House budget leader proposes reduced higher education cuts

By Blake Nelson / The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri colleges and universities may still face budget cuts next year, but they may be less than what the governor wants.

The chairman of the Missouri House Budget Committee on Thursday proposed a way to reduce the financial hit to higher education outlined in Republican Gov. Eric Greitens’ 2019 budget proposal.

Republican Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick said during a news conference that funds the state had set aside for the Children’s Health Insurance Program, known as “CHIP,” could free up money for higher education now that CHIP has received additional federal funding from Congress. He declined to give specific numbers but said the restorations would be in the “tens of millions.”

“It’s going to be significant,” said Fitzpatrick. He estimated more concrete numbers would be released in about two weeks.

Greitens’ 2019 budget proposed giving higher education institutions $92 million less than originally budgeted for the 2018 fiscal year. He also withheld millions of dollars allocated by lawmakers from the current higher education budget.

The governor’s office did not respond to a request for comment. Previously, Greitens said that increased spending on health care “means we have to tighten up in other areas of government and spend less money.” He also cited growth in “administrative costs” at many universities.

A brief statement from UM System President Mun Choi did not address Fitzpatrick’s plan specifically but noted that: “An investment in the University of Missouri System and our four campuses is an investment in the state of Missouri. There is so much we can contribute to the state with stable support.”

Legislative leaders earlier said they hoped to reduce the cuts.

“If it were up to me, we’d restore all the cuts,” said Republican Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, who’s also the Higher Education Committee chair. “I’ve been to a lot of campuses and I can tell you: They’ve all cinched the belt.”
Lawmakers have also repeatedly criticized higher education spending. During a floor debate Wednesday, GOP Sen. Rob Schaaf read aloud the salaries of several University of Missouri administrators, and wondered whether some of those salaries could be docked to save money.

**Bill to Increase In-State Tuition Withdrawn**

By ZIA KELLY • 15 HOURS AGO

Senator Caleb Rowden withdrew a bill aimed at increasing the cap on in-state tuition for public universities following a filibuster yesterday. The bill would have allowed universities to raise tuition prices to up to 10 percent above the inflation rate.

Christopher Dade is the president of the MU chapter of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, which advocates for students at the four UM campuses in the state legislature. He says his group actually supported the measure.

Governor Greitens’ proposed budget would cut $98 million from higher education state-wide, including $43 million from the UM System.

**Double dose of bad news for Mizzou's Sterk: Sued by South Carolina coach, fined by SEC**

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, MO. • Missouri athletics director Jim Sterk got hit with a double dose of bad news Thursday. First, South Carolina women’s basketball coach Dawn Staley filed a $75,000 defamation lawsuit against the AD over comments he made in a radio interview about the Tigers’ game at South Carolina earlier this season. The Southeastern Conference
then announced that the league has reprimanded and fined Sterk $25,000 for violating its code of ethics by publicly criticizing another institution.

The conflict stems from South Carolina’s 64-54 victory over the Missouri women’s team on Jan. 28 in Columbia, S.C., a game that featured a scuffle that led to multiple fouls and two ejections. After the game former Mizzou player Sierra Michaelis tweeted that South Carolina fans spit on Mizzou players at Colonial Life Arena. Later that week, Sterk doubled down on the accusations in an interview on Columbia radio station KTGR 1580 AM and seemed to hold Staley accountable for what he described as an “unhealthy” atmosphere at the game.

“We had players spit on and called the ‘N’ word and things like that,” Sterk said on Jan. 30. “I mean it was not a good environment and unfortunately and I think Coach (Dawn) Staley promoted that kind of atmosphere. And it’s unfortunate that she felt she had to do that.” Sterk has since declined to comment on the matter.

Staley filed a civil slander suit against Sterk Thursday in South Carolina’s Richland County’s court of common pleas Fifth Judicial Circuit. Sterk is required to answer the complaint within 30 days.

“After Mr. Sterk refused to retract and apologize for his statement, Coach Staley felt like she had no choice but to hold him accountable and protect her name and reputation,” Staley’s attorney, Karl “Butch” Bowers said in a phone interview Thursday from Columbia, S.C. “Mr. Sterk’s statements were false and defamatory and we look forward to proving that in a court of law.”

The suit alleges that Sterk defamed Staley by “orally publishing to third parties that Coach Staley willfully and intentionally created an atmosphere at a college basketball game designed to incite riotous conduct and behavior by players and fans alike, which is false.” The suit claims Sterk “falsely accused Coach Staley of promoting an atmosphere of racism and physical assaults against the Missouri fan base.” The suit states that Sterk’s statement was “made with actual malice and with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard for the truth.”

In addition to the fine, the SEC issued a conference-led review of South Carolina’s game management procedures and security for visiting teams. The SEC cited league Bylaw 10.5.8 that require member schools to implement policies that hold their constituencies responsible for good sportsmanship and set standards for behavior that “reflect the high standard of honor and dignity that characterize participation in the collegiate setting.” The league has assigned two staff members — Tiffany Daniels, Associate Commissioner for Competition and Senior Woman Administrator, and William King, Associate Commissioner for Legal Affairs and Compliance — to work with South Carolina AD Ray Tanner to review its game management issues.

“We take seriously the reports from Missouri’s student-athletes about inappropriate language and actions directed at them by individual fans, and appreciate South Carolina’s willingness to engage in a full review of fan behavior from January 28,” SEC commissioner Greg Sankey said.
“Our goal is to explore additional mechanisms for enhancing each visiting team’s experience before, during and after competition. Any lessons learned on ways to improve sportsmanship, hospitality and team security will be shared across the SEC.”

Missouri Chancellor Alexander Cartwright and University of Missouri System President Mun Y. Choi issued a joint statement in support of Sterk on Thursday in response to the SEC fine: “We remain confident in University of Missouri Athletic Director Jim Sterk. Since he came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court. He has proven himself to be an excellent administrator.”

Sankey met with Sterk and Tanner two weeks ago at the SEC athletics directors meetings in New Orleans. A source familiar with the situation said Sterk did not retract his comments in that meeting.

“Both Missouri and South Carolina have cultivated highly successful women’s basketball programs, which enjoy tremendous fan support and have earned the respect of this office,” Sankey said. “While we always appreciate a healthy level of competitive intensity on the court, there is no place in this league for discord inside or outside of the arena. I have had multiple conversations over the past few weeks with representatives of both schools about the problems emanating from their January 28 game and it has been my desire for those issues to be mutually resolved between the athletic programs and individuals involved. Unfortunately, a mutual resolution does not appear imminent. Our hope is that we can direct our focus back where it belongs – on our student-athletes and on-court competition.”

**South Carolina coach Dawn Staley sues Mizzou athletic director Jim Sterk**

**BY AARON REISS**

areiss@kcstar.com

February 22, 2018 01:56 PM

Updated 11 hours 50 minutes ago

COLUMBIA - South Carolina women’s basketball coach Dawn Staley has filed a civil lawsuit against Missouri athletic director Jim Sterk for defamation and slander.
According to records, Staley filed the complaint Thursday in Richland County, S.C. Staley is seeking an award of no more than $75,000, according to the suit.

The lawsuit references Sterk’s comments during radio interviews after the Mizzou women’s basketball team’s game at South Carolina on Jan. 28. The Tigers lost 64-54 to the Gamecocks. The physical game involved a scuffle between the two teams and followed an earlier matchup at Mizzou that the Tigers won. Referees ejected Staley from that first contest between the two teams.

According to the lawsuit, Sterk attended the game in South Carolina and told KTGR radio in Columbia that Missouri players were spit on and called racial slurs by fans, and he thought Staley "promoted that kind of atmosphere, and it’s unfortunate that she felt she had to do that."

The lawsuit contends Sterk’s claim that Staley “intentionally promoted a hostile and negative atmosphere designed to incite riotous conduct at a college basketball game in which her team was participating was false, defamatory, reckless and made with actual malice.”

Later Thursday, Southeastern Conference commissioner Greg Sankey fined Sterk $25,000 for violating SEC Bylaw 10.5.1 during his interview with KTGR. The bylaw states that "coaches and administrators shall refrain from public criticism of other member institutions, their staff or players."

Sankey also announced the conference assigned staff to work with South Carolina athletic director Ray Turner on a review of South Carolina's "game management procedures and visiting team security."

On Jan. 30, when a reporter asked Missouri coach Robin Pingeton about the accusations — which first picked up traction because of a tweet by former MU player Sierra Michaelis — the coach appeared to choke up. She avoided specifically mentioning any actions about Gamecocks fans, but she said she was "really disappointed with some things that transpired."

"Fans have got to be better," Pingeton said on Jan. 30. "… All around. Our side. Their side. Fans have got to be better. These are daughters playing a game they love to play."

According to The State newspaper, she said the accusations would "be handled in a manner reflective of those facts." Tanner told reporters an internal investigation did not confirm any of Sterk’s claims.

The suit also references an interview Sterk gave with 101 ESPN in St. Louis a couple of days later. The suit claims Sterk operated with “apparent ignorance of the outcry from the women’s college basketball world” that his statements were false when he spoke to 101 ESPN. According to the lawsuit, Sterk told 101 ESPN that his program had “moved on. … And kind of in the words of that famous philosopher Forrest Gump, that’s about all I’ve got to say about that.”

The South Carolina athletic department said it was aware of the lawsuit but was not in a position to comment because it is a legal matter.

Staley's lawyer, Butch Bowers, told The Star "Mr. Sterk's refusal to retract his statement and apologize for it left coach Staley with no choice but to protect her reputation and integrity."
"We look forward to proving that his comments were false and defamatory in court," Bowers said.

Sterk did not comment on the lawsuit, but late Thursday, MU chancellor Alexander Cartwright and University of Missouri System president Mun Choi said in a joint release regarding the SEC's fine that they "remain confident in" Sterk.

"Since he came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court," the statement read. "He has proven himself to be an excellent administrator."

South Carolina is second in the SEC standings, and Mizzou is in a three-way tie for third. If the Tigers do finish third and the Gamecocks hold on to their second place spot, the two teams could meet in the SEC Tournament semifinals.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**South Carolina coach files lawsuit against Missouri AD Sterk**

By **Daniel Jones**

**South Carolina women’s basketball coach Dawn Staley has sued Missouri athletic director Jim Sterk for slander, according to court documents that were filed in the South Carolina Court of Common Pleas on Thursday.**

Staley is seeking damages of $75,000 for comments Sterk made on KTGR on Jan. 30.

Sterk has 30 days to respond to the lawsuit.

The conflict stems from Missouri’s game Jan. 28 at South Carolina, which was played in front of 13,433 fans at Colonial Life Arena. The Tigers were booed throughout the game, a heated 64-54 Gamecocks victory that included a scuffle in the second quarter.

Two days later, Sterk appeared on KTGR’s “The Big Show” and was asked by host Matt Michaels lightheartedly if he was glad to make it out of Columbia, S.C., safely.

“It wasn’t a great atmosphere,” said Sterk, who was seated courtside at the game. “It was really kind of unhealthy, if you will. We had players spit on and called the n-word and things like that. It was not a good environment, and, unfortunately, I think Coach Staley promoted that atmosphere. It’s unfortunate that she felt she had to do that.”
Also Thursday, Southeastern Conference commissioner Greg Sankey issued a public reprimand of Sterk and fined him $25,000 for violating SEC bylaw 10.5.1, which states, “Coaches and administrators shall refrain from public criticism of other member institutions, their staff or players.”

In the same release, Sankey said the league would conduct an office-led review of South Carolina’s game management procedures and visiting team security.

“Both Missouri and South Carolina have cultivated highly successful women’s basketball programs, which enjoy tremendous fan support and have earned the respect of this office,” Sankey said. “While we always appreciate a healthy level of competitive intensity on the court, there is no place in this league for discord inside or outside of the arena.”

Sankey continued: “I have had multiple conversations over the past few weeks with representatives of both schools about the problems emanating from their January 28 game, and it has been my desire for those issues to be mutually resolved between the athletic programs and individuals involved. Unfortunately, a mutual resolution does not appear imminent. Our hope is that we can direct our focus back where it belongs — on our student-athletes and on-court competition.”

University of Missouri Chancellor Alexander Cartwright and System President Mun Y. Choi released a statement late Thursday regarding the SEC’s fine.

“Since (Sterk) came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court,” the statement said.

Neither Sterk nor MU athletics would clarify exactly how Staley promoted the negative environment immediately after the claims were made.

Staley told reporters Jan. 27: “I think our fans will give the extra stuff, and we’ll let them feed us the energy that we need to win the game.”

She also said that in the team’s first matchup of the season, an 83-74 Missouri victory, “there were some things out there that weren’t basketball, that weren’t basketball plays. And if we can clean up those parts of the game, you’ll get a great game from us. ... And I get that you want to take key people out of the game. We want to do that. If we get the opportunity to get Sophie (Cunningham) out of the game, yes, we’re going to try to do that, but within the confines of the rules of the game.”

Other members of the Missouri program said that spitting and slurs were used during the game. When asked Jan. 29, Robin Pingeton neither confirmed nor denied that spitting took place but said, “There’s certainly some things that are really unfortunate that transpired, not only verbally but in some other things.”
In a press conference Jan. 30, Gamecocks athletic director Ray Tanner said that the athletic department provided added security for the Tigers in the arena and a review of game operations failed to turn up evidence of “the alleged behavior.”

Staley and Tanner responded to Sterk’s claims Jan. 31. Tanner called for Sterk to retract his claim that Staley incited a negative environment, while Staley said that “the accusations are serious and false, and they will be handled in a manner reflective of those facts.”

Sterk instead doubled down at his next opportunity on WXOS-FM in St. Louis on Feb. 1. When asked if he had anything to add to his comments about Staley, Sterk said, “We’ve moved on, we’ve got a great game against Mississippi State tonight, the No. 2 team in the country. And in the words of that famous philosopher Forrest Gump, that’s all I’ve got to say about that.”

The issue reached the Southeastern Conference office, but a meeting between Sterk, Tanner and commissioner Greg Sankey did not result in a resolution.

Staley’s lawsuit claims that “because (Sterk) will not retract the slanderous allegations and has flatly refused to admit the falsity of the same, Coach Staley has no choice but to bring this action to clear her good name and excellent reputation, along with the reputation of the South Carolina fan base who were also falsely impugned and maligned by (Sterk’s) false comments.”

It goes on to say that Sterk’s “false and defamatory statements are slander per se in that they were designed to suggest Coach Staley is unfit or unable to properly perform her duties in her chosen occupation.”

Missouri is not scheduled to play South Carolina again this season, though the two teams could meet next week in the SEC Tournament in Nashville, Tenn. Both are also likely to make the NCAA Tournament.

**Dawn Staley sues Missouri AD Jim Sterk; SEC fines him $25K**

South Carolina women's basketball coach Dawn Staley filed a defamation lawsuit against Missouri athletic director Jim Sterk for accusations he made about her after a game last month.
The SEC, meanwhile, reprimanded Sterk on Thursday for his comments and fined him $25,000 while also ordering a conference review of South Carolina's game management procedures.

Sterk accused Staley of promoting a hostile and negative atmosphere and said Missouri players were spit on and had racial epithets hurled at them by South Carolina fans after the Gamecocks' 64-54 victory on Jan. 28.

In the suit, filed Thursday in Richland County, South Carolina, Staley cites Sterk's "false, defamatory and reckless" statements. Staley is seeking damages not to exceed $75,000.

"We're not going to let him destroy in one day the sterling reputation she spent a lifetime building," Staley's lawyer, Butch Bowers, said in a statement to The State newspaper. In a statement announcing the penalties, SEC commissioner Greg Sankey said "there is no place in this league for discord inside or outside of the arena."

"I have had multiple conversations over the past few weeks with representatives of both schools about the problems emanating from their Jan. 28 game, and it has been my desire for those issues to be mutually resolved between the athletic programs and individuals involved," he said. "Unfortunately, a mutual resolution does not appear imminent. Our hope is that we can direct our focus back where it belongs -- on our student-athletes and on-court competition."

Sterk made his comments Jan. 30 on Columbia, Missouri, radio station KTGR.

"We had players spit on and called the N-word and things like that. ... It was not a good environment, and unfortunately, I think Coach Staley promoted that kind of atmosphere. And it's unfortunate that she felt she had to do that," he said.

South Carolina athletic director Ray Tanner said on Jan. 31 that the university had conducted an investigation after Sterk's comments and had found "no confirmation of the alleged behavior directed at the visiting team by fans at the game."

On Feb. 1, responding to the allegations, Staley said, "The accusations are serious and false, and they will be handled in a manner reflective of those facts."

The suit notes that Sterk repeated the allegations in an interview with 101 ESPN in St. Louis on Feb. 1, after South Carolina's investigation had found no evidence to support it.

The lawsuit says Sterk had been given multiple opportunities to retract the statement but had refused to do so. He has made no public comments on the matter since Feb. 1.

"We remain confident in University of Missouri Athletic Director Jim Sterk," Missouri chancellor Alexander Cartwright and University of Missouri system president Mun Y. Choi said in a joint statement. "Since he came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court. He has proven himself to be an excellent administrator."
Staley’s team won the national championship in 2017, and she is a member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and coach of the United States women’s national team.

*Similar stories ran in sports outlets across the country*

![SEC Country Logo](image)

**University of Missouri chancellor, president release statement on Dawn Staley’s lawsuit**

By: Brian Stultz

*The University of Missouri Chancellor Alexander Cartwright and University of Missouri System President Mun Y. Choi have released a joint statement pertaining to the lawsuit South Carolina women’s basketball coach Dawn Staley filed against athletic director Jim Sterk, per Dave Matter.*

“We remain confident in University of Missouri athletic director Jim Sterk. Since he came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court. He has proven himself to be an excellent administrator.”

On Thursday, it was reported that Staley had filed a defamation lawsuit against Sterk. The lawsuit stems from what Sterk said about Staley following an intense matchup between the Gamecocks and Tigers in Columbia, S.C., when it was alleged that South Carolina fans spit on Missouri players.

“It wasn’t a great atmosphere. It was really kind of unhealthy, if you will,” Sterk said. “We had players spit on and called the N-word and things like that. It was not a good environment, and unfortunately I think Coach Staley promoted that kind of atmosphere, and it’s unfortunate she felt she had to do that. It wasn’t good.”

“The accusations are serious and false. It’s going to be handled, but not right here, and not in the manner in which they were dealt. That’s all I’m going to say about that.”
In the lawsuit, Staley is seeking an award of no more than $75,000.

The SEC announced on Thursday that Sterk had been fined $25,000 and reprimanded by the league office, and that the conference will review the game management procedures and visiting team security at South Carolina.

“Both Missouri and South Carolina have cultivated highly successful women’s basketball programs, which enjoy tremendous fan support and have earned the respect of this office,” SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey said. “While we always appreciate a healthy level of competitive intensity on the court, there is no place in this league for discord inside or outside of the arena. I have had multiple conversations over the past few weeks with representatives of both schools about the problems emanating from their January 28 game and it has been my desire for those issues to be mutually resolved between the athletic programs and individuals involved. Unfortunately, a mutual resolution does not appear imminent. Our hope is that we can direct our focus back where it belongs — on our student-athletes and on-court competition.”

South Carolina's Dawn Staley files defamation lawsuit against Mizzou AD Jim Sterk

By TYLER MURRY


COLUMBIA, S.C. - According to records, South Carolina women's basketball coach Dawn Staley filed a defamation lawsuit against Mizzou Athletic Director Jim Sterk today after comments made by Sterk during a radio interview on KTGR in January.

Staley is suing Sterk for $75,000 not including court and legal fees, and Sterk has 30 days to respond.

Following Mizzou's loss to South Carolina on Jan. 28, Sterk alleged opposing fans spit and used racial slurs at Mizzou's players and coaches as they walked off the court.
“It wasn’t a great atmosphere. It was really kind of unhealthy if you will,” Sterk told “The Big Show”. “We had players spit on and called the N-word and things like that. It was not a good environment. And unfortunately, I think Coach Staley promoted that kind of atmosphere, and it’s unfortunate that she felt she had to do that.”

According to court records received, the lawsuit claims Sterk's statement that "Coach Staley promoted a hostile and negative atmosphere designed to incite riotous conduct at a college basketball game in which her team was participating was false, defamatory, reckless and made with actual malice in that the Defendant knew the statement was false and still made it with reckless disregard for the truth."

Sterk also met with South Carolina's athletic director and SEC commissioner Greg Sankey in February to discuss Sterk's statements and what transpired after the game.

Today, the SEC announced a public reprimand and fine of $25,000 against Sterk for a violation of the conference's code of ethics based on his statements. The SEC also mandated an office-led reviews of South Carolina's game management procedures and visiting team security.

In a statement, SEC commissioner Greg Sankey said, "Both Missouri and South Carolina have cultivated highly successful women's basketball programs, which enjoy tremendous fan support, and have earned the respect of this office. While we always appreciate a healthy level of competitive intensity on the court, there is no place in this league for discord inside or outside of the arena. I have had multiple conversations over the past few weeks with representatives of both schools about the problems emanating from their January 28 game and it has been my desire for those issues to be mutually resolved between the athletic programs and individuals involved. Unfortunately, a mutual resolution does not appear imminent. Our hope is that we can direct our focus back where it belongs – on our student-athletes and on-court competition.”

We reached out to the South Carolina athletic department for a comment, but it declined to make a statement on the lawsuit.

In a statement, UM system chancellor Alexander Cartwright and system president Mun Choi said, "We remain confident in University of Missouri Athletic Director Jim Sterk. Since he came here in August 2016, Jim has exhibited a passion for our student athletes and their success and safety both on and off the court. He has proven himself to be an excellent administrator."

South Carolina Athletic Director Ray Tanner released a statement Jan. 31 stating, “The commitment to a secure environment for everyone at our home games, including fans, student-athletes, coaches and staff from the home and visiting teams is of the utmost importance. In anticipation of this rivalry game, the athletics department provided security for the Missouri basketball team, above its standard operating procedure. Upon hearing the accusations regarding our crowd’s behavior towards the Missouri team, the athletics department conducted a review of our operations from the game, including interviews with staff and security personnel. In this
review, we received no confirmation of the alleged behavior directed at the visiting team by fans at the game.”

On Jan. 31, Staley said, "The allegations are false and they will be handled as such. That’s all I’m going to say about it."

**UPDATED: South Carolina coach files defamation lawsuit against Mizzou athletic director**

By STEVE LAMBSON AND OLIVIA GERLING


COLUMBIA - The head coach of the University of South Carolina's women's basketball team filed a defamation lawsuit Thursday against MU Athletic Director Jim Sterk.

The lawsuit, filed by Dawn Staley, accuses Sterk of libel/slander for suggesting she promoted a reportedly racist atmosphere after the Tigers' game against the Gamecocks on January 28.

According to the lawsuit, following the game, South Carolina Director of Athletics Ray Tanner began looking into claims of inappropriate behavior by Gamecocks fans, directed toward Mizzou players. On January 30, Tanner said he couldn't confirm any such behavior.

The suit said, despite that finding, Sterk said the following in an interview on KTGR radio:
"It wasn't a great atmosphere. It was really kind of unhealthy...we had our players spit on, and called the N-word, and things like that. It was not a good environment and unfortunately, I think Coach Staley promoted that kind of atmosphere, and it's unfortunate she felt she had to do that."

The statement was later carried by other news outlets, like ESPN, the New York Times and Washington Post, according to the suit.

Staley is seeking up to $75,000 in damages.

**Is the University of South Carolina’s women’s basketball coach considered a public figure?**

According to University of Missouri School of Law professor Sandy Davidson, that is the question to decide the defamation lawsuit filed against MU Athletic Director Jim Sterk.

“That often is the deciding factor in a libel suit,” she said.

According to the suit, USC Athletic Director Ray Tanner made a statement on January 30. He said there was “no confirmation of the alleged behavior directed at the visiting team by the fans of the game.”

But Davidson said proving a libel case is difficult.

“We’re talking about defamation,” she said. “What we’re talking about is damage to a reputation.”

She said cases like this are split into public officials and public figures, and private individuals.

“How you are categorized makes all the difference on how likely you are to succeed in a defamation suit,” Davidson said.

In the upcoming case, the court will be looking at whether Staley can be considered a public figure or not.

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**South Carolina's Dawn Staley files defamation lawsuit against Mizzou AD Jim Sterk**
A recent MU study has found that a majority of Instagram users are more likely to use the social media platform to engage with social or entertainment images than with political or controversial images. The study was led by T.J. Thomson, a doctoral candidate in the School of Journalism, and Keith Greenwood, an associate professor of journalism.

According to Thomson, about 4.2 billion likes are exchanged on Instagram each day, but they are not equally distributed. This topic was therefore chosen to further understand why certain kinds of images attract more engagement or why certain kinds of users respond to them the way they do.

For this study, Thomson and Greenwood chose a group of 30 individuals, with their ages ranging from late teens to mid-40s and presented each of them with a collection of 50 random photographs that were from some of the most popular Instagram accounts.

They were then asked to arrange those images in an inverted pyramid, starting with images they were least likely to engage with on the left to the images they would definitely engage with on the right. Thomson also conducted personal interviews with each individual to get some background or depth on their responses.

The key finding from this study was how users are more likely to interact with social or entertainment images and are less drawn to political or controversial images.

“The reasons for this are multifaceted,” Thomson said in his article “I ‘Like’ That: Exploring the Characteristics That Promote Social Media Engagement With News Photographs.”
“Some users said they felt badly about ‘liking’ a photo of a tragedy while others said they get ‘serious’ news from other sources and Instagram is an oasis where they can escape from the troubles and concerns of everyday life,” he said in the article.

Another important finding was that because users’ engagement is public, they are aware that their likes have visibility and they consciously promote certain content by “liking” it, Thomson said.

This study helped reveal three main categories of Instagram users.

The “Feature Lovers” are the group of people that are more interested in features or adventurous photographs because that’s something they can’t see as easily through other sources, Greenwood said.

The “News Hounds” are people who use Instagram as another news source. They try to track visual news and see things about what’s going on in the world, Greenwood said.

The “Optimists” are a group of people engaged most strongly with images that were uplifting, positive, empowering or funny while disregarding photos that showed armed force, military might or weapons of destruction, Thomson said.

Various organizations, especially news outlets, can use this study to determine how to better engage with their target market and reach a greater audience using Instagram.

“The newsworthy or gritty aspects of life can achieve good engagement provided that they are rendered in aesthetic and empowering ways,” Thomson said.

Thomson said starting off with a simple, clean image on the first frame and using the multi-post feature on Instagram can be helpful.

Instagram users are more drawn to images that are original, authentic and tend to stand out. Getting closer to the subject in the image or isolating one feature helps simplify its composition, Thomson said.

“By thinking about and applying these principles, you can create Instagram content that is more thoughtful, engaging and attractive to your audience so you can differentiate your brand and stand out in the chaotic media landscape,” Thomson said.
What You Need to Know About the Greitens Indictment

By NATHAN LAWRENCE • 12 HOURS AGO

Interview with University of Missouri School of Law Associate Professor Ben Trachtenberg.

Listen to the story: http://kbia.org/post/what-you-need-know-about-greitens-indictment#stream/0

Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens was indicted Thursday evening on a charge of felony invasion of privacy. But what does that mean, and how will it affect Missouri politics?

What is an indictment?

An indictment is a legal process where a grand jury decides that the attorney prosecuting a case has enough evidence to begin basic criminal proceedings.

It’s the first step in a long process. Later, Greitens will be informed of his charges in a process called arraignment, then given a chance to plea - but for now, he has just been booked by the police and sent home.

What does Greitens stand accused of?

The indictment alleges that Greitens photographed a woman in a state of undress without her knowledge or consent, when she may have been expected to have privacy, then stored that image using a computer or other digital device.

Why is it so important that he may have used a digital device?

In Missouri, the crime of invasion of privacy starts out as a misdemeanor, but if these images are stored or distributed digitally it becomes a much more serious charge—a felony—because that image can then be used to embarrass, attack or harass a victim. Some people refer to this as “revenge porn.”

So does this mean Gov. Greitens is out of a job?

Not necessarily. The indictment process is unrelated to Greitens’ job as governor of Missouri. However, as court proceedings move forward, they could become increasingly inconvenient or embarrassing. So far, he has opted not to resign, and in a statement earlier this evening, he said he has no plans to.
A number of Missouri legislators have signaled they plan to begin to move toward impeachment, which would force Greitens to leave office, but that, too, is a long road.

MU Confucius Institute to host Chinese New Year Showcase Friday

BY NICOLE SCHROEDER

The MU Confucius Institute will host a Chinese New Year Showcase to celebrate the Spring Festival at 7 p.m. Friday at the Missouri Theatre.

The event will include traditional Chinese music, singing, dancing, martial arts and other performances involved in celebration of the Chinese New Year, or Spring Festival. The showcase will be free and open to the public.

Spring Festival is the most important holiday of the year in Chinese culture, said Bridget Caddell, program coordinator for the institute. The celebration revolves around families gathering, she said, and welcoming in the new year through participating in customs such as wearing red for luck and lion dancing.

The event will be put on by students in Chinese classes throughout Columbia Public Schools, Caddell said. Students range from seventh-graders to high-schoolers, and they have been preparing for the event since November.