In December, The Chronicle of Higher Education published “A Dying Town,” a story about the challenges facing the Missouri Bootheel. It details the struggles too many Missourians face in staying healthy and prosperous, including the unflinching stories of several residents who, without a college degree, had no safety net when jobs left their towns, the economy stuttered or medical bills piled up. There is no question that the story lights a fire under anyone working in the fields of public health or education. As we continue to strive toward making higher education as beneficial and accessible as possible, it is vital that we make sure no community falls between the cracks.

Higher education has numerous real, proven benefits, but unfortunately, we often hear only about the obvious ones. It’s true — college graduates earn about 65 percent more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school education. This is an important statistic, and it frames the benefits of higher education in a handy, easily digestible number. But, as the story showed, money doesn’t tell the whole story. Those with a college education also are less likely to suffer from debilitating conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. These characteristics have economic components, but studies have clearly shown that a college education plays a role.

Yet public higher education does not operate solely on the individual level. As a land-grant institution, the University of Missouri System has an obligation to carry the benefits of university research beyond the campus. We do this by supporting our student and faculty researchers, who are constantly making strides toward bettering lives in Missouri communities and in society as a whole. Research, after all, is consequential precisely because it helps people. Think of a recent study by MU researchers that explored the
psychological impact of the 2011 Joplin tornado, finding that even amid a disaster of tragic proportions, there were opportunities for personal growth. Think of the team of MU scientists, cardiologists and engineers fighting heart disease by working to develop revolutionary new cardiovascular stents, a project that has received millions of dollars in federal grants. The Family Nutrition Education Program through the MU Extension office provides thousands of families with guidance on healthy and affordable food options.

At Missouri University of Science and Technology, we are empowering teachers to educate the next generation of researchers through Project Lead The Way, a precollege program that inspires students to become involved in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. The past five years, more than 3,000 elementary and secondary education teachers attended Project Lead The Way classes at Missouri S&T, giving them the tools they need to provide their students with quality science and engineering education.

We are committed to improving the lives of Missourians, and this means cost must not be a barrier to quality higher education. Recently, we signed the Missouri Land Grant Compact, which allows all Pell Grant recipients who are residents of Missouri to attend MU tuition-free, provided they meet admissions requirements (honors students will have room and board covered as well). We also have worked to lower the cost of educational materials by adopting open source and lower-cost textbooks. For students from low-income families across Missouri, these efforts mean the prospect of a college education is less burdened by financial concerns. Education, not bills, should be the focus of any student’s time at a university.

MU is helping to broaden access to medical care across the state. The Springfield Clinical Campus and Missouri Telehealth Network from MU’s School of Medicine are integral parts of that task. One telehealth initiative, Show-Me ECHO, helps rural physicians treat chronic pain and conditions like Hepatitis C. ECHO Autism trains care providers to diagnose and treat autism.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City houses the UMKC School of Dentistry, which, as the only public dental school in Missouri, includes courses that send students to provide dental care in neglected areas throughout the state. In addition, the University of Missouri-St. Louis,
together with MU, recently received a joint $1.8 million federal grant to train social workers to help underserved populations with educational and health access programs.

While all these efforts are geared toward different aspects of the community, they operate in service of a single guiding principle: building a stronger, more connected Missouri in which the benefits of the UM System can be felt by anyone of any background or means. Our mission is service, an ethic that guides us in all the work we do.

To see what that ethic looks like, look no further than Freda Kershaw, who was profiled in The Chronicle’s story. Freda works in Pemiscot County for MU’s ParentLink program, which provides research-based information and resources to parents and youths across Missouri, as well as working to help families bridge gaps in services by collaborating with communities. ParentLink has expanded its services in the Bootheel, and with the help of community liaisons like Freda, the program is inspiring communities to work together to improve the health and wellness of their residents. We’re so proud of her and many other UM System faculty, students and staff who are making a difference in their communities throughout our state.

For some, wellness means planting a garden where there was an empty lot. And just as that garden serves as a symbol of the will to change lives for the better, our hope is that the University of Missouri System, too, is more than a system of brick-and-mortar institutions. It is an ethic, and we are striving to ensure that ethic continues to spread across Missouri in all its forms.
Arming university faculty an option for battling active shooters

BY TYLER WORNELL

JEFFERSON CITY — Improving college campus safety in an age of increasingly frequent mass shootings is a continual challenge. Allowing trained faculty members to carry concealed weapons on campuses could be a potential solution, some lawmakers argued Wednesday.

Rep. Dean Dohrman, R-La Monte, introduced a bill Wednesday that would allow universities to designate full-time faculty as “campus protection officers,” who can carry concealed weapons. The faculty member would be required to have a concealed carry permit and would undergo training conducted by the Department of Public Safety, and the list of staff members would be given to the department.

Similar legislation was passed in 2014 that allows teachers in elementary schools and high schools to become certified as school protection officers. Columbia Public Schools spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said the district has three such people, in addition to school resource officers who are employed by local law enforcement.

Dohrman, during a hearing in the House Higher Education Committee, said the bill would allow more coordination between law enforcement and campus faculty in the event of an active shooter.

“The point is to have some sort of organized response,” Dohrman said. “They have to go through some more public safety training, their name will be submitted to law enforcement and there will be a coordinated effort when law enforcement gets there.”

Rep. Greg Razer, D-Kansas City, was unreceptive to the idea because he said civilians lack the professional training that law enforcement undergoes.
“I like firearms on college campuses in the hands of trained police officers,” Razer said. “If we have that sort of fear, let’s figure out a way to get more professionally trained officers on campus instead of putting them in the hands of the psychology professor or the religious studies professor.”

Adding more people into the picture with weapons would confuse police officers and make it unclear who the active shooter really was, he said. Dohrman said that’s why pre-coordination and a list of protection officers at each institution would be important.

Police “will be informed that there is within that building someone designated,” Dohrman said, “and it’s of course up to the institution, but they could have a type of radio or whatever with them that they could (use to) coordinate with.”

The bill received support from two nonprofit organizations that advocate for higher education and support their members’ missions and goals. Brian Millner, president and CEO of Missouri Community Colleges Association, and Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education, both spoke in favor of the bill Wednesday.

“I think our institutions believe this is a really reasonable approach, one that allows us to invoke some sort of local control and decide what’s best on a college-by-college level,” Millner said. “This gives the board of the college at least some authority to make a decision about what is best for their campus.”

**The Council on Public Higher Education is composed of presidents and chancellors from 13 Missouri public institutions, including the University of Missouri System and each of its four campuses.**

“We think that it provides a mechanism to expand safety options on campus,” Wagner said. “I think that in some respects it could allow us to expand our public safety staff at little or minimal cost.”
Wednesday’s hearing also brought up the larger issue of more frequent mass shootings in America. The New York Times on Jan. 24 reported that there already have been 11 shootings on school properties in 2018.

Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, said there are select members of her church who have undergone concealed carry training and are prepared to respond in the event of an active shooter.

Razer questioned how a culture of fear has resulted in more public institutions feeling there is a need to have someone with a weapon on hand. “It hurts my gut to think about that there is a church in southeast Missouri that says, ‘Hey, we have three services on the weekend, we’ve got to make sure that somebody is packing heat to take care of us,’” Razer said.

Rep. Curtis Trent, R-Springfield, said provisions like this aren’t about fear, but rather responsibility.

“We know that bad things can happen. We hope that they won’t, but we want to have a response in place so that action can be taken as quickly as possible, and that’s going to be the people who are on the scene,” Trent said. “They are going to be the ones who are most there and most responsible for the outcome until law enforcement can arrive.”
Bill aims to help refinance higher education student loans

By TYLER EMERY


JEFFERSON CITY - Students could soon have another option for taking out loans for higher education.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia introduced HB 1273, which gives the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) the ability to issue loans to students to refinance their private or federal loans.

Kendrick said the bill establishes a program that allows students to refinance at lower interest rates and spread out the life of the loans, to up to 25 years, rather than the current 10. He said the program intends to ensure graduates don't have to repay loans "when their earning potential is the least and their job security is fairly low" right out of school.

"I don't necessarily think were at a debt crisis level yet. However, I do think it's more of a repayment crisis we're currently seeing," Kendrick said.

As of now, there isn't a way to receive student loans from the state. MOHELA currently only services existing federal student loans and deals with repayment plans. The proposed program would be an option for MOHELA to adopt.

"MOHELA would be buying the loans from the federal government for particular individuals they're going to refinance. It would take students out of a federal loan and put them into a MOHELA loan that would refinance it at a lower rate," Kendrick said.
While this program would shift students out of federal loans and into state loans, Kendrick said the bill contains protections against risky student borrowers.

"I wanted to make sure that the state wasn't going to refinance individuals that were risky of default or delinquency. That doesn't necessarily do any good for us," Kendrick said. "There's no reason for us to shift a risky borrower from the federal government to the state government."

As part of the program, anyone looking to refinance their loans must have graduated from an accredited institution with an associate's degree or higher.

Brandon Henderson is a student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and spoke in support of the bill as a representative for the Associated Students of the University of Missouri.

Henderson said the proposed bill acts as a "life preserver" for students to help ease the burden of student debt.

"Many students my age, including myself, crave the same opportunities that many generations before us received. And I know sometimes hard work is not enough," Henderson said. "This bill is an investment in students and students are an investment in the state of Missouri."

Kendrick said this program his bill proposes is "not a fix-all" for student loan debt, but that it is a step in the right direction.

"It will help a significant amount of people. There's only a limited amount of things we can do. This is one of them," Kendrick said.
Killer 16ft crocodile's bones and jaw found by mum on quiet street in MANCHESTER

A crocodile expert has speculated the "mystery" croc may have been roaming the streets of Wythenshawe before its death.

Generated from a News Bureau direct pitch

By: Sophie Norris

Bones belonging to a 16ft-long killer crocodile have been uncovered on a quiet street in Manchester.

Mum-of-one Ashleigh Leonard, 23, came across the 'scattering of bones' including a jawbone with razor sharp teeth after returning from a shopping trip with her one-year-old daughter Harper Livesey.

The bizarre discovery has fuelled speculation from experts the beast may have roamed the streets before its death.

Dr Casey Holliday, a crocodile expert from The University of Missouri, US, believes the bones are those of a Nile Crocodile, the world's second largest reptile. In the wild, the beasts can be found in Africa weighing up to 2,000 lb.

He claims he is aware of crocs being kept as pets in the UK, overwhelming their owners and then being let loose and believes at some point, a crocodile may have been roaming the streets of Wythenshawe.

Ashleigh said: "It's a complete mystery as to how the bones got there. I just live on a normal suburban street in Wythenshawe."
"I'd come back from shopping with my friend and Harper. When opening the car door to get my daughter out of her baby seat, I noticed what seemed to be a gathering of bones.

"I couldn't work out what creature they belonged to and neither could anyone else. It looked like a lot of the bones were actually missing.

"None of my neighbours have any exotic pets that I'm aware of. I know for certain my facing neighbours, next door and upstairs don't have any animals at all.

"When I went back out to have another look, the crocodile bones weren't there anymore. We have a road sweeper every Wednesday on my road so I'm guessing they've been swept away."

Unsure of what animal the remains belonged to, Ashleigh appealed to a bone and fossil identification group where a number of members identified them as those of a crocodile.

Ashleigh said: "They were literally on the road, just next to the pavement. Not immediately recognizing them did make me extremely curious as to what it was, that's why I looked for some advice.

"Looking closely, I knew it wasn't an animal you'd see everyday. They were placed at the side of my street, right outside my house.

"I did notice not all the bones where there, but the most significant ones were. I hoped that would help me eventually find someone to identify which animal it belonged to.

"When Casey said it looked like crocodile remains, I was quite excited. It's not exactly something you see every day – or want to."

Dr Holliday runs a research lab at his university which focuses largely on archosaurs – birds, dinosaurs and crocodilians.

He claims the bones photographed by Ashleigh show the jaw of a crocodile as they have a 'characteristic notch in the lower jaw'.

Dr Holliday, 42, said: "It's such a fun mystery. It's very weird.

"I imagine a crocodile wouldn't fare so well on the streets of Manchester.

"This may seem strange but crocodiles are common pets in the US and UK. I imagine someone's crocodile either escaped or outgrew its loving home and the owners 'disposed' of it.

"A quick Google reveals a number of stories of people and their pet crocs, so having a pet croc is not uncommon in the UK, or in the US."
"The skull would be in better shape if someone just dumped a dead croc, but if people just abandoned it or it escaped, it could have been crossing a road in Manchester.

"The thing to remember is crocodiles are super cute as babies, but just like human babies they grow up to be teenagers and then they're not as fun to live with."

By looking at the images taken by Ashleigh, Dr Holliday was able to identify the lower and upper jaw, joints and even nostrils of the crocodile.

Dr Holliday said: "People get crocodiles as pets and they outgrow them and often 'release' them when they get too big.

"As to the kind of crocodile, it's probably a Nile crocodile, the most commonly acquired pet species. The length and shape of the jaw also suggests this.

"Given the disposition from the photo, it looks like the animal was hit by a car several times.

"I have a PhD in Anatomy and we put in quite a bit of effort studying alligators and other crocodilians so I have a knack for identifying their remains.

"It's got all the parts that make it some sort of crocodilian skull. There is a characteristic notch in the lower jaws of crocodiles that alligators don't have. You can see that very easily in the photo.

"Those of us who work on crocodiles can see this part very easily. Only the left half of the skull seems to be there.

"I also enjoy participating in groups for bone and fossil identification. This one was really cool.

"Of course, this is just speculation. From the photo – I’ve not seen the bones in real life - it looks like the animal was pretty smashed up after death. Possibly hit by a car several times."
Coroner Refuses to Release Newly Public Suicide Inquest Transcript

By CLAIRE MITZEL & COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN • 3 MINUTES AGO

Documents related to the inquest into the death of 17-year-old Kenneth Suttner should be available to the public, a Howard County judge ruled Wednesday.

The ruling came after Sandy Davidson, the Missourian’s attorney and an MU communications law professor, filed a motion in January seeking to modify or eliminate a protective order on the records.

The protective order prevented the inquest transcript and exhibits from being shared with the public.

Circuit Court Judge Scott Hayes did not take up the motion in the five-minute hearing Wednesday; instead he immediately decided to lift the protective order.

“The information is public the way it is supposed to be,” Hayes said.

But Howard County Coroner Frank Flaspohler would not give the documents to the Missourian following the hearing, saying he had to speak to his attorney first.

Flaspohler’s attorney, Richard Hicks, said he would recommend Flaspohler deny the Missourian’s request for the documents.
Hicks said that lifting the protective order did not necessarily make the documents public to everyone and that the ruling applied to special prosecutor April Wilson, who repeatedly has tried to keep the documents private, not Flaspohler.

The Missourian filed a request for the documents with Flaspohler on Nov. 27, 2017. The request was denied.

Flaspohler has maintained his office is a law enforcement agency and exempt from Missouri’s Sunshine Law.

“I’m concerned that if we were to fulfill requests for this transcript, then our stance would be inconsistent,” Hicks said.

Flaspohler said he understood Hayes’ ruling to mean that the protective order was lifted on the Glasgow School District, so they could give the transcript and exhibits to anyone who requested them, but it didn’t mean he had to release them.

Court records show the protective order prohibited the school district specifically from releasing the documents to the public.

The school district was the first organization to attempt to obtain the documents through the court after Flaspohler, who conducted the inquest, refused to hand over the inquest documents to the district.

Hayes ruled in October that the school district had been wrongfully denied records.

Wilson tried to keep the records closed, and Hayes ruled again in December to allow the district to receive copies of the documents. But he placed a protective order on the documents that barred anyone else from obtaining them.

Suttner killed himself in December 2016, and Flaspohler called an inquest into the cause and manner of his death because bullying was suspected.
The inquest jury found in January 2017 that the school district had been negligent in preventing bullying.

Tom Mickes, attorney for the school district, said previously the district couldn’t properly defend itself without knowing the contents of the inquest documents.

The inquest jury also recommended charges against Suttner’s former Dairy Queen manager, Harley Branham, who was accused of harassing Suttner to the point of tears. She was initially charged with involuntary manslaughter, but that charge was later dropped.

She now faces a felony stalking charge and four misdemeanor charges, two for assault and two for harassment, according to court records. Branham’s arraignment was scheduled for March 7.

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Security Costs Loom Larger in Campus Free-Speech Fights. A Lawsuit Shows Why.**

**NO MU MENTION**

By KATHERINE MANGAN

The University of Washington’s College Republicans sued the university late Tuesday over its decision to charge the group $17,000 in security fees for a planned rally this weekend featuring a controversial conservative speaker.

The group called the fees “draconian and unreasonable” and argued that requiring sponsors to cover such costs is an illegal restriction on protected speech.

The university says that the fees are based on a number of objective factors, including threats of violence, and that even $17,000 probably won’t cover the cost of securing the event.

The speaker at the center of the dispute is Joey Gibson, founder of Patriot Prayer, a right-wing group based in Vancouver, Wash., whose rallies have sometimes sparked confrontations between right- and left-wing demonstrators.

The standoff comes as colleges nationwide grapple with the soaring cost of securing events where provocative speakers and angry protesters can be expected to clash.
The question of who should pay for added police protection and other security measures has vexed colleges as they try to balance free speech and campus safety.

The latest controversy began when Washington’s chapter of College Republicans applied to use the campus’s central plaza, known as Red Square, this Saturday afternoon for what it described as a free-speech rally. The event was approved, with one condition — the student group would have to pay a $17,000 security fee.

The group’s lawyer, William J. Becker Jr., sent a letter to the university’s president, Ana Mari Cauce, last week threatening to sue unless the fee was canceled.

He pointed out that a coalition of groups opposed to the event is planning a counterdemonstration. According to the group’s social-media posts, he said, it would probably try to disrupt the event.

On its website, the coalition urges people to show up for a peaceful protest against a group it says is trying “to recruit more people to their hateful organization and spread their ideas of white supremacy.”

Requiring the College Republicans to pay a fee based on the potential reaction of those opposed to the viewpoints expressed amounts to “an unconstitutional heckler’s veto,” Becker wrote. The university is essentially charging fees based on the content of the event, which is unconstitutional, he said.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of the College Republicans and its president, Chevy Swanson, contends that the fee rewards those “so intolerant of and hostile to hearing views they find objectionable they must threaten and/or commit violence to protect themselves from such views.”

‘Objective Criteria’

In a statement on Monday, the university’s police chief, John Vinson, said that security estimates “are solely based on objective criteria, including an analysis of violence and threats to public safety by the invited speaker, attendees at previous events or the sponsoring group — both in and out of the state of Washington — as well as the date, time, and location of the proposed event.” They are not based, he said, on a speaker or group’s ideology or political positions.

“The UW has gone to great lengths to support this student group’s right to invite speakers, including an event in January 2017 where UWPD’s own security costs exceeded $20,000 and the student group paid less than half of that amount,” Vinson wrote.

The university, he said, “is committed to providing a safe environment that allows speakers, their hosts, and others to be heard, but the university cannot continue to bear the significant costs associated with such events.”
The event he was referring to last January was an appearance, in downtown Seattle, by the right-wing provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos. It turned violent when, on a march to the University of Washington, a protester was shot.

Afterward, the university approved a policy that allows it to pass along some of the costs of security to a campus event’s sponsoring group if an analysis indicates a strong likelihood of violence, property damage, or significant disruption.

Given what has happened at previous Patriot Prayer rallies, that’s a reasonable expectation, the university contends.

In August the Seattle police used tear gas to disperse a crowd protesting a Patriot Prayer rally. Three people were arrested, and the police confiscated several weapons, including boards and metal bars, according to local news reports.

Emotions were particularly raw at that event, which came one day after a white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., turned deadly.

The College Republicans say it’s unfair to penalize them, through high security fees, for threats of violence from those who oppose the group’s views.

The lawsuit describes Patriot Prayer as “an informal group of evangelical Christians formed and led by Gibson to convey a message of peace.” Even if skinheads or Nazi sympathizers occasionally show up at its rallies, its supporters contend, it is not a white-supremacist group.

The Southern Poverty Law Center counters that the group, far from being peaceful, tries to provoke left-wing violence with its rallies in largely liberal cities.

Peter F. Lake, director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University, says he expects more such disputes over security costs to wind up in court.

Precedents established by the U.S. Supreme Court allow colleges to limit the time, place, and manner of speech, but not the content, he points out. “The court has shown a reluctance to penalize a speaker because of the reaction of the listeners,” he says. “That’s the heckler’s veto.”

Colleges are, however, permitted to charge “reasonable fees under certain circumstances,” as long as the restrictions aren’t based on the content of the speech, he says.

Ari Cohn, director of the individual-rights-defense program at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, says the university needs to spell out how it estimates security costs. Otherwise, he says, it looks as if it’s simply trying to censor controversial speech.

“A university should be in the business of fostering as much expression as possible,” Cohn says. “It can’t price certain speech out of the market because it’s controversial.”