as well. Public discussion about implicit bias has been based largely on the results from one particular test, and that test, in his view, has been falsely sold as solid science. "They have engaged the public in a way that has wrapped the feeling of science and weight around a lot of ‘cans’ and ‘maybes,’" Blanton says. "Most of your score on this test is noise, and what signal there is, we don’t know what it is or what it means."

Blanton is not saying there’s no such thing as unconscious bias, nor is he arguing that racial discrimination isn’t a deep and abiding problem in American life (though at least one white-supremacist-friendly website has mentioned his research in an attempt to make that case — illustrating how such discussions can be misconstrued). He just thinks that scientists don’t know how to measure implicit bias with any confidence and that they shouldn’t pretend otherwise. "It is such an important problem that it deserves a stronger science," he says.

Forscher hopes the discussion will move beyond the long-running, sometimes caustic back-and-forth over the IAT. He wants to focus on understanding the root causes of discrimination in order to combat its pernicious effects. As part of that mission, he’s for several years helped train police officers in Madison about bias. He intends to continue that work while also trying to figure out how best to go about it.

"I see implicit bias as a potential means to an end, something that tells us what to do and some possible remedies for what we see in the world," Forscher says. "So if there’s little evidence to show that changing implicit bias is a useful way of changing those behaviors, my next question is ‘What should we do?’"
At the heart of the recent crusade against campus sexual violence have been students who publicly told their stories of being assaulted and then mistreated by their colleges after reporting the incident. These activists sought to use the publicity to force institutions to change their policies.

But according to at least two universities, the heightened media coverage has led some student victims to wonder whether they have any control over whether their cases become public, if they decide to report to their college or to law enforcement.

Recent statements from officials at Stanford University and the University of Kentucky raise the question of whether publicity about sexual-assault cases can chill reporting on campuses. As more news outlets seek records pertaining to campus investigations — records that journalists often argue should be public — that question

Stanford has faced a barrage of negative headlines related to the case of Brock Turner, the former swimmer who was found guilty of sexual assault but given what many people criticized as a light sentence. Last month, in a separate case, a student filed a lawsuit alleging that Stanford was "deliberately indifferent" to sexual-assault complaints filed by her and several other female students against the same male
student. Officials there say students are citing fear of publicity as a barrier to coming forward about assaults.

And at the University of Kentucky, Eli Capilouto, the president, has drawn a direct connection between the student newspaper’s detailed articles about a harassment case and a noticeable decline in sexual-assault reports. The university has balked at releasing documents related to that case, which involves a former professor. Mr. Capilouto has argued that doing so would violate a federal law on educational records, as well as the victims’ privacy. This fall the university sued the newspaper, The Kentucky Kernel, to appeal a ruling from the state attorney general that ordered the institution to release the documents. The Kernel obtained the university’s investigation report independently and has published several news stories about it.

Anti-rape activists and scholars who study sexual violence say concern about publicity — more specifically, fear of family and friends finding out — is one factor, among many, that may prevent victims from coming forward. Victims often turn to the campus disciplinary process to avoid the publicity of a criminal trial. Nowadays, given heightened attention on campus sexual assault, details of those cases can emerge publicly, too.

But these activists and scholars, many of whom have spoken out against colleges’ handling of sexual-misconduct reports, say colleges seem to be using the publicity issue as leverage in an attempt to protect their reputations.

"I’m a bit suspicious when universities start to claim that they have to suppress information in order to protect survivors," said Jennifer Freyd, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon who studies sexual violence. "Maybe in some cases, they’re right. But I’d be cautious."

The most significant chilling effect, activists and scholars say, comes from the content of the publicity — which often exposes how poorly colleges are handling assault reports.

The debate over balancing victim privacy with transparency raises another issue: whether publishing the nitty-gritty details of allegations or findings — as were included in the Kernel’s reporting about the former professor — is always in the public interest.
Transparency and Privacy

When Mr. Capilouto visited *The Chronicle*’s offices in December, he stood by his criticism of the student newspaper’s reporting.

"If you have met with victim survivors as I have … [and] if you recognize how privacy is so important to reporting, but also recovering from this — to have a student newspaper provide so much information in an article that anybody in 15 minutes could most likely identify the victims of assault, that is a serious matter," he said.

Two alleged victims of the professor, who have not been named publicly, decided in November to join the university’s suit against the newspaper because they were concerned about their identities being revealed. "As the media’s interest in the victims’ story has persisted, the line between the laudable goal of transparency and the blatant invasion of privacy has been crossed," their brief states.

Lauren Schoenthaler, a senior associate provost at Stanford whose duties include overseeing the university’s Title IX office and sexual-violence-prevention programs, said that since the Brock Turner case was thrust into the spotlight, fear of media attention has become one of the most common reasons that students are reluctant to report a sexual assault.

Asked whether Stanford’s statistics show any change in sexual-assault reporting, given the recent uptick in media coverage, Ms. Schoenthaler said it’s difficult to document students’ fears about publicity through numbers. (The number of reports has increased annually over the past three years, according to data Stanford has reported under the Clery Act, though it’s unclear whether more reports mean a higher reporting rate or a higher number of incidents.)

But Ms. Schoenthaler said she is hearing from two sources — the university’s confidential support team for victims and her staff in the Title IX office — that students are worried about publicity.

Students wonder, "is there a chance that if I share this information with the university or with the police, even if I do so anonymously — will my family be reading about the worst night of my life over their morning coffee in the newspaper?" she said.

Mahroh Jahangiri, executive director of Know Your IX, a network of campus survivors and advocates, has heard such concerns from victims she’s worked with...
before. But she’s skeptical that college officials who argue that public attention is chilling reporting have victims’ best interests at heart.

When it comes to sexual violence, colleges tend to err on the side of less transparency, Ms. Jahangiri said. Colleges should be making basic information about sexual assault public, she said, including nonidentifiable aggregate data about reports received and the timelines of investigations. But most institutions don’t.

Federal and state laws already protect the privacy of individuals, including names and identifying information, said Laura Dunn, executive director of SurvJustice, a nonprofit group that provides legal assistance to campus sexual-assault victims. So as long as colleges are taking the steps required by law and redacting such information from all documents related to a Title IX investigation, they’re in the clear, she said.

"When there is a lack of transparency," Ms. Dunn said, "exactly one party benefits and that’s the institution."

Ms. Schoenthaler stressed that Stanford takes responsibility "for all of the ways that we are managing sexual assault on campus." Last year, the university invested an additional $2.7 million in its sexual-assault prevention programs, she said.

**Limits on Information**

Public attention on campus sexual violence often leads to the biggest changes in college policy, state policy, and federal policy. And going to the press is the primary mechanism outside of a lawsuit for students to hold institutions accountable, Ms. Dunn said.

But transparency around sexual-assault cases should have limits, many anti-rape activists say. When journalists obtain documents like Title IX complaints and campus investigation reports, they should be cautious about publishing intimate details of assaults, these activists say — advising that reporters should first try to talk to the victims involved.

Alexandra Brodsky, a cofounder of Know Your IX and a fellow at the National Women’s Law Center, questioned whether public colleges should release full investigation reports — even redacted ones — if journalists file records requests. That could chill sexual-assault reporting, she said.

"I can’t imagine what it would be like for every survivor to know that if he or she reported, that was going to make it into the campus paper," she said.
Frank LoMonte, executive director of the nonprofit Student Press Law Center, said any document kept as a business record of a public college should be accessible to the public, unless there is an overriding reason to withhold all or part of it.

"The concern voiced by victims is not to have lurid or sensational details aired in the media," he said, "but that’s not an all-or-nothing proposition." It’s possible, he said, for colleges to protect victim privacy while producing the vast majority of the record.

"There is definitely a public interest in knowing the nature of these offenses, which necessarily requires knowing some of the details," he said.

Mr. LoMonte pointed out that the former Kentucky professor had been accused of both off-color language and unwanted touching of students, allegations the professor has denied. The former is problematic, but the latter is an actual crime, Mr. LoMonte said. "If all the public knows is that a guy lost his job" following an investigation of alleged "sexual harassment," he said, "that’s not an adequate level of detail."

Ms. Brodsky suggested that colleges should release — with some time delay — basic information about each case, such as factors that were considered, the range of sanctions that were considered, and an explanation for the final outcome.

In some cases, even when names and identifying information are redacted, the detail included in a news story might be enough for some readers to identify the victim, perpetrator, and witnesses, Ms. Dunn said.

Sometimes it can’t be avoided, she added: If campus-safety officials at a small college send out a timely warning about an assault, chances are many students and local journalists can deduce additional information, no matter how vague the message is. "Everyone knew what party was happening that night and who left upset," Ms. Dunn said.

In sexual-assault cases, there are always tradeoffs that must be made between the First Amendment and confidentiality, said Michele Dauber, a law professor at Stanford who helped lead efforts to revise the university’s sexual-assault policy. She has also spearheaded a campaign to recall the judge who handed down Brock Turner’s sentence.

Ms. Dauber said she’s in favor of transparency, "within limits to protect survivor privacy."

"Students need to understand that these offenses are happening on their campus," she said. As long as journalists are following their ethical guidelines, she said, "I don’t believe it is appropriate to attack the press."