An Interview with Melissa Click

For those following the unrest at the University of Missouri last fall, Melissa Click became a household name after she confronted a student trying to record a gathering of students on a campus quadrangle, shoving the student’s camera and calling for muscle to have him removed from the area.

Listen at http://kbia.org/post/interview-melissa-click

Suspended MU professor Melissa Click speaks to ABC 17 News

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **ABC 17 News has gained the first public interview with MU's controversial assistant communication professor, Melissa Click, who is breaking her silence following campus protests in November.** Click talked to ABC 17 News on Wednesday to describe her own experiences after the footage surfaced showing a confrontation between her and a student journalist.

Click made it clear she regretted her actions, but emphasized context is important to understand what happened on November 9.

Click said members of Concerned Student 1950 had spoken to the media earlier Monday, but asked for a temporary break to prepare for a news conference later that same day and to talk to Jonathan Butler, who had just ended his hunger strike.

She says, "I was never calling for violence." Click claimed the person taking the video never identified himself as a student or a journalist.

Click has not spoken publicly until now because she thought the events were historic for the University of Missouri system and the movement's message deserved more attention, before the video became a legal matter.

Click also confirmed she is not a member of Concerned Student 1950. She said the first time she ever saw the group was during the homecoming parade in October. She went to find out why things had stopped and became disappointed with the crowd's angry reaction, before stepping in to let the students know they were not alone.

**Videographer of Melissa Click incident reacts to her break in silence**

By Ashley Zavala

Columbia, Mo. — Mark Schierbecker, the man who recorded the now-notorious Melissa Click censorship incident on camera, is speaking out after Click broke her silence Wednesday.
"I'm actually proud of her for finally speaking with the media," said Schierbecker, a History major at the University of Missouri. "To move on from this, she needs to speak her mind, because to a lot of journalists out there that day, we didn't have a clue."

In her first time speaking publicly, Click claimed she didn't know whether Schierbecker was a student or a journalist.

"I did hate being othered as a member of the independent media. As a member of the media, you don't have any more or any less rights as a civilian or member of the public, so it is completely immaterial whether or not I was on assignment that day," said Schierbecker.

Schierbecker said the assistant professor of communications did more than what was caught on camera. He said the incident he experienced was not isolated, and Click treated the media as depicted in his viral video the whole day.

"I wasn't the first or the last journalist she laid hands on that day."

Schierbecker says he takes issue with Click opining the incident caught on camera was her worst 11 seconds.

"I think the only reason we got this apology out of her to the public was because it was broadcasted for the world to see," said Schierbecker.

In response to the reactions of lawmakers and the legislature denying the University of Missouri a budget increase, Schierbecker says Click and the video is not worth it.

"I don't think there's any reason for lawmakers to use that as a pawn in their own game," said Schierbecker.

Schierbecker said he's pleased with how the university is handling the Melissa Click situation.

"When the board [of curators] heard nothing was going on from myself, they sprung into action. I think [Chancellor] Foley completely understands the issues."

University of Missouri seeking legal opinion on graduate student union rights

By Rudi Keller
The effort to organize a graduate student employee union at the University of Missouri faces an uncertain future because the school is unsure about student workers’ legal status and whether they have a right to organize, interim President Mike Middleton said in a news release issued Wednesday.

The release, issued after an unpublicized meeting between administrators and representatives of the Coalition for Graduate Workers and the National Education Association, reported that the university is examining the legal issues involved.

“We believe that the university needs clarity on the graduate students’ legal right to organize, as there is no legal precedent or clarity in current Missouri law to make that determination,” Middleton said.

A graduate employee rights movement began after Columbia campus officials announced Aug. 14 that MU would stop paying the health insurance premiums of graduate assistants, effective the next day. The university cited possible penalties of up to $100 per day per student because the plans violate provisions of the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

The university quickly reversed its decision, and interim Chancellor Hank Foley said Jan. 19 that it would provide coverage in the coming academic year while lobbying members of Congress. This week, U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said the IRS had issued a new ruling that it would not impose the penalties for insurance plans that begin before Jan. 1, 2017, effectively allowing the status quo to remain in place through the 2016-17 school year.

No one from the Coalition for Graduate Workers could be reached Wednesday morning to comment on the meeting with officials. A petition supporting a union had more than 1,000 signatures by mid-December.

Last week, the Graduate Professional Council voted to support unionization efforts with a resolution asking the university to allow an election on representation. The council did not endorse creating a union for graduate student employees.

The unrest among graduate students might have spread to potential students. Graduate school applications for the coming year are down 19 percent, according to a Jan. 4 internal memo.

The news release listed other actions the university has taken to quiet unrest among graduate assistants, including a plan to increase minimum stipends by $6,000 over the coming two years and a request for proposals to provide housing that includes day care services.

The higher stipends were recommended in a report from a task force on graduate assistant health benefits as a way to help graduate students pay their own insurance premiums. Graduate assistants also receive tuition waivers as part of their compensation package.
“There is significant progress being made to address the identified concerns, and we are committed to working directly with graduate students to find common ground,” Foley said in a news release.

MU spent about $4 million to provide insurance subsidies for 3,100 graduate student employees in the 2014-15 school year.

“Now that the federal government has issued these new guidelines, we are appreciative to them and to our legislators who have worked on our behalf,” MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken wrote in an email. “We are in the process of reviewing the new guidelines as to how they affect us specifically.”

The IRS ruling, issued Friday, will allow all universities that provide similar subsidies to do so while they redesign their insurance programs, McCaskill said Monday in a news release.

“This decision means Mizzou’s hardworking graduate teaching assistants will no longer be in limbo when it comes to access to the quality, affordable health insurance they were promised,” McCaskill, an MU graduate, said in a news release.

**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

**Nixon talks up his record, calls legislative threat a bluff**

7 hours ago • By Koran Addo

Gov. Jay Nixon said Wednesday that legislators who have threatened to cut funding to the University of Missouri after recent upheaval on campus are just grandstanding, as lawmakers often do.

Nixon, speaking to the Post-Dispatch Editorial Board, said it would be “very wrong” for legislators to cut funding to such an important state asset.

He said the length of the legislative session gives lawmakers too much free time to spout off.

“You’re not going to stop the Legislature from getting up and saying stuff. That’s what they do,” Nixon said. “It’s just a question of what effect it will have. And I don’t think it will have a tremendous effect.”

In an hourlong interview, Nixon touched on several topics, saying his last 300-plus days in office are going to be a sprint rather than a “slow lap.”
He spent much of his time reflecting on his record since taking office seven years ago, including ethics reform and placing restrictions on lobbyists.

He touted the state’s 4.4 percent unemployment rate — lower than the national 4.9 percent rate — and the lowest in Missouri in more than a decade.

On his fiscal record, Nixon emphasized balancing the state’s budget every year he’s been in office and keeping Missouri’s AAA credit rating intact.

Nixon talked up his work in the social services, particularly that 100,000 more children have health insurance now than when he took office.

He also focused on mental health. He’s proposing $200 million more in mental health funding. He said Missouri needs resources for everyone, from a child with autism to an adult with schizophrenia.

He said he got serious after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in December 2012. While a lot of attention was focused on the availability of guns, Missouri focused on the mental health aspect of the problem, he said.

Nixon called the gun issue in Missouri settled: “Everyone has one.”

On education, he spoke of more funding for K-12, improving the high school graduation rate to among the top 10 in the nation, expanding scholarships and holding down tuition.

A House committee on Wednesday cut a $26.8 million increase recommended by Nixon for performance funding for the University of Missouri. The money was to help freeze tuition.

He spoke about the recent turmoil within the UM system, particularly at the flagship campus. He called interim President Michael Middleton the right person for the job amid tension in Columbia, where black students have said they feel unwelcome on campus.

He discussed the case of Melissa Click, an assistant communications professor caught on video in November trying to block student journalists from recording a campus demonstration.

Legislators and others have called for Click to be fired, while black students and others have offered support.

In January, the university suspended Click indefinitely pending an internal investigation. Nixon said Wednesday the university should have acted more quickly.

He added that he will move forward in nominating people for three vacant spots on the university’s Board of Curators.
Three board members — including two who represent the St. Louis area, and who both are black — have resigned since November. The board now has six members, all white and all lawyers.

Republican legislative leaders have said they won’t approve any new board members until January, when there is a new governor. Nixon said that won’t stop him from making nominations.

And should the Legislature reject those appointments, Nixon said he’ll make more after legislators go home for the summer.

**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

UM System stripped of performance funding increase

14 hours ago • By Alex Stuckey

JEFFERSON CITY • The University of Missouri System was stripped of the governor's recommended $26.8 million performance funding increase by a legislative committee Wednesday.

And Republican Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, chairwoman of the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee, said the system is lucky it didn't see a cut.

Not giving the system an increase "is a gift," Lichtenegger, from Jackson, said. "I saved them by not taking any more" funding.

The committee voted Wednesday on the Department of Higher Education budget. It now moves to the full House Budget Committee for consideration.

In January, Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, recommended a $55.6 million -- or 6 percent -- increase for all public higher education institutions based on performance funding. This increase would allow those institutions to freeze tuition — the fourth time since Nixon took office.

But lawmakers voted Wednesday to drop the performance funding increase for those institutions to about $10 million -- or 2 percent. UM wouldn't see a penny of that increase.

Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, called the move "retaliatory."

This cut "is not going to be felt by the administration that people are frustrated with," he said. "It's going to be felt by students by way of higher fees and reduced educational opportunities."
The cuts follow significant upheaval in the system.

System President Timothy Wolfe stepped down Nov. 9 following student-led protests on the Columbia campus. Student demonstrators were angered over Wolfe’s perceived indifference to a number of racist incidents on campus.

Black students said they did not feel welcome or safe at Mizzou.

The protests gained national attention when one student went on a hunger strike and members of the Mizzou football team pledged to skip all team activities until Wolfe stepped down.

The same day Wolfe resigned, the board stripped R. Bowen Loftin of his title as chancellor of the Columbia campus and reassigned him to lead some of the university’s research efforts.

Since Wolfe's resignation, three UM Curators have resigned.

These events "have made our university a laughing stock and I'm trying to make people understand we are not going to be the laughing stock and we're going to find leadership to fix these problems," Lichtenegger said.

*The bill is House Bill 2003.*

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**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

Lawmakers upset over protests, Melissa Click deny budget boost to University of Missouri

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 6:38 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — The University of Missouri was frozen out of a budget increase for state colleges and universities because Melissa Click is still employed and the Board of Curators did not quash a protest by the Concerned Student 1950 group during their last meeting, state Rep. Donna Lichtenegger said Wednesday.
Lichtenegger, R-Jackson and chair of the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, steered a spending plan for higher education through her committee that includes a 2 percent increase for all state colleges and universities except UM. She proposed the amendment reducing Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed 6 percent increase that was intended to prevent tuition increases in the coming year.

The university was slated to receive a $26.8 million budget increase under Nixon’s proposal. State support this year is about $434 million.

“There were many people in this building, and many people outside this building, our constituents, who wanted us to literally just take as much as we could,” Lichtenegger said. “I fought not to do that. The best thing I could do is not to give the increase.”

The cuts will not hit the intended targets, state Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, said.

“Retaliatory action by the legislature is not going to be felt by administrators,” Webber said.

Lawmakers and their constituents are upset over the campus unrest in Columbia that saw President Tim Wolfe resign Nov. 9, Lichtenegger said. They want Melissa Click, an assistant professor of communications, to be fired for impeding news coverage of the protests and they want the university leadership to stand up to the protesters, she said.

Lichtenegger praised the School of Journalism for severing its ties to Click immediately after a video of her actions became public. Click is a faculty member in the Department of Communication.

“Had the chair of mass communications done the same thing we wouldn’t be in this mess right now,” Lichtenegger said.

Last Thursday, members of Concerned Student 1950 interrupted the Board of Curators meeting in order to show their support for Click. The curators put Click on paid leave Jan. 27 and directed that her actions be investigated. The interruption lasted about 10 minutes and continued despite a half-hearted attempt by board Chair Pamela Henrickson to quiet them with her gavel.

“They are there to learn, not to protest all day long,” Lichtenegger said. “I thought we learned that lesson in the ’60s. Obviously we haven’t. When the curators didn’t immediately do something about that problem, that was kind of the last stroke for me.”

The committee is punishing all four campuses for issues tied to the Columbia campus, Webber said. “The cut that they made affects UMKC, UMSL and S&T as well. There are tens of thousands of students that are trying to get an education and the Republican supermajority is making it more difficult for that to happen.”

The committee’s action cut Nixon’s $55.8 million overall proposal for increased state aid to colleges and universities to $9.9 million by the time all amendments were considered.
Lichtenegger said that she was trying to keep overall spending down to avoid any withholding by Nixon in the budget year that begins July 1.

Lichtenegger’s amendment reduced the total by $45.4 million and an additional change, proposed by Rep. Josh Peters, D-St. Louis, moved $500,000 to Lincoln University to help it match federal land-grant university funding. Peters sought an additional $500,000 from the UM budget for Lincoln but it was rejected on a roll call vote.

When Nixon proposed the increase in September, he was joined by college and university presidents who promised they would ask their governing boards to forego tuition increases for the 2016-17 school year. Most boards, including the curators, have already voted against increases on the basis of the promised new revenue.

Lichtenegger said it was up to the schools to decide if they would revisit their tuition decisions.

All the appropriation bills now move to the House Budget Committee, which will make more changes before sending them to the House floor for debate.

House committee votes to exclude UM System from budget increases

JEFFERSON CITY — The House Committee for Higher Education Appropriations voted Wednesday to nix a funding increase for the UM System.

In his budget, Gov. Jay Nixon recommended a 6 percent increase to higher education funding, totaling $55.6 million for all state-funded Missouri colleges and universities. Under Nixon's proposal, the system would have received an additional $26.8 million over this fiscal year's allocation.

The amendment approved in the committee hearing brought the Nixon's proposal down to a 2 percent increase and applied it to all state-funded Missouri colleges and universities, but it excluded the UM System from receiving any more money.

Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, chair of the committee, said the UM System's exemption from the increases is a consequence of recent turmoil on MU's campus.

"It would be one thing if it just made state news, but this is national," she said. "It has made our university a laughingstock, and I'm trying to make people understand that we are not going to be a laughingstock."
Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, was the only member of the committee to protest the measure. "In my opinion, it's retaliatory, and retaliatory actions from the General Assembly and the legislature are not going to be felt by administrators that people are frustrated with," he said. "It's going to be felt by students by way of higher fees and reduced educational opportunities."

Lichtenegger said former members of the UM System Board of Curators have been supportive of the proposed funding measures and that some donors have said they "are furious and will not give another dime" to the university.

Budget restrictions to the UM System could have been worse, Lichtenegger said. "As far as I'm concerned, not giving them the 2 percent, like everybody else is getting, is a gift," she said. "At least I kept it from taking any more, which could have happened."

Faculty: MU education dean's departure not tied to university issues

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The departure of University of Missouri College of Education Dean Daniel Clay is a normal academic career move that does not reflect on issues at the college or university, two division directors said Wednesday.

On Monday, the University of Iowa announced it was hiring Clay to lead its College of Education. Clay’s first tenure-track position was at Iowa, the news release said. His salary will be $305,000, a raise of almost $58,000 over his MU salary.

“It was not an easy decision,” Clay wrote in an email to education alumni. “I love Mizzou. Not only did I earn three graduate degrees here, I was given the opportunity to lead the College of Education at a critical time in its history.”

For much of the past year, Clay has been working on a special fundraising assignment with the Provost’s Office, with Kathryn Chval filling in as acting dean. Clay was traveling with interim Chancellor Hank Foley and could not be reached for comment.
“Dan was the leader in the period of where some of the real ramp-up happened,” said Chris Riley-Tillman, associate division director of the Department of Educational, School & Counseling Psychology. “My thought is that he will be remembered as dean who, when he left, we were in a really, really good position.”

The University of Iowa news release praised Clay’s efforts at MU, including its position in the latest U.S. News and World Report college rankings. The school is ranked 40th overall and 30th among public university education programs. The program for student counseling and personnel services is ranked fifth nationally.

“Our plan wasn’t to increase the department rankings or increase the college rankings, but we wanted to increase our research production, the quality of our students and really expand our impact within the region with service,” Riley-Tillman said. “If you do those three things, your rankings are going to rise.”

The university has seen a number of high-profile departures in recent months, including the decision by Vice Chancellor Hal Williamson to resign a little more than two months after agreeing to return to his role overseeing medical programs.

John Lannin, acting associate director of the Department of Learning, Teaching & Curriculum, said he doesn’t view the departure as a reflection of campus or college issues. “He has close ties to the University of Iowa, and he has worked there before,” Lannin said. “He has a number of colleagues that are there, and it is one of only a few places he would consider. He has done a lot to mentor our entire leadership team, and most of the people who are fulfilling administrative roles are people he appointed.”

Chval will continue as acting dean, and a process for selecting a new dean has not been announced, Riley-Tillman said.

Chval “is an ideal successor, and hopefully we go in that direction,” he said. “There are a number of other people who could do the job quite well.”

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**Trilobites Were Stone-Cold Killers**

Trilobites were savvy killers who hunted down their prey and used their many legs to wrestle them into submission, newly discovered fossils suggest.
The fossils come from a site in southeastern Missouri, not far from the city of Desloge. They are trace fossils, which means they preserve not the organisms themselves, but their burrows. The burrows were made by various species of trilobite as well as by unknown, wormlike creatures.

A statistical analysis of these burrows and their intersections shows that they cross one another more than expected, a sign that the trilobites were deliberately hunting down their wormy prey. In a subset of those cases, the trilobites seemed to sidle up to the burrows in parallel, perhaps so they could latch onto the worms lengthwise with their row of legs.

"This is legitimately the moment of interaction between the trilobite and the animal that it ate," said study researcher James Schiffbauer, a paleobiologist at the University of Missouri.

**Trilobite tracks**

The discovery of these fossils came about by accident. During a department field trip to visit a local lead mine, the researchers made a side trip to a known fossil spot. **While there, study co-author John Huntley, also a professor at the University of Missouri, stumbled across a block of fossilized burrows, frozen in silty shale.** The sediment was set down during the Cambrian period, between 540 million and 485 million years ago, when the area was a shallow nearshore environment. The shallow bottom was likely covered with a dense microbial mat, which made for a rich food source for wormy (or "vermiform") creatures. These worms were, in turn, prey for trilobites.

"It became sort of a small shallow-water hunting ground for the trilobites," Schiffbauer told Live Science.

Graduate student Tara Selly took on the painstaking task of cataloguing and counting the burrows and their intersections. Her findings revealed that the worm and trilobite tunnels intersected about 30 percent of the time — more than would be expected based on chance alone.

"Likely one-third of [the burrows] were actually capturing predatory events," Selly told Live Science.

**A moment in time**

The trilobites known from this area belong to species with particularly large eyes, Schiffbauer said. Those eyes may have made them adept hunters, he said, able to seek out burrow entrances or impressions. The critters would then burrow down to grasp their prey.

"What we're seeing is really sophisticated behavior fairly early on in what some people would say is a very simple creature," Schiffbauer said. The trilobites might also have used scent to sniff out their prey, he said.

Predation is important to understand, Huntley told Live Science, but it can be hard to see in the fossil record. Some Cambrian fossils have recorded animals inside the gut tracts of other
animals, but it's not clear whether they were hunted and eaten or scavenged. Other signs of predation in the fossil record are wounds or drill holes in skeletons or shells, Huntley said.

"In this case, what we're getting is actually impressions of the body," Huntley said. "It's a different window into this process that we know is important ecologically and really important evolutionarily as well."

The research is detailed online in the Feb. 15 issue of the journal Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology.

**Study: Biculturalism has positive effect on Mexican-American youth**

COLUMBIA, Mo., Feb. 10 (UPI) -- New research suggests biculturalism has positive effects on young Mexican-Americans.

According to new survey data, Mexican-Americans who are connected to both American and Latino culture tend to have higher self-esteem and engage in prosocial behaviors, like empathizing with others.

The surveys were conducted researchers at the University of Missouri and included the responses of 574 Mexican-American adolescents living in Phoenix, Ariz.

"Regardless of the nationality of a parent, one thing remains constant -- parents want their children to have prosocial tendencies," Gustavo Carlo, a professor of diversity at Missouri's College of Human Environmental Sciences, explained in a press release.

"Parents want their kids to have self-esteem, to care for others and be confident: traits that lead to relatively high levels of well-being," Carlo added. "This is particularly true for Latino immigrants working to make a better life for their children in the U.S."

Survey participants were asked to answer queries about their ethnicity, what language they spoke at home, their willingness to help others and their self-esteem.

Though most foreign born residents in the United States work to maintain ties to their national heritage while adapting to American culture, adolescents may face added pressures at home to adhere to tradition and resist conformation -- while facing the opposite at school or in the workplace.
The latest findings suggest a balance may be best.

"We found that adolescents who can adopt both their culture of heritage and mainstream culture and those who can navigate between the two worlds are more likely to be confident, have higher self-esteem and help others," Carlo said.

"However, not all adolescents have the luxury to navigate both worlds," Carlo continued. "For example, one may want to fit in with their peers but, for a variety of reasons, is unable to do so. Then the next best alternative is to remain connected with one's culture of origin to improve overall well-being."

The new research will be published this spring in the Journal of Latina/o Psychology.

MU professor: To overcome bias, recognize it exists

COLUMBIA — After providing a rundown of studies on implicit biases, MU professor Bruce Bartholow paused and re-introduced himself.

“Hi I’m Bruce, and I’m a racist,” said Bartholow, who teaches psychology. He spoke Wednesday night at a meeting of the Citizens Police Review Board, a body in charge developing a process to review police misconduct and increasing accountability.

Bartholow followed his statement by saying that he doesn’t really think he is racist, but that he knows he has biases that can influence his behavior. He encouraged those in the audience to think about their own prejudices.

“(Implicit biases) are thoughts or actions or feelings that come to mind or that rise out from no conscious thought of your own,” Bartholow said. “They are unintentional, spontaneous, effortless and occur relatively easily.”

Bartholow’s research focuses on implicit biases, or thoughts and actions under the control of automatically activated evaluations, he said. To understand these reactions, he performs several studies, some of which ask participants to determine if another person poses a risk to them.

Participants in the study are shown a picture of a white or a black person and then an image of a hand tool or handgun that is displayed for less than a second. Then, participants are asked whether they saw a handgun or hand tool.
When the picture is of a black person, participants claim more often that they see — sometimes erroneously — an image of a handgun. Bartholow said the race of the person determines a pattern in people’s biases.

“When that (a black face) is seen on the screen it automatically, subconsciously and implicitly primes people to see something dangerous,” Bartholow said. “It primes people to associate that face with a stereotype of black men and violence.”

Board member Renee Henson asked Bartholow if he thought a black man dressed nicely would make a difference in the studies conducted. Bartholow said it would.

“It speaks to a broader culture phenomenon bigger than race,” Bartholow said. “Stereotypes would say anyone dressing more professionally is representing less danger than someone dressing in a street and hip-hop kind of way.”

Studies by other researchers have shown that, in general, police officers are less biased than students or community members. But data also shows that special unit officers, who are usually in closer contact with gangs and violent crimes, were more biased than other police officers.

“If you are in an environment where you are predisposed to find danger, that alone could predispose some bias,” Bartholow said.

People should be aware of their biases in order to overcome them, Bartholow said. He added, however, that prejudice will always exist.

Citizens Police Review Board member James Martin said he’s been fighting racism since the 1950s and doesn’t see anything changing in the near future.

“I’m not too optimistic that bias is ever going to leave America because each generation has a new thing going on,” Martin said. “I pray that it does, and I’d like to see it in my time, but I don’t know.”

Martin said police officers need more training, since the research shows a big difference between the people who are and aren’t trained. Bartholow said he isn’t an expert on the subject, but that more training for officers would be beneficial.

“If police officers are going to draw a weapon, their training tells them to take the person down,” Bartholow said. “So much fear and so much anxiety build up in these situations, and officers need better training about how to overcome that.”

The board proposed to invite Bartholow speak to other groups in Columbia.

“(Bartholow’s) presentation is something the public needs to hear,” Assistant City Councilor Rose Wibbenmeyer said.
College freshmen are more liberal and keen on political activism, survey says

Today's American college freshman is more liberal, less religious and increasingly committed to civic involvement and political activism than her predecessors in previous generations, according to a national survey released Wednesday by UCLA researchers.

Nearly 60% of freshmen surveyed said they expected to vote sometime during their college years and majorities supported same-sex marriage, abortion rights, affirmative action, legalization of marijuana and equal pay for women. They also overwhelmingly oppose U.S. involvement in other countries' wars.

“Collectively, the findings suggest that more students are committed to social justice,” said Kevin Eagan, director of UCLA’s cooperative institutional research program, which has conducted the annual "American Freshman" survey for the last 50 years. “That may be why they are the most committed to political and civic engagement of any of the previous 49 classes.”

One-third of those surveyed said they were “liberal” or “far left,” the highest proportion in four decades, while one-fifth described themselves as “conservative” or “far right.”

But their attitudes were markedly different according to race and ethnicity. Although interest in political and civic activism has grown among all students, African American and Latino students were far more likely than Asians and whites to expect to participate in a campus demonstration. They were also more likely to believe it important to promote racial understanding and influence politics.

For instance, only 6% of Asians planned to participate in a protest or felt it important to influence politics, compared with more than twice that share for African Americans.

The UCLA researchers said the heightened interest in political activism could be the result of students witnessing the recent wave of protests against police shootings of African American men and student demonstrations against campus treatment of minorities at the University of Missouri, Claremont McKenna College, Occidental College and elsewhere.

Whether the enhanced political interest will affect the presidential election this year is another matter, however. Although Barack Obama produced a record turnout of young voters in 2008 – and won the backing of 66% of those under 30 years old – young people still have the lowest voting rates of any age group.
“We certainly see students embracing more of the progressive perspectives,” Eagan said. “But will it actually translate to action?

"If they organize, protest and show up at the polls, they may have a role in shaping the public discourse on issues related to social inequality, equity and discrimination," he said. "By contrast, if these students do not follow through on their intentions and goals, the enthusiastic support we're seeing for addressing social justice concerns will likely diminish, eliminating the potential for a broader impact in politics or American life."

The researchers surveyed more than 141,000 first-time, full-time students who entered 199 four-year U.S. colleges and universities in 2015. Among them were freshmen from 29 public and private California campuses, including UCLA, UC San Diego, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Northridge, USC and Occidental College.

Despite their overall embrace of liberal views, today’s freshmen are more likely to support restrictions on free speech – a trend that has led to controversial student movements to disinvite commencement speakers, disrupt presentations by those with unpopular views, and demand “trigger warnings” before uttering potentially uncomfortable speech.

Support for banning racist and sexist speech on campus reached 70.9% in 2015, up from 58.9% in 1992. And 43% of those surveyed said colleges should have the right to ban extreme speakers, up from 25% in 1971.

Eagan said he understood student concerns that derogatory speech could lead to violence or harm students. “At the same time, institutions need to make sure we aren’t insulating students from ideas that may be counter to their narratives,” he said.

The proportion of students who did not affiliate with a religion grew to 29.5%, an all-time high since the survey began. Freshmen also continued to report that they studied more and partied less in their last year of high school than previous classes.

For the first time, the survey asked students about their sexual orientation and gender identity and found that those who described themselves as bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer or “other” more frequently felt depressed and overwhelmed than the 93.2% of students who said they were heterosexual.

The survey also asked questions about students’ financial aid for the first time. It found that more than a quarter of freshmen received a federal Pell Grant – an annual award of up to $5,775 for low-income students – and they were disproportionately Latino and African American. Those students worried far more than others about their ability to pay for college and had to scramble more to take out loans, find work-study jobs and seek other ways to foot their educational bills.

The UCLA institute plans to release another analysis in June that will provide more detail about how college freshmen have changed over the 50 years of the surveys.
Today’s Freshman Class Is the Most Likely to Protest in Half a Century

No MU Mention

Today’s college freshmen are more likely to participate in a student-led protest than each of the nearly five decades of classes that preceded them, according to survey results released on Thursday. That includes the college freshmen of the late 1960s and early 70s, an era storied for its on-campus political activism.

Nearly one in 10 freshmen said there was a very good chance they would participate in a protest in college, according to the annual Freshman Survey by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, part of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The racial unrest in recent years — including police shootings nationwide and protests on college campuses — has clearly made a mark on students’ psyches. Among black students, 16 percent said they were very likely to demonstrate while in college. But students of all races reported being more likely to demonstrate than just a year before.


Below are five takeaways about the behaviors and beliefs of today’s freshman class.

1. Students’ heightened interest in political activism could make them a force in this year’s elections (and it’s likely to be on the left).
Sixty percent of freshmen surveyed said there was "a very good chance" they would vote in a federal, state, or local election while in college. That's up nearly 10 percentage points from 2014 (though it’s worth noting that in 2014 a heated presidential campaign was not underway).

And when they get to the polls, they are likely to vote for candidates on the left. Thirty-four percent identify as "liberal" or "far left," a share similar to the figure in 2008, which was the highest since 1973. About 22 percent of respondents identify as "conservative" or "far right." That figure is down from about 26 percent of students in 2006.

Not only do students plan to vote, but they also have a desire to bring about change. When it comes to influencing the political structure, 33 percent of black students saw it as a "very important" or "essential" life objective, compared with 27 percent of Latinos and 20 percent of white students.

2. Pell Grants are vital for students, but they’re not enough, especially for women.

For the first time, the survey included questions about Pell Grants, the bedrock piece of federal financial aid for low-income students.

The vast majority of students without Pell Grants (73 percent) said they relied on family resources to pay at least part of their first-year bills, but just 32 percent of Pell Grant recipients did the same.

And they worry about making ends meet. Eighty-four percent of Pell Grant recipients reported concern about paying for college, compared with 57 percent of nonrecipients.

Women are more concerned about paying for college than men are, especially women at historically black colleges, where 79 percent of women said they had "some" or "major" concerns about paying for school.

3. LGBTQ students more frequently feel overwhelmed and depressed.
Just 25 percent of students who identify their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or "other" rate their emotional health as "above average" or in the "highest 10 percent," compared with 53 percent of heterosexual students. (For the first time in the survey’s history, students could identify their sexual orientation and indicate if they are transgender.)

About 46 percent of students who identified as queer said they frequently felt depressed, compared with 8 percent of heterosexual students.

Among all students, about 10 percent reported feeling frequently depressed, a figure virtually unchanged from the year before.

4. On pace with societal trends, students continue to be less likely to affiliate with a specific religion.

This was the first year that students were given the option to select agnostic or atheist as affiliations. Nearly 30 percent of incoming freshmen said they were agnostic, atheist, or "none." The percentage of students identifying with a specific religion stands at 71 percent.

Asian students are the least likely of the survey’s racial and ethnic groups to affiliate with a particular religion, while black students are by far the most likely — at 86 percent, at least 10 percentage points higher than any other group.

Queer students are more likely than their peers to identify as agnostic or atheist.

5. More than ever, students are paying attention to the job outlook and grad-school admissions in their undergraduate search.

Job outlook has always been an important factor in students’ college choices, and it continues to become more so. This year 60 percent of students, an all-time high, said whether a college’s graduates land good jobs was a "very important" consideration in choosing a school.
Over all, 38 percent of students said they considered grad-school admissions when choosing an undergraduate destination, indicating steady aspirations for advanced degrees.

Additionally, nearly 70 percent of students say it is "very important" that their school of choice has a "good academic reputation."

View graphs online at http://chronicle.com/article/Today-s-Freshman-Class-Is/235273

Get Ready for More Protests

No MU Mention

The protests that swept across college campuses last year may be here to stay, at least for the next four years, according to the newest findings from an annual survey of incoming freshmen.

Nearly one in 10 students responding to the survey said they expect to participate in student protests while in college. About 9 percent of incoming freshmen said they have a “very good chance” of participating in student protests while in college, an increase of 2.9 percentage points from last year’s survey. The finding is among several from this year’s survey that the researchers say point to the highest level of civic engagement in the study’s 50-year history.

“Many of these students, if not nearly all of them, were seniors in high school last spring when demonstrations against hostile campus climates and sexual assault were occurring,” said Kevin Eagan, director of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of California at Los Angeles, which publishes the report. “And that engagement has continued into the fall, with protests related to the Black Lives Matter movement. That those protests have continued may be, in part, supported by this year’s incoming freshman class actually exercising that increased interest.”
The American Freshman Survey collected responses from more than 141,000 first-year students during their first few weeks of college. Black students saw the largest increase in planned activism. Last year, 10.5 percent of black students said they expect to participate in student protests and demonstrations during college. This year, 16 percent of black students said they plan on protesting. Black students were more than twice as likely to say that they would join campus protests as were white students, with 7.1 percent of white students reporting that there was a very good chance they would participate in student demonstrations.

Even so, it’s still an increase of 2.5 percentage points over last year, a difference that Angus Johnston, a scholar of student movements who teaches at Hostos Community College and runs the "Student Activism" blog, said was striking.

“It’s still a big leap,” Johnston said. “That suggests that some white students are really interested in the racial justice movement and want to be involved and supportive of that. And it’s also a reminder that while the racial justice protests got more attention, there’s a lot of campus organizing going on in general. What we see with these results is that the idea of campuses being places of widespread student protests is filtering down to students just enrolling in college. We’re going to see an increase in what we saw happening last year.”

The renewed interest in civic and political engagement is seen outside of campus demonstrations, as well, the survey found.

Nearly forty percent of students said that becoming a community leader is a “very important” or “essential” life objective for them. About 60 percent of incoming freshmen rated improving their understanding of other countries and cultures as just as important. Both were all-time highs for the categories.
Nearly two-thirds of black students said promoting racial understanding was very important or essential to them, as did more than half of Latino students, and about 45 percent of both Asian and Native American students. Less than a quarter of white students reported feeling the same way.

There was a similar racial divide concerning the importance of “influencing the political structure.” About 20 percent of white freshmen and 18 percent of Asian freshmen reported that influencing political structures was an important or essential goal, compared to about one-third of black students and more than a quarter of Latino students.

“We do not know for sure whether the increases with respect to students’ expectations to participate in protests, connect with their communities and engage in the political process are directly related to the wave of activism among high school and college students over the past year,” the researchers wrote. “Recent developments may have signaled to students that a collective sense of belonging and working together to raise important issues on campus and in their communities can lead to change. We expect new forms of student activism to take place through 2016 given the presidential elections.”

The rise in student activism, the researchers noted, has occurred as students' political views increasingly shift toward the left. More than one-third of incoming freshmen identified as either
liberal or “far left,” the highest proportion since 1973. About 21 percent of students identified as conservative or “far right.”

Nearly 60 percent of incoming freshmen said there was a “very good” chance that they would vote in a local, state or national election while in college. Last year, just over half of students said they planned on voting.

"Today’s freshmen are the young people who grew up in the era of Barack Obama, and now Bernie Sanders, calling for justice and for something new,” said Shaun Harper, founder and executive director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education. "They're calling for change. These are the kids who grew up in an era of protests in Ferguson, Baltimore and elsewhere. I think they have a lot of consciousness now about activism, having seen it play out on a national stage during their adolescent years."

Other Findings

▪ The study also found that during their first year of college, 26.6 percent of freshmen at four-year institutions said they would rely on Pell Grants but would also need to find other ways to pay for college. More than half of Pell Grant recipients took out loans, compared to 40 percent of other students, and nearly 85 percent of Pell Grant recipients expressed concerns about their ability to pay for college.

▪ The percentage of students who are affiliated with a particular religion continues to drop, with 15 percent of students saying they do not affiliate with a specific religion, 8.3 percent saying they are agnostic and 5.9 percent saying they are atheist. About 70 percent of incoming freshmen said they identify with a specific religion, down from 85 percent in 1973, when the survey first asked about religious affiliation.

▪ This year’s survey included new questions about mental health and sexual orientation. Students who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer reported more frequently feeling overwhelmed and depressed than did their straight peers. More than half of straight students rated their emotional health as “above average” or in the “highest 10 percent,” compared to less than one-quarter of LGBQ students. “Given these numbers, perhaps it is not surprising that more than one-quarter of students who identify as LGBQ believe there is a very good chance they will seek personal counseling while in college,” the researchers wrote, “compared to the 12.9 percent of heterosexual/straight students.”
The curators

Finding their role

By Henry J. Waters III

Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Under normal conditions, University of Missouri curators occupy a relatively benign role. Seldom are they a center of attraction far and wide. Seldom must they contend with angry students in their very midst and angry state legislators charging them with neglect of duty. Not often do they face criticism from campus faculty and administration at the same time.

Today the curators might feel they suddenly are in the midst of a perfect storm. Some might think this sort of controversy is not what they signed up for.

I’m here today to give them a boost.

As the student protest moves from quad to curators’ meeting, the governors have conducted themselves well, listening instead of slipping into untoward heavy-handedness. Because of recent resignations, they are down from their usual nine to only six members. Some worry about this, particularly the fact all are lawyers, but not I. Would not we rather have six good people on board? What’s magic about nine, especially in the short run?

Unable to resist, members of the Missouri General Assembly weigh in. Some Republicans oppose any effort by Gov. Jay Nixon to name replacement curators, apparently preferring to take their chances with a new governor after the coming election. Nixon might make interim appointments after the legislative session ends, but unless the GOP leadership relents by confirming earlier nominations, nothing permanent can be done until next year.

Earlier, Sen. Kurt Schaefer bemoaned the presence of too many lawyers on the board, and now Rep. Don Rone, R-Portageville, introduces a bill prohibiting more than two members of the same occupation from serving on any higher education governing board. Rone’s bill is not likely to pass, but even so Schaefer says it will highlight the issue. Schaefer says curators should understand health care, agriculture and journalism. He might have noted a dozen other disciplines.

It’s not a frivolous idea to urge governors to take professional diversity into account as they make nominations for the board, but it is frivolous to consider passing a law mandating any such thing and even for Schaefer to suggest curators’ direct professional experience should mirror the activities of the university.

Most important to governors and senators should be the quality of prospective board members. I can readily imagine an excellent board peopled entirely by lawyers — or without a single one.
Has college financial aid totally backfired?

It’s pretty clear that college tuition has been going up over the past several decades, and there are many theories as to why. A new study offers more evidence to an already-heated debate.

Increased availability of financial aid accounted for 40% of the jump in tuition costs between 1987 and 2010, according to a working paper released this month by the National Bureau of Economic Research, a Cambridge, Mass.-based private, nonprofit economic research organization. When you add declines in student loan interest rates as well as expansions in grant aid, the increased access to federal aid accounts for more than half of the jump in tuition, said Aaron Hedlund, an economist at the University of Missouri and one of the authors of the study.

The expansion in federal aid over the past two decades was the “biggest single factor” in tuition growth during that period Hedlund said. “If that was the only thing that changed, tuition would have risen quite a bit,” he said. In fact, for every extra dollar available to students in subsidized federal aid, colleges raise tuition by an estimated 65 cents on average, a separate staff report released by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York concluded last year. That study focused on changes in tuition patterns after Congress increased borrowing limits in the mid-2000s.

The study, which Hedlund wrote along with Grey Gordon, an economist at Indiana University, adds to a growing body of research indicating that making more federal financial aid available to students pushes colleges to raise their tuition. The most famous advocate of this theory is William Bennett, a Ronald Reagan-era Secretary of Education, who in 1987 argued that increases in federal financial aid “have enabled colleges and universities blithely to raise their tuitions, confident that federal loan subsidies would help cushion the increase.”

The idea is controversial in part because increased access to financial aid also typically increases access to college, especially for low-income families.

But research on the so-called Bennett Hypothesis has also been mixed. Researchers and pundits have pointed to a variety of factors to explain tuition increases including state disinvestment in higher education and increased spending on administrative salaries and capital improvements at colleges. The Government Accountability Office found in 2014 that it’s “difficult to establish a direct relationship” between increased federal aid and tuition hikes.

The Bennett Hypothesis likely explains tuition increases at some colleges, particularly for-profit universities, which are trying to maximize revenue, and graduate programs for which students
can take out federal loans up to the cost of the program, said Mark Huelsman, a senior policy analyst at Demos, a left-leaning think tank. But not every type of higher education institution responds to increases in aid in the same way, he said.

Hedlund and Gordon’s study focuses on nonprofit colleges and they don’t separate their findings by institution type, but Hedlund said the pair planned to do more research on how different types of schools respond to increases in financial aid. He suspects public schools are less likely than their private counterparts to raise tuition in response to increased availability of aid because state money accounts for so much of their funding. “There’s a real thought out there that (state disinvestment) could be a factor in rising tuition and we’re really going to put that through the lens,” Hedlund said.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Protecting Student Journalists in a New-Media Era

No MU Mention

The controversial firing of a faculty member who advised Mount St. Mary's University’s student newspaper has drawn attention to such publications’ vulnerability to censorship.

At the same time the Maryland private college is coming under fire from free-speech advocates, however, that state’s Senate is considering a bill intended to keep such events from taking place at public colleges and high schools, by guaranteeing the First Amendment rights of their student journalists.

Similar bills have been offered up in Nebraska and passed by legislative committees in Missouri and Washington State. North Dakota enacted such a measure into law last spring.

Nurturing such legislation is the Student Press Law Center’s New Voices campaign, which has enlisted journalism instructors and students in 20 states to lobby for similar bills. The Chronicle on Wednesday interviewed Frank D. LoMonte, the
nonprofit center’s executive director, about that effort. Following is an edited and condensed version of that conversation.

Q. I suspect a lot of people already think student journalists are protected by the First Amendment. Why is that not the case?

A. The Supreme Court decided a case in 1988, called *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, which is the benchmark by which the rights of student journalists are measured. The normal presumption under the First Amendment is that the government cannot regulate the content of speech except for some very extreme exceptions along the lines of threats of violence. In *Hazelwood*, the Supreme Court lowered the bar significantly in the educational setting. What they said was that a school could censor student speech in a curricular publication that is affiliated with a school, and part of its educational mission, on just about any reasonable basis.

Over the years the courts have been highly deferential in how they have reviewed schools’ censorship decisions. The *Hazelwood* case is about K-12 schools — there is even a footnote explicitly disclaiming any effect on colleges — but, in the absence of any guidance from the Supreme Court on college journalism, a number of lower courts have applied *Hazelwood* to the speech of college students.

Q. Given that the Supreme Court handed down its *Hazelwood* decision way back in 1988, why launch a campaign to reverse its effects now?

A. Immediately after *Hazelwood* there was a burst of activity at the state level to try to blunt its impact, and a number of states in fact passed statutes reversing the effects of *Hazelwood* and providing a heightened degree of legal protection. But a number of other states refused to pass them, and there was a collective sense of battle fatigue in the journalism community after those defeats. It has taken a generation for people to recover from that initial round of defeats and be prepared to step in the ring again.
What has revived the movement was the success of the North Dakota act, which passed unanimously and with bipartisan support in 2015.

Q. Can college journalists retain their First Amendment rights by operating newspapers that are self-financed and not sponsored by their institutions? How common is it for them to do so?

A. It’s certainly the case that *Hazelwood* would no longer apply to a fully independent publication. But there are really only a handful of large institutions where it is financially viable to obtain complete separation from your college. You are talking about the Ivy League schools and a handful of large state institutions of the size of a Florida, a Georgia, or a North Carolina.

Q. Have changes in the newspaper industry undermined the ability of student newspapers to operate independently, without institutional sponsorship?

A. No question that campus publications are being buffeted by all the same economic realities that apply to the professional media. National advertising has dried up, classified ads are almost nonexistent, so the ability to function as an independent, freestanding business entity is very limited. There have been a number of publications that have had to go back to their host institutions for financial assistance after finding themselves unable to sustain a fully independent business model. The greater the degree of entanglement with the institution, the greater the risk of being censored, both legally and just as a practical matter.

Q. How much are college newspapers being censored?

A. At the highest quality institutions, censorship is, thankfully, almost nonexistent. You would never see a Princeton or Columbia trying to lay a finger on its student journalists because they know that there would be an enormous reputational price to
pay. Where we do see a fair degree of censorship is at those second- and third-tier institutions, the ones that are the most reputation-conscious because they are the most financially strapped. The climate has become more and more difficult for college journalism because institutions are so obsessed with their reputations. The competition for state funding is more intense than ever. The reliance on private donors is more pronounced than ever. And the ability of a news story to live beyond a single news cycle on Google is greater than ever. For all of those reasons colleges are much more motivated to crack down on unflattering journalism than they might have been during the paper-and-ink era.

Q. What do you see as your effort’s prospects for success? Are the obstacles that thwarted past measures still out there?

A. I think we are living in a very different world these days because of the Internet and social media. Censorship has always been a harmful educational practice, but now it’s also a futile and self-defeating practice. While schools are nervous about newspapers, they are utterly petrified by how people are talking about the school on social media, and journalism is an antidote. A newspaper is governed by legal and ethical standards, students sign their real names, they correct their mistakes, they work under the guidance of a trained adult supervisor.

Q. Given that the First Amendment only covers public institutions, will your campaign help student journalists at private colleges in any way?

A. We are a bottom-up, and not a top-down, organization, and New Voices is all about local flavor. We have prepared model legislation that can apply to private institutions if the proponents so choose.

California has statutory protections for the free-speech rights of all students at public and private institutions alike. That was proposed in North Dakota, and the Catholic
colleges actually showed up to oppose it, and in the interest of maintaining unanimity, that provision was dropped from the bill. To be honest, the argument is much more compelling at a public institution because you are talking about government regulators. If the First Amendment protects anything, it absolutely has to be the ability to criticize the quality of government services you are receiving.