



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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Missouri, Kansas make plans for basketball scrimmage

Missouri and Kansas are making plans to renew the Border War — even if not quite in full measure.

The two schools have made plans to participate in a basketball scrimmage at the Sprint Center in Kansas City next Sunday, with the funds from ticket sales going to hurricane relief.

A source confirmed the plans to the Tribune on Thursday afternoon. Carrington Harrison of 610 Sports had the first report about the event.

The source said that a release about the event should come out Friday.

A Missouri spokesperson said that MU is “in talks with Kansas for an event but it would be premature to get into the details at this time.”

An email distributed to Mizzou Network radio affiliates said that the network “plans to broadcast a special program from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22.” There were no details on the program, but affiliates were told they “will be very happy with the content.”

The Tigers and Jayhawks haven’t met on the basketball court since 2012, Missouri’s last year in the Big 12 Conference. Kansas won that game — played at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, Kan. — 87-86 in overtime after rallying from a 19-point second half deficit.

The schools haven’t played in Kansas City since 1997, when they met at Kemper Arena for the Big 12 Championship game. Top-seeded Kansas beat 10th-seeded Missouri 87-60.

MU has stated publicly that it has an interest in restarting the Border War, but those talks haven’t been mutual. Athletic director Jim Sterk said in June that “there wasn’t any interest” from KU about playing a football game in Kansas City.

Jayhawks basketball coach Bill Self was asked by the Kansas City Star in June if he was seriously entertaining a game against Missouri.

“Definitely no right now,” he responded, later adding, “that’s a decision that will be made at a university level, not just at a basketball level.”

By July, his stance had softened.

“I’m sure there will be a time where Kansas and Missouri play again. I don’t know when that time will be,” Self told the Star. “People seem to think it’s up to me to make that call. I mean, we have an athletic director. We have a chancellor. We have other people that are involved with that. I do think that I caught the majority of the attention initially when I said, ‘They left us. We don’t have to play them.’ I was probably the only one quoted with what everybody else thought.”

MISSOURIAN

Missouri, Kansas discussing possible exhibition basketball game

By ALEC LEWIS

More than 2,000 days have passed since the last Border War game was played, but those days could be numbered.

On Thursday, the Missouri athletics department confirmed a possible renewal of the Missouri-Kansas rivalry on Oct. 22 at the Sprint Center in Kansas City as part of a benefit for hurricane relief efforts.

“We are in discussion with KU for an event, but it would be premature to talk about details at this time,” said Nick Joos, Missouri’s senior associate athletic director for strategic communications, via email.

In a statement to The Kansas City Star, Kansas associate athletics director Jim Marchiony also acknowledged the talks.

Carrington Harrison of 610 Sports radio first reported the news of the game, which would have to be cleared by the NCAA because of rules not allowing Division I basketball teams to play exhibitions against each other.

The radio station and The Kansas City Star also reported that MU broadcast rights-holder Learfield Sports had contacted affiliates to clear space from 3-5:30 p.m. Oct. 22 for a Mizzou Network “special program.”

In 2011, after the Joplin tornadoes, Missouri was cleared to play in an exhibition against Missouri Southern to raise money for relief efforts.

The Missouri-Kansas rivalry dates back to 1907, with the Jayhawks leading the all-time series 172-95. The two teams haven’t played since Feb. 25, 2012, a game Kansas won 87-86.

Missouri will play in two closed scrimmages before its Nov. 10 opener against Iowa State. The possible exhibition would come a day after the Oct. 21 “Mizzou Madness” event.



Offenders with genetic mental disorders judged more harshly

Posted by [Jeff Sossamon-U. Missouri](#) October 12th, 2017

Generated from News Bureau press release: [Criminal offenders with genetic mental disorders judged more negatively, MU study finds](#)

New research finds that criminal offenders with genetic mental disorders are judged more negatively than offenders with mental disorders whose criminal behavior may arise from environmental factors, such as childhood abuse.

Additionally, researchers found that offenders with genetic mental disorders are judged just as negatively as offenders whose mental disorder receives no explanation.

“We are used to thinking that if people who commit criminal acts suffer from a mental disorder, then that should be taken into account when assigning blame and punishment for their crimes,”

says Philip Robbins, an associate professor of philosophy in the University of Missouri College of Arts and Science.

“In our study, we wanted to determine if it mattered why and how defendants acquired those mental disorders, and how that might affect the way society assigns blame and punishment when a crime is committed.”

Robbins and Paul Litton, a professor in the university’s School of Law, tested their hypothesis and explored its implications for philosophy, psychology, and the law. They conducted two surveys with 600 participants; the results confirmed that if the cause of a mental disorder was genetic, study participants tended to assign more blame and harsher punishment for the crime compared to cases in which the offender had a mental disorder that was not genetic in origin.

Robbins and Litton also expected to find that different environmental explanations would elicit different judgments from those participating in the survey. For example, they predicted that mitigation would be greater for someone who developed a mental disorder due to childhood abuse compared to someone whose mental disorder resulted purely by accident, such as falling off a bike.

“Our theory was that people who have been intentionally harmed by caregivers are seen as more victim-like than people who have suffered accidents,” Robbins says. “If so, intentional harm should be associated with less negative moral judgment than non-intentional harm. However, we found that whether the harm was intentional or accidental, it didn’t affect judgments of blame or punishment.”

Robbins says further research will be required to determine why there is no difference between intentional and unintentional causes of harm. However, their study adds to empirical research for defense attorneys to consider when constructing their case for a more lenient sentence.

The findings suggest that presenting evidence of severe childhood abuse suffered by the defendant will be more effective than explaining the crime in genetic terms.

“It’s a little surprising that genetic explanations have no mitigating effect,” Robbins says. “We think the reason is that with a genetically caused mental disorder, there is no pre-existing person who has been harmed, so the offender is not seen as a victim. In the environmental cases, the offender is seen as a victim. That’s what makes the difference.”

The researchers will publish their findings in the journal *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*.



MU staff to hold open forum amid concerns of low pay, poor morale

Alyssa Toomey

Updated: Oct 12, 2017 06:50 PM CDT

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/mu-staff-to-hold-open-forum-amid-concerns-of-low-pay-poor-morale/636759661>

Staff at the University of Missouri will be able to share their concerns with top administrators at an open forum Tuesday.

The forum comes after the release of a [campus climate survey](#) in which 52 percent of staff respondents said they seriously considered leaving Mizzou. Nearly 60 percent of staff and faculty who seriously considered leaving said they did so because of low pay.

"Basically that is reflective of our current climate. We have not as staff members gotten pay raises—standard across-the-board pay raises—in, I can't even remember the last time, and I've been here 11 years," Chrissy Kintner, assistant to the vice provost for enrollment management and strategic development and chair of staff council, said. "That's been more the norm than it has been the exception. What you're seeing in that survey is that people are kind of disgruntled about that."

Tuesday's event will be the first staff open forum that Chancellor Alexander Cartwright will attend.

"He has been very receptive to staff," Kintner said of Cartwright. "Staff council meets with him monthly. He has been very open. He knows there's a problem with morale and with compensation."

In spite of the current climate, Kintner said she has confidence in the new administration.

At last month's curator's meeting, President Mun Choi said increasing staff and faculty salaries is a top priority. He also said the low pay has had a big affect on faculty and staff retention.

"I do think that President Choi and Chancellor Cartwright have been very receptive to the fact that staff exist and the contributions we make to this institution," Kintner said. "President Choi met with staff

council before he even started. That had never happened. And Chancellor Cartwright has been very open to meeting with us and working collaboratively."

"This needs to be addressed and this needs to be addressed soon," Choi told the UM Board of Curators last month. "Going forward, we will need to cut expenses and find areas to grow revenue for merit increases for faculty and staff."

Kintner said it's also important to remember the bigger picture.

"For staff we really have to stick to what we do and why it is that we're here because we're here for something greater than just a paycheck."

The open staff forum will take place at 2 p.m. Tuesday in Memorial Union.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

EDITORIAL:

Curator Steelman clarifies the state of the university

Speaking before a meeting Tuesday sponsored by the Show-Me Institute, **University of Missouri Curator David Steelman said university leadership showed signs of weakness in the face of November 2015 student protests, but now the institution is on the right path under UM President Mun Choi and MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright.**

Stelman said the university is not a racist institution but needs to improve communication with the public and state leaders. He promised university leadership will be stronger, beginning with more direction from central administration and less autonomy vested in the four campuses.

Regarding the threatened 2015 strike by Mizzou football players, Steelman said, "From my perspective it was very clear, they were going to play the football game or the coach wouldn't have a job." The team did play and Coach Gary Pinkel resigned soon after for health reasons.

Amid widespread criticism for lack of decisive institutional leadership, student enrollment at MU declined and incoming President Choi announced dramatic plans for reallocating budget resources. Since his arrival \$100 million has been cut and more is coming, Steelman said. "We have multiple academic programs we have to eliminate," he said. "We are going to have to eliminate more of the administration."

The cuts won't be universally popular, Steelman said, but are necessary to provide more advantageous funding. "We had become a fragile institution because we stopped listening and we were not humble. The university needs to be more accessible and remain affordable while building up quality programs."

The trauma on campus has not been pleasant, but the fallout is essentially good news. The new vision outlined by Choi, Steelman & Co. would not have happened without what university leaders call "exigency," a moment of crisis providing political muster for hard decisions otherwise not possible in a large, decentralized bureaucracy.

The words of David Steelman, a strong conservative leader given to straight talk, will frighten some on UM campuses, but the curator is smart and determined to improve the university. Given the resiliency of the institution's nether parts I am not worried lawyer Steelman will overwhelm academicians the likes of Choi and Cartwright. My sense is all are on a common reallocation quest long overdue on most large college campuses. If their resolve remains strong and focused the result for the University of Missouri can be positive indeed.

Meanwhile students and their parents should be eager to enroll at MU where issues of racism are in sharp focus and creative leadership is engaged in serious efforts to improve the university experience. An exciting turnaround seems underway.

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MU academic task force meets with faculty council

Taylor Petras

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COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement, and Opportunities met with the MU faculty council Thursday to discuss its plan to re-evaluate the university's academic programs.

The task force released its [Phase I Report](#) Sept. 1. The report outlines the data being used and collected to evaluate Mizzou's programs.

"There's a lot of things that programs do that we cannot measure quantitatively that are critically important," said task force co-chair Cooper Drury. "So we want to get that input from people around campus."

Drury said the task force has already met with all the deans at the university. He said the faculty council was the third group they've had discussions with.

"The big take-home message is just the enormity of their task," said Clark Peters, a faculty council member and a social work associate professor. "You always want more. One of my colleagues brought up that it's really hard to be critical because we don't have findings."

Faculty council members asked the task force chairs if they were considering academic programs at other UM campuses to help make decisions.

"We are aware of and have some data within the system of numbers of graduates," co-chair Matthew Martens said to the group. "It will be hard to do at individual program level, because we don't have the data to compare to other campuses."

Some faculty council members questioned whether the program reshuffle would mean taking money from weaker academic programs and simply giving them to others.

Drury said it was not the task force's job to find ways to cut costs to the university, but rather to strengthen its academic programs.

"We would basically have more educational outcomes, greater opportunities for students, and great opportunities for research," he said.

The task force will continue meeting with groups to get feedback and suggestions throughout the semester. Drury said it will be meeting with faculty from each college within the next week or two.

A final recommendation report to the provost's office is due Jan. 15.



Effects of MU Enrollment Decline Felt Beyond the Campus

By MICHAELA BENNETT

The decline in enrollment at the University of Missouri in recent years is affecting more than just the campus. Rental properties in Columbia rely on students to fill their properties.

New apartment construction has given students an abundance of rental properties to choose from, which makes it harder for leasing agents to fill vacancies.

Brendan Vogel, a sales manager for Brookside Apartments, says the decrease in enrollment has affected their business.

“It’s pretty much a clear correlation: if the enrollment is booming then rental prices can stay high and there’s clear supply and demand in our favor,” Vogel says. “But, I mean every property is going to struggle if there’s less enrollment”.

Brookside is now offering leasing specials to entice students to lease with them. These include discounts on rent and price-matching.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

2016 report shows BJC recommended MU Health to Boone Hospital trustees

By Brittany Ruess

BJC HealthCare told the Boone Hospital Board of Trustees more than a year ago it could not operate the hospital under the current lease structure and **recommended looking at partnering with the University of Missouri Health Care system.**

The St. Louis-based health care group, which has leased Boone Hospital for 29 years, told the trustees in a June 2016 letter it no longer felt the current lease was suitable for either parties' needs and would consider ending the lease early if the trustees reached an agreement with MU Health, according to a report from a consulting firm the trustees recently released to the Tribune.

The report is from Verite Healthcare Consulting, a firm the trustees hired to review management proposals, and was drafted in early December. Details of the lease proposals from the four companies vying to operate the hospital — information trustees detailed in public presentations earlier this year — are included in the report.

Under the current lease, both BJC and the trustees must notify one another by December 2018 if they wish to continue, change or terminate the agreement. With that deadline looming, in spring 2016 the trustees sought company proposals to manage the hospital.

The trustees received four written proposals by the June 30, 2016 deadline, including a short letter from BJC dated the day before the deadline. MU Health, the Kansas City-based not-for-profit company St. Luke's Health System and Duke LifePoint, a Brentwood, Tenn.-based for-profit company also submitted proposals.

BJC's letter states the hospital's operating lease, short-lease term with an exit option every five years, rent changing with hospital cash flows and governance model with a county-elected board

of trustees “is no longer responsive to what the hospital will need to succeed, indeed, to thrive in the years ahead.”

Then, BJC told the trustees they should seriously consider meeting with MU Health to find a model to “accomplish important objectives,” including improving efficiency, coordinating regional health care services and guaranteeing “the delivery of high quality health care in Boone County long into the future.”

BJC listed concerns about the current lease in a letter to the trustees sent on Sept. 19, 2016, according to the report.

The company stated it was concerned it did not have a base of operations in Columbia and the lease can be evaluated or negotiated within a short timeframe — every five years or more frequently depending on the trustees’ discretion.

The Boone Hospital trustees and the BJC trustees have shared fiduciary responsibilities that sometimes conflict under the current lease structure. BJC also was concerned with its requirement to spend money on physical improvements to the hospital “that may not be necessary or affordable,” according to the report.

Brian Neuner, chairman of the trustees, said BJC’s letter came at no surprise to the trustees. BJC CEO Steve Lipstein shared the same information with the trustees in an earlier conversation, Neuner said.

BJC’s market interest also have adjusted in recent years with changes in the federal health care landscape, he said. BJC is turning its attention to Illinois where, unlike Missouri, its lawmakers opted to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

“We’re in this position because health care has changed so much, and a community hospital and its vision doesn’t align with a bigger hospital in a metro market ... when” Medicaid “expansion didn’t pass, it did impact hospitals in Missouri. It had an impact,” Neuner said.

Lipstein also told the trustees that he supported their decision to seek alternative options and if the trustees didn’t come to an agreement with the other companies, BJC still would be interested in operating the hospital, Neuner said.

Despite signs BJC and the trustees were leaning against a future relationship, the trustees and their consultants included BJC as a possibility when presenting options to the public earlier this

year. BJC has remained, essentially, a safety net option for the trustees, even as the [trustees enter in serious negotiations with MU Health](#).

“If we did not find a partner or an option that suited the situation or what we were looking for, BJC did remain an option,” Neuner said.

The Verite report states continuing the current lease with BJC would yield the highest amount of cash flows to the hospital, but BJC has indicated desired changes to the current lease. Earlier this month, BJC laid off 50 Boone Hospital employees citing low patient volumes and declining revenue as a result.

The initial proposals are “15 months old and a lot can happen in 15 months,” Neuner said. “The overall strength of the BJC organization is what carries the weight there. And, their decision to make some moves in regards to our” full-time employees “is in regard to patient volume, cost and way healthcare is going. There are so many variables.”

MU Health’s proposal at the time the report was drafted offered the third-highest earning potential for the hospital, according to the report. That proposal was drafted under former MU Health CEO Mitch Wasden, who left Columbia to become executive vice president of Oregon Health & Science University in Portland.

[Neuner has said the trustees were uncomfortable with the proposal MU Health pitched under Wasden, who desired a “takeover approach.”](#) The conversation focused more on a partnership between the hospitals when new MU Health CEO Jonathan Curtwright took over, Neuner has said.

The Verite report also stated a partnership with MU Health likely would change Boone Hospital’s “character and culture forever,” something the trustees have said would not happen in an agreement with MU Health. When asked about that statement, Neuner noted the report was based on the initial MU Health proposal under Wasden.

Because of ongoing negotiations, Neuner said Thursday he could not detail the differences between MU Health’s two proposals. He said he can assure the public maintaining Boone Hospital’s character and culture are high priorities for the trustees along with a healthy financial position.

The trustees find MU Health’s proposal currently has the “most significant impact locally” on jobs, tax dollars and income staying in the Columbia area, Neuner said.

Duke LifePoint offered the highest return potential and St. Luke's had the second highest, according to the report.

the maneater

Division of IT gets ready for cybersecurity month

By DANIEL DOAN

MU's Division of Information Technology is planning several new presentations and a social media campaign to educate students and faculty about Cyber Security Awareness Month in October.

In order to reach out to as many students possible, the Division of IT will be posting across various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

"We understand that we're never going to reach everybody," information security officer Becky Fowler said. "Students get bombarded with all kinds of 'care about this' and 'care about that,' but this is definitely gonna give us more visibility than we've had in years past. So even if it's not 100 percent coverage, it's still an improvement over the number of people we've reached in the past."

One of the biggest things that IT is doing this year is changing how it runs presentations. Instead of focusing on how many students attend, they're requiring IT professionals to attend two of four presentations.

"This year the presentations are more focused on our IT professionals so the people that work an IT job ... we're trying to make them our cyber-security awareness ambassadors, so that they can help us then educate the people in their department, their faculty, staff, students on information technology," business technology analyst Amanda Clough said.

One of the most common and dangerous forms of cyberattacks the division is trying to bring awareness to is phishing.

Phishing is a type of cyberattack where the attacker sends someone an email with a link in it in order to try and capture someone's username and password from a certain site. Once attackers have that information, they may then have access to a number of sites a user employs.

"Phishing is probably one of the biggest threats to our university because it's like a beachhead into our environment," said Bryan Mooney, team leader of assessments and incident response.

“So getting account information and distributing malware onto a machine, it’s really an entryway for attackers to get into our environment.”

Mooney wants to inform students, faculty and staff that there are a number of ways to protect themselves, but the biggest one is to keep passwords unique and private. If no one knows a password, then they can’t use an account and information associated with it.

“If we can educate our users on how to spot phishing emails, how to be cautious and proactive on defending their accounts and their information that they have control over, then we can do a whole lot of good for security and the university,” Mooney said.

Mooney will give a presentation on phishing on Oct. 24 from 10-11 a.m. in Memorial Union N206. He will talk about the different types of phishing, show examples of what common phishing schemes look like and how to report a phishing email.

“I’m going to talk about how to successfully report a phish, because our biggest asset in protecting our end-users is our end-users, so we need them to report a phish whenever they get it to abuse@missouri.edu,” Mooney said.

MISSOURIAN

Artful Bra auction allows cancer survivors and nurses to give back

By PAIGE COX

“It takes a whole village to find a cure.”

This phrase, written in Scrabble tiles, dangled from a bra decorated by breast cancer survivor Judi Bloss and her friends in Bedford Babes from the Village of Bedford Walk for the 8th annual Artful Bra event Thursday. Bloss said it took a month for the group to decorate the bra.

Artful Bra is a silent auction of decorated bras to raise money for uninsured and underinsured breast cancer patients at the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.

“If you had to worry how you are going to pay for (cancer treatment), I can’t even imagine,” said Kim Triplett, a cancer survivor who spoke at Thursday’s event. “I am lucky to have good insurance and cancer insurance, but it’s nice to know that this event takes care of people who don’t.”

This year’s auction contained 50 bras up for auction and 43 judged in the competition.

“It’s amazing to see all of the creativity that goes into this,” Vicki Kemna said. Kemna was recently declared cancer-free and is an employee at Boone Electric Cooperative. Her coworkers made a “mammometer” bra and dedicated it in her honor.

“It was entertaining when they showed it to me,” she said. “A bunch of the linemen made it for me and modeled it. Of course since we are Boone Electric, (the bra) lights up!”

Cancer survivors weren’t the only ones who worked on donated bras. Lynn Nichols and Cassie Wilbank are nurses at Ellis Fischel and have decorated a bra every year since Artful Bra began eight years ago.

“Our patients drove us and we wanted to share the hope they get from this,” Wilbank said.

Wilbanks and Nichols decorated a bra that features stories from their past patients in diary form.

“It gave us goosebumps when we went back through and read all the stories of people moving on and having kids and grandkids and lives after cancer,” Nichols said.

Bras from the competition are either kept for decoration or donated to Ellis Fischel and hang in all of the patients’ rooms.

“My husband wanted me to switch rooms all the time because he liked to see and take pictures of all the different bras,” Triplett said.

The bras were advertised to buyers as good conversation starters and a good reminder of screening.

“It’s my first time ever trying to buy a bra,” said first-time attendee Chad Thall, whose wife works at Ellis Fischel as a nurse. “It’s easy to throw money at something like this since it is such a good cause.”

the maneater

R.A.D.: inside the free class working to make MU safe

By PAIGE WILLIAMS

Coming into college, the sexual assault statistics are scary. One in four college women have been sexually assaulted. No one wants to become a part of that statistic, but variables surrounding sexual assault are often out of one’s control.

During Summer Welcome, the MU Police Department advertised for its women-only self-defense classes through R.A.D. Systems, which stands for Rape Aggression Defense. The

classes aim to teach women, men, children and seniors how to defend themselves to create a society where “violence is not an acceptable part of daily life,” according to the mission statement on R.A.D. Systems’ website.

My dad encouraged me to sign up for a self-defense class. I’m the first kid to go to college and his only daughter, so he felt it was crucial that I learn how to defend myself. He hoped that the skills I would learn would make me a little bit safer on campus.

The class, offered at various times and days throughout the year, is three days long and goes for four and a half hours each day. The class I took taught techniques specifically designed for women. On the first day, we were introduced to R.A.D. and spent the whole time in the classroom discussing why it was so crucial that women go through the training.

The following class, we immediately started to learn techniques: kicks, punches, knees, elbows and headbutts. Essentially, we learned how to use different parts of our bodies as weapons. There was hardly a situation that we didn’t discuss. For example, we talked about how to get away if there was someone sitting on top of you. A situation that seems nearly impossible to get out of, especially if you’re the smaller person, but they actually shared a technique that was very effective.

The final day, while the most fun, was by far the hardest. The students were put into three different scenarios on our own and challenged to fight our way out using all of the techniques we had learned. Instructors wore padded suits and acted as aggressors. To be in those situations was challenging, not only physically, but mentally because it made every hypothetical situation we had been talking about seem real.

Police officer Jacob Clifford was the lead instructor for the class. He stressed that the last class was by far the more important.

“[Aggressing] is what helps people the most [because] until you are padded up and have to throw a punch or throw a kick or throw a knee or elbow or fight and kick to get away from someone, it doesn’t really make it real,” Clifford said. “This is what really brings it all together and brings it home. This is why we are doing this.”

Having seen R.A.D. for the first time as a student at MU in Speaker’s Circle, Clifford became a R.A.D. instructor as soon as possible after joining the force.

“I went to college to be an educator,” Clifford said. “I think that aspect of [being a R.A.D. instructor] is what appealed to me. I like the classroom setting and it goes back to the service mentality. I think we owe it to each other and we owe it to our community to leave this a better place than we found it. We [police officers] all expect to save the world in some fashion.”

Coming into R.A.D., hardly any of the women in the class had ever thrown a punch. Everything we were learning was brand new. In some ways, the most important technique we learned was mental, not physical: confidence.

“People become more confident and see how strong they are,” Clifford said. “‘Yes, I can be loud. Yes, I can throw a punch. Yes, I can be assertive and mean, if I need to be.’ People who have never thought of themselves that way realize that they can.”

For me, as well as many other students, learning confidence was key to being able to execute the techniques. With more confidence, I was able to move with more speed, precision and power.

At the conclusion of the final day, we sat in the classroom and shared what we had liked most about the program and whether or not we would recommend it to friends, including freshman Lauryn Vela.

“[My favorite part was] the kicks,” Vela said. “I used to play soccer so I felt the most comfortable kicking. [And] yes, because I feel everyone should be able to feel a little more confident in their skills to defend themselves, if it came down to it. [If more people took the class], we wouldn’t be so susceptible to those kinds of attacks.”

Taking R.A.D. has given me peace of mind. While I know I am not invincible, I am certainly not an easy target. Now, it would be quite a challenge to make me part of that statistic.

MISSOURIAN

How safe is Columbia from threats of gunfire?

NO MU MENTION

OP-ED BY GEORGE KENNEDY

A 20-year-old man was shot and killed Saturday in a student-housing complex in south Columbia. The same night, four young people were shot and injured outside the appropriately named Ruckus bar on Business Loop 70.

Those are just the most recent reports of gunplay that have some of us longtime residents wondering whether our town is becoming dangerous. We’re not St. Louis or Chicago, but we’re not exactly peaceful Collegetown USA any more.

Or are we?

So far in 2017, nine people have been shot to death and 67 others assaulted with firearms in Columbia. Through September, police have received 358 reports of shots fired. That’s the highest number in at least six years.

I got those numbers from Assistant Chief of Police Jill Schlude. She sat down with me for most of an hour Wednesday afternoon to share what our police know about gun violence and what they are trying to do to combat it.

Some of what she told me was surprising. Some was predictable. Most was depressing. But she also described a few borrowed tactics that show some promise.

First, the big picture:

Nearly half of those reports of shots fired have come from two of the eight police beats that cover the city. Those two, beats 30 and 40, cover northeast Columbia, the area bordered generally by Business Loop 70 on the south and Highway 763 on the west. The neighborhood just north of downtown, which had been the hot spot, has cooled significantly.

With just a few exceptions, victims and shooters have several things in common, she said. Nearly all have been young black males. Nearly all have been involved with drugs or gang activity or both. There's a strong relationship with poverty and lack of educational or job opportunities.

These shootings are especially difficult to solve, she said, because victims and perpetrators usually know each other, and witnesses are afraid to talk to police.

So Columbia police have adopted a strategy that has been used with considerable success in cities such as High Point, North Carolina, and Kansas City.

The strategy is known as "focused deterrence." In theory, at least, it seems simple.

"We're focusing on folks engaged in violent criminal behavior, not the guy selling \$100 worth of weed on a Friday night," Assistant Chief Schlude said.

Officers can often identify likely shooters in advance. Patrol officers get to know their neighborhood troublemakers, she said, although they are seeing a growing number of outsiders coming to town and not just for a football game.

Once they've been identified, then comes the invitation with the warning.

"We tell them we will help you, help you get a job or an education. And you should let us help because the other path leads to prosecution," she paraphrased that conversation.

Already, she said, this strategy is showing some payoff in the form of fewer shots fired in one of the neighborhoods chosen for the introduction of "community policing." That's the time- and labor-intensive approach that gets officers out of their cars and more deeply involved in the daily lives of residents on their beats.

In Kansas City, Assistant Chief Schlude told me, she visited a church to observe the collaborative work of cops, clergy and mothers who have formed the No Violence Alliance.

Back here in Columbia, she said, "We think anybody should be able to go out on Friday night, even to an adult business, and not have to worry about getting shot."

That's a commendable goal; but I'm pretty sure she would agree that, for a worrisome number of our fellow citizens, it remains only a goal. We still have a long way to go.