THE TRIBUNE'S VIEW

Middleton did more than hang in there

Since November 2015 the good ship UM/MU has been buffeted by a perfect storm of student protest and allegations of campus ineptitude. What started as a seemingly ordinary student protest escalated into a full-blown assault against campus and system management, fueling in the University of Missouri football team, the Missouri General Assembly, MU faculty, the media and random observers throughout the community, state and nation.

The UM System president and MU campus chancellor resigned. UM curators were caught off-base. The ship lurched perilously close to a rocky shoreline with nobody at the helm.

At that moment the opportunity to become interim president of the University of Missouri System was the most enticing in American higher education, right? Not exactly.

Mike Middleton had retired as dean in the MU chancellor’s office after a long career on the MU law school faculty and time spent working on civil rights issues. He and his wife, Julie, were highly regarded on campus and beyond. Curators recognized Middleton would be an excellent candidate to fill the gap; blessedly for the institution and the state, he agreed.

It’s hard to overestimate the difficulty of the position Middleton assumed. The only thing he had going for him was his good reputation and the sense among supporters that there was no place to go but up. Against him was an array of political and attitudinal obstacles. The campus was caught in a maelstrom of racial discontent. Black students were protesting. Black football players threatened to boycott the remaining games in the ongoing season. Resistance of university managers to immediately punish a white faculty member for siding with the protest triggered a popular backlash extending into the state legislature.

The public mood resembled that of a lynch mob, but whom would the mob attack? Citizens were mad at protesting students, football players and their coach, faculty leaders — and campus administrators were gone. The conflict somehow had remained nonviolent, but how would you like to inherit this wind?

When Middleton decided to do this final deed for the university he loved, he had to prove his intentions and credibility to all sides at once. He assured students he would listen to their concerns and recognized the need to react seriously but urged them to be reasonable and patient. He assured legislators, curators and the public he would assert management prerogatives and keep the ship off the rocks. He named new officers dedicated to improving cultural diversity and inclusion. Everybody on campus knew the days of ignoring harassment were gone.

Within months, the University of Missouri became an example for the nation how to handle the most frustrating kinds of problems facing higher education today. Middleton managed while the curators did a national search and hired a new president. Today is Mike’s last day. When new President Mun Choi arrives Wednesday, he will find a functional landscape rather than a ravished battlefield.

He will have Mike Middleton primarily to thank. Today’s atmosphere on large college campuses is a potentially toxic brew of Title IX politics involving gender, race and disability. With every new official accommodation comes pushback from a segment of the population generally disdainful of higher education campuses and their attempts to satisfy “spoiled” students in particular.

But here’s the good news. Through it all, since Concerned Student 1950 launched its protest, public affection for the university and MU is sustained. The future is challenging but not essentially because of new issues raised by the protests.

No doubt interim President Middleton often was tired and frustrated and even hurt by unfair criticism, but when he contemplates his work over the past year, he should be satisfied. He got up every day, put on his shirt and tie, and marched into the battle zone. This was a daunting prospect, but Mike is gentle and kind and tough and smart, and once again he succeeded.

HJW III
**Millennials seek expanded job roles**


**Story Generated from News Bureau press release:** ‘Values Gap’ in Workplace Can Lead Millennials to Look Elsewhere

By Chris Joseph

COLUMBIA — **There is a significant "values gap" between employers and the millennials who work for them, according to a new MU study.**

Researchers conducted interviews with textile and apparel industry workers. The majority of those interviewed were millennials, individuals who have come of age since the turn of the century.

"A number of people brought up the fact they wished their employer just allowed them more opportunity that might not be in their dominant job role," researcher Rachel LoMonaco-Benzing said.

The workers wanted flexibility to address issues in the industry, she said.

Efforts to do that were often rebuffed by co-workers and managers who said it wasn't part of their job role, the study found. LoMonaco-Benzing said older employees would often give up pursuing those interests, while millennials were more likely to leave for a company that would allow them the flexibility.

"If they were given the free reign for the small percentage of their job role, then they would feel more apt to be loyal to that employer," she said.

A 2016 Gallup report showed 21 percent of millennials surveyed said they had changed jobs within the previous year.
KOMU 8 News talked to local millennials in the apparel and food industry and found they highly valued flexibility in job roles and employers with an open mind.

"We have a lot of flexibility — it's kind've left up to our judgment how we want go out about it," said Sophie Angell, a stylist at Envy in Columbia. "People a lot of time will ask for our help which is more fun, because that's what we're there for."

Grace Callis, a sales associate at Breeze in Columbia, also said she has "complete freedom" on the sales floor to work with customers to meet their needs and correct any issues.

"I like to feel like I'm being useful. If I feel like I can make just a quick decision like that then it keeps me from standing around and just feeling like I'm taking up space."

Both Angell and Callis said they enjoyed a friendly relationship with their managers and feel comfortable talking to them about any issues.

Millenial desire for flexibility is not just limited to retail. Kelly Walsh, a millennial who works as a manager at Babbo's Spaghetteria in Columbia, said she tries to give her millennial employees opportunities to change things up.

"I like to be flexible, let them kind of do what they want, maybe switch some things around with some of our plates, if we can allow that for the evening," Walsh said.

Alec Hartley, a server at Babbo's Spaghetteria, said he values the ability to discuss and address issues he sees in the restaurant.

"If you find something that you don't think is jelling with the whole company, if we did this a little bit differently they're definitely willing to listen," Hartley said.

He said he also appreciates his managers are only a text away.

LoMonaco-Benzing said it's important for older employers to ask potential employees about their values as millennials continue to enter the work force.

"It can give them a better idea how to modify culture or policies going forward," she said.
There’s no denying it: Millennials are changing the way we do business—forever. And for an “older” Gen X-er like myself, I can’t wait to see what they come up with next!

But, I may be a minority in my thinking, when it comes to the admiration I have for this younger generation and how they view the workplace. Many Baby Boomers and Generation X employers are struggling to connect with the employees half their age. This older workforce believes strongly in loyalty and commitment to a job—no matter what—and for Millennials, sticking with something they don’t believe in is not one of their core values.

A new study just released out of the University of Missouri-Columbia reveals that the one reason why young workers choose to leave a firm is that they find a disconnect between their beliefs and the culture they observe in the workplace.

“We were interested in workers’ values regarding sustainability and corporate sustainability practices and whether a gap existed,” said Rachel LoMonaco-Benzing, a doctoral student in the MU College of Human Environmental Sciences. “Not only did we find a gap, but we also found that workers were much more likely to leave a job if they felt their values were not reflected in the workplace.”

For the study, LoMonaco-Benzing and Jung Ha-Brookshire, an associate professor of textile and apparel management, and associate dean of research and graduate studies in the MU College of Human Environmental Sciences, respectively, interviewed employees in the textile and apparel
industry involved in corporate supply chains. They found that workers expressed the most frustration if their employers touted a commitment to environmental sustainability publicly but did not follow through.

“Fewer people of this generation are just looking for a paycheck,” Ha-Brookshire said. “They have been raised with a sense of pro-social, pro-environment values, and they are looking to be engaged. If they find that a company doesn’t honor these values and contributions, many either will try to change the culture or find employment elsewhere.”

**How This Affects the Workplace**

This sense of pro-social/pro-environment values they have is empowering many Millennials to take risks and be bold. They are seeing the world through a different lens and want to change it. Their passions and inspirations define what they do for a career and consequently drive many of their workplace decisions. And for a generation that is committed to doing good, they are changing the way we all view the workplace and how we interact with it.

There is an obvious need for businesses to rethink and reshape the way they appeal to this newer generation. According to the study, to attract and retain the best employees, the researchers encourage companies to understand that the new generation of workers has high ethical and social expectations.

And in case the Baby Boomers and Gen X-er’s of my generation need some actual proof that these younger employees are brilliant, creative, and worth hiring, you don’t have to look much further than the hugely successful Millennial companies which have perfected the business of doing good.

Chris Bledsoe, co-founder of Ollie, a start-up devoted to “all inclusive living,” shared with me that his company has a set of core values they always stick to. “What we are doing is meaningful, and we have a mission and conviction to see that this product exists,” he says. “The size of the problem we are solving feels like we are doing something purposeful and that is what matters.”

For Ty Collins, one of the founders of Rad Power Bikes, a direct to consumer electric bike company, the love for what they do is evident in the passion and drive they put forward each and every day. “We get to come to work every day and are surrounded by like-minded people who are just as passionate about ebikes as we are,” says Collins. “Then we get to design, market, and share our passion with the world,” he added.

Claire Coder, founder of Aunt Flow, a buy-one-give-one subscription service box for 100% cotton tampons, has a unique mission: to create a sustainable solution that provides menstrual
hygiene products to people in need. Her core belief: business is about what you are passionate about and believe in. “I understand that tampons won’t solve poverty, but ensuring that women have access to their basic needs is a start,” Claire says.

And then there’s the core belief in sustainability and equality that drives every decision the owners of Jaswig, a stand-up desk company, uses in their business model. Co-founder Mathias Ellegiers says there is one central theme that drives everything they do: “Our philosophy reflects in every aspect of our company, resulting in a durable, human-centered and environmentally-conscious business, products, and relationships.”

And it’s no coincidence this business philosophy directly matches the employee’s personal views of health and sustainability. “Everyone working at Jaswig is an equal human being and has a voice,” says Ellegiers. A philosophy that I’m sure can be echoed by many in this generation.

MU Dr. Tahir Rahman on "This Week"


By Joey Parker

Generated from a MU Health expert pitch

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A Columbia man is in custody, accused of trying to help ISIS plan a terror attack in Missouri.

Although the suspect is innocent until proven guilty, cases such as this raise the question of how a U.S. citizen could possibly become a terrorist.

Dr. Tahir Rahman is an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. He says, “Sometimes people think that the violent actions must be the byproduct of a psychotic mental illness, but that’s not always the case.” That is what he said in reference to a study into the mind Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik.

As our guest for “This Week,” Dr. Rahman says it's often a difficult issue to even discuss.
Columbia groups work to keep annual music festival

By Roger McKinney

About 10,000 students, teachers, parents and other adults will flood onto the University of Missouri campus April 27-29 as they have since 1952 for the state's high school music festival.

From there, they will flood into restaurants, shops and hotels.

But, for the first time, the Missouri State High School Activities Association is seeking proposals for a new location for the event, officially called the State Solo and Small Ensemble Festival, for the next five years. The Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, the University of Missouri School of Music and others are working together on a proposal to keep the music festival at MU.

The bids will be opened in public March 6, said MSHSAA spokesman Jason West. He said that may be followed by visits to the venues to determine what the locations have to offer, and staff will make a recommendation to the MSHSAA board at its meeting April 7-8.

West said MSHSAA Director Kerwin Urhahn has instituted a new "request for proposals" procedure for these types of events.

"The RFP process is fairly new," West said. "Before that, it was a matter of us just reaching out to various venues."

He said MSHSAA is seeking more than a location for the festival, but "an overall package."

"What kind of community support will the event have? Is there proper space for the event? Will the audiences be crowded like sardines, or is there space for everyone?" West asked.

Megan McConachie, spokeswoman for the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the bureau is working with the MU School of Music and local hotels and businesses to put together such a package.
She said the 10,000 student musicians and accompanying adults stay in hotels, shop in stores and eat in restaurants.

"It has a pretty significant impact here in Columbia," McConachie said.

Julia Gaines, director of the MU School of Music, said MSHSAA personnel have been frustrated in the past because they have had to deal with so many people in preparing for the event. The proposal now includes establishing one point of contact.

"This festival is the biggest one we do," Gaines said. "There's not many things that bring so many kids to Columbia."

Gaines said tradition will be important in the proposal, noting parents enjoy returning to campus and are familiar with it.

"I think the most promising thing is we are in the center of the state," Gaines said, adding that most other locations wouldn't be as easy to reach in a few hours.

The cost to the university for the event is difficult to quantify, said Jeff Sossamon, MU spokesman. He said the festival is part of the university's educational mission and School of Music staff duties. He said it also would be difficult to separate service-oriented costs of things such as campus rentals and trash service, which would be occurring with or without the festival.

James Melton, fine arts director for Columbia Public Schools, has been on a committee involved in crafting the proposal. Melton said he recalls traveling to Columbia for the festival as a high school student from Maryville.

Melton said the festival is very convenient for Columbia students. He said other universities might be suitable for the event because of their size, but the fact that Columbia is situated in Central Missouri and MU is in central Columbia makes it ideal.

"I think it's wise for them to be putting it out for bid, but the community is taking it very seriously," Melton said.
These St. Louis charter schools have struggled for 14 years, but continue to evade closure

By Kristen Taketa St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 20 hrs ago

Of the more than 10,400 children who attend charter schools in St. Louis, few perform worse as a group than the 2,800 who attend Confluence Academies.

The network of five schools on four campuses has lagged far behind state averages on Missouri standardized exams throughout its 14-year history.

That kind of persistent failure is supposed to be at odds with the very concept of charter schools. The independently run, publicly funded schools are founded on the idea that, if they fail in their promise to provide a better alternative to traditional public schools, they should be closed.

And yet on Tuesday, Missouri’s Board of Education said it had no choice but to grant the schools a fresh five-year license to operate.

In fact, Missouri law generally gives the board, which is the state’s highest authority in K-12 education, no direct oversight of charter schools. Its role is more about making sure paperwork is complete than it is ensuring students are learning. It’s a reality that makes some board members fume.

“We’ve been baffled. We don’t like what’s going on, but we can’t do anything about it,” state board Vice President Victor Lenz said last week. “We’re tired of having to approve something that obviously shouldn’t be going on.”

So the board voted unanimously to renew Confluence’s charter, but not before spending the better part of an hour scolding its leaders for failing to show satisfactory results after 14 years.
“I come back to almost 3,000 students, some of whom have gone through an entire school generation in failed schools. In failed schools,” state board member Peter Herschend said at the meeting. “And that’s inexcusable.”

**Dependent on sponsors**

When traditional public schools have failed, the Missouri State Board of Education has revoked their accreditation, taken over schools and even shut down an entire district.

But when a charter school shows poor performance, the state board can sanction its sponsor but not the school.

Every Missouri charter school requires a sponsor, usually a university, to operate. Some board members say they can do little more than hope the sponsor either turns the school around or has the sense to close it. In extreme cases, the board can remove a sponsor and prohibit that organization from sponsoring future charter schools. It has never done so.

Sponsors must reapply every five years for the state to renew their schools’ charters, or else be closed off from state funding.

Doug Thaman, executive director of the Missouri Public Charter School Association, said the law is working as it was intended. Limiting the state board’s power, he said, is a deliberate way to ensure charter schools remain independent and free to pursue educational reforms.

“I think it’s an important separation,” Thaman said. “The State Board of Education is not in the business of operating school districts or managing school districts.”

In the 18-year history of charter schools in Missouri, the state counts 21 times when a charter school has closed. The vast majority of those closures happened because the university sponsor revoked its sponsorship.

The two times when the state board did close charter schools happened after sponsors of failing schools handed off sponsorship to the board. That gave the state the authority to close them. Such was the case...
with Imagine Schools, which the state board shuttered in 2012, causing a sudden influx of 3,800 children in St. Louis to other schools.

The state board’s lack of direct oversight authority was evident at last week’s meeting when another charter school applied for a renewal.

The Academy for Integrated Arts, sponsored by the University of Missouri-Kansas City, has just 12 percent of students who passed state math tests, and 32 percent for English.

State board members came up empty when thinking of reasons to keep the 176-student charter school open. And so they voted 3-2, with two members abstaining, against renewing the school’s charter.

Then the board abruptly retreated into a private session to rethink its action.

After returning to the public meeting, the board voted 6-2 to renew the charter, because members knew they would be sued for violating state law if they didn’t, said Mike Jones, the state board’s St. Louis representative.

“At a certain point, you learn to live with these paradoxes, but that doesn’t make it right,” Jones said.

The state board’s frustration on oversight comes as legislators are looking to expand charter schools to counties throughout the state. Currently, charters enroll about 23,000 students only in St. Louis and Kansas City.

**Troubled history at Confluence**

Confluence Academies has continued even as other charter schools with low performance have shuttered.

In 2012, Confluence was under threat of closure when its then-sponsor, Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, placed the school on probation.
That probation was lifted a year later, triggering complaints from the State Board of Education. Confluence gained sponsorship from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2014. Tuesday’s vote marked the third time the State Board has renewed a five-year charter for Confluence.

But even as that vote was cast, board members rebuked Mizzou as the school’s sponsor for what they said was lax oversight. Many directed their comments to Gerry Kettenbach, Mizzou’s director of charter school operations, saying he should have the guts to close Confluence.

“You have the responsibility to make sure they’re doing what they need to do in order to continue,” Lenz said to Kettenbach. “This is 2,900 kids. That’s not something we can take lightly.”

Kettenbach holds to the belief that Confluence is improving and deserves another chance, or at least that closing Confluence would be worse than keeping it open. Kettenbach argued that abruptly closing Confluence would be traumatic, like it was for Imagine students, suddenly leaving 2,800 students without a school.

If Confluence closed, those students might have to attend neighborhood district schools.

“School closures are always the last option,” Kettenbach told the board. “It’s a moral issue. And it’s a public responsibility issue.”

He also claimed a closure would “become a litigious thing,” echoing a complaint by charter-school sponsors that their efforts to revoke sponsorship have been met by lawsuits.

Kettenbach pointed to the hiring of Confluence’s first chief executive, Candice Carter-Oliver, as a promise that the schools will turn a corner. Carter-Oliver was previously an assistant superintendent for the similarly high-poverty, majority-black Normandy School District in north St. Louis County. That district has improved significantly from bottom-level scores in 2014 but still performs as poorly as a provisionally accredited district.

The early years

In many respects, Confluence is a carryover from how charter schools used to be in St. Louis.
In the first years after charter schools opened in St. Louis in 2000, most tended to be large, multi-campus operations managed by for-profit companies, often with questionable reputations.

Most schools from that era have gone extinct amid failing academics and financial woes. Now, building on lessons from that generation, new St. Louis charter schools tend to start and remain small, adding a grade a year, and are run by nonprofits or community members.

Confluence’s first school opened in 2003 in Old North St. Louis with 240 students under the for-profit management of EdisonLearning. At the time, the controversial company was trying to salvage its reputation amid financial failure while managing dozens of other public schools in the country. Nine years later, Confluence severed ties with EdisonLearning.

Confluence grew quickly. After just five years, Confluence had three schools with nearly 2,300 students.

Today, almost all Confluence students are minority children from low-income families. Just 17 percent of students who took state math tests scored proficient or advanced last year, while 32 percent did so for English. The schools’ worst test score is in science, for which just 6 percent of students scored proficient or advanced.

The schools as a group passed just 48.3 percent of the state’s accreditation standards, meaning they fare as poorly as an unaccredited school district.

Even so, school leaders say the score is significantly higher than the 28.3 percent rating in 2013.

Leaders also point out that they serve a high-poverty student population, with Confluence schools outperforming district schools in the neighborhoods where they operate. For example, 33.2 percent of students at Confluence’s Aspire Academy scored proficient or advanced in English, compared to just 10.6 percent for Walbridge Elementary located two blocks away and 15.2 percent at nearby Herzog Elementary.
Parent and Confluence board member Essence Owens is among those who see Confluence as a better alternative to district schools. She said she enrolled her two children at Confluence-Old North largely for the simple chance to choose where her children go to school.

“Just having the choice was the biggest thing,” she said.

**High turnover of teachers**

Carter-Oliver is working on adding Advanced Placement courses — currently Confluence offers none — as well as dual enrollment in local college courses and a high school biomedical track. She wants to offer project-based learning and internships. The more students are engaged in learning, she said, the less likely they’ll be bored or act out.

“We aim to keep schools safe, but suspension is not the answer,” Carter-Oliver said. “When children are engaged, you reduce misbehavior.”

One of the biggest problems Carter-Oliver has to face is a teacher turnover rate of 17 percent. Kettenbach has said that kind of turnover has forced the school to start “from square one, rather than building upon teachers’ knowledge and taking the program to the next level.”

Confluence attributes the faculty loss to “administration taking instructional accountability to higher levels.” However, some teachers have described out-of-control student behavior and high-stress environments.

“After those two days at (Confluence Preparatory Academy), I told them, don’t ever send me back,” said Tosha Phoenix, a substitute teacher Confluence hired through a third-party agency. “They can’t pay me $24 an hour to go back to CPA. They can never pay me to go back.”

Carter-Oliver is working with staff to offer tuition reimbursement for teachers, student loan assistance and expansion of a teacher academy.

Those kinds of initiatives makes Kettenbach optimistic that Carter-Oliver will bring needed change to the schools.
“We believe she will effectively lead Confluence Academy to greater success in the next five years,” Kettenbach wrote in Confluence’s charter renewal application that the State Board said it had no choice but to renew.

**FACT CHECK: Greitens overstates number of students not enrolled in physics**

GRACE HASE, Feb 24, 2017

> “Over 200 of our 520 school districts did not have a single student in physics.”
> —Gov. Eric Greitens
> 
> *Jan. 17 at the State of the State address*

At this year’s State of the State Address, newly elected Gov. Eric Greitens discussed problems with the Missouri education system and why he believes Missouri schools rank last in almost every area. Greitens, a Republican, offered some interesting statistics about how so few students are enrolled in certain math and science courses. His statement about physics enrollment stood out.

“What we need to do is make sure that the money we spend finds its way into the classroom,” Greitens said. “Over half of Missouri school districts do not offer a single Advanced Placement class. Over 200 of our 520 school districts did not have a single student in physics. Over 100 did not have a single student enrolled in chemistry.

“We need to expand course access programs, so that every child in Missouri can use technology to get the education they need.”
The governor’s claim about enrollment numbers for Missouri high school students in physics courses seemed a bit low. So we wondered, is this really the case? And if so, why do so few Missouri school districts offer physics?

**What the numbers show**

Greitens spokesman Parker Briden said the office pulled data from a report compiled by a think tank called the Show-Me Institute. The report, which focused on course access in Missouri, requested information from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on enrollment of various courses offered in public schools.

The report said that, “During the 2014-2015 school year, of the 507 school districts that offer high school in the state ... 213 districts had no students enrolled in physics.” However, PolitiFact Missouri called into question these numbers, and on Feb. 8, the Show-Me Institute issued a correction to its data.

According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there are 448 school districts offering high school courses in Missouri — not the 507 that the Show-Me Institute had previously stated, or the 520 that Greitens claimed.

With the new calculations, the Show-Me Institute found that 154 of those districts — not 213 — had no students enrolled in physics.

**Why are so few students enrolled?**

Even after the Show-Me Institute’s correction, the data still showed that a large number of students in Missouri weren’t enrolled in physics during the 2014-2015 school year. However, when the Show-Me Institute crunched its numbers, it only included higher-level courses for each subject. It didn’t take into account the ninth grade course, “Physics First.”

*A TIME for Physics First, a program that was created as part of a grant in 2009, takes a different approach to teaching high school science. Meera Chandrasekhar, a leader of the*
program team and physics professor at MU, said that Physics First reverses the high school science sequence and allows students to apply the algebra skills they are just learning.

“It gets students in ninth grade started off in a really good footing for upper-level science courses because physics is a fundamental science,” Chandrasekhar said.

How many students really are studying physics?

In order to find out how many students are in any physics course in Missouri, we decided to crunch our own numbers independently from the Show-Me Institute. Turns out there was a bit of a difference.

When the Show-Me Institute compiled and published its report, it didn’t use finalized numbers for the 2014-2015 school year. The most recent numbers from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education showed that of the 448 school districts offering high school in Missouri, 178 districts did not offer upper-level physics courses. When adding in Physics First, 156 school districts did not offer any physics course.

Even though there isn’t a large difference between the two sets of data, 22 of these school districts actually offer Physics First only. Chandrasekhar said that this has to do with requirements for high school teachers.

To be able to teach physics at the high school level, a teacher must have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in physics. Physics First, however, is taught as more of an introductory science course and the program offers training for high school science teachers who are qualified in other areas such as biology or chemistry. This is a benefit for more rural schools in Missouri that might not necessarily have the resources to hire a physics teacher since physics is not a required science.

“Every child in ninth grade gets to take a physics class then,” Chandrasekhar said. “It essentially boosts the numbers.”
The national picture

When Greitens made his claim about physics enrollment, it was part of a much larger claim — that education in Missouri is behind.

“We have an education system that ranks near last in every measure that matter,” Greitens said.

However, when it comes to physics, that’s far from the truth. Paul Cottle, a physics professor at Florida State University, has focused some of his research on physics course access in the United States. As a part of his research, he requested data from every state education department on its physics enrollment numbers.

For the 2014-2015 school year, Missouri ranked sixth out of the 29 states from which Cottle received data. Missouri’s physics enrollment numbers were also above 50 percent, compared with the 23 other states, which had enrollment rates below 42 percent.

Our ruling

Greitens said that over 200 of 520 school districts in Missouri didn’t have any students enrolled in physics.

The data that Greitens used for his claim contained incorrect information and didn’t account for students enrolled in the Physics First course.

Part of Greitens overall claim was that the Missouri education system ranks nearly last in every category. But when it comes to physics, Missouri has an above-average enrollment rate.

We rate this claim as Mostly False.
Activist Athletes

By Sarah Brown  February 26, 2017

Briyana Smith, a women’s basketball player at Knox College, lay down on the court before a game — and stayed there for four and a half minutes. Eric Striker, a University of Oklahoma football player, filmed a Snapchat video on his phone that went viral. The University of Missouri’s football team staged a full-on boycott, refusing to practice or play altogether.

These demonstrations, protesting racial injustice, reflect the many ways that college athletes have taken public stands in recent years to send a message or bring about change.

Collegiate athletes — particularly in revenue-generating sports like football and men’s basketball — have a national platform that many of their fellow students do not. They can also leverage the massive amounts of money that pour into college sports each year.

The most recent uptick in athlete activism on campuses began in 2014, in the aftermath of Michael Brown’s death at the hands of a police officer in Ferguson, Mo. That incident inspired some players to call attention to what they saw as systemic racial bias in law enforcement. Later that year, players on a number of basketball teams wore shirts saying "I can’t breathe" before games, a reference to what Eric Garner, another black man, had said when he was put in a chokehold by a New York City police officer. He later died.

In 2015, 32 players on Missouri’s football team wanted to call attention to what they saw as poor institutional responses to racial incidents on the campus. So they refused to play until Timothy Wolfe, then the president of the university system, resigned. The boycott began a few days before a scheduled game against Brigham Young University, and if Missouri had canceled the game, it would have owed BYU $1 million. Mr. Wolfe was also facing growing pressure from student protesters, including one who vowed not to eat until the president resigned. He later died.

In 2016, with political polarization and racial tensions running high, athletes’ activism increased. They were inspired largely by Colin Kaepernick, the quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, who in August started refusing to stand during the national anthem as a means of protesting injustices against black people. Since then, many college football and basketball players, as well as marching-band members, have demonstrated in some way during the anthem.
While many such protests are about race, they touch on other issues as well. The University of Minnesota’s football team decided to boycott its bowl game in December because the university had suspended 10 players for an alleged sexual assault. Team members said they wanted to call attention to what they considered a lack of due process for students accused of misconduct. Players ended the boycott two days later, after Minnesota’s investigation report into the incident was made public. It contained many lurid allegations about the case, in which the alleged victim claimed that she was pressured to have sex with multiple men, including several football players.

Given the widespread opposition to President Trump, experts on sports and social movements say they expect even more athletes to join the fray.

When college officials see such activism and aren’t sure how to handle it, their first call is often to Harry Edwards, a prominent sports sociologist and emeritus professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Lately his phone has been ringing off the hook. "Oftentimes I’ll get a call or query or be invited to a university, and what they want to know is, How we can avoid this?" he says. "They cannot avoid it."

Mr. Edwards tells college presidents, athletics directors, and coaches that "they should be aware of where their locker rooms are." Many athletic administrators seem surprised, he said, that their players are talking and tweeting about broader societal issues.

Given their potential influence, it may seem surprising that more college athletes don’t engage in protests. But even as their activism has gained more traction, these students continue to face pressures that might have given some of their peers pause before speaking out.

One factor is simply the way athletics teams operate. "The sports structure in and of itself is not designed to cultivate activism," says Joseph N. Cooper, an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut who studies sports, race, and culture. "It’s really designed to cultivate conformity." He likens it to the military: "You have leaders who provide orders, you don’t question them, and you’re not thinking critically about what you’re doing." College players also have a lot on the line — namely, dreams of a professional career. If their activism rubs people the wrong way, that could put their futures at risk.

**TAKEAWAY**

**Athletes take the field — and a knee**

- Activism among college athletes swelled in 2016. Many were inspired by Colin Kaepernick, the NFL quarterback who knelt during the national anthem to protest racial injustice.
- College athletes can pack a powerful protest by leveraging their high profiles — and, in some cases, the revenue they generate. But the number of athlete activists remains small because protesting carries risks.
- Widespread opposition to President Trump is likely to inspire more college athletes to take stands on race and other issues in the coming months.
Story continues.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Campus Conservatives Get a Lesson in Activism: When Professors Start Ranting, Start Filming

By Tom Hesse FEBRUARY 23, 2017

No MU Mention

Are you a student looking to spread your conservative message to the masses? Try capturing the liberal leanings of your professors.

The Conservative Political Action Conference kicked off on Tuesday in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C., with a series of workshops for conservatives on how best to be politically active. An especially popular workshop, aimed at college conservatives, offered a suggestion for students seeking to take their activism to social media: When professors start ranting, students should start filming.

"People are so used to their professors’ just constantly ranting and indoctrinating with their liberal values that they don’t realize that’s not OK," Cabot Phillips, a contributor to the conservative website Campus Reform, told audience members.

Mr. Phillips, who served in Sen. Marco Rubio’s presidential campaign, started the "Campus Activism Boot Camp" with a session titled "#Liberal Privilege: Using Social Media to Change College Campuses." One of the most effective ways to do that, he said, is to film ranting professors or out-of-control student protests.

To that end, he offered a few tips: Make sure you film horizontally, add subtitles for people who are watching with the sound off, post to Facebook rather than YouTube, and have other conservatives on your campus ready to share the video.

Campus Reform, which was created by the Leadership Institute, a group that trains conservative activists, calls itself a watchdog for higher education. Mr. Phillips told the audience that the site, which relies heavily on content written by campus contributors, would help spread their messages.

"If you have a professor who’s going crazy on video, we’ll get you on TV," Mr. Phillips said.
An ‘Act of Terrorism’

Recording professors on video can have repercussions. Recently, for example, a student at Orange Coast College, a community college in California, was suspended two semesters for filming and posting comments by a professor who called the election of Donald J. Trump an "act of terrorism."

After the incident, signs were posted outside of classrooms at the college stating that recording instructors without their permission was prohibited.

Responding to an audience question about that incident, Mr. Phillips said he was confident that the student would win a lawsuit and gain reinstatement thanks to pro bono legal help. (On Thursday the college announced that the student's suspension had been rescinded, The Orange County Register reported.)

"That school was completely in the wrong for what they did," Mr. Phillips said, adding that increased publicity could lead to more support for students, potentially offsetting any backlash that might arise. "I would say always err on the side of recording your professor when they’re doing things," he said. Tabatha Palomo, who this fall will start her freshman year at West Virginia University, sat in on the workshop. She said she’s prepared to enter a liberal environment when she goes to college, and thinks it’s important for conservatives to document the campus climate.

"It boils down to a case of ‘he said, she said’ if you don’t have the videos and stuff," Ms. Palomo said.
Liberty Fuchs, who attends Santa Monica College, about two hours north of Orange Coast College, described herself as a libertarian. She said she’s felt pressure to conform to her professors’ political leanings in the past.

"One of my professors ended our class" by using a four-letter word to insult President Trump, Ms. Fuchs said.

She had contemplated recording the professor, she said, but she ultimately chose not to. After all, she said, his reading list was balanced. "He was the philosophy teacher, and he recommended, like, Rothbard stuff," she said, referring to Murray N. Rothbard, an economist influenced by Friedrich Hayek. "So I gave him a pass."
Tenured Positions at US Public Universities Are Under Attack

NO MU MENTION; Missouri legislation mentioned

The idea of tenure has long been important to American higher education.

In the 1700s, religious groups operated most colleges in the United States and, before that, Britain’s North American colonies. Often, college officials would remove employees who spoke about subjects that were in conflict with the school’s teachings. By the late 1800s, it became common for individuals who gave large amounts of money to a college to have powers similar to those officials.

Then, at the start of the 20th century, the presidents of three private universities decided their professors needed more protection. The three universities were Harvard University, Columbia University and the University of Chicago. The presidents felt professors needed the freedom to explore difficult issues, which would, in turn, help better educate students. So they created a system to reduce the ability of donors to influence the removal of professors. This system is called tenure.

After World War II, most U.S. colleges and universities established tenured teaching positions. A tenured position was meant to last as long as a professor chose to teach at the school that offered it. But during the 1950s and 1960s, some American professors were dismissed for expressing their political beliefs.

Then in 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court decided a case involving tenure. The court ruled that a tenured position must be based on a written contract between a professor and a school. It also decided that any school wishing to end a professor’s tenure had to do so through a process similar to a trial.

Critics say tenure is 'guaranteed job for life'

But some people call tenure a “guaranteed job for life” for professors, and, in some cases, a waste of money.
One of tenure’s critics is Rick Brattin, a member of Missouri’s State House of Representatives. Last month, he proposed a measure that, in part, bans tenure for anyone who starts teaching at a public university in Missouri after January 1, 2018.

Brattin says he proposed his bill because the costs of higher education have risen too high. He calls tenure at public universities “un-American” and an unnecessary cost to taxpayers.

Tax money helps pay for operating costs at public universities, including professors’ wages. Brattin argues that once professors earn tenure, they often care less and less about how well they teach.

"You cannot tell me that every tenured professor is absolutely doing everything to the fullest extent, that’s not even possible. So to have a system in place that protects that person with a guaranteed lifetime employment, it works against itself. Because then we have no ability to shed those who just shouldn’t have made the cut, but they slid in and now they have this protection."

Brattin is not alone in his opposition to tenure. Iowa Senator Brad Zaun has proposed banning it in his state. And Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker weakened tenure protection laws for the University of Wisconsin in 2015.

Not every professor receives tenure. When a university offers a position to a teacher, that teacher is first called an “assistant professor.” This means they are on the path to tenure, and must spend the next 7 or more years proving themselves. It means they must prove their teaching abilities and the value of their research. After that period, school administrators and other tenured professors in the same field decide if the candidate should receive tenure. Then, if approved, that person becomes an “associate professor.”

**Others support tenure track**

In 2013, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) reported that the number of tenured positions at U.S. schools has dropped since 1975. Beginning in 1915, the AAUP was one of the first organizations of college professors to fight for academic freedom.

Brattin claims some professors seek tenured positions so they can enjoy employment for life. He adds that giving tenured professors power to judge tenure candidates makes no sense. In no other industry do members of that industry police each other, he says. And no other business guarantees a job for as long as an employee wants it.

Yet at least one other part of American society makes this promise: U.S. federal judges can hold their position for life.

Also, it is possible for colleges and universities to dismiss tenured professors. Hans-Joerg Tiede is the top official dealing with academic freedom and tenure for the AAUP. He says some schools have removed tenured professors by closing down their academic study programs completely. Also, schools facing extreme financial problems have canceled tenure contracts. And schools have removed tenured professors for legal and ethical violations, Tiede adds.
Banning tenure would work if every university administrator was completely interested in protecting their professors, he says. But that is not always the case. For example, the AAUP criticized Louisiana State University last year after the school removed a tenured professor of 14 years for making “inappropriate” statements.

Tiede argues it is the job of professors to challenge, and sometimes even shock students to get them to think differently. Banning tenure at a given university will only weaken that school in the end, he says.

"If you remove tenure, you’re moving your institutions of higher education … outside of the mainstream of higher education in the United States. And you will have a very difficult time attracting faculty members, because faculty members want to have the freedom to be able to be able to engage in research and to teach."

And, Tiede says, once a professor earns tenure and becomes an associate, their work is not over. They can still work to earn the higher position of “full professor” and beyond. Also, professors are not the main reason costs have gone up, Tiede says. The real reason, he argues, is the growing number of school administrators and their salaries.

However not all professors want a guarantee of life-time employment. James Wetherbe is a professor of information technology at Texas Tech University. He has also earned tenure from four different schools, and rejected it every time.

Wetherbe agrees with Brattin that the current tenure system can lead to professors caring less about the quality of their teaching. He also notes the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of speech. Public university professors who feel they have been punished for what they say or do can take legal action. This is true with or without tenure.

Wetherbe suggests a new system in which associate professors apply for a new, unbreakable contract every three years. Full professors would do the same every five years.

"If you’re doing a good job, then you’re in good shape. Now, can you get caught in a political situation? Can you get caught up in a freedom of speech or academic freedom issue? Yes, you can. But … most faculty can deal with an administration that’s out of line within a five-year period."

Wetherbe says that schools will want to avoid any damage to their public image. For example, Mount St. Mary’s University removed a tenured professor for comments he made against an administrator in February 2016. The university then removed that administrator and renewed the professor’s position a short time later.
Fire staffing not up to snuff

By Alan Burdzik
Columbia Daily Tribune

Recent changes to fire suppression industry standards suggest Columbia needs 95 more firefighters to properly staff its nine stations—a jarring number that the local union president said he doesn’t expect the city to agree to.

But Columbia Fire Department Lt. Travis Gregory, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1055, said it was something city officials needed to know, so he had Kurt Becker, a Clayton firefighter and expert on fire suppression standards, deliver the message last Monday. It marked the beginning of the meet-and-confer process between the city and union, which also is asking for salary and benefits increases.

Revisions to the National Fire Protection Association guidelines, called 1710, on how to use departmental resources suggests increases in staffing depending on the area where a squad responds to emergencies. For instance, “high-hazard” areas should have six people on a truck. The Columbia Fire Department staffs three people on each truck in its three high-hazard areas, which include downtown, the University of Missouri and most of the central city.

High-hazard areas include parts of town that have high population densities and places where emergency personnel are often called, such as nursing homes and rowdy bars. The increase in staffing on those trucks and for squads in other areas of the town would more than double Columbia’s daily on-duty fire staff of 36 to 74.

Though Gregory knows the city can’t afford 95 more firefighters—that would almost double its suppression staff of 128—he said it is up to the union to make sure officials know what is necessary.

“I don’t think that it’s unreasonable,” Gregory said. “At some point we have to educate them what the standard is.”

The union will meet with officials again in April, he said, giving them more time to talk about staffing and how it can be paid for, which could include grants and a ballot initiative. Gregory said he expects a counteroffer from the city but has no definite number in mind that he would consider a reasonable compromise.

“We’ve always been 100 percent upfront and try to give the city council the most time that we can, especially when it comes to things that have monetary implications,” Gregory said.

Paying for 95 more firefighters with the city’s current budget is most likely not going to happen. Over the past few years, city officials often have lamented that local sales tax revenue is declining and public safety staffing is miserably low, though the police department has been more of the focus on that front. City Manager Mike Matthes has said the city budget has barely allowed the addition of only a handful of personnel to each department during the past three years. A property tax hike to fund about 30 more officers and 15 more firefighters was defeated in 2014.

Matthes did not respond to a message seeking comment.

Salary and benefits for an entry-level firefighter cost $66,301.23 per year, according to an email from Margaret Buckler, the city’s director of human resources. For the firefighter II position, it is $73,030.35. At the entry-level rate, hiring 95 more firefighters would cost about $6.3 million annually.

Third Ward City Councilman Karl Skala said he was surprised
when he heard the numbers Becker gave last week.

“We just can’t make those numbers work,” Skala said.

Though officials anticipate asking voters again for a property tax increase to pay for more public safety personnel, those talks are in the initial stages, Skala said, and it is too early to know how much will be asked for or when it will reach the ballot.

“Everybody wants to make sure the firemen are safe, the vehicles and so on and so forth,” he said. “It’s going to be almost impossible to meet those kinds of standards.”

When the NFPA changed 1710, it relied on data from two scientific studies and found that because of changes in recent decades to building construction and materials used in many products found inside those buildings, such as furniture and clothing, fires spread more quickly than ever. That means more firefighters need to be on the truck that gets to the scene of a blaze first so that more duties, such as quickly assessing the area, connecting hoses to hydrants and going inside for any trapped victims, can be done at once, Becker said.

The studies the NFPA used for the revisions looked at fires and how they spread in single-family residential buildings and high-rises. When the data were released, Becker said, people in the industry knew they would be a “game changer.”

“The game’s changed; you have to understand the new rules, and we have to work together to figure out how to live within those rules,” he said.

Since 1710 was changed, fire departments across the country have been trying to find ways to meet the standard, or get as close as possible, Becker said. The flame-fanning materials used today have decreased the amount of time a person has to safely escape a house fire from 20 to 30 minutes down to four to six minutes. Even before 1710’s latest changes, the fire department was below the number of daily staff, 48, needed to be in full compliance, he said.

“The takeaway, unfortunately, is no matter how you slice this thing, you can’t be running firetrucks with two or three firefighters on them,” he said. “That’s not safe, and that’s what CFD is doing every day,” though he added that most departments can’t meet 1710 staffing standards or have difficulties doing so.

Currently, the fire department has two vacancies in its 145 full-time positions, Buckler said. Assistant Chief Brad Fraizer said the department is fully staffed in that it has enough personnel that it can run all of its 12 trucks at nine stations daily and fit the city budget.

Fraizer said 1710 is “a goal that all departments would like to reach.”

“We don’t disagree that that level of staffing would be great,” Fraizer said. “There’s a lot we could do with that, but there’s also the practical side that we’re one of many essential services the city provides and we work with the budget we’ve been given.”

Having nearly 100 more firefighters wouldn’t affect response times, Fraizer said, as the people would be dispersed among the stations at trucks the department currently runs anyway.

“It would, however, change how quickly things are done on the fire ground,” he said.

Columbia fire engineer Josh Card was on duty Sunday afternoon at Station 1, 201 Orr St., in downtown Columbia. Though fire prevention and warning systems such as building codes, sprinklers and smoke alarms have gotten better in recent decades, he said, today’s construction materials won’t stand up to intense heat as long as “legacy construction” that was solid wood. That makes for less time to rescue trapped victims or salvage a structure.

The department keeps a list of 150 to 200 people who have passed the first couple of rounds of tests the department gives to potential hires. Card said people stay on the list for about two years, and if the money was available, it wouldn’t be difficult to find people interested in the job.

“Us finding people to fill the positions is not the problem,” Card said.

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Robot 'building season' drives Columbia high school students
ASHLI ELLERMAN, Feb 26, 2017

COLUMBIA — Students gathered in the shop of the Agricultural Engineering Building at MU, making a robot that's got game. Power tools, wires and metal parts covered a table. As Morgan Kruse, a senior at Rock Bridge High School, demonstrated how part of the robot will work once it’s finished, she reflected on her past four years as a part of Columbia’s high school robotics team.

Kruse is about to compete in her final FIRST Robotics Competition. As the big day nears, she has high hopes for their robot this year and her ability to help make it great.

“I feel like we can get it done on time,” Kruse said. “We are further ahead than we were last year — like, times a hundred.”

On March 8, Kruse and her 27 teammates will travel to St. Louis to compete in the FIRST Robotics Competition. Getting to the competition has required the students to spend almost every day in the past 6½ weeks in the shop, designing, building and programming their robot.

Team members, known collectively as the Army Ants, mostly come from Rock Bridge, Hickman and Battle high schools. A few come from Fr. Tolton Regional Catholic High School, and one is home-schooled.

FIRST — For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology — aims to inspire the next generation of leaders in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, and to recognize their accomplishments, said Kevin Gillis, an MU bioengineering professor and, for the past four years, the Army Ants' chief mentor.
The story continues: **Robot 'building season' drives Columbia high school students**