JEFFERSON CITY • After months of tough talk aimed at the University of Missouri, legislative leaders appeared to tone down their rhetoric against the embattled institution Thursday.

A day after Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon said threats by Republicans to slash funding to the university are little more than grandstanding, GOP leaders cautioned that budget cuts being discussed in the capital city now may not be the reality when the Legislature approves a final state spending blueprint in mid-May.

In comments to reporters, House Speaker Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, said initial approval of a plan to reduce Nixon’s spending request for Mizzou by nearly $27 million was merely a “starting point” in the negotiations.

His counterpart across the Rotunda, Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, said he thinks University of Missouri officials need time to deal with the fallout from a tumultuous 2015.

“I’m just going to take a deep breath and let them work through their issues. They deserve that at least,” said Richard, who previously has said the university should face some kind of funding reduction.

The Republican responses came after Nixon told the Post-Dispatch editorial board on Wednesday it would be “very wrong” for legislators to reduce funding to such an important state asset.

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

Lawmakers have been threatening to punish the UM system after racial turmoil on the Columbia campus led to a leadership shake-up last fall. Members of the House and Senate have threatened special audits and have called for the removal of Mizzou assistant communications professor Melissa Click, who was caught on video in November trying to block journalists from recording student demonstrations.
The university system’s Board of Curators also has seen its two black members resign their seats, leading to a dust-up between Nixon and Richard over finding replacements.

On Wednesday, a House budget panel voted down a $26.8 million increase recommended by Nixon for performance funding for the university. The money was supposed to help freeze tuition.

Richardson said that cut may change in the coming months.

“I do think you see in that budget some frustration reflected at the University of Missouri, but I don’t see it as something that’s ultimately going to end up being punitive. We want the University of Missouri to be successful. I believe the University of Missouri can be successful. I believe it should and is the premier flagship institution of this state,” he said.

“But we want to be confident going forward that leadership is in place to take that university in a positive direction.”

State Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been a frequent critic of his hometown university.

But he wouldn’t offer an opinion on the merits of the House budget action Thursday.

“Their process is so much different over there,” Schaefer told reporters after the Senate adjourned for the week. “We just wait until they get done with their process, wait to see what they actually pass out and send to us.”

Richard stood by Schaefer’s response, saying, “He’s months away from taking up MU’s budget, so let’s let the House do what they do.”

University of Missouri graduate assistants look to courts for standing to form union

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 2:00 pm
Graduate students working as teaching and research assistants at the University of Missouri, with the help of the Missouri National Education Association, are preparing to go to court for a declaration that they are employees and are entitled to form a union.

Talks featuring representatives of the Coalition for Graduate Workers, the teacher’s union and university administrators reached an impasse Wednesday when the UM System refused to recognize the graduate workers as legal employees of the university, coalition co-chairman Connor Lewis said.

“We have a constitutional right to organize, and they are disputing whether ... we are actually employees,” Lewis said. “To all of us paying taxes and doing valuable work for the university, that is a tough sell.”

The coalition and UM officials have met three times, according to a university news release. Another meeting is planned for next week but has not been scheduled, Lewis said. It seems unlikely anything will change at that time, he said.

The coalition seeks an election to determine whether graduate assistants want to create a local union of the MNEA. The university refuses to sanction the election because it contends the graduate workers are not employees under state law, Lewis said.

“They are saying they don’t interpret it as meaning they have to allow an election,” Lewis said. “In the absence of any legal guidance, they can decide to hold an election. They are just declining to do so.”

Graduate students employed by the university receive a stipend for living expenses, a tuition waiver and benefits that include subsidized individual health insurance coverage.

A notice sent Aug. 14 that graduate workers’ insurance coverage would not be renewed for the upcoming academic year — issued by the Columbia campus 24 hours before the coverage was to take effect — ignited efforts to organize.

The Missouri Supreme Court in 2007 recognized that the state constitutional guarantee of collective bargaining rights includes public employees. In 2012, the court ruled that the employee rights to collective bargaining impose a duty on employers to engage in good-faith negotiations for the purpose of obtaining a contract, even if no contract is approved.

The coalition affiliated with the MNEA as it seeks an election for union representation, Lewis said. At the meeting Wednesday, representatives of the system’s general counsel and human resources offices gave the university’s position that the assistants are not employees, he said.

Within hours of the conclusion of the meeting, the UM System and the MNEA issued widely varying statements about the discussion. The university’s news release emphasized the need for a legal opinion recognizing the graduate assistants as employees before it would consider a union election.
It also listed steps taken to appease immediate demands, noting the increase in minimum stipends for doctoral assistants to $15,000, the promise to continue health insurance through the 2016-17 school year and movement to create graduate student housing with options for child care.

“We understand and respect the graduate students may choose to seek legal clarification on whether they have the right to have a union vote, but frankly, we should not wait to continue to address outstanding issues,” interim Chancellor Hank Foley said in the university statement.

The teachers union portrayed UM’s stance as intransigent and shortsighted.

“By refusing to grant its consent for a representative election, the university administration is forcing” the coalition “to take legal action that will likely prove costly to the university, and that the university will likely lose,” MNEA President Charles Smith said in the union statement.

A union would provide stability to future graduate assistants and security that their interests would be considered regularly by university administrators, Lewis said.

“We need a sustainable mechanism for graduate employees that is not only fair but competitive,” Lewis said. “I think it is good, to be quite honest, to make sure we never get into a crisis mode again.”

The increased stipends are a good step, he said, but there is no guarantee health insurance will be covered after the coming school year.

“We had to fight very hard for the past several months to get the kind of things we have gotten now,” Lewis said. “We don’t see that as a sustainable way to make things happen at the University of Missouri.”

UM diversity officer candidate sees conflict resolution as key skill

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

In April 2009, the president of Virginia Tech faced off in a meeting with faculty and students over his decision to quash a requirement that faculty report on their efforts to
promote diversity in their annual evaluations, Kevin McDonald said Thursday during his public appearance as a finalist for the University of Missouri’s chief diversity officer.

McDonald, vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech at the time, had helped arrange the meeting. The directive, which originated in the provost’s office, was seized on by conservative higher education think tanks and denounced as social engineering.

The faculty member chosen to represent the protesters handed a list of demands to President Charles Steger.

“The president proceeded to take it and throw it on the floor,” McDonald said. “I was sitting amongst the group and I thought that would be my last day on the job.”

McDonald, who said he sees his role as conflict resolution, spoke to his boss.

“I was going to ask him to do something that would be uncomfortable,” he said. “I was going to ask him to pick up the piece of paper and ask the representative to start again. It felt like hours, but it wasn’t, but he did pick it up, they started again and what resulted was a full tuition, room and board scholarship for students based on socio-economic status.”

McDonald is the second of three candidates for the UM system job created as a result of the fall protests by Concerned Student 1950 on the Columbia campus. The first, Paulette Granberry Russell of Michigan State University, faced questioning Tuesday morning. The third finalist, G. Christine Taylor, former vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at Purdue University, will be at a forum at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday at the Old Alumni Center.

McDonald is vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology, a private school with about 20,000 students in Rochester, N.Y., a job he has held since 2010.

The story he told about Virginia Tech sounds shares similarities with the Oct. 10 homecoming parade incident in which Concerned Student 1950 protesters blocked the car carrying UM President Tim Wolfe. While the students recited speeches about the university’s founding in 1839 by slaveholders, Wolfe remained in his car and did not attempt a dialogue.

The protests grew and, after a hunger strike by graduate student Jonathan Butler and a boycott by the Tiger football team, Wolfe resigned Nov. 9. The first question Thursday, from Concerned Student 1950 member Maxwell Little, asked McDonald what he would do to implement the student protesters' demands for shared governance, more black faculty and other reforms.

The elements to do so are a commitment to meeting intended targets, planning, resources and patience, McDonald said. The students making the demands must be included in the effort to meet them, he said.
“You have to have the concerned community members at the table,” McDonald said. “And I often remark in this work that it doesn’t make sense if I am at the table if I am not allowed to eat. So it doesn’t help to be at the table if you are not allowed to participate.”

After the forum, Little said McDonald’s answer sounded like a political statement intended to calm the students. He added that the story about Virginia Tech made him think someone should have been on hand to advise Wolfe on Oct. 10.

“Then he would have known to get out of the car,” Little said.

During McDonald’s tenure at Rochester, efforts to increase diversity have had mixed results. Black enrollment has fallen to about 5.5 percent of students from 6.8 percent in the fall of 2011, while the proportion of Asian and Hispanic students has increased. The campus was about two-thirds male in the fall of 2011, a figure that has not changed.

The institute has sought to increase black enrollment, but low graduation rates in poverty-challenged Rochester make that difficult, he said. To help prepare the students for a technical education, the institute has opened a charter school, he said.

Programs that traditionally are more attractive to female students have been added, increasing the number of women on campus, McDonald said. But as enrollment has increased, the proportion of women has not increased, he added.

Diversity and inclusion programs need to foster real change, McDonald said. Plans that respond to protests can’t sit on a shelf. But it can’t be done with constant agitation, either, he said.

“I am a consensus-builder, not a hell-raiser,” McDonald said.

MISSOURIAN

Diversity officer candidate addresses Concerned Student 1950 demands, touts diversity accomplishments

COLUMBIA — Kevin McDonald said he would prioritize increasing campus diversity and engaging with student activists as the UM System's first chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer and highlighted his experience bridging divides between students and administration at a forum Thursday.
The UM System Board of Curators created the new position on Nov. 9 in response to racially-charged protests on Mel Carnahan Quadrangle. The diversity officer will “counsel the President and General Officers of the UM System on matters of diversity, equity, inclusion, workplace, culture and climate,” according to the job advertisement on UM System’s website.

At the forum, graduate student and Concerned Student 1950 member Maxwell Little asked McDonald what his plans were to meet the activist group's demands despite recent threats from the Missouri legislature to freeze or cut the university's funding.

McDonald said a strategic plan, resources and patience will be needed to meet the demands. He added that he would also want to take the demands issued by the Legion of Black Collegians in 1969 — which Concerned Student 1950 included in its list — into consideration.

McDonald said he became interested in the job when he saw MU students' recent efforts towards diversity and inclusion.

“The Concerned Students are an enlightened bunch and we have, in the field, really looked on with great interest and admiration at what they’ve done to move this important agenda forward,” McDonald said.

If selected for the job, McDonald said he would promote efforts to increase diversity among students, faculty and staff.

He also emphasized increasing discussion between students and administration and said he would have to have "concerned community members" involved when formulating any diversity plan.

McDonald is currently the vice president and associate provost for diversity and inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York.

During his time at RIT, black enrollment has decreased from 6.8 percent to 5.5 percent, according to school enrollment data.

McDonald attributed the slide to declining black graduation rates in Rochester’s K-12 public education and said that RIT created a charter school to help address the issue.

Prior to working at RIT, McDonald was the vice president for equity and inclusion at Virginia Tech, where he said he helped mitigate a controversial dispute between students and faculty and the university's president.

The Virginia Tech provost had begun requiring faculty to report on their diversity efforts, prompting backlash from conservative think-tanks who brought national media attention to the campus.

When the president removed the requirement, students and faculty protested.
McDonald said he convinced the president to meet with students and faculty, but when someone from the group of protesters presented a list of recommendations to the president, he threw the list on the floor.

"I thought that that would be my last day on the job," McDonald said.

But after McDonald spoke to the president and to the protesters, the president picked up the paper and discussion resumed.

The dialogue resulted in the creation of the Presidential Scholarship for low-income students in addition to $900,000 for diversity initiatives.

Thursday’s event was the second of three forums in the diversity officer selection process.

At the first forum on Tuesday, Paulette Granberry Russell said she would promote initiatives to raise high school graduation rates for students of color and focus on increasing diversity in certain academic fields.

Russell is the senior adviser to the president for diversity and director for the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives at Michigan State University.

The final candidate, Purdue Chief Diversity Officer G. Christine Taylor, will speak at the last forum from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

A feedback form will be available on the UM System's website after Tuesday’s forum.

UM System diversity leaders give faculty council progress update


COLUMBIA, Mo. - University of Missouri System diversity and inclusion leaders spoke to the MU Faculty Council Thursday on what progress has been made since protests on the MU campus last November.
On Nov. 9, after UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned amid the protests, the UM Board of Curators announced a list of new initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion. The initiatives were to be implemented within 90 days. That deadline was on Feb. 7.

The first action on the list was to hire a first-ever chief diversity, inclusion and equity officer. Right now, Chuck Henson is the interim vice chancellor for the position until a permanent officer is chosen.

"The work is going on at several levels including working with students, working with staff, working with faculty, working with the City of Columbia," Henson said Thursday.

So far, the new division has given diversity orientation to many incoming students.

It is also hosting a lecture series on African American experience in Missouri. The first lecture was held earlier this month.

Right now, Henson said the division is developing training modules for the university hiring teams.

"We want to try and do everything we can to attract the most diverse pool when we have hiring openings," Christian Basi with the MU News Bureau said.

Starting on Feb. 24, Henson will host what he called "the working group." It is to have a conversation with student leaders and then educate the campus community on what the UM System does, according to Henson.

"That is a group of administrators and students who are coming together to continue that conversation, continue that relationship so that the students have a good idea of what is happening and that we can get the students input," Basi said.

Another initiative on the list last November was to create a diversity, inclusion and equity task force. David Mitchell, the chair of that task force, also spoke to the MU Faculty Council Thursday.

Right now, the task force is talking to three candidates for the permanent chief diversity officer, according to Mitchell.
MU Faculty Council discusses ways to educate students about UM System

COLUMBIA — MU Interim Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chuck Henson and S. David Mitchell, chair of the UM System diversity, equity and inclusion task force, spoke Thursday night at the MU Faculty Council meeting.

**Henson said events are planned for later in the month to help students better understand how the UM System works.**

Henson said the events will include answering questions like, “Who is the president? What does he do? What is the system? What is the relationship between the system and the campuses?”

Mitchell also reviewed recent appointments of diversity, equity and inclusion officers throughout the system. The 18 to 20 officers were appointed from nominees from all four campuses, the UM System, MU Extension and MU Health Care. More faculty, staff and student members will be selected.

A diversity officer's job is to promote diversity and relationships among system campuses, according to the system's website. The officers will work together to address diversity and inclusion issues throughout the system.

“I think if we are going to change, we need to be a part of that change,” Mitchell said.

MU Faculty Council chair Ben Trachtenberg also touched on other events involving the UM System.

He said a proposal to reduce the system's contribution to retiree health insurance is not a done deal. Public forums on the issue are scheduled at MU next month starting March 3.
JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri system's budget would be frozen under a spending plan passed by in a House committee, whose chairwoman blamed the system for not properly handling of recent race-related protests.

The plan includes a 2 percent increase for state colleges and universities, except for the four-campus University of Missouri system, the Columbia Daily Tribune reported.

State Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, who heads the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, said Wednesday that the exclusion is due to Melissa Click — an assistant communications professor at the Columbia campus — still being employed despite her suspension over a run-in with a student videographer during race-related protests in November.

Lichtenegger also cited the failure by the university system's governing curators to quash a protest by black, pro-Click demonstrators during the board's meetings last week in Columbia.

"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."

Columbia Democratic Rep. Stephen Webber countered her argument: "Retaliatory action by the Legislature is not going to be felt by administrators."

The appropriation bills now move to the House Budget Committee, which will make more changes before the bills go to the House for debate.

The university, which is getting $434 million in state support this fiscal year, was to receive a $26.8 million budget increase under Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon's spending proposal. By the
time all amendments were considered Wednesday, the committee cut Nixon's $55.8 million overall proposal for increased state aid to colleges and universities to $9.9 million.

The University of Missouri's tensions with the state Legislature intensified after the November protests spurred by what activists said was administrators' indifference to racial issues. The Columbia chancellor and system president resigned after the protests escalated, which included one student's hunger strike and the response to that strike by members of the football team, who said they'd refuse to play.

A video of one of the protests showed Click calling for "some muscle" to remove a student videographer from the protest area.

She told KMIZ-TV on Wednesday that she felt compelled to confront him, citing a lack of campus police, and insisted she wasn't calling for violence.

"I'm hoping that the people who watch this interview will be able to identify with saying something in a hectic and flustering moment," Click said. "I feel sorry. I feel embarrassed by my actions."

Click claims the videographer never identified himself as a student or a journalist, but in the video, the student says he's with the media as he approaches her. Click was charged with misdemeanor assault, but a Columbia prosecutor says he'll drop the matter if she completes community service.

Measure Would Deny University of Missouri System Funds Boost

The University of Missouri system would be denied a higher education funding boost under action taken by a House committee. The system's handling of race-related protests is being blamed.

Republican State Rep. Donna Lichtenegger of Jackson heads the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee. The Columbia Tribune reports that she steered a spending plan for higher
education through her committee Wednesday that includes a 2 percent increase for state colleges and universities except for the four-campus University of Missouri system.

Lichtenegger says that's because an assistant professor at the Columbia campus remains employed despite her recorded run-in with a student videographer during race-related November protests, and because the governing board didn't quash a protest during their meetings last week.

The appropriation bills now move to the House Budget Committee.

**House committee votes to deny UM System a budget increase**

Rep. Kip Kendrick: “The mentality of doing damage to the University of Missouri because my colleagues in Jefferson City are upset with the university makes absolutely no sense.”

State lawmakers voted Wednesday to deny the UM System a $26.8 million increase in funds proposed by Gov. Jay Nixon.

In his budget proposal for fiscal year 2017, Nixon proposed a 6 percent increase in funding for all public Missouri colleges and universities, totalling $55.6 million. However, the Higher Education Appropriations Committee voted on an amendment to change the increase to 2 percent and exclude the UM System from receiving the increase.

Chairwoman of the committee, Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, said the exclusion of the UM System is a consequence of Concerned Student 1950’s protests in November and MU’s failure to fire assistant communications professor Melissa Click, according to the Columbia Daily Tribune. Click was caught on video calling for “muscle” to remove a student journalist from Concerned Student 1950’s campsite in November. Lichtenegger also cited Concerned Student 1950’s protest at the Board of Curators’ meeting last week and called it the “last stroke.”

“They are there to learn, not to protest all day long,” Lichtenegger told the Tribune. “I thought we learned that lesson in the ’60s. Obviously we haven’t.”

Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, called the committee’s decision a retaliatory action that would hurt students.

“Retaliatory action from the General Assembly and the legislature is not going to be felt by administrators that people are frustrated with,” Webber said. “It’s going to be felt by students by way of higher fees and reduced educational opportunities.”
Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said last week in a town hall meeting that cutting funding would not help.

“Cutting any sort of funding to the university as some sort of retaliatory statement is unfair, it is shortsighted and it’s unnecessary,” Rowden said.

During the town hall, Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, called the university a “gem.”

“The mentality of doing damage to the University of Missouri because my colleagues in Jefferson City are upset with the university makes absolutely no sense,” Kendrick said.

Lichtenegger said that some constituents wanted the university system to fare far worse consequences and have lawmakers cut the budget. Now, the UM System budget is frozen.

“The best thing I could get was not doing the two percent increase,” Lichtenegger said.

After Nixon announced his proposal to increase funding, many schools promised to freeze tuition for the 2016-17 school year. Now it will be up to them to revisit their decision to freeze tuition, Lichtenegger said, because of the substantial $45.4 million difference. MU has yet to finalize tuition for the 2016-17 school year.

The appropriations bill will now move to the House Budget Committee before going to the full House and then the Senate.

Mizzou prof. who called for 'muscle' apologizes again

The University of Missouri assistant professor who has faced an avalanche of criticism for calling for "some muscle" to help her deal with a student journalist at a protest site on campus is apologizing again.

Melissa Click, who teaches Missouri’s communication department, on Wednesday gave her first interview since the November incident that came in the midst of protests on the Columbia, Mo. campus by African-American students who charged that the administration was doing little to take on festering racism on campus.
She apologized in a brief written statement the day after the incident was caught on video, but had been silent on the matter that continues to be hotly debated on the Missouri campus and in the state legislature.

In the video, Click appears to be having physical contact and berating a student journalist who was trying to conduct interviews at a campsite set up by student protesters on the quad of the Columbia campus. The confrontation happened shortly after the university system president and the chancellor of the Columbia campus announced their resignations.

At one point in the video, she calls for "some muscle" to help her remove student journalist, Mark Schierbecker, from the protest area.

"I certainly wish I hadn't done anything that was worthy of being in a viral video," Click told the Columbia ABC affiliate. "So again, I'm sorry for my behavior in the video. I wish I could take it back."

The video led to Click being placed on an indefinite paid suspension from her teaching position by the Board of Curators, the governor-appointed body that oversees the state system's four campuses.

Click said in the interview that Schierbecker never identified himself as a student or a journalist. But in the video that is posted online, Schierbecker can be heard telling Click that he's "media," and Click shouts "who wants to help me get this reporter out of here" before asking for "some muscle."

She was charged with misdemeanor simple assault in January, but a Columbia prosecutor says he'll drop the matter if Click completes 20 hours of community service.

Click, who was at the protest site as any ally of the African-American students, says in the interview that she was "never calling for any violence."

More than a hundred GOP lawmakers have called on the university to fire Click. Earlier this week, state Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, a Republican who heads the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, said that she is introducing a plan that would freeze the budget at current levels for the four campuses in the University of Missouri systems because Click continues to be employed at the university, the Columbia Daily Tribune reports.

Litchenegger also is angry that the Board of Curators didn't stop a protest by black students who recently interrupted a Board of Curators meeting in which they expressed their support for Click.

“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.”
COLUMBIA, MO. A suspended University of Missouri assistant professor says she's embarrassed about her run-ins with student journalists during race-related student protests in November.

Melissa Click called for "some muscle" to remove a student videographer from the protest area on the Columbia campus. The confrontation was caught on video.

Click tells KMIZ-TV (http://bit.ly/1PlyW7B ) she felt compelled to confront him, citing a lack of campus police. She calls the run-in "a hectic and flustered moment," and says she wasn't calling for violence.

Click claims the videographer never identified himself as a student or a journalist. But in the video that went viral, the student says he's with the media as he approaches Click.

Click was charged with misdemeanor assault, but a Columbia prosecutor says he'll drop the matter if she completes community service.
TheChat: Melissa Click says she was ‘flustered’

By Steve Kraske

Good morning.

• “When I watch the video, I feel sorry. I feel embarrassed by my actions. I was never calling for violence. It was just something that came out in a flustered moment.” — University of Missouri communications professor Melissa Click in an interview explaining her actions during a campus protest last fall.

Click apologized again, said she has no plans to resign and asserted that if campus police had been on the scene that day, faculty and staff would not have had to protect students.

• “She is still likely to be the Democratic nominee.” — the respected University of Virginia Center for Politics analyzing Hillary Clinton’s prospects.

The center, headed by Larry Sabato, acknowledges that “these are perilous times for Clinton.” It also concludes that the biggest threat to Clinton isn’t Bernie Sanders, but the new FBI investigation into her use of a private email server while serving as secretary of state.

• “Very wrong.” — Gov. Jay Nixon on threats from lawmakers to cut funding for the University of Missouri in the wake of recent unrest and controversy on the Columbia campus.

He said lawmakers who are threatening to cut funding are just grandstanding, and it’ll have little ultimate impact. The university is too important a state asset to undermine with substantial budget cuts, Nixon said. (link via johncombest.com).

• “When will we stop and really address the true issue? We put ourselves on a glide path to zero. Zero growth. Zero faith in government.” — Kansas House Minority Leader Tom Burroughs, a Kansas City, Kan., Democrat, addressing the 2012 budget cuts that he says have caused so much economic chaos in the state.

In a blistering floor speech, Burroughs accused Republicans have stealing from the state retirement fund to balance the budget.
Melissa Click breaks her silence

By Ashley Zavala Thursday, February 11th 2016

Columbia, Mo. — **Three months after the notorious censorship video of Melissa Click went viral, the University of Missouri professor is ready to tell her side of the story.**

"I've learned I'm not really good at crowd management and have no training in it," said Click. "I've learned a lot about the way social media works. I've learned a lot about humility and apologizing. I've learned so much."

Click is apologetic about her actions caught on camera November 9th.

"I'm sorry for what I did. I wish I could take it back. I wish I could go back and try again. But it did happen and I do take responsibility for it," she said.

Click said she's telling her side of the story now because when the video initially came out, she didn't want to become a focal point when the university lost two leaders amidst a campus-wide conversation about race. She said when the video became a legal matter, she said it wasn't a good idea to talk publicly during that time.

Click says she was drawn to the message of the students demonstrating for racial equality. She said that day she was originally on Concerned Student 1950's camp site on the Carnahan Quad, helping organize supplies for the student group. She said the group spent a significant part of the day doing interviews. Once Tim Wolfe resigned as president of the University of Missouri System, the group wanted some time to get ready for a press conference. She said the day of the now infamous incident, she was just trying to help the student group.

"I think many of us who were present felt that they were under threat. The goal was a non-violent way to keep calm," said Click.

In the video recorded by student journalist Mark Schierbecker, Click is seen calling for "some muscle over here" and later mocking the journalist for saying the space on campus was public property.
"Not my best moment," said Click. "And I'm sorry for that moment, absolutely."

The video of her clashing with the journalist has almost three-million views on YouTube. When asked if she would still feel the same way she does about the incident had the video not gone viral, Click said, "Sure, absolutely."

"I think everybody has the possibility of revealing something that's not their best self in a stressful moment," said Click. "I hope people can identify with being in a high stress moment and hope they can forgive me for that."

While suspended from her position with the university, Click has been spending some time at the Food Bank of Central Missouri for the community service requirements of her deferred charges.

With recent events putting a strain on the University of Missouri's relationship with some Missouri lawmakers, Click said she thinks the animosity between the Missouri legislature and the university has a history that predates her by decades.

"I think I'm a convenient target right now - that's not to say I didn't do something wrong, I did and I'm sorry for it - I think the legislature's decision to punish the university system and everyone who works in it and attends those schools because the university should make a personnel decision that's in line with their politics, I think that's a dangerous path for the relationship," said Click. "It's a complex situation when politics gets so tightly wound in with education."

Click said she's hoping the Board of Curators decision to suspend her doesn't create an environment where she can't be judged fairly.

"I've tried my best to repair this. I strongly believe my mistakes should be put in the context of my twelve years of good service to the university."

---

Student journalist disputes claims made by Missouri professor Melissa Click

February 12, 2016 by Alisa Nelson

University of Missouri professor Melissa Click claims that a student journalist she threatened during campus protests in November didn’t identify himself as a student or
journalist. Mark Schierbecker disputes that, and her claim that he broke through a chain of protesters.

“They passed around me because they assumed I wasn’t a member of the press,” said Schierbecker. “I just happened to end up on the right side of things. I passed through non-violently, but she’s going to try to word it to seem favorable.”

Schierbecker’s video shows him saying he’s media and moments later, Click calling for “some muscle” to remove “a reporter.”

Schierbecker said he’s not too disappointed about a Columbia city prosecutor no longer pursuing assault charges against Click.

“The criminal charge was inconsequential to some of my ulterior goals in this, which is to shed light on press freedoms,” said Schierbecker. “I think we’ve done that marvelously.”

Click has agreed to a deal that allows her to avoid prosecution. She claims she was not calling for violence.

The Board of Curators two weeks ago suspended Click with pay pending further investigation.

MISSOURIAN

First MU forum on retiree health insurance changes is Tuesday

COLUMBIA — Seven open forums about recommended changes to retiree health insurance benefits for the University of Missouri System employees will be held this month and next at MU. The first forum will be from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Tuesday in the Benton Bingham Ballroom of Memorial Student Union.

A panel of MU leaders and insurance specialists will lead the discussion.

The schedule for the other forums is:

March 3: 9:30-11 a.m., Mark Twain Room, Memorial Student Union

March 4: 8:30-10 a.m., Wrench Auditorium, Memorial Student Union

March 7: 1-3 p.m., Room 194 A and B, General Services Building
March 11: 8:30-10 a.m., Wrench Auditorium, Memorial Student Union

March 18: 9:30-11 a.m., Mark Twain Room, Memorial Student Union

March 25: 9:30-11 a.m., Wrench Auditorium, Memorial Student Union

Forums will also be held at the other three UM System campuses.

The recommendations from the Total Rewards Advisory Committee would change percentage subsidies for early retirement employees to fixed annual subsidies for medical, dental and vision insurance.

Regardless of when an employee plans to retire, he or she must fulfill three criteria to qualify for any UM-sponsored insurance subsidy:

- Be eligible for benefits with at least five years of service before Jan. 1, 2018.
- Be at least 60 on his or her retirement date.
- Have at least 20 years of service to the UM System on his or her retirement date.

If the employee meets all three requirements, then he or she qualifies for UM coverage and a subsidy of some sort. The type of subsidy, percentage or fixed, would depend on years of service and age:

- If the years of service and age add up to 80 or more before Jan. 1, 2018, the employee’s subsidy will continue to be calculated with percentage system.
- If the years of service and age add up to less than 80 before Jan. 1, 2018, the employee’s subsidy will become a fixed annual payment of $100 per year of service, up to a maximum of $2,500.

Employees hired on or after Jan. 1, 2018, would not be eligible for any retiree health insurance benefits.

_column: ‘Temporary’ is not synonymous with ‘weak’_

Interims are a sign of change and soon-to-come prosperity

Having so many interim leaders attempting to fulfill the immediate needs of MU may make it seem like MU is falling apart, but in reality, it is building itself back up.
MU is currently home to 15 interim administrators as well as an interim Missouri Students Association president and vice president. The public’s reaction to the number of interims at MU has been mostly negative, as people see it as a failure. It’s as if when people hear the word “interim,” they hear the word “weakness.”

Although several of these temporary administrators took their place as a result of the downfall of the several former leaders, MU should not be embarrassed by these new interims. Interim leaders show the power of growth, change and flexibility; all qualities MU should be proud to exercise during moments of difficulty.

One of the reasons interims could contribute to positive change is their unique ability to make sizable changes without the pressure of losing their jobs. Since the people who are temporarily stepping into these positions are aware of their impermanence, they have an opportunity to make bold statements and decisions.

This ability to be courageous in MU politics could help this campus make progress professionally and socially, which has been a need that many MU students have made clear is not meeting their standards.

Another way interims could help MU prosper is through their ambition. A person with the drive to accept a leadership position at essentially a moment’s notice is, most of the time, a person who already has the skills that are essential for creating change. For instance, according to previous Maneater reporting, Chancellor Emeritus Brady Deaton described the interim role in an email as dependent on “personal commitment, understanding of issues and respect from others.”

It is easy to focus on the insufficiency of prior leadership, consequently influencing the opinion of what an interim could provide. The strength and power of an interim should not be questioned because of their status as a “replacement.” Instead, the judgment of an interim should be done the same as any permanent leader.

Although these people are temporary, they are essentially given the same amount of power and duties as someone who would be working the position permanently. A campus searching for positive transition should not allow itself to have tunnel vision when it comes to the idea of the word “interim.” Rather, it should be about imagining a bigger picture, which is what interim position holders are able to do. They have an unmatched ability to see the long term for MU, rather than for themselves.

Interims are here to be a funnel for student voices, and that is the journey that most interims expect to embark on when they accept their position. Give them a chance to push this campus to its next step in its ever-growing success.
A movement may be emerging on college campuses. Though it may seem like the well-publicized string of protests slowed at the turn of the spring semester, a new survey of college freshman indicates that these students are more interested in political engagement and activism than they have been in years.

The annual American Freshman Survey, conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, polled 141,189 full-time students at nearly 200 colleges. Students across the country have been protesting racial injustice in their communities and responding to national conversations after high-profile shootings in places like Ferguson, New York City, and Baltimore, as well as highlighting problems such as campus sexual assault and college affordability. “Perhaps connected to the increased activism among college and high school students over the past year, first-time, full-time college students in 2015 report substantially greater likelihoods of participating in student protests and demonstrations while in college compared to their peers who entered last year,” the study says.

The percent of students who said they had a “very good chance” of participating in protests increased 2.9 percentage points—from 5.6 to nearly 9 percent—since last year’s survey, making this class the most ambitious about campus demonstrations in the survey’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,” Kevin Eagan, director of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of California at Los Angeles, told Inside Higher Ed.

The survey was administered between March and October 2015 (before many of the most highly covered protests). And although the survey didn’t explicitly ask about any specific events or protests, black students reported the greatest likelihood of participating in demonstrations (16 percent) and have experienced the largest increase (5.5 percent) in participation since last year—perhaps reflective of their involvement in protests at places like Yale, Princeton, and the University of Missouri over the racial climate on their campuses. One in 10 Latino students also said they would participate, compared to about 7 percent of their white peers.

This freshman class also demonstrated other shifts in the way they feel about their role in the political process. Forty percent of freshmen believe it is “essential” or “very important” to become community leaders, 60 percent expressed a commitment toward “improving their understanding of other countries and cultures,” and three-quarters indicated that “helping others in difficulty” is important. While students’ commitment to political engagement improved across the board, differences in responses among racial groups is noteworthy. Nearly two-thirds of
black students, more than half of Latino students, and about 45 percent of Native American and Asian students rated this goal as “very important” or “essential,” versus just over a third of whites.

According to the survey, student interest in civic engagement extends beyond their presence at physical protests and demonstrations. While the researchers can’t say for sure that students’ expectations for participating in protests is connected to their levels of political engagement or to the recent waves of activism, the racial divide persists when looking at how much of a priority students place on influencing the political structure. According to the survey, 18 percent of Asian American or Pacific Islander and 20 percent of white students felt that it was a “very important” or “essential” objective. Conversely, more than a quarter (about 27 percent) of Latino students and almost a third of black students said so; these two groups have been the most vocal about discrimination on college campuses.

Issues that are important to college students—college affordability, race and racial bias, immigration, gun violence—have gotten a lot of attention during the current 2016 presidential election cycle. Bernie Sanders is campaigning to make college free. On her website, Hillary Clinton promotes that she will “fight to bring an end to sexual assault on America’s campuses.” Ted Cruz discussed the problems with affirmative action with Buzzfeed last year. Political candidates have vied for the youth vote, and it has been widely reported that the youth turnout in the 2008 presidential elections was a major contributor to Barack Obama’s victory. There are still many months to go until the general election, but if this survey is any indication, college students—whose views, according to the survey, are increasingly aligning with progressive and liberal platforms—are slated to have a sizable impact on whom the country elects to office.

---

**the maneater**

**Tax preparation tips college students need to know**

Personal financial planning student Michael Danner talks about the Tax Preparation Help program.

The Maneater sat down with senior Michael Danner, a student in the personal financial planning department and College of Human and Environmental Sciences, to talk about the Tax Preparation Help program. MU holds the program annually to help students and residents deal with their tax returns.

**Q: What is Tax Preparation Help?**

**A: Tax Preparation is a free program that we offer here on the University of Missouri campus, and we provide assistance for individual income tax returns to individuals that**
living around this area as well as students and teachers and faculty members at University of Missouri ... Here we deal with helping them file their taxes. This is not an educational thing where we sit people down and explain how can they do by themselves. We actually do that for them. But we can provide educational benefits while we are interacting with clients that we are providing service for.

Q: What kind of materials should students bring to get the service?

A: The items we require students to have are some form of photo identification, whether that would be a driver license or even a passport. A social security card or have their social security number memorized as well as forms like W-2 and 1098-T, etc.

A W-2 is typically mailed to the individual by the people who employ them or sometimes they are able to access it online as well. 1098-T is a form that sent to you by the University of Missouri and it is basically an account summary of your student's individual account graduate and undergraduate. And that is has to do with tuition, book purchases that you have purchase on campus ... Additional materials typically involve health insurance. If a student or an individual has health insurance they bought from the marketplace, they get a form from United States government that they need to bring. But basically anything they think might involve with their tax return, they should bring all of those items. And we are able to sought through with them.

Q: What are the most common problems college kids encounter when they are dealing with tax?

A: I would say the most common problem that we have is not necessarily anybody’s fault. It is just that most people aren’t educated enough to understand what different things they are eligible for, like different tax credits, etc. And the preparers here as well as quality insurance people are able to provide that kind of educational benefit to them in that regard, so that they know in the future what they are and are not qualified for and what they can expect to see in the returns.

Q: For students who missed the tax preparation help, how should they get the same help?

A: There are different programs. They can buy TurboTax, downloading the app or the computer program, or go to H&R Block. But, individuals need to pay to get the full service.