Foley praised, panned as candidate for chancellor during search committee forum

At the forum held by the University of Missouri Chancellor Search Committee, senior engineering student Chris Trunell said members won’t have to look far to find the ideal candidate, endorsing interim Chancellor Hank Foley for the job.

Trunell spoke about 40 minutes into the forum where co-chairs Leo Morton, chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Elizabeth Loboa, dean of engineering, led approximately 150 people through a discussion of the attributes needed in a chancellor.

Trunell worked with Foley over the summer on a project to raise awareness of MU’s status in the American Association of Universities and how that tied into its mission as a land grant institution, he said. Foley embodies the characteristics identified during the forum and his selection would mean stability, Trunell said.

“I believe he is the perfect candidate, and I don’t believe the search is very far from where we are right now,” Trunell said.

The university is seeking a new permanent chancellor to replace R. Bowen Loftin, who was pushed out along with then-President Tim Wolfe in November 2015. Foley, vice president for economic development, was selected to take the job during the search, which commenced soon after Mun Choi, provost at the University of Connecticut, was selected as permanent president.

Foley wrote that he wanted the job on a permanent basis in an email to the campus after the selection of Isaacson Miller Inc. to lead the search.

Unlike the Presidential Search Committee, which included all members of the Board of Curators, the 22-member Chancellor Search Committee is not subject to the Sunshine Law and does not need to post meeting notices or engage in open discussions, UM System spokesman John Fougere said Wednesday.

Morton and Loboa said after the forum that they have no problem with doing their work in secret. Documents compiling the comments at the forum, as well as materials prepared by the search firm will be posted online but the committee will not hold open meetings or discussions.
“I think it is important that the committee members feel comfortable doing things in an environment where they can feel free to provide advice and receive counsel from others,” Morton said.

The committee’s first meeting, where they heard from Choi and interim President Mike Middleton, was held after the forum. The Tribune was barred from the meeting when a reporter attempted to enter the room.

“It is not our belief that this is open to the Sunshine Law,” said Tim McIntosh of the system human resources department.

At the end of the forum, Middleton explained why the names of potential candidates should remain secret. A decision to make names public at some point before a selection is made could limit the pool of candidates, he said.

“It is very difficult to have some candidate identified as a candidate while holding a position as a president or chancellor at some other university,” Middleton said.

During the forum, the committee heard suggestions that the new chancellor be in tune with change while rooted in tradition, have a vision for innovation, be open, accessible and interested in collaboration, understand the needs of a medical school and health system, promote MU’s role in research and be an advocate for the university.

“I am looking also for somebody who is courageous without being reckless and somebody who is bold who is also not brash,” said Diane Dahlman, director of recreation services and facilities.

During the discussion, graduate student Alex Howe said he’s not convinced Foley is the right candidate. He had heard a call for someone skilled in shared governance and able to bring all campus groups together, Howe said. The forum identified calm decision making, team building and an ability to listen, he said.

“To find those character traits in a new chancellor, we would need to look a little farther than just what we’ve got right now,” Howe said.

The search is just starting, so it is likely to be several months before a selection is made. The search committee was to be given a schedule for its work during the afternoon meeting, Morton said. He said it is wrong to focus on the process and whether it is open.

“The end point is to get the best possible person we can to lead this university, now and into the future,” he said. “And the question is, what is the process that will allow you to do that best. At the end of the day, we want to be able to assure, that no matter what, we have found the best possible person to fill that position.”
University of Missouri says chancellor search committee not subject to Sunshine Law

The University of Missouri Chancellor Search Committee held a public forum Thursday ahead of its first formal meeting, but the university did not publish a meeting notice or post an agenda.

That’s because the university believes the search committee is not subject to the Sunshine Law, UM System spokesman John Fougere wrote in an email to the Tribune.

After several requests, Fougere gave the time and location of the meeting — 1 p.m. in the T.O. Wright Room of the Reynolds Alumni Center. But as an advisory committee that will not recommend policies or how the university should spend money, it does not fall under the Sunshine Law’s definition of a public governmental body, Fougere wrote.

Asked whether the expense of maintaining a chancellor qualifies as spending money, Fougere wrote that the university has decided it does not.

“‘The university will pay a new chancellor regardless of who the committee recommends,’” Fougere wrote. “‘The statute refers to committees that advise on expenditures, not those that advise on selection of personnel.’”

Interim President Mike Middleton named the 22 members of the search committee in late December. The co-chairs are Leo Morton, chancellor of University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Elizabeth Loboa, dean of the College of Engineering. The committee is seeking a permanent replacement for R. Bowen Loftin, who resigned in November 2015 along with former UM System president Tim Wolfe. University of Connecticut Provost Mun Choi has been hired to replace Wolfe on a permanent basis.

The Sunshine Law requires public governmental bodies to conduct most of their business in open session. Meeting notices, with agendas, must be posted at least 24 hours in advance unless an emergency arises. Closed meetings are allowed, but only for limited reasons after an open vote to enter closed session.

Because the university does not consider the panel to be subject to the Sunshine Law, it will not post meeting notices or agendas in advance or hold open meetings.
The search committee established to select a new university president worked under the Sunshine Law requirements because all members of the Board of Curators also were members of the search committee. Much of its early work, discussing the qualities and experience needed in a president, were held in open session.

The decision to conduct all the Chancellor Search Committee’s business in private is questionable, said Jean Maneke, a Kansas City attorney who advises the Missouri Press Association on open meeting and records issues.

“I think that UM officials have always been extremely talented at walking in the shadows of the language of the Sunshine Law,” Maneke said.

The law can’t cover every possible reason for having advisory committees and the distinction between recommending a person to hire and the salary that person would draw is one area that isn’t clear, Maneke said.

“People have intent when they draft the law, but often that intent isn’t fully reflected in what the words say,” she said.

Curators Chairman Maurice Graham said he was not aware the university considered the panel exempt from the Sunshine Law. To understand the decision, he said, he would have to speak with UM General Counsel Steve Owens.

“At this point, I am not in a position to say” whether the decision is correct, Graham said.

Listening, communication skills top wish list for next MU chancellor

ANDREW KESSEL, 11 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — MU's next chancellor should be able to communicate effectively and show a willingness to listen to, and understand, the concerns of faculty, staff and students.

Those were key messages to the committee charged with searching for a permanent successor to former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. The listening session in the Reynolds Alumni Center was
for members of the campus community to share what qualities and job experience they think the next chancellor should have.

Speakers refrained from drawing direct lines to previous administrators, but the need to do better was a consistent thread.

Kristofferson Culmer, a doctoral student in computer science and former president of the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students, argued that some of the incidents that have drawn controversy to MU in recent years could have been avoided if the administration had paid better attention to what students were saying.

When looking at candidates, the committee should "avoid someone who comes in and says, 'I know how to fix this,'" and select someone who knows how to listen, Culmer said.

Undergraduate Chris Trunell, who worked as an analyst in Interim Chancellor Hank Foley's office last summer, suggested where the search committee might look for its new chancellor: 105 Jesse Hall, the chancellor's office. "Honestly, I think he's sitting at the desk right now," Trunell said of Foley, who has served as interim since shortly after Loftin's resignation in November 2015.

Trunell, a senior, said that since he came to MU, he has seen three chancellors. In his view, Foley has shown he can do the job and comes with the added benefit of continuity. Foley has expressed interest in dropping the interim from his title, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Other topics included the importance of collaborating with industry and the need for the new chancellor to advocate for the campus effectively. One attendee said that in today's political climate, MU needs someone who "knows when to tweet and when not to tweet."

The 22-member search committee is made up of faculty from various departments, staff, alumni and two students. Leo Morton, chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and Elizabeth Loboa, dean of the MU College of Engineering, are co-chairs.
Morton and Loboa said that they felt positively about the meeting and that it reaffirms what they've heard at previous listening sessions with graduate students, the Mizzou Alumni Association, the MU Faculty Council and others.

"It was good to hear the reassurance that the way we're starting to look at it is right," Morton said. "And that gives us more confidence that we're going about this the right way."

Doctoral candidate Alex Howe shared a similar opinion. He's interacted with Foley, he said, but is eager to see the results of a national search.

"We can afford to dream big on this one," he said.

Later Thursday, University of Missouri System Interim President Mike Middleton and President-designate Mun Choi met with the committee — Middleton in person and Choi by telepresence — to give them the official charge for the search, UM spokesman John Fougere confirmed.

The expected plan is that the committee will provide two or three recommendations, with the ultimate decision up to Choi, Middleton said.

No more public listening sessions are planned.

No timeline for MU chancellor search, public forum held Thursday


The MU chancellor search public forum wrapped up Thursday afternoon at Mizzou.
Members of the University of Missouri Chancellor Search committee led the forum, where members of the public shared what they hope to see in a future chancellor.

A microphone was passed around the room and more than a dozen people shared their input. Their ideas were recorded by a note taker and then displayed on a projector to ensure everyone's thoughts were properly captured and understood.

Students, staff, alumni and leaders within the community all spoke about their hopes for the new MU chancellor.

"I think that they have to have a chancellor that has the ability to get along, that is a leader, that has experience working with an extremely diverse constituency...so they have to be able to interact with a broad diverse group of people on a broad diverse group of subjects, and I think, hopefully, that came through to the committee," Kee Groshong, former Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services told ABC 17 News after the forum.

Right now, there is no timeline for the search.

"We will certainly have a schedule, but again, we want to get the best possible person," Leo Morton, Chancellor at University of Missouri, Kansas City and search committee co-chair told ABC 17 News.

Currently, Hank Foley is serving as interim chancellor after former MU chancellor Bowen Loftin resigned in November 2015 following protests on campus. Foley has expressed interest in the position, but another search committee co-chair said the search is still necessary.

"For institutions such as ours, doing these types of national searches are really what should be done and it is typically, and at the end of the day you want the best person in the position so I think it's the right thing to do," Elizabeth Loboa, Dean of College of Engineering at MU and Professor of Bioengineering, told ABC 17 News. "Of course we really appreciate interim chancellor Foley's leadership at this time at MU so if he applies...then absolutely he would be considered along with any exceptional candidates."

The search committee will eventually present recommendations to UM System President Dr. Mun Choi, and Dr. Choi will ultimately choose the next MU chancellor.

The university says they will post any updates to the search here.
Open forum shows community hopes for a strong leader in new MU chancellor

The MU chancellor search committee held an open forum Thursday to gain insight on what students, faculty, staff and alumni want to see in the new chancellor.

The forum focused on what members of the community want to see as far as demonstrated experience, leadership characteristics and key focus areas for the new chancellor. The room was filled with several dozen faculty and staff members, as well as a few graduate and undergraduate students.

Open forums, such as this one, constitute the second step in the process of hiring a chancellor, after the establishment of the committee. The next steps involve recruitment, screening and selection.

“The current plan is for the committee to come up with two or three finalists and, at that point, [UM System President-designate] Dr. Choi will make the selection,” Interim UM System President Mike Middleton said. “But I am certain he will respect the recommendations of the search committee to the extent [that the] search committee suggests a preference. We want this to be a process that really is driven by all of the constituency at Mizzou.”

Elizabeth Loboa, co-chair of the search committee and dean of the College of Engineering, explained the goals of forums such as Thursday’s.

“Currently we’re in the midst of very deep and thoughtful listening sessions,” Loboa said. “The purpose of those meetings is to fully understand the challenges and the opportunities that await the next MU chancellor, as well as identify the traits to be successful.”

Many faculty and staff members present expressed concerns about how a new chancellor would approach issues that are highly prevalent at MU, including budgeting, student governance and overall leadership.

“I think there needs to be somebody who has demonstrated experience with doing more with less,” said Peter Wilden, associate professor at the MU School of Medicine.

There was an overwhelming sense of agreement among those present that the new chancellor must be someone who is a team player who listens to the requests of students, staff and faculty.
“I’m looking for somebody who is courageous without being reckless and somebody who is bold without being brash,” said Diane Dahlman, Executive Director of the MU Student Recreation Complex, at the forum.

There is no decision yet on whether the selection process will be closed or open, which would mean the public will know who is vying for the position of chancellor. However, if the choice were up to Middleton, it would be open.

“On a personal level, I agree [that the search should be open], but I won’t be in a position to make that decision,” Middleton said. “It is very difficult to have some candidates identify themselves publicly as candidates when they are holding presidency or chancellorship at another university.”

**UM curators might be shorthanded for financial discussions**

The University of Missouri Board of Curators will be short-handed again when it meets Feb. 9 to discuss finances — and possibly set tuition rates — unless Gov. Eric Greitens fills the five vacancies that will exist when the board meets.

The meeting will have major business to conduct, discussing the $31.4 million Greitens cut from campus operations and system administration and whether to increase tuition in response. The February meeting, which will be held in Columbia, is traditionally the meeting when tuition and fees are set for the coming year.

As few as six curators, including two serving beyond the expiration of their terms, could be on hand for the meeting.

“I have a conference on this and some other issues the early part of the week,” curators Chairman Maurice Graham said Thursday. “We are working on exactly what you are taking about. Quite frankly, we are waiting to find out about our new curators.”

Graham said he has not spoken to Greitens about the vacancies. He has heard, he said, that Greitens is “making appointments a high priority, and I am personally hopeful we will know something in time for us to have at least some of the new curators on board by the February meeting.”
Then-Gov. Jay Nixon appointed three curators in June after state Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, said he would not consider any appointments from the Democratic governor during the 2016 legislative session. One of those curators, Mary Nelson of St. Louis, resigned her seat Jan. 9, the day Greitens took office.

Nelson did not give a reason for resigning in her letter to Nixon.

“In the short term of my tenure, I attempted to keep the best interests of the citizens of this state — and in particular, the current and future students of the System — first and foremost in every decision,” she wrote. “I remain convinced that the System is Missouri’s single largest asset, and that it will determine the economic vitality of this state in ways no single business ever will.”

Of the other two, Jon Sundvold of Columbia was serving a term that expired Jan. 1 and Thomas Voss of Eureka was appointed to a term ending Jan. 1, 2021. Under the Missouri Constitution, if the appointments are not confirmed or withdrawn by the end of next week, Sundvold and Voss cannot be appointed to the board in the future.

The terms of two other curators, Pam Henrickson of Jefferson City and Donald Cupps of Cassville, expired Jan. 1. They can continue to act until their successors are appointed and confirmed, UM System spokesman John Fougere said.

Five of the full board of nine curators are required to have a quorum to conduct business, Fougere said.

Parker Briden, spokesman for Greitens, did not respond to messages seeking comment about whether Greitens will make appointments in time for Senate confirmation before the Feb. 9 meeting.

The curators may increase tuition by 0.7 percent for the current year and by 2.1 percent for the fall semester under Missouri’s law limiting tuition increases. The State Technical College of Missouri, already has approved a midyear tuition increase in response to Greitens’ cuts. Many others are considering whether to seek a waiver of the tuition cap for the fall, a legislative committee was told this week.

The cuts certainly will be part of the board’s discussions, but it is too early to determine whether tuition will be on the agenda, Fougere said.

“There is still some discussion of that,” he said. “Obviously, we are having discussions among leadership about our strategy going forward, and I would expect it to be part of the discussion in some fashion.”

Graham wants the board to have regular discussions of critical issues, and the first will focus on finance, he wrote in an email. The discussion will cover historic trends in funding and how to operate in the face of long-term state financial constraints.
“We know that the state of Missouri is facing significant financial issues and that because of that, we have to realize we are a part of that equation,” he said. “We need to continue to focus on our mission of providing the best and most affordable education that we can.”

MU Center for Agroforestry hosts medicinal plant symposium

DAPHNE PSALEDAKIS, 16 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Newcomers and veterans to medicinal plants gathered Thursday at the MU Agroforestry Symposium to discuss an industry that's gaining ground in interest and sales.

Some people attended to learn the basics of growing and sustaining medicinal plants. Others had been working with medicinal plants for years, using them to craft anti-itch salves, health drinks and other products created with the benefits of plant healing.

"People have been using herbal remedies for thousands of years," Shibu Jose, director of the MU Center for Agroforestry, said. "Based on indigenous knowledge handed down through generations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and in many European countries, 70 to 95 percent of the population still uses traditional medicine or herbal medicine for primary healthcare."

Jamie Jackson, founder of Missouri Herbs, a company that produces natural and organic herbal products for the face and body, is well acquainted with the benefits of medicinal plants.

Jackson became ill and didn't respond to her prescribed medication, so she turned to medicinal plants for healing. After gathering knowledge about their properties, Jackson said she was able to heal herself.
Armed with that knowledge, Jackson decided to create a line of natural face and body skincare products that were free of preservative ingredients.

"We bought one of the most expensive skin creams on the market, and it had propylene glycol in it, which is antifreeze," Jackson said.

Jackson grows the herbs used in the products at Falcon Creek Farm in the Missouri Ozarks and harvests them with the help of Richard Sherman, who also attended the symposium. Jackson said she creates topical products, rather than extracts, with those plants to educate people about the beneficial properties of the herbs without involving the Food and Drug Administration.

Jackson wasn't the only one at the Symposium with experience growing medicinal plants for salves. Rachel Liester of Stanton County in Nebraska grows herbs that she uses in salves and sells at Whole Foods in Omaha and Lincoln.

"I've actually been studying native plants and their healing and food properties for about 20 years," Liester said. "It's not something a scientist has to do or an herbalist has to do. You can pick some lemon balm leaves right from your garden, make a cup of tea, and it's going to help your digestion. It's going to help you relax, and it's also an antidepressant. Who doesn't need that nowadays?"

Liester teaches others about the growing and harvesting of herbs and how to make medicine with those herbs. She teaches at her farm, local colleges and businesses. She also has a class coming up at the local art center, with around 10 people in each class.

Dennis Bettenhausen came to the forum on medicinal plants from five miles east of Columbia in hopes of learning more about moringa, a tropical plant. He said he is interested growing the plant for health benefits.

The symposium, hosted by the MU Center for Agroforestry, is held annually and focuses on a different theme each year. In previous years, topics have included climate change and pollination.
The center for agroforestry decided to focus on medicinal plants this year because of ongoing research projects at MU into the different compounds and properties of the plants, as well as increasing interest in the industry, said agroforestry education and outreach coordinator Gregory Ormsby Mori.

"A recent report indicates that the global market for all these medicinal plants and natural products, could reach up to $115 billion by 2020," Jose said. "So the growing market presents a great opportunity for our landowners to cultivate these plants intentionally, as part of agroforestry settings here in the US or elsewhere in the world."

Nicklaus: Ban on Russian investments would hurt Missouri more than the Kremlin

Russia’s stock market may not be the world’s most stable, but it was one of last year’s best performers. Rising oil prices pushed the country’s main index up 51 percent in dollar terms.

Maybe Missouri’s pension managers should be congratulated, then, for having exposure to such a hot market. Instead, state Sen. Maria Chappelle-Nadal, D-University City, wants to force them to sell.

Her bill, which would prohibit public investments in any company doing business in Russia, follows an unfortunate Missouri tradition of using pensions to fight political battles.

Last year the demagoguery came from Sen. Eric Schmitt, a Republican who’s now the state treasurer. He wanted to ban pension investments in companies that did business in Iran and Sudan.
Schmitt didn’t like President Barack Obama’s nuclear deal with Iran. Chappelle-Nadal is upset about Russia’s apparent role in hacking the Democratic National Committee’s emails.

Apparently some of our lawmakers weren’t paying attention in civics class. In our federal system, the U.S. government handles foreign policy. States are supposed to stick to matters within their borders.

Obama punished Russia for the hacking scandal, but his sanctions did not include an investment ban. U.S. citizens are free to buy stuff like the VanEck Vectors Russia Small-Cap exchange-traded fund (up 105 percent last year), and pension funds should have the same flexibility.

However politically appealing an investment ban might sound, such a move wouldn’t hurt Russia.

“The value of an investment is determined in markets by the value of its future cash flows, and if one pension fund divests, someone else will purchase,” says Jeffrey Brown, a finance professor at the University of Illinois. “Yes, there may be a short-term effect on stock prices, but not a long-term effect from the mere act of one investor selling.”

The Missouri funds, meanwhile, would be a little less diversified. If a money manager wants to mirror the global energy industry, for example, it wouldn’t be wise to omit Russian giants Gazprom and Rosneft.

“Any time one imposes limitations on portfolio choice, it restricts a fund’s ability to pursue the highest possible expected return per unit of risk,” Brown says.

Not that anyone in Missouri is making an outsized bet on Russia. The $39 billion Public Schools Retirement System has $118.4 million invested in Russian companies, or just 0.3 percent of the fund. The Missouri State Employees Retirement System and the University of Missouri pension fund have similarly tiny percentages in Russia, totaling $17.6 million.
Steve Yoakum, the public schools fund’s executive director, echoes Brown’s point about diversification. “Anytime you reduce your opportunity set, chances are you are going to reduce your returns or increase your risk,” he said.

The pension funds already have policies that forbid investing in companies that are subject to U.S. sanctions or are found to have ties to terrorism. They rely on lists from the Treasury and State departments, and Yoakum said he didn’t recall having to sell any investment because of such a designation.

A blanket ban on an entire country would have a much bigger effect. A strict reading of Chappelle-Nadal’s bill might even rule out Exxon Mobil, which has extensive projects in Russia.

Trying to keep up with the stock market without being allowed to own one of its largest companies would be like running a NASCAR race on three tires. The result wouldn’t be pretty.

Fortunately, Schmitt’s bill went nowhere in last year’s Legislature. Both taxpayers and public employees can hope Chappelle-Nadal’s proposal meets the same fate.

At Howard U., Anti-Trump Protests Echo Past Activism

By Alex Arriaga January 27, 2017

On the first morning of Senate confirmation hearings this month for Sen. Jeff Sessions, President Trump’s nominee for attorney general, the Alabama Republican was struggling to deliver his opening remarks over interruptions from protesters. Meanwhile, across the hall from the hearings, demonstrators were protesting his nomination by staging a sit-in inside Mr. Sessions’ office.
Jacquelyn Grant, president of Howard University’s chapter of the NAACP, was among them. She presented a demand to Mr. Sessions’ staff: Unless he resigned from the nomination or Mr. Trump withdrew it, the protesters would leave only if removed by force.

"I mean, you have a person who couldn’t even become a federal judge because of the racist remarks that he made — now wants to become an attorney general," Ms. Grant said in an interview later. She was referring to a controversy in 1986, when Mr. Sessions was denied a judgeship after facing accusations that he had made racially insensitive comments. "It was something that we could not stand for," she said. "We were aware there could be consequences."

There were. Among the protesters arrested that day, five were Howard students, including Ms. Grant, a junior. The students were held for several hours, and released periodically throughout the evening. Some face charges of unlawful entry, to which they pleaded not guilty this week.

Inequity in Higher Education: Campus Racial Tensions

The shooting of Michael Brown in August 2014 highlighted racial tensions in Ferguson, Mo., and students demonstrated on campuses in nearby St. Louis. Across the country, minority students began questioning inequities at colleges. Read The Chronicle’s coverage of these tensions, and efforts to resolve them, on campuses around the United States.

Alvin Thornton, a professor of political science who has been at Howard for 38 years, said that acts of civil disobedience were to be expected from students at the historically black college. After all, Howard "as an institution is a form of protest," he said.

Founded in 1867, the university took its name from a Union general in the Civil War who later played a key role in helping former slaves integrate into American society. Howard’s mission was to give educational opportunities to recently freed African-Americans. Howard students and professors have since established a tradition of political protest.

In the first half of the 20th century they fought Jim Crow laws and demonstrated in support of anti-lynching laws. Later, a wave of student activism crested during the civil-rights era. More recently, 300 Howard students, their hands raised, formed one of the first campus protests of the shooting, in 2014, of Michael Brown, an African-American teenager, by a policeman in Ferguson, Mo.

"This didn’t start with the nomination of Mr. Sessions," Mr. Thornton said. "It’s important to contextualize this responsibility of our students to be the vanguard of people that are still very vulnerable in our democracy."

Legacy of Activism

The demonstration at Mr. Sessions’ office was not Ms. Grant’s introduction to activism at Howard.
In the fall of 2015, when the university received an anonymous online death threat that referred to student protests then in progress at the University of Missouri at Columbia, Ms. Grant and others met at an iconic spot on the Howard campus, between a flagpole and a series of steps leading up to Frederick Douglass Memorial Hall.

“We're saying that we're committed to truth and service, but we're also saying that we are patriots in the truest form.”

The choice of location was symbolic, Ms. Grant said: "Frederick Douglass being a pillar in the black community as far as education and resistance, and then the flagpole holding both the American flag and the Howard University flag. We’re saying that we’re committed to truth and service, but we’re also saying that we are patriots in the truest form."

Ms. Grant credits her professors with emphasizing questions of what it means to be black in America. "Whether it be Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, or Sandra Bland, we talk about those things in class," she said.

But she added that Howard’s history of high-profile activism plays a major role in developing students’ sense of civic engagement. Ms. Grant said there was a reason many of the nation’s civil-rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, had paid visits to the Howard campus.

The legacy at Howard includes leaders such as Mordecai Johnson, the university’s first African-American president, a son of two slaves, who spoke alongside King and who traveled throughout the country addressing racism, segregation, and discrimination. Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, studied law at Howard; Stokely Carmichael, a chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee later known as Kwame Ture, was a philosophy major there; and African-American intellectuals such as Toni Morrison and Ta-Nehisi Coates are among the alumni.

"They knew that the student body is not afraid to resist what needs to be resisted," Ms. Grant said. "We’ve never been the type of university where we just silence our dissent."

Ms. Grant said students at Howard were in a unique position to join national protest movements because their campus is so close to the country’s halls of power. "When you’re right there next to the White House, or you’re saying, I’m going to protest on the U.S. Department of Justice steps, that sends a message," she said.

Allyson Carpenter, a senior and president of the Howard University Student Union, was not present when the protesters were arrested in Mr. Sessions’ office, but she helped lead conversations between the student union and the campus chapter of the NAACP that evolved into the protest. She was motivated by the senator’s mixed record on voting rights.
"Our students see Senator Sessions as a threat to the things that we believe are important," said Ms. Carpenter, a political-science major. "Our students are passionate about this because of the values that our university instilled in us."

Devon J. Crawford, a graduate student in divinity at the University of Chicago who graduated from Morehouse College, an all-male, historically black institution in Atlanta, went to the police station where the arrested students were being held that night as an NAACP organizer. "What we saw was the best of our HBCU traditions, which is to raise our voices in civil disobedience in order to advocate for the most vulnerable in our society," Mr. Crawford said. "This will only be, I believe, a catalyst for other students at HBCUs and all around the country."

Ms. Grant said the efforts would continue. "We had the spotlight for 15 minutes, but in the 16th minute, we’ll still be working," she said. "We’ll still be in our communities making sure we’re educating, making sure we’re mobilizing, making sure that we uplift our community as a whole."

The People’s Inauguration

One form of uplift occurred at an African Methodist Episcopal Church, a few blocks from the White House, on the Saturday after Mr. Trump’s inauguration. There, before the Women’s March on Washington kicked off, students from Howard and NAACP chapters of other colleges held a rally called the People’s Inauguration.

One speaker at the rally, the Rev. Stephen A. Green, national director for the NAACP’s youth and college division, advises and supervises about 300 youth and college chapters embracing about 30,000 members. Howard was the first college to start its own NAACP chapter, and it led the groups representing the NAACP at the Sessions protest.

Mr. Green said the People’s Inauguration rally was planned immediately after the election. "We decided that we needed to do something inauguration weekend to develop a ‘what’s next’ strategy," he said.

A theme of the day’s discussion: What does leadership in resistance look like?

Mr. Green told students they were among a "renaissance of leaders emerging" as a baton is passed from an older generation of activists — like Rep. John Lewis, a leader of the first March on Washington — to a new cohort on campuses.

They are ‘the first line of defense for black millennials in America because of their proximity to power.’

"I’ve had a conversation with them about them being the first line of defense for black millennials in America because of their proximity to power, and I think they have harnessed that and are really embracing it as part of their burden and blessing," Mr. Green said.
At the rally, Symone D. Sanders, formerly the press secretary for Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the Democratic presidential candidate, told attendees she was reminded of the leadership role students took in fighting apartheid in South Africa. "It was black people on college campuses all over America, historically black colleges, who were organizing their campuses," said Ms. Sanders, who is not related to the senator.

Glenn Vaulx, a Howard sophomore who attended the People’s Inauguration, called it a moment that reflected the history of activism on Howard’s campus. He said he and his classmates were constantly reminded of student leaders in previous generations, and were encouraged to revive that legacy for today’s issues.

"I’m very proud to be a part of that," he said, "and to be a student at the school."