University of Missouri puts emphasis on basics

By THE ST. JOSEPH NEWS-PRESS

Supporters of the University of Missouri-Columbia should find encouragement in proposals under discussion that prioritize student needs first, then the needs of the state.

A byproduct of this focus is the university will benefit as well. But for that to happen, MU must excel at providing an affordable, quality higher education to its students, and the state must reap the rewards of having a more highly skilled workforce.

Otherwise, what's the point?

These overlapping interests are at the heart of five goals an MU committee on enrollment initiatives will consider before submitting a refined plan in March. The goals, as drafted, propose to accomplish these things by 2023:

- Increase the annual number of incoming undergraduate students to 6,000 (this fall, the university had 5,136 first-time students).
- Improve first-year undergraduate retention to 93 percent, up from 87 percent currently.
- Improve four-year undergraduate graduation rates to 52.8 percent, up from 44 percent currently.
- Increase degree and credential completions to 10,000 a year, up from 9,150 last year.
- Ensure 95 percent of graduates are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation (no comparison was provided).

These kinds of objectives are increasingly common on the campuses of public higher education institutions. Some of the goals appear more attainable than others, but all have their place in keeping the university focused on the right things.

First-time student enrollment took a hit after MU’s image was tarnished following campus protests over racial issues in November 2015. The new administration seems to understand fixing that problem starts with addressing those issues, and we have seen substantial progress in engaging students in this process.

Improving four-year graduation rates and ensuring grads are employed (or in graduate school) within six months has risen in importance in recent years. This is one of the clearest paths to lowering the cost of higher education and making it more accessible to a broader range of
students: become more efficient at producing graduates and putting them into the workforce without unwarranted delays.

Finally, the goal of raising the overall number of degrees and credentials awarded each year holds promise for reestablishing our flagship university as critical to our state's success.

The point has been well made by advocates for this priority that adding hundreds more college graduates to the workforce each year would make a difference across Missouri.

**New MU law dean embraces mentorship, scholarship and lifelong learning**

At 25, Lyrissa Barnett Lidsky had job offers from a large law firm in New York City and the U.S. Department of Justice — but she knew where her heart was. At the suggestion of her now husband, she applied for a teaching position at the Levin College of Law at the University of Florida.

To her surprise, she got it.

"I was just unbelievably fortunate to get my dream job at the age of 25," Lidsky said. “It was everything I wanted. Every day since then, I’ve been grateful.”

**After 23 years at the University of Florida, Lidsky became dean of the MU School of Law on July 1. She is also the Judge C.A. Leedy Professor of Law there. Lidsky was drawn to MU by its Research 1 status and vibrant faculty, she said.**

As the law school’s chief academic officer, Lidsky oversees almost 40 faculty members and the legal research they conduct. She also interacts with alumni and donors and works to promote the School of Law.

Lidsky said she advocates for a culture of open inquiry, support and diversity within the school, along with a focus on mentoring students.

"I really wanted to be part of an institution that fundamentally valued both the scholarly mission of the law school as well as the teaching mission," she said.

**A legacy of mentorship**

Mentorship has long been important to Lidsky’s thinking.
As a first-year law student at the University of Texas at Austin in 1990, she took a class with professor David Anderson. He now serves as the Fred and Emily Marshall Wulff Centennial Chair in Law there and will retire Jan. 15.

Anderson still remembers when he first met Lidsky over 25 years ago.

"The first time she spoke up in class, I had to restrain myself from bursting out in laughter because her country accent was so pronounced," he recalled.

"I was from a town of 1,000 people in the middle of nowhere," said Lidsky, a native of Iraan, in West Texas.

Anderson recognized quickly how bright she was and took an interest in her development, becoming her mentor. Lidsky came alive with the intellectual and analytical rigor of law school.

"Within the first three months, you will never think about the world in the same way ever again," she said. "The kind of analytical tools that law school gives you fundamentally affect how you read a newspaper, how you understand the world, how you dissect problems as they arise."

Lidsky graduated in 1993 with high honors awarded to the top 3 percent of her class. Anderson greatly enjoyed watching her succeed as a law student and later a professor.

"I’m as proud as a parent, of course," Anderson said. "Everything she could be, she’s been immensely successful at."

Before law school, Lidsky earned bachelor's degrees in English and political science from Texas A&M University in three years, graduating with a 4.0 GPA in each. She spent the following year at Cambridge University as a Fulbright Scholar.

Lidsky later helped recruit students to the University of Florida, in Gainesville, from places such as Ecuador, Colombia and Chile. She also taught in Cuba, France, Poland and Belize.

"She turned out to be something of an international," Anderson said.

Anderson and Lidsky also coauthored "Mass Media Law: Cases and Materials." Lidsky started as junior editor alongside Anderson and former Stanford Law School professor Marc Franklin.

Franklin eventually retired and is an emeritus professor at Stanford. As Anderson prepares to retire, Lidsky has taken the lead in updating the book. This is especially important as the internet and social media change the landscape of media law, Anderson said.

Along with becoming colleagues and coauthors, Anderson said he and Lidsky have become good friends. Their two families are also close.

"It’s really ... a remarkable instance of a student-professor relationship evolving into a long-term family friendship," he said.
Lidsky carried on the legacy of caring for students at the University of Florida. Rachael Jones met Lidsky at orientation during her first year of law school in 2013. They bonded quickly.

"Lyrissa just kind of adopted me," Jones, who went on to become Lidsky's research assistant, said. "The most incredible thing about her … is the way that she puts students first."

Jones recalled a time during her third year of law school where she landed in the emergency room because of asthma.

"She showed up at 10 p.m. and stayed with me all night — fought with nurses and everything," Jones said. "Lyrissa's the type of person that will drop everything to help someone in need. It's a testament of her devotion to her students."

Jones and Lidsky later coauthored several articles together. Now a media law fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Jones said Lidsky still acts as her sounding board.

"At this point, there's not much Lyrissa and I haven't done as coauthors and colleagues," Jones said with a laugh. She said Lidsky fondly refers to herself as "your David Anderson."

"She's truly shaped me," Jones said. "I always wonder what I did to deserve this."

Adapting to life at MU

During her first five months at MU, Lidsky has focused on getting to know her faculty. She's also been out on the road networking with law school alumni. She has a map of Missouri on her office wall and is learning about different parts of the state.

Lidsky said she has been struck by the strength of the alumni network and its passion for investing in current and prospective students. She's also been racking her brain to find a clever nickname for the law alumni, she said.

"My goal is to get a term that is as evocative as the Mizzou Mafia," she said, referring to the unofficial nickname for Missouri School of Journalism graduates. "The Mizzou law network is fiercely loyal to this institution."

Lidsky also stays busy as a scholar and writer, specializing in First Amendment law. She maintains a breezy disposition, talking with her hands and joking about her split personality on Twitter: On one hand, she said, she is a dean announcing events and talking about the school; on the other, she is a scholar discussing the First Amendment.

"If you're just going to be be bland, it misses the point of using social media," Lidsky said.

Grabbing a casebook on First Amendment law she coauthored from a bookshelf in her office, she pointed out Supreme Court cases reviewed on its pages. While she was writing the book, she played a game with herself, setting an arbitrary word limit for each case summary. Capturing the complexity and core meaning of cases is "part of the fun of writing casebooks," she said.
"It's an interesting time for a First Amendment scholar these days," Lidsky said. "There's plenty to talk about."

Outside of her role as a dean and scholar, Lidsky said she enjoys spending time with her husband, Howard, and their three sons, all of whom live in Columbia. Her two youngest sons are in middle school and high school. Her oldest took a year off after high school and starts as a freshman at MU in January.

As she settles in to her new home and role, Lidsky hopes to develop a zest in her students for embracing change and solving problems.

"Lawyers today have to be incredibly adaptive," Lidsky said. "I want to inculcate an ethic of lifelong learning in every student."

For Jones, the lessons Lidsky instilled in her have had lasting impact.

"Lyrissa has constantly seen something in me and believed in me, even when I can't see that in myself," Jones said. "Having someone like that put that much faith in you ... is incredible."

More than 2,300 students to receive degrees during MU winter graduation ceremonies


Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=67de0eff-06e7-4570-8d95-1c2e2f3da4b0
Maryland lawmakers to track sexual harassment claims — but not reveal offenders
By Fenit Nirappil and Ovetta Wiggins

Generated from News Bureau expert pitch

Legislative leaders in Maryland on Tuesday ordered officials to start collecting data on sexual misconduct complaints against state lawmakers or their staff members, the latest fallout from a tidal wave of harassment allegations that have toppled elected officials and industry leaders nationwide.

“This is a watershed moment in time, and we need to make certain that everyone is treated fairly and that there’s a place they can go,” Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Calvert) said shortly before the Legislative Policy Committee — chaired by him and House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel) — approved the changes.

The General Assembly’s human resources department will begin tallying harassment complaints and will brief the Legislative Policy Committee annually on the nature and outcomes of investigations. The identities of accused harassers will not be included in the report, regardless of whether the claims are found to have merit.

The report will be considered a public record, though it is unclear whether people who want to see it will have to file a public-information request.

“That type of data is better than nothing, so that the public can get a sense of how big of a problem is this and what types of steps are taken to address it,” said Avi Kumin, a Washington lawyer who represents sexual harassment victims.
But he and other experts on sexual harassment issues said the General Assembly should name those who are found to have acted inappropriately.

“I understand the need to be sensitive for due process and for privacy, but if a complaint is substantiated, don’t the voters have a right to know about the malfeasance and misbehavior of their elected officials?” said Jennifer A. Drobac, a law professor at Indiana University who studies sexual harassment. “These elected officials answer to the people.”

Miller and Busch, through their aides, did not respond to this criticism.

Under the current process, alleged victims of sexual harassment can file complaints with the legislature’s human resources director or with staff members of Busch and Miller. The human resources director investigates the cases. The presiding officers are informed of cases involving lawmakers, have a role in deciding disciplinary measures and handle appeals.

Complaints may be referred to the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics, a panel of lawmakers that can punish colleagues with public reprimands or provide victims with written findings that the victims can choose to make public.

Neither scenario has occurred in connection with harassment allegations in recent memory.

Experts on sexual harassment investigations said the involvement of legislative leaders has both benefits and drawbacks.

“The pro, of course, is it’s handled at a higher level and there is some sense of greater accountability than it just disappearing into an HR reporting system,” Kumin said. At the same time, he added, knowing that Busch and Miller will be told if allegations are made against a sitting lawmaker could discourage people from coming forward. “One of the reasons that people are fearful now is that they are concerned about possible retaliation,” he said.
Debbie Dougherty, a professor at the University of Missouri who studies institutional harassment, said having only one person designated to investigate complaints can also be problematic.

“The standard reasons why people don’t report usually come back to the people they are reporting to,” she said. “I would be a lot more comfortable if multiple people investigated, even independently.”

Del. Shelly L. Hettleman (D-Baltimore County) said she believes that many victims are reluctant to come forward. “I know, talking with people, that the issue is more prevalent than what’s reported,” she said.

Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan (D-Montgomery), one of 11 women in the 47-seat state Senate, said the decision to track complaints reflects “encouraging progress, but I suspect we can do more” in terms of transparency and accountability.

Asked at a news conference about the policy change, Gov. Larry Hogan (R) said he was surprised that the legislature wasn’t already compiling data on sexual harassment.

“The legislature obviously doesn’t fall under our purview, but it’s surprising to me that they haven’t had any kind of policy before and a good idea for them to do,” he said.

Daily newspaper serving Southwest Michigan

Staying mentally fit by helping others
New study suggests volunteering can benefit cognitive functioning in older adults

By Andy Steinke
Sit down at a table with Mary Rimpson and Nate Whitelow and you’ll be lucky to get a word in edgewise.

The Benton Harbor residents are full of energy, and are passionate about many things – their family, their community, their faith and especially children.

Rimpson, 77, and Whitelow, 66, volunteer at Benton Harbor’s International Academy at Hull through the Region IV Area Agency on Aging’s Foster Grandparent Program.

“I was sitting around the house,” Rimpson said of her post-retirement life many years ago, “and I had an aunt … and she told me about the program. And I started. I came over here, I took the class. I’ve been working with the schools for 14 years.”

She said if she had continued sitting at home every day, she would have gotten stiff and probably put on weight. But volunteering, she said, has had more than just physical benefits.

“Volunteering keeps my mind sharp,” she said. “I don’t have to have somebody go to the store with me. As somebody asked me, ‘Who does your business?’ I do my own business. I am not crazy yet. I do my own stuff.”

Whitelow – Grandpa Nate as he’s known to the kids – has been volunteering with AAA for six years. The former Benton Harbor Area Schools paraprofessional said the Foster Grandparent Program has been very beneficial for him.

“Area Agency (on Aging) has really given me an opportunity to do my physical therapy for myself,” said Whitelow, who had surgery on his hip about three years ago. “If I wasn’t here, all the things I like to do, I think I wouldn’t be able to do them.”
Both realize the positive effects volunteering has had on their lives, but according to a new study, their many hours of annual service might be having a greater effect on their health than they even realize.

**Studying a years-long study**

Christine Proulx, an associate professor of human development and family science at the University of Missouri, said many studies have been conducted that link formal volunteering to physical health benefits – like reduced mortality and increased physical functioning. But the correlation to cognitive functioning was another story.

“I was just curious,” she said when talking about her recently published study. “People have looked at volunteering in later life and how it effects physical health. But the literature on cognitive health was much smaller.”

She and two associates dissected the University of Michigan’s Health and Retirement Study – a longitudinal project sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Social Security Administration that has collected data every two years since the 1990s. Their results were published in The Journals of Gerontology: Social Sciences.

Cognitive functioning was measured in those older than 50 with three tests – an immediate and a delayed recalling of 10 words, a serial sevens subtraction test of working memory, and counting backward to assess attention and processing speed.

Proulx’s team examined nine waves of that data from 11,100 participants who were 51 and older.

What they found was that formal volunteering was associated with “higher levels of cognitive functioning over time, especially with aspects of cognitive functioning related to working memory and processing.”

The benefits were greater for women than men, and were greater for those with below average levels of education.
Formal volunteering does not stop cognitive decline, which Proulx said typically starts when people are in their 40s, but it makes the decline less steep.

“The thing that we don’t know,” she said, “is what it is about volunteering that’s beneficial.”

Proulx suggests volunteering is beneficial because it stimulates the brain. When volunteering a person must follow directions, solve problems and be active, all of which engage working memory and processing.

As a way to stratify participants of the Health and Retirement Study, Proulx’s team broke them down into those who volunteered 1-99 hours per year, 100-199 hours and 200-plus hours.

Proulx’s study found the benefits of formal volunteering plateaued at 200 hours per year.

“Let’s say the average year, you are available for 50 weeks,” Proulx said. “Two hundred hours is a few hours a week. It’s possible that more than that doesn’t add anything to the protective effects of volunteering. Doing more might just be too much, and maybe it’s competing with other things that are good for your health, like reading or spending time with friends.”

The study also compared those who volunteered formally – people like Whitelow and Rimpson who work through the AAA – and those who volunteered informally – like those who lend a hand to a friend, neighbor or family member in need.

Formal volunteering, of any length, was associated with higher levels of cognitive functioning than informal volunteering.

Volunteering in Southwest Michigan

This year, 89 senior citizens – average age 72 – have volunteered more than 89,000 hours helping approximately 460 kids across Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties through AAA’s Foster Grandparent Program, according to program coordinator Rose Egelhaaf.

But the program is far from the only opportunity for those looking to lend a hand.
Volunteer Southwest Michigan has a wide swath of volunteer opportunities in the tri-county area.

Last year, the nonprofit accounted for nearly 44,000 service hours, which have a monetary value of more than $1 million, according to its 2016 annual report.

That only counts the people who signed up for opportunities through its website, www.volunteerswmi.org, said Sarah Kolbeck, director of client services and data processing. It doesn’t count people who see an opportunity on the website or in the newspaper and call the nonprofit directly.

“Our main goal is to connect individuals in the community to volunteer opportunities,” she said. “How we do that is we have partner nonprofits who can post their volunteer opportunities on our website for free.”

More than 250 nonprofits, some more active than others, post opportunities for a wide range of ages.

“Individuals who are 60-plus have a lot of skills and things they can offer,” Kolbeck said. “Some people, they are looking at retirement, and they think, ‘What am I going to fill my time with?’ They worked so hard their whole life, and it’s just a matter of not just keeping busy, but getting out of the house. It keeps them engaged with other people.

“I think, for them, it’s that social engagement that really brings happiness,” she said. “And obviously that sparks neurons and the mental capacity to think outside the box and keep going and stay engaged.”
Jewish tradition finds permanent home in Columbia

By: David Rothchild


COLUMBIA - Rabbi Avraham Lapine and his wife, Channy, dreamed of dedicating their lives to the Jewish community.

In 2011, that became a reality, when they started a Chabad house at the University of Missouri.

“Chabad houses started after the Holocaust, but Chabad actually goes way back - over 200 years,” Channy said. “Because it’s a philosophy. It’s a way of looking at Judaism, which approaches Judaism with joy, with love.”

Avraham said Chabad mainly serves students, but is open to mid-Missouri community members as well. The Lapines said Chabad offers teachings, a social outlet, emotional support and a home away from home during the holidays.

“Whatever you would get back at home on holiday services, or whatever you do with dinner with your family, you can get that here at Chabad,” Channy said.

However, after six years of renting a house on the corner of Providence and Brandon Road, the Lapines finally bought it. Avraham said they raised $40,000 in order to buy the house.

“It was really, really an unbelievable feeling,” he said. “That Jewish life is really thriving in Columbia and the University of Missouri. We felt it, we see how people really, really appreciate it - what Chabad does for the students and for the community.”
Chabad at MU is the first and only one of its kind in mid-Missouri, and its permanent status comes just in time for Chanukah.

Avraham said buying the house right before the holiday makes it more significant.

“One of the messages of Chanukah is of the freedom of religion,” he said. "Chabad is all about being Jewish, not only being Jewish, but being Jewish openly - being proud of your Judaism. So actually there is a little bit of a connection.”

One of Chabad’s practices includes public menorah lightings, and one will take place at MU’s Student Center on Tuesday during the first night of Chanukah.

“Especially in a world that’s so dark, we need as much light as possible,” Avraham said. "And that's the message of Chanukah - a little bit of light expels lots of darkness.”

While Chabad at MU is one of hundreds of other houses on a college campus, Chabad is an international movement, present in 100 different countries.

This Mizzou basketball player started a nonprofit. Now he’s organizing a holiday toy drive

By: Aaron Reiss

COLUMBIA
This is a story about a charity toy drive, and it involves the NCAA, which means something simple and good is still a bit … sticky.

Terrence Phillips, a junior guard on the Missouri basketball team, has started a nonprofit organization called “Beyond The Ball” with one of his friends, Ashley Reed, whom he met about a year ago. Per NCAA rules, Mizzou athletics can not help Beyond The Ball’s holiday toy drive — no collection boxes at Mizzou Arena’s entrances, no video advertisements during timeouts. Phillips had to receive an NCAA waiver to use his likeness on any promotions.
Phillips also had to delete all mention of Mizzou basketball from his social media accounts while promoting his charity. And Phillips said because his playing time has shrunk under new head coach Cuonzo Martin, that scrubbing led to questions about whether Phillips is transferring.

“No, I’m not transferring,” he said. “I’m ready to launch my nonprofit.”

Phillips’ charitable work should negate the notion that inconsistent playing time has him looking to leave. Martin has praised how Phillips has handled his changing role, and the point guard from California feels tied enough to this community to work through months of NCAA red tape.

“The whole kind of basis behind it was to give back to Columbia, a place that I’ve called home for about three years now, a place that I’ve really embraced,” Phillips said.

At first, Phillips and Reed had an idea for a backpack drive. Reed even made fliers. But by the time they thought of it, late this past summer, there was too much to get done for NCAA clearance and not enough time to do it. So they shifted their focus.

They received approval from the NCAA and Mizzou’s athletic compliance department in late November, just as Phillips was preparing to travel to Orlando, Florida, for a basketball tournament. A late start, they admitted. But this has worked.

They have five collection boxes set up around town: **at an apartment complex, a couple of bars, a restaurant and a gymnastics studio.** Willie’s, a local sports bar where Phillips worked as a bartender during this past summer, spent about $1,000 on toys at Walmart. That was enough for three or four carts full of toys.

“I got one of every Disney princess,” Willie’s general manager Brian Miller said.

At Reed’s apartment on Sunday, boxes from Walmart littered her bed. They came from people who purchased toys off of an online registry that Beyond The Ball set up.

Another box, which rose to the 5-foot-11 Phillips’ chest, sat on the floor. Toys almost filled it to the brim.

More gifts are coming. As of Tuesday afternoon, **Beyond The Ball had raised $1,900 online to buy toys.** Another Columbia restaurant, Campus Bar and Grill, pledged to donate all of the money it made off cover charges this past Saturday.

Beyond The Ball’s goal is about 300 toys, and Reed said that by the time the nonprofit hosts a cookie decorating party on Dec. 17 at a local theater, where the toys will be distributed to children in town, there should be an excess. This event, the culmination of the collection, is what Phillips is most excited about.

“He’s returned into a child over this,” Reed said of Phillips.

Phillips almost immediately knew which toy was his favorite when asked. It’s this batman mask that lights up at the eyes.
“It has a voice changer,” Phillips said. “... I’m really hoping a kid doesn’t take it because I might take it home with me.”

Before Missouri’s game Saturday, Phillips took a break from warming up to meet a young boy standing close to the court, on the student section bleachers.

The Tigers all do community service. But as an organized team activity, it can feel a bit like “forced action,” Phillips said. Not bad, but maybe not enough.

The point guard said he has received questions about what he plans to do with his nonprofit after this toy collection. He wants to do another one next year — and more after that. He wants to keep this going for as long as he can.

And he still wants to organize that backpack drive.

**The Maneater**

**Showcase features students’ original garments and wearable art**

The Student Apparel Design Showcase was MU’s first to include work from students in each of the creative textiles classes along with intermediate and advanced fiber art.

By MORGAN SMITH

Students in the textile and apparel management department’s Product Development program exhibited their fall semester projects inside and around the Gwynn Lounge on Thursday. The projects ranged from aprons to jean jackets and incorporated various creative techniques and styles.

**The Student Apparel Design Showcase was the first at MU’s College of Human Environmental Sciences to incorporate the work of students enrolled in six different studio classes.** The gallery included the wearable art of intermediate and advanced fibers students as well as garments made by students from five textile and apparel management classes ranging from beginner to intermediate and advanced.

“This is the first [showcase] that we’ve done that encompasses all the creative classes,” professor Jean Parsons said. “It looks great; I think our students do impressive work.”

Parsons has worked in the textile and apparel management department at MU for six years and has hosted individual class and senior capstone showcases prior to this combined event.
Parsons said the exhibition, organized by professor Kristen Morris, displays the growth that students in the program experience from their first projects to the graduate-level projects that become more intricate and complex. The projects include the physical, original garments as well as prints showing designs, patterns and inspiration.

“[The showcase] shows the transition from their very first projects, the aprons, [displayed] out in the front and the bags, and then they move to [projects from] the pattern-making and the digital classes,” Parsons said.

Parsons said most of her students have spent four to five weeks on their pieces, but timelines can vary in other classes.

Their assignments can also be specific or broad. One of this semester’s prompts included artwork that can lay flat on a wall but then be taken off and worn. Another asked that students create electronic sketches of their own hand-illustrated patterns, according to the gallery’s informative cards.

“We’re showing a real cross section of the work they’ve done and also the opportunities they have,” Parsons said.

Parsons said many of the projects featured were made using new technology that is entering the apparel industry. The scarves displayed were all digitally printed with patterns designed by students with computer programs.

Doctoral student Lida Aflatoony is currently in Parson’s creativity and problem-solving class, which was assigned the “Wear of the Wall” prompt. Her garment used laser cutting and three-dimensional printing. Similar to a shawl, it encompassed several organic shapes with hand-designed motifs that were executed by machines.

“Right now, we’ve been using a lot of technology to make our garments and handcraft, little by little, is forgotten,” Aflatoony said. “I wanted to show that handcraft and technology should work hand in hand.”

This showcase was Aflatoony’s second since she arrived in the United States after studying fashion and working in Milan.

“We can communicate ideas,” Aflatoony said. “Art and design exhibitions for design majors are the best way of communicating with the public and demonstrating what is usually going on inside the design labs.”