MU News Bureau

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Scientists Breed Pigs Resistant to a Devastating Infection Using CRISPR

And the race to develop commercial applications for the revolutionary gene-editing tool is off and running By Monique Brouillette

One of the worst things that can happen to a pig farmer is a pen infected with porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome virus (PRRSV). It emerged in the 1980s, and the syndrome now afflicts these hoofed animals worldwide, causing illness, death and miscarriage. In fact, it has been designated the most economically significant disease for swine, costing livestock producers in North America $600 million annually from deaths and medical treatments. Vaccinations have mostly failed to prevent the syndrome’s spread, but a new approach by biologists at the University of Missouri may mark a turning point. They are one of the first teams to develop a commercial agricultural application for the revolutionary CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing method—to breed pigs resistant to infection.

CRISPR/Cas9 is a gene-manipulation tool that allows scientists to make changes to DNA with razor-sharp accuracy. The tool has generated excitement in the research community because it allows rapid modification of gene function, replacing older and less efficient methods. For porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome, Missouri's Randall Prather, Kristen Whitworth and Kevin Wells turned to the technique to breed three piglets that lacked a protein on cells that acts as a doorway for the virus. The edited piglets were grouped together in a pen with seven normal piglets, and then they all were inoculated with PRRSV.

About five days later the normal pigs grew feverish and ill, but the genetically edited pigs did not. Despite sharing close quarters with their sick pen mates, they remained in top health throughout the 35-day study period. Blood testing also revealed that the edited animals did not produce antibodies against the virus—further evidence that they evaded infection entirely. “I expected the pigs would get the virus but not get as sick,” Prather says. “But it is just night and day. The pigs are running around with the other pigs coughing on them, but they are just fine.” The study's results were published in the journal Nature Biotechnology.
This work and other recent experiments demonstrate the promise of CRISPR/Cas9 for the care of domestic animals. Late last year geneticists at the University of California, Davis, employed the new technique to breed dairy cows that do not grow horns. The outcome is a boon: cows are routinely dehorned to protect farmers and other cattle from being injured, but the process can be brutally painful and dangerous for the bovines.

More livestock will likely be produced in such a way, says Alison Van Eenennaam, a geneticist who worked on the development of the hornless cows. “This is analogous to breeding,” she notes. “It's just precision breeding.”

Colleges see growing demand for mental health services

University of Missouri sees 62 percent rise in requests for anxiety, depression help

Watch the story: http://www.kmbc.com/news/colleges-see-growing-demand-for-mental-health-services/38305110

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Crippling anxiety and depression is becoming an epidemic among college students, officials said.

At the University of Missouri’s flagship Columbia campus, there has been unprecedented demand for counseling services.

“When I came to Mizzou, my first test, it felt like I was running a marathon,” said sophomore Jessica Weiss. “I was, like, ‘Oh, what is this?’

Weiss said she finds relief from her anxiety in meditation.

“I was on prescription medication and I was weaned off of that and so now I just use my mindfulness practice to help me with that and it really does,” she said. “It’s changed my life.”
Stress management and wellness classes provide daily meditation sessions. Students are needing it more than ever before.

Psychiatry and counseling services on campus are treating record numbers of young people, and it's not just at the University of Missouri. Counselors at the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and the University of Central Missouri also say students' mental health needs are growing, mostly for dealing with anxiety and depression.

A recent report found that in the last five years, 29.6 percent more students are visiting their campus counselors. At the University of Missouri, demand is up 62 percent.

Dr. Craig Rooney, the director of Mizzou's Behavioral Health Services said there may be a good reason for that.

“I think some of our efforts over the last couple of decades have been successful and they’re simply more comfortable coming in," he said.

Students, officials said aren’t ashamed to see a counselor.

“They seem to be open to a lot of ideas," said Dr. David Wallace, the director of Mizzou’s counseling services. “They’re open to things that prior generations saw themselves locked up about.”

Wallace attributes the demand for mental health services to enrollment at the university in the last decade. He said university recruiters have also been bringing in a more diverse group of students from urban areas, which he said are more likely to be open to receiving counseling.

Nearly a decade after the Virginia Tech massacre, there’s an emphasis on college mental health. At Mizzou, there’s a crisis hotline and plans to hire six more counseling staff members in the next five years.

The Board of Curators recently approved expanded diversity training, telepsychiatry and a program called Respond, which helps faculty and staff members spot when a student might need help.

Efforts that will bring more focus to mental health services will help prepare students’ minds for life on campus and beyond.
“They have new insights about themselves, the world around them and their relationship with others,” health promotion and wellness coordinator Terry Wilson said.

Funding for University of Missouri reactor makes progress

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A state representative says she'll attempt to find $10 million for new training and classroom space at University of Missouri's research reactor.


Lichtenegger, who serves as chairwoman of the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, previously denied a budget increase to the university for the upcoming fiscal year.

"We made a statement to the university," Lichtenegger said at the end of the tour. "They are listening and cleaning up their act now. ... We are starting to see things move forward, and I brought you here because this is one of the places at the university where great things are happening."

Reactor officials said the $10 million is important for developing industries that use irradiated elements for medical purposes. The money would also be used to fund the construction of a 28,000-square-foot building, reactor executive director Ralph Butler told lawmakers.
Much of the previous construction at the reactor has been financed by bonds repaid through revenue from the reactor. That won't be possible with the new building because it is designed to train people for the jobs in nuclear medicine, he said.

The reactor supplies elements that reduce bone cancer pain and treat inoperable liver cancer. They expect to soon receive approval to produce iodine-131, used for thyroid cancer, Butler said.

Chamber President Matt McCormick, who joined the tour, said the reactor is an asset that should be supported because it can bring an industry of high-paying jobs to Mid-Missouri.

"This project doesn't put us in competition with anybody else in the state or the nation," McCormick said.

Funding for University of Missouri reactor makes progress

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A state representative says she'll attempt to find $10 million for new training and classroom space at University of Missouri's research reactor.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that Republican state Rep. Donna Lichtenegger arranged for six House members to visit the reactor and hear a one-hour pitch from officials Monday.

The chairwoman of the House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee previously denied a budget increase to the university for the upcoming fiscal year.

Reactor officials said the $10 million is important for developing industries that use elements exposed to radiation for medical purposes. The reactor supplies elements that reduce bone cancer pain and treat inoperable liver cancer.
Executive director Ralph Butler said the reactor is the most powerful one at a U.S. college and is a reliable source for almost any nuclear material.

UM system leadership wants to move on from bad publicity

JEFFERSON CITY - The UM system leaders said their message is "looking towards the future," as they spoke at the UM System Legislative Day at the capitol.

The goal of the legislative day is for all four campuses to come together and talk to state lawmakers.

During the legislative rally, interim president Mike Middleton said the UM system brings much to the state of Missouri.

"We are educating tomorrow's leaders. We must encourage our legislators to not punish the UM system," Middleton said.

The House Select Budget Committee voted Tuesday to cut roughly $7.6 million from funding for the UM system administration. The committee voted to restore about $400,000 in cuts to the Columbia campus that would have been equal to the salaries of several people, such as former MU professor Melissa Click.

Middleton said the budget cuts force the system to face "scarce resources," which jeopardizes the quality of the UM programs. He said the restoration of the $400,000 is a good step in the right direction.

The UM leaders said they have three goals: accountability, transparency and fiscal responsibility.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said he will continue to fight for the university, but is tired of talking about Melissa Click.
"It's as almost as if Melissa Click is impeding job growth in the state of Missouri with as much time we talk about her and her actions," Kendrick said. "We have much bigger issues to talk about in this capitol."

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said the initial UM system budget cut was designed to show lawmakers are watching an institution that is funded largely by taxpayer money.

"I think the best way to deal with that is the resolution that I pre-filed yesterday that allows an objective evaluation by an outside group to make a determination of what needs to be fixed at the university before we make those funding determinations," Schaefer said.

He said it was a "positive step" that MU fired Melissa Click but does not agree with the university's process and rules which were used to fire her.

"The process to actually terminate her under the university's rules was never even engaged," Schaefer said. "In other words, the only way that could start would be from a faculty member complaint, which was never filed. The chancellor actually doesn't have the ability to terminate her. The curators took the extraordinary process step of going forward and doing it on their own."

He said that shows the university's rules on firing a faculty member need to be changed because they are "clearly not responsive to anybody."

**UM Leaders Looking to Build Trust with Legislature**

Watch story: [http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=c44b3eda-e0ad-4d0d-a360-0bf2d4d37633](http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=c44b3eda-e0ad-4d0d-a360-0bf2d4d37633)
UM System cut remains in budget passed by House committee

By Alex Stuckey

JEFFERSON CITY • Columbia Rep. Caleb Rowden implored House members Tuesday to partially restore a cut to the University of Missouri System next year, saying it would not hit its intended target.

Rowden shares lawmakers' frustrations with the embattled system, but said "any cuts we make are designed not to hit students and low level staff, but they're going to hit those people first." Rowden is running for senate this year.

His argument largely fell on deaf ears. The Missouri House Budget Committee on Tuesday rejected Rowden's proposal for the 2017 budget year that begins July 1. It would have restored about half of the $7.7 million cut to the UM System administration -- which includes the board of curators and the president's office -- if the state reached Gov. Jay Nixon's revenue projections.

"I want to see the university show me" changes, Rep. Eric Burlison, R-Springfield said Tuesday. "I dont want to hear how they're going to make changes."

The House Budget Committee on Wednesday signed off on a $27.1 billion budget plan for 2017. The plan is based on an estimated 3.1 percent revenue growth, which is pared back from Nixon's projection of 4.1 percent.

To make up for that difference, Flanigan plans to implement a surplus revenue fund, where money would flow if revenues exceed Flanigan's estimate.
Rowden had hoped to provide the UM System administration $3.8 million through this fund.

"I'm asking you to give the new leadership a chance to make the changes we want to see," Rowden said.

The $7.7 million cut first was proposed last month by House Budget Leader Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage. He also proposed a $400,000 symbolic cut to the salaries of multiple Mizzou employees, including embattled assistant communications professor Melissa Click. After the UM Board of Curators fired Click on Thursday, that cut was restored.

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 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, leading to a dust-up between Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon and Republican legislative leaders over finding replacements.

On Tuesday, Senate Budget Leader Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, proposed creating a special committee to review university system operations. That panel's recommendations could be considered when reviewing the budget next year. Schaefer is running for Attorney General this year.

A $9.9 million -- or 2 percent -- increase for public higher education institutions, except the UM System, based on performance funded remained in the surplus fund. Nixon recommended a $55.6 million -- or 6 percent -- increase for all schools through performance funding.
The committee also funneled a $70 million increase into the Foundation Formula, which funds K-12 public schools. Nixon recommended a $85 million increase.

Other aspects of the budget include:

-- $54.1 million for a 2 percent pay raise for state employees.

-- $5 million increase for K-12 transportation.

-- $4.5 million increase for the State Public Defender System.

-- $30 million in the surplus revenue fund for a transportation department cost-share program.

Legislative leaders expect to debate this budget on the House floor next week.

The bills are House Bills 2001-2013.

**UPDATE:** Funding cut to UM System passes House committee

ELLEN CAGLE, 14 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — The House Select Committee on Budget voted 20-5 Wednesday in favor of a House bill substitute that would cut University of Missouri System funding by $7.6 million.

The substitute on House Bill 2003, proposed by committee chair Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, would cut the funding from system administration.
There was no discussion on the bill.

Five representatives, including Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, voted against the substitute. Reps. Jeremy LaFaver, D-Kansas City, Randy Dunn, D-Kansas City, Jeanne Kirkton, D-Webster Groves, and Gail McCann Beatty, D-Kansas City, were also opposed.

Three members were absent.

Interim UM System President Mike Middleton urged legislators Wednesday to support the UM System. He spoke to a crowd in the Capitol rotunda as part of an annual UM System Legislative Day event.

Middleton told the crowd the system is trying to be "transparent and fiscally responsible." He implored those gathered to encourage lawmakers not to "punish" the university.

"We're educating tomorrow's leaders," he said at the event.

LaFaver, the Kansas City representative, said in an interview he was concerned about how the cuts would affect the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

"Coming out of the hearing, I was concerned with how those cuts would hit the university in my backyard," he said.

In an interview Wednesday, Rowden said he was disappointed by the committee's vote.

"Given the enrollment issues and the real-world budget issues that the university has — I think it's shortsighted, and just really unnecessary," he said.

MU's enrollment next year could drop as much as 900 students, MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley told a House committee in February. The drop could amount to a $20 million budget shortfall, Foley said.
Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, is on the committee, but was absent for the vote. In an interview later on Wednesday, he called the cuts frustrating.

"My district includes the University of Missouri, but that's not why we should fight for the University of Missouri," he said. "The University of Missouri impacts the entire state. The cuts were a retaliatory action. To me, those are the worst cuts possible. It's unacceptable."

"We'll continue to fight to get the money restored. We'll continue to educate colleagues about the importance of the university and why we need to support it now more than ever."

The bill will advance to the full House for debate.

Despite the committee's vote, there's still time to minimize the cuts, Rowden said.

"I think there's a chance to try and do something on the (House) floor," he said. "We're going to start having those conversations. We have a few days to talk to a lot of people and figure out what their appetite is going to be."

Confusion about the cuts

Flanigan's substitute includes seven line-item appropriations for the university system. Each of the system's campuses would receive its own appropriation, as would the University of Missouri Extension, the system's administration and a program for endowed professorships. Previously, state funds have been appropriated as a lump sum.

In a budget hearing on Feb. 24, representatives voiced confusion about how the cuts would affect each campus within the system. At a hearing last week, legislative budget analysts said it's not possible to determine how the cuts will be distributed to each campus.

Committee members voted Tuesday to reject a funding cut to MU of about $400,000. The cuts would have been equivalent to the salaries of former assistant communication professor Melissa Click, a chair in the Department of Communication and the salary of Michael O'Brien, the dean of the College of Arts and Science.
Also on Tuesday, the committee voted against amendments by Rowden that would add $3.8 million in administrative funding to the university system's budget, according to the Associated Press.

The decisions came five days after the UM System Board of Curators voted 4-2 to fire Click, though proposed legislation regarding the university system's finances did not abate after Click's firing.

Click ignited national controversy after asking for "some muscle" to stop a student journalist from filming reactions to the resignation of Tim Wolfe, former president of the University of Missouri System, in November. The resignation came after weeks of campus protests about racism and racial inequality at MU.

In recent months, Missouri legislators have denounced MU's handling of Click's employment and MU leaders' response to racial protests on campus.

A contentious relationship

Politicians have proposed bills that would target the university system, including a bill that would restrict teaching waivers, which allow professors to forgo teaching classes to conduct research.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, proposed a resolution Tuesday that would assemble a task force to review UM System rules and regulations, campus administration and diversity programs, among other programs. The findings would be presented to the General Assembly in December and could affect the system's funding, according to a news release.

"This step is necessary to ensure the long-term survival and growth of this capable institution, and to earn back the trust and respect that has been lost through a series of recent poor decisions," Schaefer said in the news release.
On Monday, Rep. Courtney Allen Curtis, D-Ferguson, filed a resolution that would re-assign MU’s title as the state's flagship university to Lincoln University.

MU has "not fulfilled the ideals of this state," according to the resolution, and "racial tension at the University of Missouri focused the attention of the nation and the world on the state of Missouri in a negative light."

The legislation cites racial inequality, the delayed termination of Click and a lack of diversity as a reason for switching the title.

**Laws could cut MSU degree restrictions**

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Two identical House and Senate bills have been filed to repeal a key compromise in a 2005 law granting name changes to Missouri State University and two other schools.

The bills would lift restrictions requiring Missouri State University to seek a cooperative agreement with the University of Missouri to offer engineering and doctoral programs before requesting state approval to open a stand-alone program, the Columbia Tribune reports.

The bills would make it easier for other state universities to seek approval from the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to add graduate programs.

Backers of a 2005 name change succeeded in removing Southwest from the university's name, expanding its mission statewide. Since that change, 42 programs have been initiated, including engineering programs with Missouri University of Science & Technology and dental programs with the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The degrees are granted by the University of Missouri.

Missouri State University President Clif Smart says the bills shouldn't be viewed as an attack on the university.

"We do think, particularly in southern Missouri, that we are losing people to Arkansas and other places," Smart said. "The more opportunities we have to offer graduate programs, to keep them
in the state and keep them well-prepared, the better. We don't think this hurts the University of Missouri in any way."

State Rep. Kip Kendrick said the bill is a direct attack on the University of Missouri and that opening the door for additional programs will strain already stretched budgets.

Local autism program trains health care workers, educators

COLUMBIA - A local training program specializing in autism has announced it has trained 1,731 professionals in health care, education, and other areas of work throughout the state of Missouri since last July.

Training Experts in Autism for Missouri, also known as TEAM, is a free service provided by the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders at the University of Missouri.

TEAM's goal is to meet the needs of families of individuals that have been affected with disabilities in the mid-Missouri area and to be a national and international leader of research in the autism field.

The program emphasizes family-centered care which supports families from the first meeting and involves routine follow-up appointments to try to make sure each child and family has the best-case scenario ahead of them.

The program is under the direction of Drs. Jena Randolph and Karen O'Connor. The two are assistant professors at the Thompson Center.
"The original vision for this program was not just to provide professional development in a one-stop workshop," O'Connor said. "Our vision was not just to provide that one workshop, but to provide ongoing support."

TEAM has worked with exactly half of the counties in the state of Missouri, meaning they have 57 more counties to go.

"I think a goal of ours is to make sure that we reach the remaining counties in the state of Missouri," Randolph said. "We want to make sure that we are helping everyone, even in the more rural areas, and the more populated areas, too."

Program aims to overcome shortage of doctors in rural areas

COLUMBIA - Many people take quality medical care for granted. For those in rural areas, the lack of doctors can pose serious problems when seeking care.

In Missouri, 97% of the 101 rural counties are designated as Primary Medical Care Health Professional Shortage areas by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

While nearly 25% of the U.S. population resides in rural areas, the total percentage of physicians in these areas is only 10%.

"Rural physician shortage is a significant problem because people in these rural counties cannot easily access health care," said MU School of Medicine Associate Dean for Rural Health Kathleen Quinn. "People in these rural communities usually put off going to the doctor because it's far away, they have to take off work, childcare issues etc."

At the MU School of Medicine, a program in place since 1995 is helping combat the problem.
MU med student Meredith Norfleet said she understands the benefits of becoming a rural physician.

"I think one thing that I've learned from participating in this program, is that it's a definite need by all the members of our small communities here in Missouri," Norfleet said. "I think that's something that's going to drive my decisions moving forward when I figure out what I want to do and where I want to practice, knowing that all the members of rural communities here are needing better health care options."

Quinn said about 20 percent of MU Med School students take advantage of the Rural Track Program in some fashion.

But, she said, it can sometimes be hard to find rural students who want a career in health care.

"A lot of students in these smaller towns aren't exposed to health professionals, so they don't have those role models," Quinn said. "So one of things that we're working on is exposing youth to health careers, preparing them for health careers and ensuring that they can succeed and can get through the rigor of medical school to therefore practice in these communities.

For Norfleet, the decision to become a rural physician was never in question.

"It was driven by my background, I'm from a very small town of only about 220 people, so it's always been an interest of mine to go back to a smaller community and serve the people I grew up with," Norfleet said. "I think I'm excited about the relationships that I'm hoping to form with my patients. I feel like in a rural setting you get to be a lot closer to your patients, know a little bit more about their background more so than their health."

**The Academy in Peril?**

If politicians are allowed to dictate who works in our colleges and universities, and thus who voices get heard when we discuss the world and its inhabitants, we can't expect the results to be positive, argues William Bradley.

I am not an academic anymore, although I taught, either as a graduate student or a faculty member, for about 15 years. I married an academic, and we struggled with "the two-body problem" for a number of years before deciding that we would rather live in the same town than both have full-time academic careers. Since my wife's career was going better than mine was at that point -- her position was tenure track, and she had good reason to think that she would soon be tapped to take on significant administrative responsibilities -- we decided that I would pursue work outside of academe in the town where she had been living for the past couple of years.
Though I loved the research and writing and most of all the teaching, I have to say that sometimes I think I got out just in time. **Powerful forces are working against higher education in America these days, and nowhere is that power more obvious right now than in Columbia, Mo., where Melissa Click, an assistant professor of communication, was recently fired by the Board of Curators at the University of Missouri.**

Before I continue, I should tell you that I have loved the University of Missouri and Columbia in general. I did my Ph.D. work there from 2002 until 2006. That academic I married? We met in a Shakespeare class there. My friends and I discussed literary theory, marriage, Jorge Luis Borges, politics and everything else you can imagine in the classrooms in Tate Hall or the many bars located nearby on 9th Street. It was a great place to learn and grow.

And I should also tell you that I don’t know if Melissa Click deserves to lose her academic appointment or not. For those of you who don’t know the story, Click was caught on video last November demanding that a student journalist leave a public area that had been occupied by students protesting incidents of racism on campus and the university’s failure to address racism within its culture. If you haven’t seen the video, well, she doesn’t come across well. She shouts. She calls for “muscle” to block the reporter’s access. She grabs a student’s camera. It was a serious error in judgment -- as she acknowledged almost immediately after the incident, “I regret the language and strategies I used, and sincerely apologize to the MU campus community, and journalists at large, for my behavior, and also for the way my actions have shifted attention away from the students’ campaign for justice,” she wrote in a public statement. I’m usually inclined to say that an admission of wrongdoing and an apology should usually entitle one to forgiveness in cases where nobody is hurt, but I understand that other people might disagree with me. It’s entirely possible that students, faculty members and administrators might feel that Click’s actions were so far out of line, she should not be employed by the university. Even if I disagree with that assessment, I would be inclined to support the institution’s right to police itself.

But that isn’t what happened in the case of Melissa Click, is it?

In firing Melissa Click, the board caved in to demands from Republican lawmakers in Missouri, 100 of whom in January signed a letter demanding Click’s termination. To show the university that they were serious, in February lawmakers passed a budget amendment excluding the university from an increase in next year’s state appropriations. Explaining the lawmakers’ decision, Representative Donna Lichtenegger said that University of Missouri students “are there to learn, not to protest all day long”
(not the hearty endorsement of First Amendment rights one expects to hear when someone comes to the defense of student journalists). About two weeks later, House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Flanigan proposed a budget that would deprive the university of more than $400,000, specifically targeting the salaries of Click, her department chair and her dean.

Two days later, in a session closed to the public, the board voted 4 to 2 to terminate Click.

You don't need to think that Click deserves to be forgiven to see that this sets a very frightening precedent that endangers the very mission of the university. If politicians are now allowed to dictate an institution’s personnel decisions, what is to stop them from abusing this power even further? Will scientists researching climate change be safe in such an environment? How about a religious studies professor whose scholarship isn’t dogmatic enough for some politician’s tastes? Can the theater department still perform *Lysistrata*, or is Aristophanes’ antiwar sentiment and frank discussions of carnal matters unsuitable for the commissars of the new political correctness? God help the political scientists, the sociologists and the artists if we decide to allow politicians this kind of power to meddle in academic affairs.

The board insists, of course, that its action was not related to the political grandstanding and budgetary chicanery on display in the state’s capital, but this is hard to believe for a number of reasons. Consider the timing. Had the board moved to fire Click immediately following the incident, they might have reasonably claimed they were doing so to protect students. According to the university’s human resources website, they do have the authority to fire an employee without notice if the employee’s transgression is “so serious as to justify immediate summary discharge.” They didn’t do this, though, I suspect because nobody really felt like this incident was that serious at that point. Click made a mistake that, frankly, probably hurt her cause more than it hurt any student journalist. I suspect the board felt they had every reason to believe that this would all blow over in time.

It seems to me, though, that the board seriously underestimated the lawmakers’ ire. Consider also the fact that the board made its decision two days after the lawmakers’ most recent attempt at budgetary blackmail. They can insist that their decision was unrelated to legislative threats, though that strikes me as highly doubtful. What’s more, if they weren’t firing her under pressure to do so, why was this done in secret, without giving Click and her supporters an opportunity to discuss the board’s concerns? As Hans-Joerg Tiede, associate secretary of the American Association of University Professors’ department of tenure, wrote, “Beyond its evident lack of conformity with the regulations of the University of Missouri, an action to dismiss a faculty member with
indefinite tenure or a probationary faculty member within the term of appointment absent demonstration of cause in an adjudicative hearing before an elected faculty body is an action fundamentally at odds with basic standards of academic due process.”

Perhaps most important, the board actually had the opportunity to let its own tenure and promotion system work but chose to contravene that process instead. Had the board been confident that Melissa Click was truly unfit to teach at the University of Missouri, it could have stepped back and let the faculty members and administrators in charge of Click’s case do their job and come to that conclusion on their own. Shared governance may be slow, but it is effective, despite what proponents of “disruption” and critics of the professoriate tend to believe. If Click needed to go, then that would be the appropriate way to get rid of her. That the board could not wait for others in the campus community to come to the same conclusion it had come to suggests that the board is not as confident in its assessment as its members have publicly said they are. When I started graduate school, I thought that being a university professor would be the coolest job in the world. And in some ways, it was and still is. I mean, you get paid to read and write and think. You get to work with idealistic young people excited to make a difference in the world. You get to make a difference in people’s lives. It’s awesome.

Unfortunately, though, there are forces in our culture that resent academics, and intellectual pursuits in general. We hear it in the voices of governors who insist that college is about the acquisition of job skills and that a pursuit of anything artistic or literary is a luxury that young people can’t afford and don’t really need. We read it in “trollish” online comments that say that people who have dedicated their lives to teaching and research live in “ivory towers,” untouched by the concerns of the “real world.” We witness it when a presidential candidate sneers about the discussions going on over brie and chardonnay in the faculty lounge.

And yes, we’ve seen it on display in the way Missouri’s Legislature treated Melissa Click. You don’t need to agree with her or support her to know that their behavior was deplorable -- bad for our higher education institutions, and bad for our culture as a whole. If politicians are allowed to dictate who works in our colleges and universities, and thus whose voices get heard when we discuss the world and its inhabitants, we cannot expect the results to be positive.

In fact, in Missouri, the Click incident may be just the beginning. Just two days ago, news media outlets in Missouri began reporting that State Senator Kurt Schaefer filed Senate Concurrent Resolution 66 to create the University of Missouri System Review Commission. According to a press release published in The Missouri Times, “The new commission’s task is to review the University of Missouri System’s collected rules and
The task force is to consist of eight political appointees nominated by the president pro tempore of the Senate and the speaker of the House. Not a word about what role, if any, the students, faculty and administration at the university -- the actual stakeholders most impacted by the commission -- will play. The release goes on to say that "MU’s adoption, or failure to adopt, the commission’s recommendations will be considered by the General Assembly in next year’s appropriation process.”

I may not be in the classroom anymore, but honestly, you don’t need a Ph.D. to know that these are perilous times for academe.

William Bradley in an essayist and former English professor who now lives in north central Ohio. His book Fractals was recently released by Lavender Ink.

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**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

MARCH 2, 2016 5:47 PM

**Lewis Diuguid: Bigotry at MIZZOU raises its ugly head — again**

Anti-Semitic flier found at residence hall on Columbia campus

MU could help lead the nation in how it handles continuing flare-up of hate

BY LEWIS DIUGUID

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**Call it adding insult unto injury. A flier saying “Hitler rules” was found in Gateway Hall at the University of Missouri-Columbia.**
MU police are investigating it as yet another anti-Semitic incident in campus. In October police reported that someone had used feces to draw a swastika on the restroom wall in Gateway Hall.

That residence hall seems to be at the center of anti-Semitic hate. But the university itself has made headlines nationwide for racial unrest.

Black students had reported instances of racism, which is not a new thing in that part of Missouri known as Little Dixie. Graduate student Jonathan Butler started a hunger strike last semester after university officials were unresponsive to the problems, seeking the resignation of top university officials.

The college football team joined the chorus, threatening not to play until Butler’s demands were met. The president of the university system and the MU chancellor resigned.

Interim appointments followed along with more headlines.

Melissa Click, an assistant communications professor at MU who called for “some muscle” to remove a student reporter from a protest on the campus, was under fire for her involvement, and then she was fired last week. Now the American Association of University Professors is outraged, urging that she be reinstated.

If that’s not enough, donations are down and so is enrollment. The Missouri legislature also is threatening to cut funding to the university because some lawmakers are upset over the handling of the blowups.

But MU is part of America, and the presidential contest — particularly involving the Republican candidates — clearly has shown that bigotry is a big American problem. People with their votes on Super Tuesday have cast ballots for bigotry.

MU can return calm to campus and students’ normal fretting over finals through thorough investigations and substantive action on the racial and anti-Semitic incidents. That could help lead the U.S. out of the dark forest of hate, which has confounded America for centuries.

It may be a long shot, but to borrow from an old saw, these problems are definitely opportunities in work clothes.
Missouri chancellor condemns pro-Hitler flyer found in dorm

COLUMBIA, Mo. (KTVI) -- Police on the University of Missouri's Columbia campus are investigating and the interim chancellor is condemning an anti-Semitic posting on a residence hall's bulletin board.

Police Maj. Brian Weimer said Tuesday the flyer scrawled in magic marker with the words "Hitler rules" was found early Monday on a Gateway Hall bulletin board.

The case comes at a time the university still grapples with racial unrest on the Columbia campus. That's where escalating November student protests over what activists said was administrators' indifference to racial issues led to the resignations of the university system's president and the Columbia chancellor.

The campus' interim chancellor, Hank Foley, and the school's diversity officer, Interim Vice Chancellor Chuck Henson, said in a joint statement Tuesday that "this type of vandalism attacks everyone."

Full Statement from Interim Chancellor Hank Foley and Interim Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Chuck Henson:

We are angry to hear about yet another anti-Semitic incident in one of our residence halls over the weekend. This type of vandalism attacks everyone. Our core values—including that of Respect—must become more than words on paper or a banner. They are the foundation of who we desire to be as a campus community and the way we all need to conduct ourselves.

This incident is currently being investigated by the MU Police Department and the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX. In the meantime, we'll continue to talk more about the importance of Respect in fostering a campus culture that enables all students to feel included and valued in our community.
Anti-Semitic Act Shakes University of Missouri Columbia Campus

The University of Missouri campus was struck again by an act of anti-Semitic injustice. A poster was found on a bulletin board in the first-floor lobby of the Gateway Residence Hall that read, “Hitler rules.” This is the second anti-Semitic incident to occur in Gateway Hall this school year. The first incident took place in the fall semester when a swastika was drawn on a wall with human feces.

Major Brian Weimer and the University of Missouri Police Department and the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX are conducting an investigation regarding the incident. Officers are encouraging people to provide any information possible concerning the matter.

“Well as you can tell the University has notified the community of it. So hopefully someone will come forward and perhaps say something that will help us with this case,” Weimer said.

As the investigation continues, students are concerned with the repetitive nature of the incident. Freshman resident Holden Staulbaumer was living in Gateway Hall during both incidents, and feels that this time should be more of a concern.

“This is the second time this has happened concerning Hitler or Jewish vandalism in our hall. The first time raised some concern but now that there’s two it’s definitely something that needs to be taken concern of,” said Staulbaumer. “The first incident they had a hall-wide meeting with every floor and every person. This second incident it was just an email and they asked if anyone had any information to contact them back or the MUPD.”

Staulbaumer expressed his concern with the current state of the dorm, but believes that all the parties involved with the case will eventually find the culprit. He said that the few people who saw the sign immediately reported it to the hall director. Staulbaumer also said that he does not believe the two incidents should represent the friends and people he has met during his time living in Gateway Wall.
Tennessee Senate Panel Votes to Eliminate Funds for Diversity Office at Flagship

Tennessee’s Senate Education Committee unanimously approved an amendment on Wednesday that would eliminate state funding for the diversity office of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, The Tennessean reports.

The amendment, proposed by Sen. Delores R. Gresham, a Republican, states that “only federal funds shall be expended to support the Office for Diversity and Inclusion” at the state’s flagship. But Ms. Gresham seemed to backpedal later, saying that she was unaware that the diversity office relied entirely on state support. She told the newspaper: “I would not completely defund the office. I think that would be extremely injurious.”

Anthony Haynes, the University of Tennessee system’s vice president for government relations and advocacy, said university officials “certainly understand the intent behind” Ms. Gresham’s amendment. “Hopefully,” he added, “we’ll get a chance to work this out before we pass the final budget bill, in April.”

The university’s diversity efforts have come under heightened legislative scrutiny after a couple of recent controversies. Last summer the university’s Pride Center — which supports students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer — was ridiculed by conservative media outlets for offering guidelines on using gender-neutral pronouns. Then in December the diversity office offered suggestions to “ensure your holiday party is not a Christmas party in disguise,” further riling many lawmakers.

The Tennessee move bore similarities to a budget proposal last month in Missouri’s legislature. A lawmaker sought to cut funding for the University of Missouri at Columbia by the exact sum of the salaries of Melissa A. Click, a professor involved in an altercation with a student last fall during a campus
protest, and her department chairman and her college’s dean. Ms. Click was subsequently fired.

MISSOURIAN

Robert Greene on his Sundance award-winning film

BLAKE NELSON, 1 hr ago

Watch the story: https://vimeo.com/157490274

COLUMBIA — MU professor Robert Greene's film "Kate Plays Christine" won the U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award for Writing at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival.

He's likely the first MU journalism professor to showcase a film at that festival, according to previous Missourian reporting. "Kate Plays Christine" has its Columbia premiere Thursday at the Missouri Theater as part of the 2016 True/False Film Fest.

Greene began teaching at MU in August, when he became the filmmaker-in-chief for the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism.

He has edited and directed several films and was one of four documentary filmmakers selected by the Sundance Institute as an Art of Nonfiction fellow.

On Friday, Greene sat down with the Missourian to discuss his film, and what the spread of nonfiction images and video means for documentary filmmakers.
Student who filmed Melissa Click video launches group advocating first amendment

Columbia, Mo. — Mark Schierbecker, the student who filmed the notorious Melissa Click incident in November, launched a student group at the University of Missouri.

The group, MU First Amendment Defenders, aims to promote free speech on the MU campus.

Schierbecker said the group advocates for students trapped in a legal battle with the university on the first amendment.

"They've said things on social media that have come back towards them because it was unpopular and the university interpreted it as a hate speech," said Schierbecker. "Of course there is no hate speech exception to the constitution, so we need to clarify that for students who don't know."

Although Schierbecker is known for recording journalists clashing with protesters, he said there were many incidents off-camera involving the free speech debate.

He said a lot of students had their own free speech curtailed by the university during that time. Those incidents prompted the formation of the group.

"I just kept seeing it over and over again, and students weren't getting their due process. The administration wasn't willing to look at the law and what was legal for them to do. As a result of that, we had a lot of students become entangled in this legal, first amendment debate, and they didn't have any advocates for them," said Schierbecker.

Schierbecker said the group currently has about a dozen active members.

The group said in addition to first amendment awareness, the group advocates for shield laws protecting journalists and their sources as well as New Voices legislation.