University of Missouri Greek system plagued by poor oversight, risky behavior

By RUDI KELLER

Fraternities and sororities at the University of Missouri operate in a free-for-all atmosphere with little oversight or guidance from an Office of Greek Life that has no “overarching goals, objectives or priorities,” a consulting firm wrote in a scathing report released Thursday.

The report from Dyad Strategies stops short of recommending that the university cease sponsoring Greek organizations. Instead, it offers almost 50 recommendations for action, ranging from barring freshman from living in fraternity houses and stricter enforcement of alcohol policies to increased security at social events to prevent rapes and hazing.

None of the recommendations will be implemented immediately, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Gary Ward said in a news release accompanying the report. Dyad consultants will work with alumni, university supporters, students, staff and faculty to review the report, with decisions on which recommendations to implement due in the spring, Ward said.

“We will not negotiate any rule in a way that we feel would decrease safety for our students,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said, explaining the delay. “But this has to be something that the entire community is on board with and behind.”

The Office of Greek Life isn’t sure what its role is, the report states.

Report on University of Missouri Greek system

“It is difficult to communicate, collaborate, advocate or innovate in an environment with so little agreement or shared understanding relative to the role and purpose of a team of professionals,” the report states.

The report comes as the FBI continues to investigate embezzlement by a now-fired staff member at the Office of Greek Life and after several years of incidents that include the near death of a student from alcohol poisoning. The national Sigma Phi Epsilon organization closed its chapter this fall after several years of violations.
Records provided to the Tribune in 2016 showed that 16 students who drank too much at fraternity parties had been hospitalized for alcohol poisoning since the start of classes in August 2015.

Representatives of the Panhellenic Association and the Interfraternity Council said Thursday afternoon they needed time to review the report and would release a statement after studying it. Both organizations are mentioned in the report as key to improving the Greek system.

The most extensive list of recommendations deals with student safety, to prevent both sexual assault and hazing. Most of the dozens of organizational discipline actions by the university have been against fraternities and many of those violations involve alcohol or drug use. The report recommends requiring registration of all social events at houses, limiting alcohol to common areas of chapter houses, requiring chapters to allow auditors who inspect houses during parties to visit individual member’s rooms and limiting non-member guests to three per chapter member.

“Research suggests that by removing alcohol/drinking from guest rooms during registered social events and restricting its use/availability to common areas during social events curbs both binge drinking and sexual assault,” the report states.

The report said unregistered social events at fraternity houses are common and that those events create a higher risk of alcohol and substance abuse. The report said sorority leaders indicate they worry more about their members’ safety at these informal house parties than at other, registered events.

Brandon Zingale is suing Kappa Alpha, which lost its university recognition, over the September 2016 incident that hospitalized him with a near-fatal dose of alcohol. He contends he was coerced into chugging vodka as a hazing ritual.

State law bars hazing and the report states that physical abuse is not common.

“Another person noted to the reviewers that coerced alcohol use and personal servitude had largely replaced any physical hazing taking place on campus,” the report states. “The hazing is compounded by the fact that most freshman fraternity members live in the fraternity house, where they have no privacy.”

Suspended and banned fraternities continue to function and recognized sororities hold social events with them, the report states. That sets a dangerous situation that could spiral completely out of university control, the report states.

“If a culture is established on campus in which students realize that loss of University recognition poses no significant threat to the existence of a chapter, then groups will become increasingly likely to operate underground without the University’s blessing,” the report states.
It is difficult for the university to impose a harsher punishment than withdrawing recognition, Basi said. The university cannot ban a student from joining an organization that has no connection to the university, he said.

“The hard part about this is how do you go about making that happen in a way that is meaningful,” he said. “Right now, our policies, as harsh as they are, may need to be adjusted to accomplish some of this stuff.”

MU's Office of Greek Life comes under fire in new report

By RYAN HANRAHAN

MU’s Greek students feel “like the University is out to get us” and that the Office of Greek Life is not providing the necessary support that their chapters need, according to a report from an outside consulting firm released Thursday.

The Dyad Strategies report offered a scathing review of the Greek Life office, concluding that it is facing a lack of purpose and direction, the result of a former director telling employees to “scale back” services to the bare minimum.

Gentry McCreary, Dyad Strategies CEO, said that directive, which occurred nearly two years ago, was unlike anything he had seen before.

“That aspect of the report was unique and troubling that a former administrator would undermine the community that they serve,” he said.

As a direct result, the office has provided limited help to chapters, which, in turn, has caused a perceived lack of support for students in the fraternity and sorority community, according to the report.

MU commissioned the report for $22,000 in August.

The report also focused on the Greek system itself, which MU has cracked down on in recent years. It recommended that MU make it a top priority to remove all freshman from fraternity houses in order to improve overall student safety and academic performance. It also states that two fraternities are still operating despite MU no longer recognizing them.
Students who belong to culturally based fraternal organizations also felt MU didn’t support them, according to the report.

Despite the report’s finding, Gary Ward, the interim vice chancellor for student affairs, said he believes the report can lead to an improved Greek system.

“From the beginning of this process, our goal has been to make the Mizzou Greek System the best in the country,” he said in a statement. “We will be reviewing the report and recommendations very carefully to determine our next steps.”

The Office of Greek Life declined to comment. The Panhellenic Association and the Interfraternity Council did not return requests for comment.

The report recommended several ways to improve safety at fraternities’ social events:

- Fraternities should register all social events and implement a maximum number of social events per semester. Sorority leaders worry extensively about the safety of their members during social events that aren’t registered at fraternities, according to the report.
- Fraternities should ban all hard alcohol and implement strict “bring your own beer” rules within their chapter houses.
- Fraternities should implement a policy in which each member may have no more than three guests with him at a time.
- MU and the Interfraternity Council should work together to find an outside firm to provide security during registered events.
- Inspections of chapter houses should occur regularly throughout the duration of a registered social event and then randomly on nights with no registered events.

McCreary said, if the report’s recommendations are followed, MU’s Greek system could become a model of success.

“I do think the things we’ve laid out are a step in the right direction,” he said.

McCreary is expected to return to campus in the next few weeks to meet with students, faculty and other leaders to talk about the proposed implementation of the recommendations.
A new report from third-party consultants says the Greek system at the University of Missouri is falling short in key areas.

Dyad Strategies, a small consulting group that specializes in Greek life, was hired by the university to compile the report as part of an overhaul of campus life administration earlier this year. According to the report, employees from Dyad visited the school in mid-August to conduct in-person meetings that formed the basis of its conclusions.

The report does not directly address recent issues of student conduct in MU Greek life at length. Sexual harassment and assault are not explicitly mentioned in the report's outline of MU Greek life’s current “liabilities,” while concerns about alcohol-related hazing incidents are voiced for just one paragraph, less than one percent of the report’s total length.

Instead, it focuses on administrative practices. Among its chief concerns are a number of fraternities or sororities that, after being sanctioned with removal from the University’s Greek life roster, continue to exist as “underground organizations,” in effect participating in Greek life activities without supervision. The report suggests granting these organizations a reprieve and returning them to official status with further training.

The report also suggests a formalized three-tier structure for discipline, which formally establishes punishments for things like being too loud or providing alcohol to minors, which it classifies as “low level” and “mid level” infractions. “High level” violations, like hazing and sexual assault, would be evaluated on a per-case basis.

In a statement Thursday, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Gary Ward said the report was intended as a starting point, and school officials have not yet decided how policies may change. “I’m grateful for the work of Dyad Strategies…this report was a first step, and we look forward to building the future of the Greek system while keeping in mind that campus safety is our top priority,” Ward said.
MU releases report analyzing Greek System, Office of Greek Life

By MARIE BOWMAN

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri has released an analysis of the Greek System and the Office of Greek Life (OGL) on Thursday, identifying problem areas that need to be addressed for "improving the Greek experience at MU."

"From the beginning of this process, our goal has been to make the Mizzou Greek system the best in the country," said Gary Ward, University of Missouri vice chancellor for student affairs. "This report was a first step, and we look forward to building the future of the Greek System while keeping in mind that campus safety is our top priority."

General Observations

The report from Dyad Strategies starts with general observations about the "confusing" purpose of OGL and the lack of "strategic focus."

"Our review discovered that, after the office's proposal to pass a Greek Student Fee was not passed nearly two years ago, the unit's employees were instructed by the previous director to 'scale back' their services to chapters to the bare minimum... As a result, there is confusion as to what the role and purpose of OGL should be, and this confusion extends from the current OGL staff to students and both internal and external stakeholders," says the report.

The report goes on to say that OGL operates without "any overarching goals, objectives or priorities" and appears to bounce "from one fire to the next, spending the bulk of its time advising council officers and responding to allegations of misconduct."

The report criticizes OGL's inability to effectively communicate with students, internal and external stakeholders and alumni. Students reported feeling "in the dark," and alumni reported being frustrated with the lack of information OGL shares with them.

OGL support is absent in the Greek community, according to chapter leaders, who describe OGL as a "reactionary unit" instead of a resource. One student goes on to say that "a fraternity would
implode before they would go to the University for help." OGL is also criticized for focusing all of its time to council advisement.

"This is a department stretched thin, not only by minimal staffing and meager programmatic resources, but also by the aforementioned disparate expectations and lack of focus," says the report. "The University faces a challenge with staffing and supervision of the OGL Unit. Current staff is bright and energetic, but young and relatively inexperienced."

The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) and Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) members reportedly felt that they received support from OGL "in terms of attendance at their events," but also felt isolated from the Fraternity/Sorority (F/S) community.

**Risk Management in Greek life**

Many risks were identified in Dyad Strategies' report, including:

- Unregistered social events, especially in fraternities.
- Chapters developing systems to "beat" the Interfraternity Council (IFC) Social Audit process, rendering them ineffective.
- Local law enforcement only conducting cursory patrols and responding to major incidents, almost never going into the fraternity or sorority houses due to them being outside of law enforcement's jurisdiction.
- Allowing freshman to live in fraternity houses, which generally impacts academic performance.
- Syllabus week providing an environment where there's an increase in partying and substance abuse.
- Substance abuse in general.
- Hazing.
- Chapters that are no longer recognized by the university still participating in the Greek community.
- A lengthy conduct process for students.
- Students of color feeling a lack of support from the university and a lack of inclusion/collaboration from other groups like fraternities and sororities.

**Recommendations**

Dyad Strategies outlines eight recommendations for the University of Missouri's OGL and Greek community:

1. Roles and Purpose
• Define a clear purpose for OGL
• Define areas of focus for Fraternity and Sorority chapters
• Articulate specific outcomes
• Make sure that new initiatives address the needs of OGL

2. F/S governing councils
• OGL and F/S councils should have a shared formal relationship and expectations.
• F/S councils should review all internal documents, policies, procedures, structures and programs to be relevant to the community.
• F/S chapters should review risk management policies and practices.
• OGL should assess the needs of F/S chapters.

3. Strategic Planning
• Prioritize critical issues.
• Determine appropriate assessment measures.
• Collect needed baseline state.
• Develop educational programming that adheres to wanted outcomes for OGL.
• Measure growth of OGL

4. Organizational Conduct
• Adopt the "three-pronged approach" created by the Division of Student Affairs that deals with misconduct and the consequences related to the severity of that misconduct.

5. Partnerships
• Develop programmatic framework for internal constituents.
• Partner with the University Development Division to create strategic plan for engaging F/S alumni and parents.
• Develop stronger partnerships with alcohol, drug and sexual violence prevention offices.

6. External Stakeholders
• Create a clear and comprehensive communication plan to engage external stakeholders.
• Create Alumni Advisory Council.
- Invest in the training and recruitment of F/S chapter advisors.
- Investigate a formal partnership with the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC).

7. Risk Management Solutions
- Revamp the Social Audit/Social Event Registration process.
- Invest in a comprehensive hazing prevention program.
- Educate housing corporations on drug testing options.
- Remove freshmen from fraternity houses.
- Revamp the fraternity recruitment process.
- Eliminate Syllabus Week.
- Work to build partnerships with alumni and headquarters of underground groups to establish a recognition plan for the university.
- Invest in sexual harassment/misconduct education programming.

8. Diversity and Inclusion
- Consistently evaluate the unique needs of culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFO's).
- Advocate for additional financial programming dollars for the CBFO communities.
- Fortify relationships with graduate/alumni chapters and respective advisors.
- Establish a reasonable outcome for diversity and inclusion programming efforts.
- Provide recruitment and growth guidance for CBFO communities.

The report wraps up with the consensus that the F/S community at the University of Missouri is "underachieving," but the F/S culture is "largely positive."

"With the changes noted in this report, there is no reason to believe that the Mizzou F/S community could not be one that is widely recognized for its success and accomplishments at impacting student learning and institutional culture in positive and meaningful ways," says the report.

The official press release states that no final decisions will be made about the recommendations until Spring 2018.

You can read Dyad Strategies' report in its entirety below:
MU releases report on school's Greek Life practices

By NICK ALLEN


COLUMBIA - Third party consulting firm Dyad Strategies began its assessment of the University of Missouri's Greek Life practices before the start of the 2017 fall semester.

MU spokesperson Christian Basi said the school hired Dyad in an attempt to improve the lives of Greek students.

"We have a very vibrant and strong greek community here, and we know it impacts thousands of students every year, and we want to make sure that that impact that the students are experiencing is the best possible experience they can have when they are here," Basi said.

The school released the firm's findings on Thursday.

Much of the report was focused on the Office of Greek Life, a small group of MU staff hired to oversee the school's fraternities and sororities.

Dyad said the office currently lacks a strategic focus, with much confusion as to its role in day to day operations.

The firm strongly suggests the office clearly define its goals, and do a better job of communicating them to Greek houses.

The report included several smaller suggestions for MU, such as not allowing freshman to live in houses due to a lowered academic performance.
Local law enforcement also received a mention, with Dyad calling it out for only responding to major incidents of out of control parties.

MU Greek Life has been no stranger to major incidents as of late. Just this month, the national chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon shut down its MU chapter for several violations of policies including those involving alcohol and substance abuse.

Sororities were not included in this part of the report, and MU sorority member Lexi Cederholm said there is a very simple reason for that.

"The fraternity side of Greek Life is allowed to have parties in their houses. The sororities are not so the houses stay a lot nicer, a lot cleaner."

Christian Basi said the school will continue to work with Dyad for the rest of this school year, and expects changes to the Greek Life system starting with next year's fall semester.

Mizzou Law School Hosts First Amendment Symposium

Generated from News Bureau media advisory: [MU School of Law to Host First Amendment Symposium](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=b74a777a-ef33-4a93-945e-28f290ec24ed)

Free Speech On College Campuses; Daniel Serda's Story

Story resulted from MU News Bureau release: *MU School of Law to Host First Amendment Symposium*

By GINA KAUFMANN & MATTHEW LONG-MIDDLETON

Tensions have been rising on college campuses over freedom of speech issues. From pressure to cancel controversial speakers to debates about safe spaces, what does free speech mean on campus?

Plus, a city planner shares the story of when his dad, a migrant farmworker, lost his job, and the KCK social worker who changed their lives.

Guests:

- Christina Wells, Professor, University of Missouri School of Law
- Daniel Serda, inSITE planning
MU Staff Advisory Council gives feedback on emergency situations after active threat last week

By DEBORAH KENDRICK


COLUMBIA, Mo. - Since last week's active threat near Mizzou's campus, MU Staff Advisory Council worked on giving feedback to university leaders Thursday. Some of the feedback, said there was too much confusion about what was going on, what to do, and how serious the threat was.

Chrissy Kintner, staff advisory council chair, told ABC 17 News after the meeting that some staff admitted to thinking it was a fire drill.

"Each building coordinator and each building needs to understand what to do when a certain alert goes off," she said. "Also, make sure the MU alert website is updated if you are going to tell us go there."

Kintner also said a lot of the confusion stemmed from the term "active threat." Kintner said, "What is an active threat? I think people's imagination is going to go to the worst possible place."

Students on campus told ABC 17 News their teachers didn't know what to do; some continued to teach class and others just ran out of the classroom. Most students agreed that campus-wide active shooter training is needed to lessen the confusion on what to do.
We like emotional user reviews, but not rants or gushing

Generated by MU News Bureau release: Online consumers want emotional reviews—just not too emotional

Although some emotion makes user reviews more persuasive, online shoppers often ignore reviews they perceive to be overly emotional, researchers report.

Online reviews play an increasingly important role in consumer behavior as more Americans opt to purchase items online. Previously, studies examining the influence of reviews focused on the length of the reviews and whether they were positive or negative. In their new study, researchers focused on how expressions of emotion affect the helpfulness of a review.

“Ranting about a bad experience may be cathartic for the author, but it is counterproductive for reviewers seeking to influence potential buyers,” says Dezhi Yin, an assistant professor of management in the University of Missouri’s Trulaske College of Business. “Overly emotional reviews appear to be discounted by readers due to their embedded emotion, even when they are providing objectively useful information.”

Not too flat

The findings have implications for both consumers who want to craft helpful, influential reviews and for online sellers who depend on reviews to spur sales. For reviewers, the research shows that feedback with a more balanced tone tends to be more influential—as long as some emotion is expressed.

“Our theory is that readers use emotion to infer how much effort and thought went into a review,” Yin says. “When someone writes a flaming, angry review or a gushing, fawning review, they are perceived as responding emotionally and not logically. At the same time, reviewers who are overly flat in expressing themselves may be perceived as unhelpful.”
This mistake makes us buy junky stuff online

Yin recommends that retailers monitor online reviews, as they can provide early indications of product and service issues. He also says, however, it’s wise to not fret over a handful of searing reviews, as their impact is likely limited. In addition, he notes that retail sites should consider review guidelines that encourage a moderate level of emotion to elicit narratives that are most valued.

App reviews

The study is based on an examination of 400,000 reviews at Apple’s App store. The researchers measured the emotional intensity of each review with linguistic analysis tools, then examined the relationship between emotional intensity and “helpful” votes given to the review.

Additionally, the researchers conducted a follow-up survey and two laboratory experiments in which respondents evaluated fictional mobile app reviews that contained the same objective content but different levels of emotion.

‘Results from all four studies provided evidence for ‘diminishing returns to emotion,’” Yin says. “Readers were much more likely to view a review as helpful when it contained a moderate amount of emotional words and exclamations, but not when it was full of such emotional markers.”

The researchers report their findings in the *Journal of Marketing Research*. Yin’s coauthors are from the Scheller College of Business at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Source: *University of Missouri*

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**UM System encourages faculty to use more open educational resources**

By LILY O’NEILL

Beginning next week, professors will have more incentive to offer free or low-cost textbooks.

As part of a University of Missouri System initiative on educational resources that are free to access online, the four campuses will be launching an incentive grant program next
week. This is intended to encourage faculty members to incorporate more of these resources in their courses.

With the rising cost of college textbooks, UM System President Mun Choi announced the initiative last spring. Scott Curtis, who’s on the system’s Affordable & Open Educational Resources Taskforce, said he hopes the lower costs of textbooks will help students academically.

“The reason for doing this, ultimately, is to make sure students are successful,” Curtis said. “We know the cost of textbooks can be a major obstacle for students. If they have access to that book, they will do better.”

Through this grant program, the four campuses will ask faculty members to consider using free or low-cost resources listed on MU’s Open Educational Resources site as they select books for next semester.

Open educational resources published with open access copyrights, are free for students and can be distributed and used for little to no cost. These free textbooks have always been available for students to use.

However, some system professors didn’t use the technology very much, either because they weren’t aware of it or they were wary of its quality. But many courses are reviewed and revised by faculty at universities across the country.

Instructors can write and add chapters to tailor textbooks to specific courses if material does not fit their curriculum. The material is accessed online, usually as PDFs, and can be revised and updated fairly quickly.

Grant money will be distributed depending on a professor’s time and effort to integrate the open-access material into his or her course curriculum, said Jana Moore, a representative from the UM System’s Office of Academic Affairs. Incentives will range from $1,000 to $10,000, Choi said.

“The greater the savings are for students, the greater the potential grant could be,” Moore said.

Faculty members can apply to adopt materials that already exist, adapt them to their own specific course needs, or create a new resource for students to use.

Carolyn Orbann, an assistant teaching professor for MU’s Department of Health Sciences, has worked with other faculty in her department since the summer to incorporate open educational resources into their spring courses. She feels the grant program is a great way to get the conversation started about how and why teachers should use the technology.

“Textbook affordability has been something that I personally have been interested in for a long time,” Orbann said. “Whenever I have the choice to choose a textbook, I do look up the cost for students and see if it’s expensive and try to look for other alternatives. Once I saw the wealth of material available (online), it was just amazing.”
Orbann is working with another faculty member to transform one of her writing-intensive classes to adopt a pre-existing open access textbook in the spring semester. They have identified two options and are now evaluating them.

“I’m glad I don’t have to worry that I’m being a hardship on a student,” Orbann said.

The grant, funded by the system’s Office of Academic Affairs, will also encourage other activities related to open educational resources, such as reviewing the available materials’ quality, curating additional online or open resources, or applying to help mentor other faculty.

“We don’t have any targets in how many grants we hope to sponsor,” Moore said. “We ideally would be thrilled if all faculty were to be interested in a program like this, but we recognize that faculty has the complete academic freedom to pick and choose materials that serve their students best.”

The launch of this program comes amid a larger national movement to reduce the costs of books. College students spend an average of $1,200 per year on textbooks, which can represent up to 15 to 20 percent of total debt at graduation, according to a system news release.

The cost of textbooks continues to rise, as does student debt. Between January 1998 and July 2016, college textbook prices increased by 90 percent, while the prices of recreational books fell by more than 35 percent, according to an American Enterprise Institute report.

The most well-known open educational resource program is OpenStax, a nonprofit initiative at Rice University funded in part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It contains almost 40 peer-edited textbooks available for free in a variety of subjects, ranging from college algebra to physics to history. The University of Minnesota also offers an open textbook library for anyone to download and use for free.

Along with making resources free to students, the UM System uses AutoAccess, a collaborative program between The Mizzou Store, faculty and publishers that provides required materials at a reduced cost. More than 240 courses across the four campuses use AutoAccess textbooks, saving students about $5 million annually.

To ensure these affordability efforts continue, the system created the Affordable & Open Educational Resources Taskforce for each campus. The task forces will be working closely with committees on each campus to inform students and faculty about the available options to reduce the cost of higher education.

Grace Atkins, the co-chair for MU’s task force, said her goal for the grant program is to make sure that all faculty is aware of MU’s Open Educational Resources site. She hopes that all members review their options before selecting future course materials.

“We talk about money, and money is so important, but what this really comes down to is equity and accessibility,” Atkins said. “The students who can afford to get their textbooks are going to
do better, and this is going to level the playing field. This is going to help with retention and academic success. The money is important, but look at the end result.”

The Washington Post

**Reality TV gives the 'angry black woman' a bad name. Sometimes anger is a good thing.**

By Macy Freeman

I’ve never gotten hooked on reality TV, yet it’s impossible to deny the impact that shows like “Love & Hip Hop” have on audiences. Friends and social media introduced me to one of the franchise’s breakout stars, Cardi B, before I ever even tuned in for an episode.

The times I have watched, the heated disagreements between the women on the show and others like it — during which drinks are often thrown and expletives flow — seemed so commonplace that it all became too predictable and is part of the reason why I never became a loyal follower.

As fictional TV shows seem to have grown more diverse in their depictions of black women — think “Black-ish,” “Insecure” and “Queen Sugar” — the reality realm hasn’t quite kept up, recycling some of the same imagery of black women as short tempered and confrontational. Some critics say these shows perpetuate stereotypical images, particularly the “angry black woman” trope, and a survey released recently suggests they have reason to be concerned.

A recently released survey examining perceptions of black women in media found that 72 percent of the black women perceived depictions of themselves in the media negatively compared to 46 percent of white women. The survey was coordinated by the American Advertising Federation (AAF), Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and professors at the University of Missouri.
Five hundred black and white women were surveyed earlier this year, and a follow-up survey included another 500 women of other races. All were between the ages of 18 and 24. The survey followed a 2015 white paper and watch parties that explored the state of black images in media. The results of the survey were announced during the recent Legislative Conference of Congressional Black Caucus in Washington.

The survey explored viewership of specific reality TV shows, including “Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta,” “Basketball Wives” and “The Real Housewives.” Of those surveyed black women were watching more of the shows in question than white women, so beyond influencing how other women might view black women, seeing these images can have an effect on black women’s self-image.

When asked about what descriptors they’d use to describe the way black women are depicted on reality TV, 53 percent of black women and 37 percent of the white women said “argumentative.”

Connie Frazier, chief operating officer of AAF, is interested in sharing the survey results with industry professionals, so they’ll understand the importance of including black women and other women of color in their decision-making processes when it comes to developing images for advertisements and other media.

Frazier says “it is important that we advocate for a more balanced depiction of African American and other women of color in ads and media and refrain from reinforcing stereotypical images.”

Last year, Mona Scott-Young, executive producer of the “Love & Hip Hop” franchise, which includes Atlanta, New York, Hollywood and soon Miami, spoke to Essence Magazine about the criticisms of her franchise.

“There are tons of shows that people can watch that depict different backdrops and different lifestyles … ‘Love & Hip Hop’ is one. Leave them alone,” she said. “This is, you know, the world that they know, the way that they navigate their world. They have every much a right to be here as you and I do.”
In recent years, the “angry black woman” stereotype hasn’t been reserved only for women on reality TV shows. It’s also been used as a way to undermine the credibility of black women in positions of power and influence, including former first lady Michelle Obama and television producer Shonda Rhimes.

But some black women reject the effort to use the stereotype as a way of silencing them from speaking out, expressing outrage at the issues affecting their communities.

Farah Tanis, co-founder of Black Women’s Blueprint, along with other community activists organized the March for Black Women in D.C. in September to raise awareness of gendered racism. The event attracted 3,329 registered supporters. Tanis says that when black women speak out against such issues as white supremacy, domestic violence, police brutality and a lack of access to health care, the anger they feel is justified.

“How are we to remain calm? Should we sit idly by as we’re being pretty much knocked off one by one? Of course we’re angry … and rightfully so,” Tanis says. “We’re also very joyful. We’re also very caring. We’re also very loving. Our love is radical.”

Tanis adds, “I think what’s going on is that people are seeing anger as an emotion that we shouldn’t have and that we can’t own. I own my anger … It’s rage that begins revolutions.”

Because pop culture is one of the most accessible outlets for an exchange of ideas and experiences, reality TV shows offer fertile ground for stereotypical images to flourish. But the problem isn’t necessarily that these depictions exist; it’s that they’re deemed to be negative, because black women aren’t always allowed to be completely human, flaws and all.

Black women have as much a right as anyone to feel and express anger whether it’s over a cheating man or threats to their civil liberties. But we often face harsh criticism either way. We don’t all express anger in the same way. For every Cardi B and Tahiry there’s a real-life Rainbow Johnson and Nova Bordelon. We all have different experiences that have shaped us into who we are as individuals, and this is why reality TV should feature more nuanced narratives to reflect a balance of perspectives.
This “angry black woman” stereotype existed long before reality TV shows came about, so I can’t honestly say that more diverse depictions is the antidote, it but it would at least offer a fuller picture of who we are.

Therapy dog brings calm, confidence to high school
By Colleen Wilson

MONTROSE - Hendrick Hudson High School welcomed a new staff member to its special education program this year.

Her specialty? Helping students walk, boosting confidence, quelling anxiety — and tail-wagging.

Ramona, a 2-year-old Labrador retriever, began working at the high school as a therapy dog, visiting Christina Feal’s special education class three times a week.

“The main goal of Ramona joining the program is really to help facilitate independence and have students gain confidence in things like social interactions and reducing anxiety,” Feal said. “They’re so influenced by her presence that it immediately changes the dynamic in the classroom.”

Ramona will nudge up to the students who seem anxious, she puts her paws on their lap, the kids pet her and an instant calm comes over the class as she helps them relax and focus on their assignment.

During their afternoon physical education class, 15-year-old Emma MacFadyen walks Ramona around the track.

Leah Montgomery, a senior in a peer leadership class that sometimes works with Feal’s class, said Ramona has helped the students feel more comfortable in the cafeteria.

“They’re a lot more relaxed being around us, it’s a big crowd and very loud, but it’s fine and Ramona has been helping with that,” Montgomery said.
Some recent research has shown animal companions can be helpful for students with special needs. A 2014 study published by the University of Missouri Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction found that children with autism show improved social skills, like communicating and confidence around others, when they had pets.

The idea to bring a dog into the school started as a conversation last year between Feal and Brad Fredman, a physical education teacher at the high school and who oversees the peer leadership course. The two talked about having dogs visit her classroom, and the conversation evolved into having a dog assigned to the class.

“We sort of knew that would be a tall order, but we approached our principal, who was 110 percent behind us, and so was all the administration above him,” Feal said.

Feal and Fredman got in touch with Yorktown-based Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a nonprofit that trains dogs for the blind, and told them they were looking for a dog with a calm demeanor that could be in a school setting.

Months passed before Feal heard anything, and then in May she got a call that Guiding Eyes had found a dog that fit their needs.

Around that time, Fredman’s peer leadership class was preparing for its third-annual Mattsters Disc Golf Tournament fundraiser. The event is named for Matt Marrico, one of Feal’s students, who they have helped raise money for in the past.

Jim Machin, the high school principal, suggested to Fredman that they donate this year’s fundraiser money to Ramona’s $2,000 adoption fee. Fredman said he and his class thought it was a “no-brainer.”

The fundraiser was a success and by the beginning of school, Feal had adopted Ramona and she was starting her new job at the high school.

“When you see the dog walking around working … everyone just kind of feels better,” Fredman said.

During the three school days Ramona works she gets two periods of rest and a lunch break. When she’s not at school, Ramona is at Feal’s home where she gets to take off her vest and “just be a dog,” Feal said.

Machin, the principal, said he had no trepidations about bringing a dog into the school and would actually like to expand Ramona’s presence more throughout the school building and to other grades.
“Just walking around during Regents exams, (Advanced Placement) exams, just for stress relief. You saw even when she’s walking in the hall with the kids, the other kids just kind of flock to her,” he said.

Machin and Feal also talked about looking for a grant that could fund a dog for each of Feal’s students so they would each have a companion at home after they graduate high school.

“A lot of these kids once their parents are unable to take care of them, they’ll potentially end up in group homes, but to have a companion that would be the ultimate goal,” Machin said.

**Advisory group pushes restrictions on drink specials**

By YUE YU

The crowd at Roxy’s erupted when Oakland Raiders wide receiver Michael Crabtree caught the touchdown pass that tied the game against the Kansas City Chiefs at 30-30 on Oct. 19. Raiders fans roared with cheers, while the Chiefs faithful let out a collective cry. The Raiders capped the 31-30 victory when they kicked the extra point.

Time had run out on the Chiefs, but not on the party. The hundreds of patrons in the club — up the stairs from The Penguin Piano Bar on Broadway — continued enjoying the $5 bottomless cup special that ran from 9 p.m. to midnight. It’s a special the bar offers every Thursday night.

Perhaps not for long, though. During its Oct. 11 meeting, the city’s Substance Abuse Advisory Commission agreed on details of a proposal for restricting drink specials in the city as a way of reducing alcohol abuse. The commission is lobbying the Columbia City Council to enact the restrictions along with other changes in alcohol policies and law enforcement.

A history of worry

The commission’s concerns about Columbians’ drinking behaviors is not new.

In July 2015, it proposed the City Council adopt administrative penalties for violations of liquor license standards. The document the commission submitted addressed the lack of adequate staffing for law enforcement after the state cut the number of liquor control agents from 60 to six in 2010. The
Associated Press reported at the time that the state had cut the liquor control budget from $2.8 million to $1.7 million and left five agents to cover more than 12,000 liquor license holders.

The commission, noting that the director of the state’s Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control worried the cuts would give state agents very little time for investigation and enforcement, came up with a system to convert ordinance violations into points. Once a license holder reached a certain number of points, the license would be subject to suspension. The more points, the longer the suspension.

The City Council in 2015 directed the Law Department to provide a staff report on the matter, but that hasn’t been done to date, according to the latest commission memo. City Counselor Nancy Thompson could not be reached for comment.

The commission had already listed three areas in need of improvement to tackle the drinking problems: law enforcement structures, drink specials and the number of alcohol outlets.

Given the lack of response from the Law Department on the point system, the commission decided to move on to drink specials, commission chairwoman Molly Borgmeyer said.

The city’s Downtown Community Improvement District paid the Responsible Hospitality Institute $49,467 in 2015 to study the city’s dining, entertainment and nightlife, District Executive Director Katie Essing said. The study identified several challenges to people’s enjoyment of nightlife, including “incidents of violence, robbery, sexual assault, vandalism, crowd congestion, noise complaints, underage drinking, over-service of patrons, and impairment of both pedestrians and drivers.”

Like the 2015 commission memo, the study also identified the problem of limited law enforcement. It cited statistics from the 2014 Missouri College Health Behavior Survey on the problems of over-service, foot injuries among over-intoxicated women who walked across broken glass and the high percentage of MU students who said they rarely, if ever, were denied alcohol when using fake IDs. The survey was conducted by the Missouri Partners in Prevention, a consortium of 21 college and university campuses in the state.

The Responsible Hospitality Institute’s report suggested the city improve the training and education of both police officers and venue staff and involve other regulatory and compliance agencies to deal with compliance violations.

The Substance Abuse Advisory Commission also looked at legislation in college towns in Florida, Arkansas and Nebraska, along with research on drink-special restrictions’ influence on underage drinking in particular, Borgmeyer said. That research included the 2013 Report to Congress on the Prevention and Reduction of Underage Drinking.

After putting all the findings together, the commission made detailed suggestions for restricting drink specials. It would:

- Prohibit offering or serving any free alcoholic beverage to the general public.
• Prohibit providing unlimited alcoholic beverages for a fixed price (to include an entry fee charge).
• Require that any alcoholic beverage be sold for no less than $2.
• Prohibit reduced drink prices after 11 p.m.
• Require that the price of non-intoxicating beverages such as soft drinks not be more expensive than the least expensive alcoholic beverage.
• Prohibit advertising and/or promoting any discount pricing practices that are prohibited, whether on or off of the licensed premises and including social media.
• Regulate games and contests involving alcoholic beverages or the awarding of intoxicating drinks as prizes.

Borgmeyer thinks banning unlimited alcohol for a fixed price and setting the $2 minimum price are the most critical strategies for curbing drinking problems.

“Honestly it’s just because people think more about what they’re doing if there’s money attached to it,” Borgmeyer said.

Challenge for business

The $1 pint night on Mondays has been a special event at McNally’s Irish Pub for at least 15 years, general manager Megan Lamb said. If the city were to enact a $2 minimum, the event would be no more.

Ian Donaghy, an assistant scientist at EAG Laboratories, said he enjoys frequenting McNally’s on Mondays.

“I’m a single dad,” Donaghy said. “(The special) kind of brings me out ... and it just makes me sad to see it go away.”

“I think it would definitely hurt business for us,” Lamb said. “We do do dollar pints on Mondays, and people enjoy that. We have for years. Never had any problem with it.”

All McNally’s drink specials last until closing time. Lamb said banning drink specials after 11 p.m. also would damage the business.

Jesse Garcia, owner of Roxy’s, The Penguin Piano Bar and The Social Room, said the policy would take away small businesses’ chance to use competitive pricing to compete with big businesses that have enough money to sustain themselves.

“(The small businesses) would all be affected drastically,” Garcia said. “Drastically.”

Garcia also thinks the imbalance between regulations on drink specials and retail liquor sales would make the market unfair for bar and restaurant owners, and the regulation itself would be ineffective.

“It’s a fallible logic to think you can control people over that,” Garcia said.
MU student Josh McElfresh said the 75-cent triple wells at Campus Bar & Grill on Thursday nights — a deal now jeopardized by the proposed regulations — is among his favorite drink specials. He agreed the restrictions would hurt business, especially when college enrollment is down.

“Everyone (in) college is on a budget pretty much, I would say,” McElfresh said. “And if you don’t have budgeted drinking, and you’re not going to go out as much, you just spend time in.”

David Maxwell, mid-Missouri regional director of the Missouri Restaurant Association, estimated the group has around 75 members in Columbia. The small business owners understand the motive behind restricting drink specials, Maxwell said, but they would want to level the playing field to keep their businesses healthy.

He said he would appreciate a chance to discuss restrictions with the commission.

People won’t stop

Charlie Lesser, 25, has been a regular at Campus Bar & Grill since he was 19. Like McElfresh, he also thinks that the restrictions would discourage students from going out to drink. That, however, could encourage reckless or binge drinking at home, he said.

“If they’re gonna be at home, they don’t have the limits,” Lesser said. “They don’t have someone like a door guy at a bar saying: ‘Hey are you 21? Can you drink?’ That’s gone.”

MU student Ana Perez said the ban on specials after 11 p.m. also could encourage binge drinking. On bottomless nights at Roxy’s, she usually has two to three drinks, but some people can have 10, she said, and some drink throughout the night until closing time.

“You are just encouraging more people to drink in a shorter amount of time instead of spacing it out,” Perez said.

“It’s not feasible to think that making a law like this is going to stop underage drinking,” Perez added. “It’s still going to happen regardless, because there are still house parties and still many ways people can obtain alcohol if they are underage.”

Ashley Woodward, assistant manager at International Tap House, agreed.

“You can try to tell people they can’t drink,” Woodward said, “but they’re still going to find a way.”

Do drink restrictions work?

Traci Toomey, director of the Alcohol Epidemiology Program at the University of Minnesota, has co-written several studies on alcohol control, including one published on the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism website. The research suggested that drink specials appear to contribute to alcohol consumption, recommending a limit on drink specials as an alcohol control policy.
Toomey said in an email that she took part in a review for the Community Prevention Guide and concluded that raising alcohol prices is effective at curbing alcohol abuse. She also looked at the College Alcohol Intervention Matrix, which gives restrictions on drink specials its highest rating for effectiveness.

Toomey understands the motivation behind setting a $2 minimum price and prohibiting bottomless drinks.

“Cheap alcohol means increased likelihood of heavy consumption and problems,” Toomey said, “and the problems are for the drinker themselves as well as secondhand effects, meaning drinking and driving, if you get behind the wheel, assaulting other students or someone in the community, having vandalism ... just a whole range of problems to themselves and then others.”

Toomey said she’s aware that college students sometimes “preload” on drinks before heading to the bars. That’s a challenge for policymakers, she said, suggesting that restrictions on drink specials should work in tandem with strategies such as enhanced server training and price controls at liquor stores.

Toomey said it’s important not to eliminate drink specials but rather to keep them under control.

“It’s just saying we are not going to discount it below $2 or have a fixed price, right?” Toomey said. “That also minimizes the ... backlash that people are suggesting.”

Dani Perez, a two-year resident of Columbia who works at the Yellow Dog Book Shop, said she supports talk about how to address drinking problems in Columbia.

“I think something needs to be done,” Perez said. “Whether this is the right move, I don’t know, but I like that there’s a conversation about what we should do.”

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**Editorial: Gov. Eric Greitens shrugs at ethics in effort to sway school-commissioner decision**

By the Editorial Board 15 hrs ago (1)

Gov. Eric Greitens’ signature campaign pledge to restore ethics and clean up corruption in Jefferson City faces its biggest roadblock from the ethically challenged governor himself. His latest ploy is a case in
Greitens tried to stack the state school board so members would install his chosen candidate to lead Missouri schools. When that failed, he used his campaign funds to bring his favored candidate in for a visit.

This is not the first time the governor has danced around campaign ethics laws. He was fined $1,000 by the Missouri Ethics Commission in May for failing to report that his campaign had received a donor list from a charity he founded. The commission agreed to waive most of the fine if Greitens paid $100 and committed no other violations in the next two years.

Now, five months later, questions of potential violations have returned. A University of Missouri Law School professor who teaches campaign-finance law is suggesting the ethics commission should look at Greitens’ recent action. “I would put it in the category of a questionable use of campaign resources,” Richard Reuben told the Post-Dispatch’s Kurt Erickson.

No matter how vigorously Greitens’ campaign manager, Austin Chambers, defends the action, saying it is an “explicitly” permitted use of campaign contributions, the expenditure merits investigation by the ethics commission. The move had nothing to do with the campaign and was a sneaky way of bringing the job candidate in for a meet-and-greet.

The issue matters not just because of the questionable campaign expenditure but also because Greitens is encroaching on the State Board of Education’s independence.

He wants to get rid of Margie Vandeven, a respected state education commissioner with a proven record, so he can install someone blindly dedicated to a national Republican education agenda.

Under that agenda, the bulk of state and federal education revenue would be spent on school choice, not on strengthening public education. Greitens paid $1,576 out of his campaign fund to bring in Kenneth Zeff, an Atlanta school administrator and education consultant with a strong background in charter school management.

Vandeven, who has led Missouri’s education for grades K-12 since 2015, is a strong advocate for public education and has the support of the eight-member Board of Education, which selects the education commissioner and helps establish education policy.

The board was designed by lawmakers to be fairly independent and removed from partisan politics. State law says no more than four board members can be from the same political party.

The governor can appoint members who share his perspective on education, but the board is not an arm of the state executive’s office.

The board’s focus is supposed to be exclusively on Missouri children and how best to serve them — not Greitens’ self-serving political agenda.
November marks the two-year anniversary of the height of protests that took place on the University of Missouri’s campus. Protests over multiple racial issues culminated with a boycott by football players, a six-day hunger strike and, on Nov. 9, the resignations of the university system president and the MU chancellor.

The University of Missouri has since experienced a noticeable dip in enrollment. Gov. Eric Greitens even went as far as to say in a Facebook Live video on Aug. 23, 2017, "I believe that this is the biggest drop in enrollment of any major university in the country."

Big decline, yes. But is it the worst drop in enrollment in the country?

Is it just MU?

In his video, Greitens goes on to state that freshman enrollment has dipped by 33 percent since protests in 2015 brought national media attention to the SEC school.

The governor’s office didn’t respond to our request for clarifications. Because Greitens referred to major universities, we decided to take a look at four-year public universities containing 20,000 or more students. We chose these universities because the Department of Education lists MU in this group. According to the Department of Education data, MU was not the only university to experience a drop in enrollment.

Departmental data show that MU’s total enrollment declined from 35,424 in 2015 to 33,239 in 2016, or 6.17 percent. That puts the university in fourth place for enrollment decline. The top three:

- Florida State University at Jacksonville, which is predominantly a two-year college, came in third with a 7.97 percent decrease in enrollment.
- The University of Akron main campus fell 8.66 percent.
- The largest decline was at Miami-Dade College, also predominantly a two-year college, which saw enrollment drop 11.43 percent.
Greitens spoke before this year’s official enrollment figures were out, but the decline has continued. The Department of Education hasn’t finished gathering numbers for 2017 enrollment. On Sep. 20, MU announced an enrollment of 30,870, according to the MU News Bureau. That’s a drop of 12.9 percent from 2015.

Freshmen enrollment is down even more. Since the protests on campus, MU experienced a 36.5 percent drop in freshman enrollment, more than the 33 percent decline Greitens mentions.

According to the Department of Education, first-year student numbers for 2016-2017 are still not yet available for all universities, so there is no way to tell if MU experienced the largest drop in freshman enrollment.

**Our ruling**

Greitens said, “I believe that this is the biggest drop in enrollment of any major university in the country.”

MU has undoubtedly experienced a drop in overall enrollment since protests that took place two years ago. However, MU’s overall enrollment decline did not top other universities like Miami-Dade College or the four-year University of Akron.

As far as freshman enrollment, numbers for 2016-17 have not yet been made available, so there is no way to tell if MU experienced the biggest drop in enrollment.

The statement contains an element of truth but ignores critical facts that would give a different impression. We rate this claim Mostly False.
Jason Whitlock: NFL Players Should Think About University of Missouri Before Protesting

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=1452844c-3edf-4790-8d97-e915834610e1