Bill that would allow MU to charge higher tuition stalls in the Missouri Senate

BY DYLAN JACKSON

A filibuster by Sen. Rob Schaaf, R-St. Joseph, would put on hold a bill that would allow MU and other universities to raise tuition past the rate of inflation.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, would do away with the current requirement that universities ask for permission from the state to charge more tuition and would allow universities to raise it 5 to 10 percent higher than inflation.

Rowden said the bill has come out of necessity as higher education funding takes hit after hit.

“Last year, higher education received effectively a 10 percent cut followed by this year’s proposed 10 percent cut, which frankly is devastating,” Rowden said.

But Schaaf, who frequently looks to kill legislation by taking advantage of the Senate’s unlimited time for debate, came out swinging against Rowden’s legislation.

“We have to protect the students of Missouri from unreasonable increases,” Schaaf said. “If I had a student at the University of Missouri and they suddenly wanted to jack up tuition by more than 10 percent, I would be a little upset about that.”

Schaaf said it was the university’s wasteful spending that is putting MU in a bind, not low tuition or funding cuts.

He then spent nearly an hour filibustering — during which he listed the highest MU salaries — until Rowden conceded.
Before Rowden withdrew the bill, Sen. Dan Brown, R-Rolla, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, said that those salaries are not out of line compared to similar schools and that not allowing universities to charge higher tuition in light of cuts is unfair.

“If we’re going to cut (higher education), we’re going to have to let them charge what the market will bear,” said Brown. “If they get crazy, kids are going to go to the University of Arkansas or University of Iowa instead.

The Washington Post

Fewer women want to be scientists in wealthy, equal countries

Generated from News Bureau press release: Countries with greater gender equality have lower percentage of female STEM graduates

By: Amanda Erickson

Getting more women into science and math jobs is a challenge across the world. Worldwide, 74 percent of STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — employees are male. The imbalance is biggest in fields such as computer science and physics, and smallest in life sciences and medicine.

But as countries become wealthier and more focused on gender equality, something interesting happens: the number of women earning degrees in science, technology, engineering and math drops, according to a new study.

Researchers at the University of Missouri looked at data on 475,000 people across 67 countries, examining how well subjects did in school and where they ended up working.

They found that boys' and girls' achievements in STEM subjects were “broadly similar.” But they also found that science was more likely to be boys' best subject.

“Girls, even when their abilities in science equaled or excelled that of boys, often were likely to be better overall in reading comprehension, which relates to higher ability in non-STEM subjects. As a result, these girls tended to seek out other professions unrelated to STEM fields,” David Geary, professor of psychological sciences in the University of Missouri’s College of Arts and Science, told the World Economic Forum.

Another interesting thing about the data: wealthier countries, with more gender equality, tend to do a worse job getting women into STEM fields. (The report's authors call this a “gender-
equality paradox.”) European countries, particularly northern Europe, had a relatively low percent of women going into the sciences. In the Middle East and Turkey, the rates were much higher.

Researchers theorize this is because women in Europe and the United States have more freedom and options.

“In countries with greater gender equality, women are actively encouraged to participate in STEM; yet, they lose more girls because of personal academic strengths,” Geary said. “In more liberal and wealthy countries, personal preferences are more strongly expressed. One consequence is that sex differences in academic strengths and interests become larger and have a stronger influence college and career choices than in more conservative and less wealthy countries.”

Another possibility? Jobs are more stable in more wealthy countries, so salary differences between fields matter less.

“STEM careers are generally secure and well-paid but the risks of not following such a path can vary,” Gijsbert Stoet, professor in psychology at Leeds Beckett University in England, told the World Economic Forum. “In more affluent countries, where any choice of career feels relatively safe, women may feel able to make choices based on noneconomic factors. Conversely, in countries with fewer economic opportunities, or where employment might be precarious, a well-paid and relatively secure STEM career can be more attractive to women.”

But their research suggests there are other pipeline problems, too. Women make up 20 percent of engineering school graduates, but only 11 percent of engineers. Twelve out of every 100 women graduate with a bachelor's degree in a STEM major, but just three accept work in a STEM field after graduation.

The ‘gender-equality paradox’ in STEM fields

Generated from News Bureau press release: Countries with greater gender equality have lower percentage of female STEM graduates

According to researchers from the University of Missouri and Leeds Beckett University in the United Kingdom they found that as societies become wealthier and more gender equal women are less likely to obtain degrees in STEM, which stands for science technology engineering and
math and as genders become more equal the less likely a woman is to study science technology engineering and math.


**MISSOURIAN**

**Up to 10 percent of UM core budget hinges on fulfilling state standards**

BY ELENA K. CRUZ

Not meeting the requirements of a new statewide funding model next year could result in a 10 percent loss to the University of Missouri System’s core budget.

Under the Missouri Department of Higher Education’s revised performance-contingent funding model, all public Missouri colleges and universities must meet six standards. The department and Gov. Eric Greitens recommended in January that lawmakers apply the full 10-percent penalty — meaning that for each standard unmet, institutions would lose 1.7 percent of their core budget. However, lawmakers have some flexibility in this and are deciding what the cut should be.

The core would be affected “because we don’t think there will be any additional money available for higher education to get an increase this year,” department spokeswoman Liz Coleman said.

**Model’s impact on UM System**

Previously, there were 11 goals, and universities and colleges had some flexibility in selecting which ones they wanted to meet. The sets of 11 varied depending on whether the school was two-year, four-year or technical.

Under the new model, the standards the UM System and other four-year institutions must meet are:
Students’ average tuition and fees cannot exceed the median household income in Missouri. In 2016, the median household income was about $55,000, according to the most recent data available from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

The percentage of the system’s total budget that goes to core spending must be less in the current three years than in the previous three years. If that’s not the case, the ratio of core spending to total spending must be in the 66th percentile of the state. Core expenditures are money budgeted for instruction, research and public service. Total expenditures also include money for academic, institutional and student support services.

The percentage of the average Missourian’s household income that goes toward her or his tuition and fees should decrease over the three-year comparison periods.

There needs to be an increase in students who pass their general education, field or professional licensing exams, or students’ scores need to match their institution’s selectivity category, ranging from 50 percent for open admissions to 90 percent for professional licensure.

The number of students who graduate must increase within the three-year time frame, or the graduation rate needs to achieve a ratio of 25 using the board’s weighted system of measurement.

At least 75 percent of graduating students must have a full-time job or the equivalent, such as enrollment in the military or graduate school, within one year after graduation.

To retain funding, four-year schools must show improvement from previous years in each of the six categories. The comparisons occur over rolling, three-year averages, unless otherwise noted. Schools can also receive their funds by hitting or surpassing specific marks that place them in the top percentile among Missouri schools.

UM System spokesman Christian Basi said it’s likely the system will meet all the goals outlined in the new model.

“Our measures have already been computed and submitted to the Department of Higher Ed for review, so we are highly confident that we’ve met our performance goals for the year,” Basi said.

**Change in funding**

This is the first year the Higher Education Department and governor’s office recommended taking away money from the core budget if the performance measures are not met, Coleman
said. In the past, colleges received additional state funding if they met the performance standards.

The department presented information about the model to the House Budget Committee on Feb. 12, and lawmakers are determining the percentage of the core budget affected. For example, they can make 5 or 8 percent of the core budget dependent on performance standards, instead of the recommended 10 percent. The legislature can also choose to ignore the budget recommendations completely.

The performance model, however, will continue to affect the 2019 fiscal year even if lawmakers choose to ignore the core budget recommendations, Coleman said.

**Change in model**

Although penalties for not meeting measures could be higher under the new model, performance funding is not new to the state of Missouri. The formatting, however, has become more uniform this year.

Last year’s model allowed individual systems to choose six of the 11 standards they wanted to focus on, but the department never set this model into motion, Coleman said. Before that, schools could choose five of the 11 options to follow, as long as they picked one from each designated category.

In 2017, the UM System chose to focus on freshman-to-sophomore retention rates, six-year graduation rates, improvements on professional or occupational licensure tests, percentage of total expenditure spent on the core budget, measurement of science and engineering expenditures and post-graduation employment rate.

“It’s important we review the performance goals and make changes to them every few years because the needs of the state, the needs of our students change, and we need to make sure we are responding to them and being held accountable,” Basi said.
Basi also said it’s difficult to compare the old and new models’ successes because the new format was so recently implemented.

Brad Hodson, executive vice president at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, was on the Coordinating Board of Education’s task force that helped develop the new model. He, along with representatives from the UM System and other Missouri higher education institutions, based the new model on the previous one. In 2012, legislative action called for performance-based comparisons; the first model was applied in 2014.

“I think the choices were designed to try to meet everyone’s needs initially,” Hodson said. “But as we’ve lived with performance funding for five years now, we’ve found that we can be a little bit more homogeneous and a little more standardized across the sector than what we probably believed we could five years ago.”

The change in model comes after the board developed new areas to allocate its attention.

“It’s directly addressing some of the concerns that legislators and the executive branch had with the former model,” Hodson said. “They would like to see a more direct attention paid to efficiency and affordability, and I think we accomplish that in this new model.”
Tying target genes to autism could lead to better treatment

Posted by Jeff Sossamon-U. Missouri February 20th, 2018

Generated from News Bureau press release: Genetic targets for autism spectrum disorder identified by MU team

A new computational method has connected several target genes to autism, according to new research.

The findings, along with other recent discoveries, could lead to screening tools for young children—and help doctors choose the best intervention when making a diagnosis.

Autism is a spectrum of closely related symptoms involving behavioral, social, and cognitive deficits. Early detection is key to producing the best outcomes; however, searching for genetic causes is complicated because of the various symptoms found within the spectrum.

“In this study we started with more than 2,591 families who had only one child with autism and neither the parents nor the siblings had been diagnosed with autism,” says Chi-Ren Shyu, professor of electrical engineering and computer science at the University of Missouri and director of the Informatics Institute.

“This created a genetically diverse group composed of an estimated 10 million genetic variants. We narrowed it down to the 30,000 most promising variants, then used preset algorithms and the big data capabilities of our high-performance computing equipment at MU to ‘mine’ those genetic variables.”

The genetic samples were obtained from the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative. Researchers collected samples from children with diagnosed cases and their unaffected parents and siblings, leading to more than 11,500 individuals.

Using advanced computational techniques, Shyu and colleagues were able to identify 286 genes they then collected into 12 subgroups that exhibited commonly seen characteristics of children
on the spectrum. Of these genes, 193 potentially new genes not found in previous autism studies were discovered.

“Autism is heterogeneous, meaning that the genetic causes are varied and complex,” says Judith Miles, professor of child health-genetics in the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. “This complexity makes it tough for geneticists to get at the root of what triggers the development of autism in more conventional ways.

“The methods developed by Dr. Shyu and the results our team identified are giving geneticists a wealth of targets we’d not considered before—by narrowing down the genetic markers, we may be able to develop clinical programs and methods that can help diagnose and treat the disease. These results are a quantum leap forward in the study of the genetic causes of autism.”

The informatics framework is now ready for a much larger scale of research, such as genetic samples to be collected through the Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge (SPARK), the nation’s largest autism study.

SPARK is partnering with scientists who hope to collect information and DNA for genetic analysis from 50,000 individuals with autism—and their families—to advance understanding of causes and hasten the discovery of supports and treatments.

Anyone interested in learning more about SPARK or in participating in the study can visit: www.SPARKforAutism.org/MUTC, or contact Amanda Shocklee at (573) 884-6092 or shockleea@missouri.edu.

Researchers report their findings in the *Journal of Biomedical Informatics*. The National Institutes of Health; the Shumaker Endowment for Biomedical Informatics; the National Science Foundation; and the Simons Foundation supported the work.
MU research team targets genetic causes of autism

By KYREON LEE


Generated from News Bureau Press Release: Genetic targets for autism spectrum disorder identified by MU team

COLUMBIA - A University of Missouri team of researchers created a massive new area of research.

A multi-disciplinary team of researchers at MU created a new computational method that has connected several target genes to autism.

Director of Informatics Institute Chi-Ren Shyu said the goal of the research was to identify genes and gene interactions that contribute to the development of specific subtypes of autism.

"We discovered 286 distinct genes. Among them 193 are really new. So, how we use that information to dig deeper to provide better understanding and hopefully we will be closer to finding the root of the cause," Shyu said.

MU Thompson Center Executive Director Dr. Stephen M. Kanne said the research will help with how specialists diagnose children.

"We think genetics is one of the keys to both understanding and treating autism. We know that it's a genetic disorder, we just don't know all the different types of autism-- the genes that it comes from," he said.
The team of researchers have worked tirelessly for two years to gather data by the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative from 2,591 simplex families, meaning each family had only one child diagnosed with autism.

"This data is not about whether yes or no to a child having autism, but measuring high and low severity," Shyu said.

The team examined the data based on 12 subgroups: groups with high and low severity in terms of awareness, cognition, communication, mannerisms and motivation and children with some physical dysmorphology, suggesting an insult to normal embryologic development versus those with no physical dysmorphology.

Shyu said the greatest number of relevant genes were discovered in the dysmorphic subgroup, both in terms of novel genes and total genes.

"By knowing the genes it can lead to a couple of things. It can lead to the course of understanding that particular type of autism and eventually the hope is to design individual treatments specific to that type of autism," Kanne said.

It is estimated that 1 in 68 children are diagnosed with autism in the United States.

MU Study: Weather Still Predictable with Climate Change

Generated from News Bureau Press Release: Weather should remain predictable despite climate change

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- New research from the University of Missouri suggests that although carbon dioxide levels continue to rise in the atmosphere, and drive the climate toward warmer temperatures -- the weather as a whole will remain predictable.

"We were doing research on the behavior of the jet stream on the time period of about 10 to 12 days -- and we found that there's no change in the behavior in this 10 to 12 day period from the previous 30 years and over the next 30 years, the projection for the next 30 years."
Anthony Lupo, a professor of Atmospheric Sciences at Mizzou, says these results don't address the effects of climate change -- but rather the range of predictability from the jet stream.

Lupo also said "climate change will continue to create a lot of ripple effects, but this experiment provides evidence that the range of forecasting will remain the same."

KOZL-TV is a MyNetwork affiliated television station in Springfield, Mo.

MU research suggests weather will remain predictable even in warmer climate

Generated from News Bureau Press Release: Weather should remain predictable despite climate change

Watch video at: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=a6460c05-472d-410f-a1e7-0a49178e632f
MU Chancellor asks students, staff to review active shooter tips amid Parkland shooting

By MARIE BOWMAN

COLUMBIA, Mo. - In a letter to students, faculty and staff, MU Chancellor Cartwright asked that everyone review active shooter resources.

"This most recent incident reminds all of us to be vigilant and prepared for the unthinkable. We have an outstanding team of public safety professionals who work hard every day to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff, but we can all use a refresher about the fundamental steps each one of us can take to be intentional about our safety," said Chancellor Cartwright.

The students, faculty and staff were asked to review an active shooter response tip sheet, a City of Houston and U.S. Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Training video, MU’s Surviving an Active Shooter video and the following points: (LEADS TO EMAIL)

St. Louis Post Dispatch reporter takes job with UM System

OLIVIA GARRETT

St. Louis Post-Dispatch higher education reporter Ashley Jost will start working March 5 as the senior adviser on critical issues in higher education for the University of Missouri System and MU.
"I’ll be working with leaders like President (Mun) Choi and Chancellor (Alexander) Cartwright and others on the marketing team to make sure that the university is aware of best practices for issues that are critical for higher education everywhere and is a leader in those issues," Jost said.

Jost will research best practices at institutions across the country on issues such as the value of higher education; distance and eLearning; shortening degree completion times; technology; public and private partnerships; dual credit options; economic development; and engagement, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

She will work with the marketing and communications team on how to incorporate her findings into speeches, presentations and other materials.

"I think that right now the university is really positioned to be, it’s already a national leader, but positioned to be even more so," Jost said. "They have two new leaders who have energy, excitement and passion and are people I really believe in and want to throw my support behind."

The UM System’s status as a land grant university and MU’s status as a member of the Association of American Universities, as well as university leaders Choi and Cartwright, drew her toward the role, Jost said.

"I’m so passionate about journalism and higher education," Jost said. "It’s worth the career change for me to throw my energy as a young professional and my work ethic behind these two men. ... The way that people talk about them around the state, other higher ed leaders, legislators, it’s all really positive, and that’s really exciting for me."

Jost is finishing up her stint at the Post-Dispatch covering breaking news rather than education. Before joining the Post-Dispatch staff in 2016, she covered higher education for the Columbia Daily Tribune. She is a graduate of Truman State University.

"I think public higher education is really important, and over the course of the last few years, I’ve just fallen in love with the industry in general," Jost said. "My favorite part about covering
higher ed is that it’s politics, it’s policy, it's business, health care — it’s anything and everything. It’s the one thing that intersects with all of our lives, education in general."

Jost will help represent the university to various groups, including the Missouri Department of Higher Education, the Council on Public Higher Education in Missouri, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Association of American Universities, Basi said. Her annual salary will be $65,000.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Editorial: Hospital partnership needs to find common ground**

By Hank Waters

As local health care leaders contemplate a way forward toward a mutually successful partnership, a look at experience in other states is helpful. In Colorado a rewarding hospital partnership was built on these guiding motivations:

*The Solution That Worked for Us:*

* A pro-active decision that we could not stand alone and continue our respective current success.
* Identified like-minded partners with shared values.
* Learned that a lot give and take would be necessary to create our vision.
* Agreed flexibility would be key for future growth and change.

**Seems to me these are the guidelines that must underlie a partnership between University of Missouri and Boone hospitals. The road to agreement is difficult but worth the effort. If Colorado can do it, so can we.**
Higher education leaders from five of Missouri’s institutions took the stage on Monday, and UCM was the host.

The program, “Inside Education” is produced by KMOS-TV and is hosted by UCM President Dr. Charles Ambrose. The quarterly program featured “The State of Higher Education” in this episode, with leaders from University of Missouri, Missouri State, Metropolitan Community College and Harris-Stowe State University.

The four leaders sat with Ambrose in a panel, discussing stressors, visions and funding, then opening it up to questions from the audience.

“That’s the intent, to have good conversation, friendly conversation,” Ambrose said.

Mun Choi, president of the University of Missouri system, Clif Smart, president at Missouri State, Kimberly Beatty, chancellor at MCC and Dwaun Warmack, president of HSSU were the panelists.

Decreases in state funding and the impact that has on schools was a major point of emphasis for each of the leaders. The value of higher education was also a topic, specifically accessibility to higher education.
Each of the leaders discussed their backgrounds in education, dating back to their own college
days. Warmack had as impactful a story as any, talking about being the first in his family to
graduate college and how that changed his family trajectory. He noted that after him, he’s had 16
nieces and nephews graduate from post-secondary schools.

“College changed my life for generations to come,” Warmack said.

The leaders each addressed the idea of college not being for everybody, with Smart taking the
lead on that subject.

“It’s hard to understand what drives that (narrative),” Smart said. “There isn’t any data out there
that supports that.

“There are a handful of people who achieve great things without a degree, but the data does not
support that.”

The schools expressed a variety of perspectives. For instance, MCC and Harris-Stowe pride
themselves on being accessible to any person seeking education regardless of means and
background.

Meanwhile the two Division I schools in the state have been more focused on making college
affordable and on pushing degree completion for existing students.

“Once we accept a student to our university, we accept responsibility for that student,” Choi said.

The program, once edited, will take an hour. It was scheduled to initially air on KMOS-TV on
Thursday, with replays at 9 a.m. on Sunday and 8 p.m. on Monday. School officials said they
were hoping that the program would be picked up by the other public television stations
throughout Missouri.
High-profile year of political corruption

Generated from News Bureau press release

By: Sandra Peddie

Long Island was particularly hard hit by corruption scandals in 2017, with about 40 public officials and government employees indicted, imprisoned or pushed from office by ethical transgressions and scandals.

This was the culmination of a decade in which more than twice that number of officials, cops and other workers were tarred in episodes that short-circuited the careers of such powerful leaders as former State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, former Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano, former Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota, former Oyster Bay Supervisor John Venditto and former Suffolk Police Chief James Burke.

Mangano, Spota and Venditto are awaiting trial and maintain their innocence.

The tally seemed to be building steam until it exploded last year. Even judges have been investigated by other agencies, publicly disciplined or dismissed on corruption-related charges.

The cost to taxpayers in waste, graft and confidence in government runs high, but it is not only they who pay a price. Honest government workers across Long Island — police officers, managers and civil servants of every stripe — have had to carry out their duties in environments tainted by wayward behavior and the bias of outsized political considerations.

In some ways, it’s a product of a New York state of mind.

The state ranks highest in the country in the percentage of state legislators convicted of public corruption over the last decade, said Jeffrey D. Milvo, a University of Missouri economist who has analyzed prosecutions nationwide. He said similar data for prosecutions of local officials is not readily available.

Dick Simpson, a University of Illinois political scientist and former Chicago alderman, said corruption endures where machine politics is entrenched. The machines thrive as long as they win elections and control government, ensuring patronage jobs and contracts for the party faithful, as well as opportunities for nepotism. A Newsday investigation last year identified more
than 100 current or ex-Nassau County elected officials, top appointees or political leaders with at least one family member on public payrolls at some point since 2015.

“Some states in the Midwest have never had a culture of corruption,” Simpson said, citing Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. “If they have one scandal, involving one legislator, it’s a big deal.”

On Long Island, in one town alone — Oyster Bay — six current and former officials and contractors and a top political leader were charged with crimes last year.

The plethora of indictments and convictions raises a deeper question about whether, rather than being discrete incidents, they are manifestations of a malignant system that spawns an outsized degree of wrongdoing.

A corrupt culture reinforces itself, said Harvard Law School Professor Matthew Stephenson, who studies public corruption and runs the Global Anticorruption Blog.

“When organizations have reputations for corruption, they tend to attract and retain corrupt people,” he said. “Individuals of high integrity don’t want to work in a corrupt environment, while those who are happy to bend or break the rules for their own gain will be attracted to such organizations where such behavior is known to be tolerated or encouraged.”

In other words, he said, “You might even feel like a sucker if you’re a guy who follows the rules.”
Avoid identity theft during tax season
Generated by News Bureau expert pitch

Take steps to prevent electronic criminals from lining their pockets with your refund and personal information, says University of Missouri Extension personal finance specialist Andrew Zumwalt.

First, file taxes promptly. Identity thieves try to file early so your refund goes to them before you file.

Second, use the services of trusted tax professionals. If you choose to prepare your own taxes and use a public computer, log out of any programs and clear the browser history before leaving the computer.

Third, remember that the Internal Revenue Service never makes initial contact with taxpayers by telephone. Impersonators demand credit card payment over the phone and threaten you with legal action if you don’t pay immediately.

Fourth, guard your identity. Don’t carry your Social Security card with you and don’t give your Social Security number to others. Safeguard your personal information in your home. Install a trusted virus protection on your computers.
Finally, check your credit report every year to make sure your identity has not been breached. A free credit report from each major credit bureau is available annually at [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com).

If you think your identity has been stolen, go to [IdentityTheft.gov](http://IdentityTheft.gov) to contact the Federal Trade Commission and learn how to set up a fraud alert. Also, fill out a Form 14039 Identity Theft Affidavit at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov).

Zumwalt cautions people to use the genuine IRS website at .gov. Don’t be confused by Internet domain names that end in .com, .net, .org or other designations.

For more information from MU Extension on taxes and other financial topics, go to [missourifamilies.org/money](http://missourifamilies.org/money).

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# MeToo movement founder speaks to capacity University of Missouri crowd

By Waverly Colville

On the morning of Oct. 15, Tarana Burke had no idea why the name of her 10-year-old movement was trending on social media. She knew something was wrong because she had no part in it.

“I was in a full-on panic,” Burke said. “I felt my life’s work was in jeopardy. I felt like this thing goes viral and I don’t see any of us in it, I’m going to be erased. There’s no way I’m going to be able to stand up in this sea of ‘Me Toos’ and say ‘Wait a minute. I’ve been doing this for 10 years.’ Who’s going to listen to me?”

Burke began Just Be Inc. and the Me Too movement to provide education, resources and support for survivors of sexual violence, harassment and assault in 2006. But when #MeToo was thrust into the social media spotlight last October, it was by a different woman: actress Alyssa Milano.
She tweeted #MeToo on Oct. 15 amid the downfall of film producer and co-founder of the Miramax production company, Harvey Weinstein, after more than 50 sexual assault allegations. Her tweet read “if all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘#MeToo’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.”

The hashtag went viral. In the first 24 hours, it garnered more than 12 million posts and reactions on Facebook alone, according to The Associated Press.

“That day was really pivotal because I started off in a panic,” Burke said. “These people are trying to take ‘#MeToo.’ I was devising all kinds of plans.”

But then, she read one woman’s story posted on Twitter. It was a turning point for Burke.

“I had spent the whole day thinking about how I was going to save my work but my work had been happening right in front of me all day long,” Burke said. “It was ego.”

**Burke chose service. On Tuesday, she spoke as the founder of #MeToo to an overflowing room of more than 200 students in Tate Hall at the University of Missouri as the university’s Black History Month keynote speaker.**

Roots of a movement

Her mission to help victims of sexual violence began in childhood, Burke said. She describes her parents as black nationalists who always made sure she had a diverse knowledge of black history. She grew up reading Toni Morrison novels and other black feminist authors.

Burke joined the 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement, an organization that trained young people to be grassroots community organizers to continue social movements from the 1960s and 1970s, at age 14.

Her first project: organizing against future president Donald Trump during the 1989 Central Park Five case.

Five men, four black and one Hispanic, were convicted of assaulting, robbing, raping and trying to kill a white woman even though DNA evidence did not match. Trump bought full-page advertisements in several New York City newspapers calling for the death penalty. The guilty man was already serving a life sentence for a different crime and DNA evidence confirmed his guilt.

Burke organized press conferences and protests.

“It was just the idea that we were acknowledged” and “seen,” Burke said. “It was at that point that I decided I wanted to be an organizer. This is the way I can take all of this history that I have in my head and all this cultural upbringing and put it to actual use in the community.”
She continued organizing throughout her college days at Alabama State University and Auburn University. Her issues were racial and economic justice. Gender justice wasn’t on her mind yet.

But she began thinking about gender issues after spending several years as a staff member with the 21st Century Leadership Movement. When working the leadership camps, she kept hearing young girls speak about sexual violence. She never spoke about her own experiences with sexual violence, but would listen to the girls. She didn’t know what to say when one of her favorite campers confided in her about sexual violence her mother’s boyfriend committed against her.

Burke wanted to tell her “this happened to me too. I know how you feel” But she couldn’t figure out how.

Thus, she began Just Be to build a sense of self-worth among young black and brown girls. And the Me Too program was born.

“I thought what did I need at this age?” Burke said. “I needed empathy. I needed someone who heard me and saw me and believed me and put me on a road to healing. That’s how #MeToo was born, out of this necessity.”

**Being unafraid**

One of the main focuses of #MeToo was to give young women language. Many were afraid of not being believed or didn’t even have the words to talk about their pain and experiences, Burke said.

That’s something that stuck with Casey Murray, another University of Missouri student.

“We shouldn’t be afraid to talk about these things,” Murray said.

Me Too began with a MySpace page and grew to a robust after-school and community program in Selma, Ala.

Ten years later it has become an international force.

Burke said she has no use for celebrity, and she sees these speaking engagements as organizing and work.

Christina Carney, an assistant professor of black studies and women and gender studies, said that point resonated with her.

“It’s not just a speaking engagement, it’s service work,” Carney said. “It’s really important that she’s not really interested in the celebratory aspect in terms of tokenism, but actually saying I’m doing this work because we need to have spaces like this.”
Burke made sure to note that those not participating in the movement weren’t discounted. Many are not ready to share their story yet but because of the popularity on social media, some women may feel pressured to do so.

She addressed the University of Missouri administration several times, putting the responsibility on them to change the culture on campus. Online training is not enough, she said.

“The university’s response to allegations of sexual violence should mirror their enthusiasm for you to get to the school and get your tuition,” Burke said as she closed her talk to a standing ovation. “They owe you accountability just like you owe them tuition money.”

Skin cancer survivors speak for suntanning restriction bill

By JENNA PURITZ


JEFFERSON CITY - Missouri teens are twice as likely to use tanning beds than the average American teen according to the American Cancer Society. This statistic comes at a time when the rate of melanoma has nearly doubled in the last nine years.

These are only a few of the statistics Rep. Nick Schroer (R-O'Fallon) mentioned Wednesday while testifying for House Bill 1260. This house bill would prohibit anyone under the age of 18 from using tanning beds. Currently, Missouri allows people under 18 to tan with parental consent.

"I don't understand why anybody would not be in favor of this. You know, just to protect our children who know no better,” mother of three Emily Messerli said.
Messerli's husband Kelly Messerli passed away in 2013 after a mole was diagnosed as stage four cancer melanoma.

"He did utilize tanning beds," Messerli said. "As we were growing up, that was socially acceptable. It's what we did," she said.

**Messerli testified in favor of the bill Wednesday along with representatives from the MU Department of Dermatology, the Missouri Dermatological Society, the American Cancer Society, the Missouri Medical Association and melanoma survivors.**

"By sharing this, Kelly's story, being a part of this bill, being a part of this whole process has opened the eyes of many other people," Messerli said.

Messerli said she's reached avid tanners and people who never had the chance to get their skin looked at by a dermatologist.

"If we can save some lives, I'll do what I can," she said.

KOMU 8 News spoke with Dr. John DeSpain, a dermatologist in Columbia, who fully supports the bill as well.

"There's just no health benefits whatsoever to using a tanning bed. For one thing, it's a cosmetic appearance issue. it's not something that's done for health," DeSpain said.

DeSpain said the tanning industry reports that it is good for people to create vitamin D in the tanning bed.

"The tanning bed actually puts out a UV-A, which doesn't do anything to promote vitamin D synthesis," he said.

Joseph Levy represented the American Suntanning Association at the hearing Wednesday. He said the bill takes away a parent's right to make a decision about a family member's use of a sun bed.

"The unintended consequence of the bill would just drive those who want to use sun beds into underground locations where there is no trained operator, so sunburn would actually increase if this bill is passed," Levy said.

Levy argued that tanning salons promote sunburn prevention and educate their clients on proper use of tanning beds. He said the American Suntanning Association has created material to help train staff to use equipment correctly and ensure a no-burn tanning session.

This was just one of the initial hearings on House Bill 1260. The bill has made no movement as of now.
Real life "Queen Elsa" charms children in the hospital

Generated from MU Health Care direct pitch

By CAROLINE PETERSON


COLUMBIA- It’s no secret anything related to a Disney character can dazzle a child.

Lauren Kight, a senior at the University of Missouri, has been dressing up as Queen Elsa from the popular children’s movie "Frozen" since her freshman year of college.

She started with birthday parties for children in her hometown of Jerseyville, Illinois.

“I would show up in my snowflake dress and sing songs from "Frozen" to the kids for their birthday. They always got a kick out of it,” Kight said.

This year, she broadened her Elsa magic to cheer up children staying at MU Women’s and Children’s hospital.

She visited the hospital for the first time recently. Even though she had to cover her sparkling snowflake dress with a medical gown, she still charmed her audience while singing “Let it Go.”

“It was amazing. I loved walking in and seeing the look on each child’s face when I said their name and made them feel so special," Kight said. " I can’t get enough of it! I want to keep doing this forever.”

One little boy named Tyson got especially excited when Queen Elsa showed up in his room.

“Every little thing he did, I couldn’t get enough of. He was so happy, so joyful,” Kight said.
Tyson’s mother, Valerie Jones, said his absolute favorite characters are the Ninja Turtles or Batman, but he loves Elsa too.

Tyson lit up when Kight waved her arms to use her pretend ice powers and say, “Be careful, I might freeze you!”

“No one can deny Elsa,” Jones said.

Kight said she loves the environment the hospital creates.

“Even though it should be kind of a sad place, it’s really not. It’s the opposite. I think that is what makes the MU Children’s hospital so cool, because there is always hope and a reason to push on,” Kight said.

To transform into Elsa, Kight starts with full makeup, including false lashes and braiding her long light blonde hair. She pins snowflake barrettes into the braid to top off the look. Her dress is adorned with silver snowflakes and light blue fabric reaching to the floor.

“All you need is a lot of glitter!” she said.

Kight said she is excited for the second "Frozen" movie to come out so she can keep playing the favorite character.

“If I can somehow be a part of the reason a kid laughs or smiles just once then I will continue to do it for as long as I possibly can,” she said.

Columbia City Council declares support for medical marijuana in Missouri

By Michael Wilmarth

Earlier this month, Columbia City Council members unanimously passed a motion declaring the city’s support for statewide medical marijuana legalization.

The council passed a general resolution stating its “support for legislation providing legal access to cannabis as a medicine together with the cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes; endorsing the Missouri Medical Marijuana Initiative.” The council decided to avoid more specific initiatives whose ability to garner support for a statewide initiative was unclear.

The petition that began circulation in early 2016 is called New Approach Missouri. It asks that Missouri physicians be allowed to discuss medical marijuana treatment with their patients. The petition had over 200,000 signatures as of Feb. 20.
Ward 2 Councilman Michael Trapp, who has worked as a counselor and director of the substance abuse treatment center Phoenix Health Programs, has been a leading advocate of the resolution. Trapp said the resolution’s purpose is to add the issue to Columbia’s lobbying agenda. Trapp has said marijuana is useful in treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and spasmodic illnesses, as well as pain management.

“By adding it to our lobbying agenda, we can engage with state government over implementation issues after the measure passes,” Trapp said in an email.

While Columbia begins lobbying at the state level, there is still much to do for Columbia residents who support the initiative. Trapp said they can continue to sign New Approach Missouri’s petition, as well as support its Get Out the Vote efforts.

“Most importantly they can vote for the measure and get their friends to the polls likely on Aug. 2,” Trapp said in an email. “If it is on the primary ballot as I suspect it will be, it will be a low turnout election.”

Twenty-nine states and Washington, D.C., have legalized marijuana for medical purposes. Missouri would be the 30th.

Advocacy groups at MU like the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws and Students for Sensible Drug Policy have supported medical marijuana legislation, holding meetings and petitioning in Speakers Circle.

If the measure reaches its goal of roughly 280,000 signatures, New Approach Missouri hopes to get the initiative for legalizing medical marijuana on the ballot in November.
Through a $1.5 million grant from the Lumina Foundation, ACE will work with employers to assess which skills and competencies employees can derive from work-based training programs, and how much college credit these are worth.

Employees who complete these training programs will be provided with shareable digital credentials to help them demonstrate what they know and what they can do. An official machine-readable transcript will also be provided that can easily be shared -- if and when the workers choose to do so -- with colleges and universities for academic credit.

While making it easier for working adults to enter postsecondary education is what many college officials might care most about, that's not the sole driver behind the new effort. The digital credentials offered through the initiative can also be used as third-party verified résumés when employees seek new jobs.

Valuing learning that happens outside colleges is not a new endeavor for ACE. Forty years ago, it launched the College Credit Recommendation Service, which helps people get academic credit for exams and training that are not part of degree programs. This new initiative will build on the success of the service, but will be useful not only to workers thinking of getting a degree, but also to those looking for recognition of their skills.

Ted Mitchell, president of ACE, said in a news release that the initiative’s focus on digital credentials is “about creating a new language for the labor market” and not just nudging people who may have no experience of postsecondary education to pursue college degrees.

“We're fostering collaborations between employers and institutions that reflect the reality of today’s adult learners, and our shared responsibility in creating more seamless pathways from employment to education, and economic opportunity,” said Mitchell.

Ryan Craig, the managing director of investment firm University Ventures, said that the ACE initiative fits in with the emergence of a “competency marketplace” that places less focus on “pedigree and degrees” and more focus on ability.

By working with Credly, ACE and the Lumina Foundation are recognizing that “it’s imperative for the future health and well-being of the sector that higher education set the direction,” said Craig.

But Sheryl Grant, director of research at the Community Success Institute and former director of badging research and alternative credentials at HASTAC at Duke University, said the announcement was “not really surprising.”

“This looks to me like it is supercharging a lot of the efforts that these organizations are already making around prior learning assessment, competency-based education and organizing credentials so that they have value to outside organizations,” said Grant. She noted, however, that all the organizations involved were well placed to succeed with the initiative because of their expertise in these areas.

Louis Soares, vice president for strategy, research and advancement at ACE, agreed that the initiative was building on a lot of things that ACE was doing already.
“The project will help us develop a sustainable and scalable platform to continue that work,” he said. He noted that the companies ACE already works with to evaluate their training programs have expressed “an increasing desire to document competencies -- we’re trying to keep pace with that.” ACE has worked with large companies like McDonald’s and Jiffy Lube, as well as smaller organizations.

Jonathan Finkelstein, founder and CEO of Credly, said he anticipated the scale of the initiative would be big. Credly began working with ACE last year and has seen heightening demand for digital credentials, even from people who aren’t intending to get a college degree any time soon, said Finkelstein.

“Employers who subject their training programs to third-party review are recognizing that they need to project to employees (and the talent that they would like to attract) that they are the kind of place that places a premium on upskilling and ongoing training and professional development,” said Finkelstein.