



**MU News Bureau**

*Daily Clips Packet*

September 26, 2017



## Details of contract between UM system and PR firm released

*Firm was hired after campus protests*

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/details-of-contract-between-um-system-and-pr-firm-released/626243368>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **An open records request has revealed how much the University of Missouri agreed to pay a public relations firm.**

Last week, Mizzou confirmed with ABC 17 News that Edelman PR was hired after the fall 2015 campus protests.

ABC 17 News obtained the terms of this past year's agreement Monday.

The contract shows from July 2016 to June 2017, the university agreed to pay the firm no more than roughly \$350,000. The university signed another contract with the firm that will run from July 2017 through June 2018. That contract is estimated at \$123,600 plus additional expenses.

The contract with Edelman includes various tasks and services the university felt they needed help with after the Fall 2015 protests.

The services include a communications protocol manual "with predetermined roles and responsibilities for varying reactive issues."

To do this, Edelman gathered information about the university's "current processes, priority issues with key stakeholders and relationship owners through targeted interviews with leadership groups."

Edelman was then tasked with creating a "comprehensive communications manual with predetermined issue/crisis definitions," and "prepared messages for priority scenarios" including back-to-school, homecoming, the anniversary of the protests and new leadership announcements.

The firm also agreed to identify roles and responsibilities for system leadership in crisis situations, among other things.

The contract also included presentation coaching that included five "coaching/training sessions" for the university. The university's president, curators and chancellors were among those who participated in the sessions.

In the coaching sessions, Edelman was to "teach and reinforce the messages developed in the communications protocol manual." The sessions also aimed to teach the participants how to tailor messages for key stakeholders, take control of interviews and deliver difficult messages confidently.

Edelman was also contracted to provide at 12-month "integrated, proactive system-wide calendar for sharing positive news." These spotlight stories were to feature "all campuses, associations, affiliations, programs and subsidiaries including University of Missouri Health Care and University of Missouri Extension."

The current agreement will have Edelman focus on promotion and protection of the university. Promotion will include things like branding, employee engagement and marketing. Protection continues to focus on crisis preparedness, media training and support.

Edelman is one of the country's top PR firms whose client list has included Penn State University after the university's sex scandal, Girl Rising, REI and Arby's.



## [Save money and grow wealth in 2017: 5 secrets to getting richer this fall](#)

**Story generated by MU News Bureau release: [Life Differences Make Women Less Risk Tolerant When Investing](#)**

By JAMES DENIN

With the carefree days of summer [vacation](#) fading fast from memory — and the rush of [holiday shopping](#) still a few months away — autumn is a great time to get your finances in order. For some people, that could mean getting serious about looking for a higher-paying, [better gig](#) (new job November, anyone?); for others, it could mean planning changes to your [health insurance](#) for 2018. And for everyone, fall is a great time to take stock of budget shortfalls so you can finally start hitting long-delayed [goals](#).

The first tasks to tackle are essential one you've put off. Still haven't filed your taxes? [Oct. 15](#) is the final deadline for your 2016 return, assuming you got an extension. When it comes to health care, if you're getting a subsidy for your insurance under Obamacare and have had a change in income, gotten married or experienced another [qualifying event](#), it's important to [update](#) your financial information to avoid any unpleasant [penalties](#) come tax time next year.

The next step is planning for the year ahead by looking at your current spending, saving and investing habits. You'll also want to make sure you've locked down your personal information to avoid any negative fallout — like identity theft — following the [Equifax hack](#).

To that end, here are five important things you can do to get richer this fall.

### **1. Get paid more, either at your current job or in a new one**

The best time to look for a job is when you already have one: A recent [paper](#) published in the National Bureau of Economic Research estimates that after controlling for observable characteristics, the unemployed receive job offers with salaries that are about 28% lower than people who have a job.

Fall also happens to be the best season to look for a job. One recruiter told [Monster](#) that about 36% of the offers his firm sends out are made in the fourth quarter. The reason is cynical: The end of the year is when employers most like to spend on hiring as a means of reducing their year-end tax burden.

To that end, you may want to consider [polishing up](#) the old résumé, and applying to some more senior positions in your field before the holidays. And if you really don't like your field, consider seeing a career counselor or doing some [soul-searching](#) to decide what kind of job you want next.

Finally, if you feel like you're hitting a wall, you could also consider acquiring some [new skills](#) in coding, fitness or "budtending." Or you could look into studying up to become a data scientist, which Glassdoor recently named the "[best job in America](#)" for high median income and job satisfaction marks.

### **2. Secure your tax refund from identity thieves**

Sometimes the best way to grow richer is simply by protecting the money you have — or that is due to you — so you can [pay yourself](#) and put it to work as soon as possible. And given that the personal information [leaked by Equifax](#) included social security numbers, it's a good time to take some steps to safeguard your identity and credit.

At the very least, you should change your [passwords](#) and consider placing a “[credit freeze](#)” to prevent thieves from opening new lines of credit in your name. You also may want to take some steps to protect your [tax refund](#).

The easiest way to do that is by filing your taxes early in 2018, so a [scammer](#) doesn't beat you to the punch and nab your refund. “If you can file early it's a great thing to do, particularly if you think you may be entitled to a large refund,” Jeffrey Levine, director of financial planning at New York-based BluePrint Wealth Alliance said. “It becomes a little bit more valuable now that we're in a heightened risk environment.”

Another trick is to [reduce the amount](#) of money your employer withholds from each paycheck. That makes your tax refund smaller, which will limit the amount of money a scammer can steal from you if they do try to pocket your refund. Plus, there's a [smart financial case](#) for getting a smaller refund.

### **3. Take a cue from behavioral economics**

You probably know that if you're frugal, your wallet will thank you — but a new [study](#) from researchers at the University of Illinois sheds light on how a “wait and see” approach to purchasing decisions pays off in more ways than one.

The study analyzed the relationship between 400 farmers in Nicaragua, as they weighed whether or not to sell their produce to Walmart when the retailer expanded into the country. It then tracked their sales over the next eight years.

What they found was that so-called “early adopters” — farmers who were quicker to begin selling to Walmart — ended up bearing more of the expansion's costs than the farmers who waited to see how the other farmers fared. As the expansion continued, Walmart rejected less fruit and started paying a better price.

Essentially, early adopters subsidized the cost of Walmart's expansion while the later adopters were able to learn from everyone's mistakes getting, as lead researcher Hope Michelson put it, a “free ride on the information provided by those early adopters.” Economists call this “strategic delay.”

To apply that thinking to your own life, build in a forced waiting period before you make any big purchase, whether it's the new [iPhone](#) or a new couch.

If you're lucky, the price might drop while you wait or you may figure out a way to get a better deal elsewhere while you wait. [Time and again](#), evidence suggests taking a long-term view tends to pay off.

#### 4. Rethink your approach to risks

Risk tolerance, an [investment](#) term that essentially describes how much we can watch the value of our retirement accounts rise and fall without becoming so nervous we act rashly — appears to be a major determinant of retirement outcomes. Alas, there's widespread [evidence](#) that young people today are risk-averse to a fault.

Simply avoiding investing in the stock market, for example, could cost a retiree more than \$3 million over the course of a career. **And one reason why women have lower net worths relative to men — aside from the fact that they are still paid far less — is that they're more likely to have their money tied up in low-risk investments, according to a [paper from researchers at the University of Missouri](#).**

“Men are more likely to say ‘I want to take above-average risk,’ and then you see that difference in their portfolio choice as well, women have more conservative portfolios,” said Rui Yao, a professor of financial planning and author of the study. “But [women] live longer, they need more money, so if they want to maintain their living standard after they retire, they should actually invest in more risky assets.”

Of course, it is not just women or young people who need to heed this warning.

Figuring out the right balance of risk and reward is a really hard thing for investors to conceptualize, said Paul Bennett, a certified financial planner and author of *The Money Navigator*, but particularly so for today's young savers who have never lived through a stock market crash.

“There are trade-offs on every strategy,” Bennett said. “But people probably overestimate how risk tolerant they are; they probably think they are more tolerant than they are.”

The best ways to solve this problem? Use the [risk assessments](#) from robo-advisers to get a sense of what sorts of [investments](#) people with your risk tolerance usually have. Also remember that the earlier you start investing, the more likely it is you can take bigger risks with assets like [stocks](#)— though Yao said the proportion of risky investments you hold should shift over time.

#### 5. Turn your hobbies into cold, hard cash

In the early days of fall, it can be hard to shake off that summer mindset and [get back](#) into the swing of work: The days are getting shorter, not longer, and without long weekends to look forward to, your [workplace motivation](#) may be starting to wane.

If that sounds like you, you might consider taking up a hobby, according to a new [paper](#) from researchers at the University of Toronto. They found that human motivation does not actually decline throughout the day, as previously thought — as long as you don't spend the day doing the same exact activity.

“People get tired of doing one specific task over a period of time,” said Dan Randles, a postdoctoral fellow who worked on the study, in a press release. “[But] we found no evidence that they had less motivation or ability to complete tasks throughout the day.”

That would suggest there's a strong argument for trying to squeeze in an extra coffee [break](#) or two during the day, talking to your boss about taking on [some new responsibilities](#) at work or even picking up a new hobby.

If the hobby involves a creative pursuit, it might be able to [pay off](#) in more ways than one: Close to 30% of side-hustlers are involved in some sort of creative endeavor, according to [Finder](#), making an average of about \$3,075 in extra cash each year.

Need more inspiration? Check out our roundup of ways to [become an actual millionaire](#).

# T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

## What are they hiding?

### REWRITTEN FROM STL POST-DISPATCH STORY

Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway reviewed state legal expenses and found that agencies not typically monitored had paid \$36.8 million to settle legal disputes over the past two years, double the amount already reported by the attorney general's office. Galloway's report on an audit of the State Legal Expense Fund says the payments were eligible expenditures under the fund but that agencies paid them out of their own budgets.

A lack of transparency and oversight is costing taxpayers more money and could be helping state agencies hide patterns of abusive behavior by their employees. That has to change.

The Legal Expense Fund, a pool of money appropriated by the Legislature, is used to make payments from lawsuits against the state. Galloway says there is no system in place to track the amount and nature of payments, and reports on spending from the attorney general's office do not identify the types of legal problems being covered.

The system is outdated and can't even produce basic electronic reports, Galloway adds. The state's Office of Administration and the attorney general's office administer the fund jointly. The system's inadequacies make it difficult to identify whether a state agency is experiencing unusually high numbers of certain types of claims.

"A culture of workplace discrimination does not pop up overnight," Galloway said in a statement. Proper monitoring mechanisms would give the state "the ability to identify and intervene, instead of blindly shelling out millions in taxpayer dollars and allowing inappropriate conduct to continue."

An adequate oversight system would possibly prevent ongoing problems such as the sexual harassment and discrimination claims that engulfed the state Department of Corrections last year. Galloway's audit examined \$4.2 million in corrections department legal expenses, 75 percent of which involved claims of employment discrimination. Last year, *The Pitch*, a Kansas City weekly newspaper, reported the fund spent more than \$7.5 million over five years to settle or pay judgments against the department.

Agencies that use their own budgets to settle legal claims instead of the Legal Expense Fund endure even less scrutiny. **For example, the report says the University of Missouri reported paying more than \$17 million for settlements or judgments on 27 medical liability claims and 213 other claims in the two-year period.**

The money agencies spent outside of the Legal Expense Fund was on top of roughly the same amount already reported being spent by the Missouri attorney general's office. Without an adequate reporting system, lawmakers must guess how much money to appropriate for legal expenses. For example, they appropriated \$6.7 million for legal settlements for the last fiscal year. The actual expense was \$24.2 million.

Transparency and oversight would help the budgeting process and also help identify situations in which the state should intervene to prevent agencies from continuing bad employment practices.



## **Bone marrow concentrate speeds joint transplant recovery**

Posted by Jeff Hoelscher-U. Missouri September 26th, 2017

**Generated from MU Health Care press release.**

Treating donor bone grafts with bone marrow aspirate concentrate (BMC) before knee transplant surgery can improve bone integration and speed recovery, research suggests.

“...pretreatment with BMC reduces the risk of bone graft failure and improves the patients’ chances for long term success.”

Biologic joint restoration using donor tissue instead of traditional metal and plastic may be an option for active patients with joint defects. Although recovery from a biologic joint repair is typically longer than traditional replacement, successful biologic restoration allows patients to return to full activity. However, in some cases, the transplanted bone does not heal correctly.

**“Surgeons performing biologic joint restoration surgeries typically only wash the donor bone to remove the marrow as a pretreatment before implanting the graft,” says James Cook, the chair in orthopaedic surgery at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. “Once implanted, the recipient’s bone has to grow into the donor bone for the surgery to be successful. This graft integration involves a long process called ‘creeping substitution’ that**

**can take more than a year to complete. The first six months are the most critical for success, so we have been studying ways to make this process better and faster.”**

Cook’s team compared 17 biologic knee joint grafts implanted without BMC to 29 grafts pretreated with BMC. Post-surgical X-ray images at six weeks, three months, and six months were compared for graft integration and healing.

The grafts pretreated with BMC achieved 43 percent bone integration at six weeks, compared to 25 percent of those not treated. Likewise, at three months, pretreated grafts achieved 67 percent integration, compared to 50 percent of the untreated grafts. At six months, the researchers observed that the pretreated grafts were more than 84 percent fully integrated, compared to 74 percent of untreated grafts.

Cook led a pre-clinical study earlier in 2017 that showed BMC provides cells to infiltrate the donor bone and release proteins important to bone healing. In this current study, the researchers reviewed biologic knee replacement outcomes related to BMC use in humans.

“To pretreat a graft with BMC, the patient’s bone marrow is collected at the start of the procedure,” Cook says. “It is processed in the operating room using a centrifuge to make a powerful concentrate containing the patient’s cells and proteins. The resulting BMC is used to saturate the donor bone before it is implanted into the patient’s joint.”

#### [Team watches as fat cells become bone tissue](#)

“The use of BMC is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for bone healing therapies,” Cook says. “It has not been used specifically for biologic joint restoration procedures. I believe this is the first clinical study to directly examine the effects of BMC on bone integration for biologic joint restoration surgeries. Our data show that donor grafts pretreated with BMC were associated with earlier and better bone integration. This means that pretreatment with BMC reduces the risk of bone graft failure and improves the patients’ chances for long term success.”

Biologic joint replacement cost varies based on factors such as the extent of repair needed. More extensive repairs can exceed \$100,000. BMC cost can exceed \$1,000. Most health insurance policies cover the procedure.

Although the results are favorable, Cook notes the study has limitations, including the size of the patient sample.

“Moving forward, we will verify that similar results can be obtained in a larger patient population,” Cook says. “We also want to see if the same positive outcomes can be achieved in other joints, such as hips, shoulders and ankles. However, based on the results of our two studies, we now pretreat all our biologic joint restoration grafts with BMC.”

#### [Myth: The weather makes your joints ache](#)

The study appears in the [\*American Journal of Sports Medicine\*](#). The university’s Thompson Laboratory for Regenerative Orthopaedics, the university’s orthopaedic surgery department, and the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute provided funding for the study.

Cook is a paid consultant and receives royalties from Arthrex Inc., a global medical device company that manufactures the needles and kits used for extracting and processing BMC.



## [\*\*MU researcher: Bone marrow concentrate improves joint transplants\*\*](#)

**Story generated by MU Health Care press release.**

Biologic joint restoration using donor tissue instead of traditional metal and plastic may be an option for active patients with joint defects.

Biologic joint restoration using donor tissue instead of traditional metal and plastic may be an option for active patients with joint defects.

Although recovery from a biologic joint repair is typically longer than traditional replacement, successful biologic restoration allows patients to return to full activity. However, in some cases, the transplanted bone does not heal correctly. **Researchers at the University of Missouri School of Medicine found in a group of patients that treating donor grafts with bone marrow aspirate concentrate (BMC) before surgery improves bone integration and speeds recovery.**

“Surgeons performing biologic joint restoration surgeries typically only wash the donor bone to remove the marrow as a pretreatment before implanting the graft,” said James Cook, D.V.M., Ph.D., O.T.S.C., the William and Kathryn Allen Distinguished Chair in Orthopaedic Surgery at the MU School of Medicine. “Once implanted, the recipient’s bone has to grow into the donor bone for the surgery to be successful. This graft integration involves a long process called ‘creeping substitution’ that can take more than a year to complete. The first six months are the most critical for success, so we have been studying ways to make this process better and faster.”

Cook’s team compared 17 biologic knee joint grafts implanted without BMC to 29 grafts pretreated with BMC. Post-surgical X-ray images at six weeks, three months and six months were compared for graft integration and healing.

The grafts pretreated with BMC achieved 43 percent bone integration at six weeks, compared to 25 percent of those not treated. Likewise, at three months, pretreated grafts achieved 67 percent integration, compared to 50 percent of the untreated grafts. At six months, the researchers observed that the pretreated grafts were more than 84 percent fully integrated, compared to 74 percent of untreated grafts.

Cook, who also serves as director of operations and research at MU Health Care’s Mizzou BioJointSM Center and director of the Thompson Laboratory for Regenerative Orthopaedics, led a pre-clinical study earlier in 2017 that showed BMC provides cells to infiltrate the donor bone and release proteins important to bone healing. In this current study, the researchers reviewed biologic knee replacement outcomes related to BMC use in humans.

“To pretreat a graft with BMC, the patient’s bone marrow is collected at the start of the procedure,” Cook said. “It is processed in the operating room using a centrifuge to make a powerful concentrate containing the patient’s cells and proteins. The resulting BMC is used to saturate the donor bone before it is implanted into the patient’s joint.”

“The use of BMC is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for bone healing therapies,” Cook said. “It has not been used specifically for biologic joint restoration procedures. I believe this is the first clinical study to directly examine the effects of BMC on bone integration for biologic joint restoration surgeries. Our data show that donor grafts pretreated with BMC were associated with earlier and better bone integration. This means that pretreatment with BMC reduces the risk of bone graft failure and improves the patients’ chances for long-term success.”

Biologic joint replacement cost varies based on factors such as the extent of repair needed. More extensive repairs can exceed \$100,000. BMC cost can exceed \$1,000. Most health insurance policies cover the procedure.

Although the results are favorable, Cook noted the study has limitations, including the size of the patient sample studied.

“Moving forward, we will verify that similar results can be obtained in a larger patient population,” Cook said. “We also want to see if the same positive outcomes can be achieved in other joints, such as hips, shoulders and ankles. However, based on the results of our two studies, we now pretreat all our biologic joint restoration grafts with BMC.”

The study, “Effects of Autogenous Bone Marrow Aspirate Concentrate on Radiographic Integration of Femoral Condylar Osteochondral Allografts,” recently was published in The American Journal of Sports Medicine. Funding for the study was provided by the MU Thompson Laboratory for Regenerative Orthopaedics, the MU Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute.

Cook is a paid consultant and receives royalties from Arthrex Inc., a global medical device company that manufactures the needles and kits used for extracting and processing BMC.



## Mizzou to Assess Student Affairs

Watch the story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=8c9a9bd6-dd9d-41e3-9d77-08dbec33a317>



## MU associate professor Rabia Gregory to use \$30,000 grant to improve the teaching of religious diversity

By MORGAN SMITH

**Associate religious studies professor Rabia Gregory recently received a \$30,000 grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to develop a program geared toward improving the way religious diversity is taught not only at MU but also across the state of Missouri.**

The two-year program will aim to spark meaningful dialogue between professors, students and other members of the community about topics such as race, religion and discrimination during its first year.

“As with so many things related to money, in a way this grant gives us not only the resources to do important work but also gives us the ability to take the time to do [it],” Gregory said.

The first events to be held this semester will be free listening sessions open to the public. These will involve Gregory and potentially other professors mediating discussions between participants.

“Frankly, my biggest goal is having meaningful conversations, not just faculty lecturing, but dialog between different members of our community,” Gregory said.

The debut session will be Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the Fireplace Lounge in Hulston Hall and will focus on race and religion. Gregory said a great deal of misinformation about the two, especially in regard to Islam, has affected how people view global and national news recently.

“Religion certainly isn’t the only part of that, but it’s a big part of it,” Gregory said. “Religious perspectives often shape the ways that individuals become political activists, the ways that people think about their obligations as a citizen.”

The grant will also fund the creation of a survey covering issues of religion, which will be distributed throughout MU and Columbia and possibly other schools that teach religion.

The Campus Climate Survey results released this past month showed that 6,766 survey participants identified as having one or multiple religious/spiritual identities out of 9,750 respondents total.

“One thing that I hope we’re going to be able to do with this project is to get a real sense of what the religious diversity on this campus is, where people are, where they came from and what their faith perspectives are,” Gregory said.

Gregory has been with the religious studies department at MU for 10 years and has received other grants to further personal research as well as to develop her own teaching methods.

This particular grant will allow the entire department to get involved through not only the listening sessions but also teaching retreats and various other events, particularly during the program’s second year. Gregory will also travel across the state to learn more about Missouri’s religious diversity.

“I think one of the most important things that we can do as scholars who work on religion at a public university is think about how our knowledge can help change the ways that citizens understand their own religions and the religions of others in relation to world events,” Gregory said.

Graduate student Alexandra Goans is working toward her master’s degree in religious studies and has been hired as the primary researcher to assist in the creation of the survey as well as to catalog the responses from the listening sessions.

Goans was a senior finishing her undergraduate degree in 2015 when protests occurred on MU’s campus.

“It seemed like a lot of people didn’t understand what it was like to be a minority on campus and I think that that really translates to the university system as a whole,” Goans said.

Goans believes the work of this program could change that.

“The long-term goal is to develop a systematic strategy for teaching,” Goans said. “If we can accomplish this, the university climate, and hopefully the climate of other universities across the state and the country, can have a more inclusive, more diverse, more accepting university body.”



## Mizzou to Unveil New Name for Academic Retention Services

Watch the story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=8b6da664-e713-4b71-bf1d-6a978979d0e0>

**Diverse**<sup>®</sup>  
ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### Racism, Bullying Best Defeated by a Team

By ANDRE PERRY

Bullying is not a newly discovered problem. But there is no denying it has been exacerbated by the President of the United States, Donald Trump. His singling out of sports figures Steph Curry, Jemele Hill and Colin Kaepernick for their stands against bigotry is more evidence that Trump takes a literal interpretation of the bully pulpit idea. How these Black sportsmen and women form a team against racism offers tormented youth a playbook on how to deal with bullies.

One in four children are bullied. That's the main finding of a new study conducted by [YouthTruth](#), a national nonprofit that conducts student surveys on educational issues. The results, which will be released tomorrow, repeated last year's findings.

When I shared the one-in-four stat with a father of two, he told me, "Power plays happen in all kinds of social settings. Schools aren't different." He went on to say, "Part of an education is learning how to deal with mean people."

He could have been referring to President Trump, who this past weekend "[dis-invited](#)" the basketball star and two-time Most Valuable Player of the NBA Steph Curry from a not-yet scheduled visit to the White House with a [tweet](#) — *after* the Golden State Warriors' point guard had already said he wouldn't go to the White House if his team asked.

Dating back to the 1960's, it has been tradition for champions of major sports teams to take part in a White House ceremony. Another former MVP, LeBron James, [chimed in with his own tweet](#): "U bum @StephenCurry30 already said he ain't going! So therefore ain't no invite. Going to White House was a great honor until you showed up!" Curry and James play on rival teams and have played against each other in multiple championships, but they are on the same team against hate.

A week earlier, the White House broke presidential etiquette by calling for the ouster of a private citizen, ESPN broadcaster Jemele Hill, who called Trump a white supremacist—partially based on his racist remarks about immigrants, his likening of Nazis with their counter-protestors, as well as his past discriminatory housing practices and race-baiting [campaign against the Central Park Five](#). As James did for Curry, Hill's colleagues created a unified front against harassment. The progressive news site [ThinkProgress broke](#) the exclusive that ESPN executives tried to remove Hill from her show three hours after the White House said she should be fired, but her black colleagues refused to replace her, forcing the network brass to keep Hill on the air.

Last Friday, in a political rally in Alabama, Trump attempted to bully NFL players who follow Kaepernick's lead in taking a knee during the national anthem in protest of police brutality since 2016. "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a b— off the field right now. Out. He's fired! He's fired,'" [howled Trump](#).

In a sports-obsessed country, Americans, particularly young people, admire and emulate black athletes who dominate two of the most revenue-generating professional sports, football and basketball, as well as their own sports teams in high school and college. We follow black athletes' workout habits, styles, relationships and, maybe now, the way they confront racist bullies.

YouthTruth surveyed more than 180,000 students in 37 states in grades five through 12 to learn "*how much, in what ways, and why* students are being bullied," according to the report.

Among students who were bullied, 44 percent said their appearance was the primary reason. Seventeen percent cited their race or skin color; 15 percent said it was because others thought they were gay. Socioeconomic class, religion, nationality, gender and disability were also cited as significant factors.

The bullies' primary weapon of choice was their mouth. The study found verbal bullying to be most prevalent, at 73 percent. Social bullying, which includes deliberately harming someone's reputation or relationships, [according to a government website](#), followed at 54 percent. Cyber bullying and physical harassment were less frequent at 28 and 23 percent respectively.

Bullying may be ubiquitous, but it doesn't have to be normalized—especially by the president.

Ironically, Donald and Melania Trump flatly contradicted each other last week. On September 19 at the United Nations General Assembly, President Trump made a pugnacious [speech](#) in which he said, "The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." The following day, at a United Nations' luncheon, First Lady Melania Trump said, "By our own example we must teach

children to be good stewards of the world they will inherit... We must remember that they are watching and listening... As adults we are not merely responsible. We are accountable.”

Trump’s position doesn’t pardon his bullying behaviors. And we need courageous people willing to take on the personal and professional risks of confronting Trump and racist bullies. Individuals can’t take on an administration bereft of moral reasoning. We need a team. Throughout history, athletes who exhibit heroism on the field have joined forces to combat hatred off of it.

Muhammad Ali held the U.S. government accountable for transnational militarism and domestic racism by refusing to be drafted for the Vietnam War in 1967. While the boxing federation and numerous states stripped Ali of his license to box, other black athletes, including fellow boxers and numerous prominent football and basketball players financially and outspokenly supported Ali as the government painted him a traitor.

Sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos gave the black power salute during the 200-meter medal ceremony at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, in protest of global segregation and human rights violations. Smith and Carlos were stripped of their medals and were sent home in disgrace. But the black community gave them a hero’s welcome. The [often-forgotten white athlete](#) in the iconic photo, Australian sprinter Peter Norman, supported Smith and Carlos by wearing a patch that read: “Olympic Project for Human Rights.” But unlike Smith and Carlos, Norman was shunned by his countrymen for his gesture of racial unity.

The significance of Colin Kaepernick protesting police brutality and racial injustice is clear. His teammates in the struggle can show they have his back by exercising their constitutional right and taking a knee in support. Several continue to protest. Oakland Athletics catcher Bruce Maxwell became the [first MLB player](#) to do so on Saturday, September 23, more than a year after Kaepernick’s demonstrations began. The next day, dozens of NFL players followed suit and flexed their cultural might in reaction to Trump’s verbal and cyber threats.

Black athletes are the heart of American culture. Singer/rapper Jidenna made it plain in a [tweet](#): “You can’t make America great again by going after athletes. Sports makes America great. [#TakeTheKnee](#)”.

**In 2015, the University of Missouri footballers [who joined black students in protest of racism on campus offered administrators an ultimatum: University System President Tim Wolfe had to go or the team wouldn’t play. In a matter of days, Wolfe resigned.](#)** From Jackie Robinson to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, we have countless examples of athletes using the power of protest and organizing to teach the rest of us how to beat back racism, xenophobia and militarism.

There is an opportunity to learn the deeper values of teamwork. When confronted by a bully we can take lessons from Jemele Hill, Steph Curry, and LeBron James, as well as Ali, Smith, Carlos, and Robinson. The most effective approach to bullying is a collective one.

*Dr. Andre Perry is a David M. Rubenstein Fellow at The Brookings Institution. This story was produced by [The Hechinger Report](#), a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education.*

# MISSOURIAN

## **GUEST COMMENTARY: American patriotism means standing up for those affected by bigotry**

STEPHANIE SHONEKAN

**Stephanie Shonekan is the chair of the department of black studies and an associate professor of ethnomusicology and black studies at the University of Missouri.**

The recent verdict in St. Louis raised the alarm, once again, about race in America and the validity of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. In anticipation of the ruling, the governor of Missouri ordered the national guard to be on standby, perhaps realizing that exonerating the white police officer who shot and killed Anthony Lamar Smith would reignite frustrations in a system that has failed African Americans.

This verdict arrived on the heels of much race-related activity. For instance, there is the disproportionate reaction to black athletes like Colin Kaepernick by the POTUS who called them all disdainful, unprintable epithets compared to his tepid and cautiously nuanced response to white supremacists who openly marched in Charlottesville in support of white nationalism.

The difference in these reactions should make us all ponder carefully and clearly. While the white nationalists, like the ones in Charlottesville, spew hatred for particular groups of Americans and seem intent on eroding the waves of progress gained painfully by so many Americans, black athletes are peacefully holding their country to a higher standard reflective of its aspirations as a nation where all citizens are valued.

These athletes, in their own way, are following in the footsteps of so many Americans who fought and sacrificed for the freedom of all Americans. So, who are the patriots? Those who want social justice for all or those who work to marginalize and oppress others?

The recent racist occurrences and outbursts are the tip of the iceberg, the most visible and public part of a deep and dangerous problem. But the part of the iceberg that lies hidden beneath the surface is much more dangerous and massive. It is that which is submerged that becomes the most subversive. The everyday occurrences that do not make it on to the news, that happen to us and we simply shake our heads and keep going through our day.

It is the story of the parents of the 5-year-old African American girl who was called an "ugly black witch" by the 5-year-old white boy in her pre-kindergarten class. It is the story of the two young black women who were pulled over in Columbia, Missouri for no other reason than the police having a suspicion that they might have weed. It is my student who was crossing the street and was almost run over by a white man in a truck who screamed "nigger" at her.

I know all these folks. I heard and understood their pain as they recounted their stories. These are happenings that occur every day, quietly adding to the subversive mass of dangerous ice below the surface.

It all seems hopeless, for how much chipping away can one group of people achieve against a system supported by the most powerful institutions and individuals? Until we are all concerned, even those of us who are not personally impacted, we remain up against a hard cold place.

Most black people know what lies beneath the surface because we have to deal with it every day. But the mainstream society seems mostly unaware of the everyday indignities that are served people of color, resulting in bursts of surprise and outrage every time the tip of the iceberg reveals itself again.

However, the tip of the iceberg is able to remain because nothing has changed beneath the surface. Perhaps it is time to plunge in and look under the surface, even if you are not personally impacted, and seek ways to act to change the shape of these hidden experiences. A recent

episode struck me deeply, and I offer it here as an example of the ugliness of racism and the hope that is possible when more of us act.

My husband works in an office that has heavy customer service traffic. He is the only black man on the team. One day last week a woman came in to get some advice on her concerns. The receptionist directed her to an office where my husband was waiting to assist her.

When the woman saw my husband standing there, she whispered to the receptionist, "Will I be safe in there with him?" The only reading of this reaction is that the woman has a racist lens through which she sees the world. It was not the well-ironed shirt my husband was wearing (he is obsessive about ironing his clothes), or the pair of glasses on his handsome face that raised a spontaneous reaction of fear in her. It was simply and completely the color of his skin. This is a textbook definition of racism.

When he recounted the story that evening, my heart went out to him because this was just another example of what black folks contend with every day. Often people call in and ask to speak to someone else because they are uncomfortable with his accent. But as I processed this latest episode, I began to realize that there were three heroes (patriots?) in this story.

The first, of course, is my husband who noticed the woman's hostility even before he heard about her comment, and yet still managed to treat her like any other client. The two other heroes were the receptionist who chose to tell my husband what the woman had whispered and the manager who heard about the encounter and called the woman to let her know that her behavior was unacceptable.

Neither of these white women were directly impacted by the racism, but someone they cared about — a colleague, a human being — had been attacked. They could have turned away, told him that he was overreacting, that the perpetrator was just a cranky lady. Instead they listened to him, absorbed part of his pain, believed him and acted to confront the source of racism. They looked beneath the surface to see a seemingly small racist act that had the potential to wound deeply.

My husband went to work the next day, still wary of the customers, but reassured that his colleagues had his back. We should never underestimate this feeling. It is now two years since a white colleague was fired ostensibly for her reaction to the events of 2015. But we know that what lay behind her reaction was that she deeply empathized and was affected by the pain of our black students.

I keep wondering how this incident and others like it have affected the ways that white bystanders react and respond to social justice issues that affect black students. This trend can be dangerous for our campus, for our community and ultimately for our democracy.

But what we need now are more people to be affected by the chill of racism, to speak up when they see something that goes against our values as a just society. We need to understand that many of the athletes and protesters in St. Louis have had experiences like this all their lives, that there is a level of exhaustion when only the affected folks chip away at the massive oppression by themselves. And, of course, we all must be intentional and adamant as we urge the wider society to rethink and reclaim the definition of “American patriot.”

# MISSOURIAN

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Chief Burton misrepresented Race Matters, Friends**

PEGGY PLACIER

**Peggy Placier is a Columbia resident, a retired MU faculty member and a member of Race Matters, Friends.**

Dear editor: For almost a week I pondered my response to Katherine Reed’s Sept. 17 interview with Columbia Police Chief Ken Burton. I decided to focus on his misrepresentation of Race Matters, Friends and our stances on racial disparities and community policing.

For months, RMF representatives have spoken (not yelled or screamed) at City Council meetings about these issues. We have met with the chief and his staff. We have provided research, reports from other police departments and cities and hours of expert assistance with data analysis.

We educate ourselves through reading, listening to experts and hearing from community members about their situations. We are serious people and this is not a hobby or a “passion.”

Yet Burton derides our large and varied group as “four or five middle aged white women” whose commitment to racial justice is baffling. Honestly? More serious than Burton’s inane attacks on RMF are his misunderstandings of racial “profiling” (a contested term we do not use) and community policing. We do not define the racial disparities that permeate the entire criminal justice system as the results of individual racism or what is “in somebody’s heart.”

I believe that is what Burton (like many white people) hears, and it raises his defenses. Then he spends more energy defending (“Are you calling me a racist?”) than getting to work on the culture, politics and policies that produce the findings. Or he stereotypically blames the community, single parent families, black-on-black crimes, gangs or poverty.

Community-oriented policing has been practiced in some cities for years. The literature and case studies are well developed. We know what it is supposed to look like. We have some beginning, partial examples in the three Community Outreach Units, which should be rigorously evaluated against the principles for community-oriented policing.

Burton’s portrayal of this philosophy is very limited. Again, he chooses to defend against demands for more robust implementation and evaluation because he does not want CPD to share power with community members. He perceives that as people “telling police how to police.” Burton says he is “tired” of years of the same cycle of responding to negative reports about CPD, “tired” of pressure first from NAACP and now RMF. “Frustrated.”

Well, so are we. But we won’t back down.



## Jess' story: Student who was "drowning" in depression shares recovery story

By: Datyona Everett

Watch the story: <http://www.komu.com/news/jess-story-student-who-was-drowning-in-depression-shares-recovery-story>

COLUMBIA – Jess Soehlke is like many college students: involved on campus, surrounded by friends, active in Greek life.

But earlier this year was another story. Beneath the surface, she was "drowning" in mental health issues.

“For most of my life, I’ve actually struggled with anxiety and depression,” she said. “But I never really got any help for it or anything like that until I was in high school.”

Professional therapy helped her for a little while, she said, until she went to college.

“This past year I kind of took a downfall a little bit with anxiety and depression,” Soehlke said about her junior year. “It became a lot for me to handle.”

She was having panic attacks four to five times a week making it impossible to lead a normal life, she said.

“I was very much against myself as a person,” she said.

Thoughts like “you’re worthless” and “nobody wants you here” and “you would be better off if you were dead” constantly ran through her head, she said.

“On July 25th, actually, I ended up self-harming myself and cutting myself and also had the intention of wanting to take my own life,” she said.

**That day she was admitted to the MU Psychiatric Center. Two anxiety-filled days dragged by.**

“I was alone and kind of had to do a lot of thinking on my own and there was a lot of crying,” she said. “I felt like there was no way out and it was scary, but I did, moving on from there, realize this isn’t for me.”

**After some rough realizations and a new motivation for life, Soehlke decided to spend her final year of college back at the University of Missouri.**

“I take it day by day,” she said about her mental state. “It’s still very hard to process that I was at a point where I didn’t want to be on this planet anymore.”

Parker Donovan shares an apartment with Soehlke and said the situation was hard for everyone.

"She's my friend and everything. I love her. She's my roommate," he said. "But it's something she also sees me struggle with everyday. So it's kind of a two way street.

The two help each other fight the hardships of mental illness.

Soehlke is now a member at the Counseling Center Advisory Board at the University of Missouri to help other people who suffer from anxiety and depression.

“The more I share, the better I feel,” she said.

Through public speaking, a [blog](#), and her new position at the center, Soehlke found a new purpose.

A tattoo on her left wrist reads “Courage over fear.” It covers the place where she self-harmed. This year, Soehlke uses her past experiences as leverage to "swim to the surface" in her battle.

“Essentially that’s everyday,” she said. “That’s what I’m trying to do is come up from under the water.”

The MU Counseling Center recently hosted its 6th Annual Take Action Carnival where Soehlke participated in the dunk tank. Her friends and roommates showed up to show support and dunk her several times.

The MU Counseling Center [website](#) has information on coping with mental illness. Anyone struggling with thoughts of suicide can call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

# MISSOURIAN

## Art exhibition kicks off MU School of Visual Studies

KATHRYN HARDISON

**MU students and faculty members will kick off the MU School of Visual Studies with an art exhibition on Wednesday at the Sager Braudis Gallery.**

The new school within the College of Arts and Science is the result of a budget-cutting reorganization of two departments and two degree programs. The programs include art, art history, digital storytelling and film studies.

The mission of the School of Visual Studies is to "explore the visual arts in their full complexity through interdisciplinary studies in history, cultural theory, and foundations of practice," according to a news release. The school is partnering with the Sager Braudis Gallery and MU Extension.

The exhibition will showcase artwork created by MU students or alumni who have been mentored by MU faculty members, said Hannah Reeves, gallery director of the Sager Braudis Gallery.

The Sager Braudis Gallery has supported the College of Arts and Science for the past two years by awarding the Sager Braudis Gallery Exhibition Award & Scholarship to the winner of the annual Visual Art and Design showcase. The gallery has also offered internships and showcased work of MU students and faculty.

This partnership through the new school, Reeves said, will take the gallery's relationship with MU to the next level.

"It's a very tight and mutually supportive art community, and we try to be involved as much as possible," Reeves said. "It will open up new ways for us to connect with MU."

Jo Stealey, director of the School of Visual Studies, will speak at the event, along with other MU administrators.

The public reception will be from 5 to 7 p.m. at the gallery, 1025 E. Walnut St. The exhibition will be up from Sept. 27 to Oct. 28.

# MISSOURIAN

## **MU School of Music to host its centennial concert Monday**

DYLAN SHERMAN

**Generated by News Bureau calendar item.**

**Columbia music lovers will have a chance to see the MU School of Music centennial concert at 7 p.m. Monday at the Missouri Theatre.**

The event is free to the public, and the concert will be followed by cake and punch to celebrate, according to a MU News Bureau news release.

The concert will include a brass choir, saxophone ensemble, graduate student string quartet, student percussion ensemble, cello choir and student vocalists, according to the release.

# THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN

## Foundation, partners award \$750K in minority scholarships, grants at 30th Annual Salute to Excellence in Education gala

By CHRIS KING

The St. Louis American Foundation's Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship & Awards Gala, introduced 30 years ago primarily to recognize excellent African-American educators in the region, has evolved into the region's premier scholarship event for minority students.

"This current year has an astonishing total for scholarships and community grants of more than \$750,000," Donald M. Suggs, publisher and executive editor of The St. Louis American and president of the St. Louis American Foundation, said at the 2017 Salute held at America's Center on Saturday, September 23. "This funding is a direct investment in our community and its future."

Since 1994, when the scholarship component was added to the educator recognition event, the foundation, together with its education partners, has fostered over \$5 million in scholarships and community grants, Suggs said.

And that arc clearly remains on the upward swing.

**Michael Middleton, the 2017 Lifetime Achiever in Education, came out of retirement a second time this spring to serve briefly as interim president at Lincoln University in Jefferson City. In his brief remarks, Middleton said he was donating his \$2,500 Salute educator grant to start a new St. Louis American Foundation scholarship at Lincoln, named in Suggs' honor, as previous foundation scholarships at other universities have been.**

**Middleton – the first black law professor at the University of Missouri School of Law and a trailblazing administrator at Mizzou – previously returned from retirement in November 2015 to serve as interim president of the University of Missouri System when Mizzou was roiled by the aftermath of a black-led student protest movement.**

Black-led protests cast a shadow on the 2017 Salute, as they also did in 2014 in the midst of the Ferguson unrest. The 2017 Stellar Performer in Education awardee, Kelvin Adams, superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools, acknowledged that the gala was being held during 9 days of ongoing police accountability protests following the verdict in the Jason Stockley murder trial.

Adams said the St. Louis region faces the same kind of urgent challenge that he faced nine years ago when he took over leadership of a dysfunctional, unaccredited school district (that achieved full accreditation and much more functional operations under his direction).

“I needed to show real humility and simply had to sacrifice,” Adams said in his brief remarks. “My challenge was what it would take to solve the problems of social inequity, violence and – yes – racism, by any means necessary.”

Adams also donated his \$1,500 Salute education grant to scholarships in his district via the SLPS Foundation.

Another forthcoming Suggs Scholarship was announced at the 2017 Salute. Maryville University, a relative newcomer to the program – it awarded its first foundation scholarship three years, 15 years after the University of Missouri-Columbia co-founded the scholarship program – announced that next year it will move up from one to two scholarships for full tuition, room and board.

Suggs also referenced the current turbulent times in his brief remarks thanking foundation partners and donors.

“Our mission as a foundation is based on the wisdom of our esteemed leader, Malcolm X, who taught us that ‘education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to people who prepare for it today,’” Suggs said.

“These are very difficult times in St. Louis that challenge us to move together to seek justice and social and economic equity. Our reaction to these challenges can provide for a new direction toward a better future for everyone.”



## **Mizzou student killed in motorcycle crash**

By **KATIE PYLIPOW**

COLUMBIA - A motorcyclist died following a car crash Friday afternoon at the intersection of Highway 63 North and Stadium Boulevard, the Columbia Police Department said.

22-year-old Tyler Romaker of Warrenton died from injuries sustained when another driver failed to yield when turning left onto Highway 63 northbound from Stadium Boulevard, police said.

He was taken to the hospital with life threatening injuries and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

**Romaker went to the University of Missouri where he was involved in Marching Mizzou, ROTC and Delta Chi fraternity.**

Police identified the other driver as Abilene Gatson, 19, of Vandalia. He was not injured in the crash.

# MISSOURIAN

## At a glance: MU's five social justice centers

CAMERON R. FLATT

A fall 2016 campus climate survey found that a third of the faculty, students and staff who participated did not feel comfortable at MU. The survey report, released Monday, also found that 40 percent of first-year MU students and 44 percent of second-year MU students seriously considered leaving.

Emil Cunningham of Rankin & Associates Consulting, which conducted the survey, said recently he thinks the problem is exacerbated by ignorance of campus resources — specifically the five social justice centers at MU.

The five centers are the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, the LGBTQ Resource Center, the Multicultural Center, the RSVP Center and the Women's Center. Each center's members have their own views on how they serve the MU community.

Here is a brief look at the centers. When possible, information about daily or yearly traffic was included.

### **Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center**

Location: 813 Virginia Ave.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday; noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Phone: 573-882-2664

Email: [mugobcc@missouri.edu](mailto:mugobcc@missouri.edu)

Yearly traffic: More than 8,000 students

Purpose: "The mission of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center complement the academic programs of study and enrich the quality of campus life for African-American students at the University of Missouri," according to the website.

"Our motto here is 'Home away from home,'" said sophomore Tatyana Presley, who uses the center. "I came here, and I instantly felt welcomed. ... Everybody here is so nice and welcoming and just encouraged me to do my best. The Black Culture Center is just a place where you can go and feel loved and feel supported."

Shelby Anderson, a graduate student and co-adviser for the Legion of Black Collegians, said the center's primary goal is to educate people on all that black culture is. "A lot of times people think that it's one thing, and it's not," Anderson said. "It looks so many different ways ... but everything about it is beautiful."

Senior Cortez Brown, who uses the center, said that for black students at MU, "I feel like, yes, of course, we can branch out and meet other cultures and stuff like that. But it's also good for them, if they don't see as many people that look like them, that they have a spot where they can congregate and have fun with people with the same color of their skin."

## **LGBTQ Resource Center**

Location: G225 MU Student Center

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Friday; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday

Phone: 573-884-7750

Email: [lgbtq@missouri.edu](mailto:lgbtq@missouri.edu)

Purpose: "(The LGBTQ Resource Center) works to educate about, support, and advocate for sexual and gender minorities at Mizzou," according to the website.

Also from the website:

"MU LGBTQ Resource Center is proud to boast of our very own check-out library. We have diverse sections from Biography and Fiction to Coming Out and Bisexuality."

"Safe Space is a training designed to give you the tools and knowledge you need to be an effective ally. Our Safe Space program is meant to teach the basics of LGBTQ identities and culture through definitions, terminology, and an overview of current cultural, social, and political issues, activities, and plenty of time for question and answer."

## **Multicultural Center**

Location: G107 MU Student Center

Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m Monday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m Friday

Phone: 573-882-7152

Email: [multiculturalcenter@missouri.edu](mailto:multiculturalcenter@missouri.edu)

Daily traffic: About 60-70 students

Purpose: "The Multicultural Center works toward creating a culturally inclusive and culturally adept campus environment ... specifically as a support system and resource for the concerns and needs of students from marginalized and/or underrepresented identity groups," according to the website.

"There's a community that we have here," said junior Nola Tran, who uses the center. "It's very open and inclusive place to come and relax between class and at the same time it provides us with a place to study."

Second-year graduate student Jonathon Sun said the center has book resources so students can learn more about themselves. "It is really difficult to find those books outside of here," he said. "Even if you go to the library, you have to do a fair amount of searching to find those."

"To be able to appreciate (diversity) helps build students and leaders and contributors to society that are ready to address those differences and respect them in order to work together to build a better tomorrow," said Alice Yu, sophomore and president of the Asian American Association.

### **RSVP Center**

Location: G216 MU Student Center

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Phone: 573-882-6638

Email: [RSVP@missouri.edu](mailto:RSVP@missouri.edu)

Purpose: "The Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center is committed to decreasing the prevalence of rape, sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking by creating a campus culture that does not tolerate violence," according to the website.

"No one deserves to experience this kind of violence," the website stated. "Rape, sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking are crimes and the only person who is to blame for these actions is the person who committed them."

### **Women's Center**

Location: G108 MU Student Center

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday

Phone: 573-882-6621

Email: [MUWomensCenter@missouri.edu](mailto:MUWomensCenter@missouri.edu)

Daily traffic: 50-60 students

Purpose: "The Women's Center is a space for resources regarding different topics that generally affect women but can also affect men," said Dani Palomo, coordinator of the center.

"For me, whenever I came here my freshman year, I was new to Columbia, and I needed to meet people," said junior Lori Bharadwaj, a student staffer at the center. "This is a place that really made me feel welcome. I walked in here and the staffers were very friendly and welcoming, and so they really made me feel at home here and at the university. I think it does a good job of making the university feel smaller."

"We are a safe space for anybody to come in if they feel marginalized in the community at all," Palomo said. "Our staff is trained to be active reporters in cases of OCR (Office of Civil Rights) and Title IX violations. Our professional staff understand what it takes for a student when they are in a crisis of any kind, where to go, who to talk to."



## **New Book on 'Little Soldiers,' the Next Generation of Chinese Students**

Lenora Chu discusses her inside look at China's educational system -- and what American colleges should know about the students recruited there.

By SCOTT JASCHIK

Lenora Chu's new book comes out of an unusual decision she and her husband made. Living in China, they decided to enroll their 3-year-old, very much American, son in a Chinese school.

Their son learned Mandarin and thrived academically. But Chu wasn't impressed with everything she saw. She set out to study both positive and negative elements of the Chinese educational system, up to and including the quest for university admissions. She writes of the discipline of Chinese students but also provides a firsthand account of the impact of the priority on memorization over creativity, and a university admissions system that many try to game.

The result is [\*Little Soldiers: An American Boy, a Chinese School and the Global Race to Achieve\*](#) (HarperCollins). Chu responded via email to questions about the book.

**Q: You note the way geography has a big influence in Chinese admissions to universities. Can you explain the policies -- and the problems they create?**

**A:** China has a household registration system called *hukou*. It's an internal passport system that ties a person to his or her place of birth, and there are two types: rural and urban. In general, a student is required to attend high school and take the college entrance exam in that locality. Here's the issue -- entrance exams for university vary in content depending on where a student sits for the test. And universities also allocate more admissions spots to some localities.

Generally, big-city kids benefit from this system. For example, Tsinghua University -- commonly called the Harvard of China -- accepted roughly 200 kids from both the city of Beijing and the entire province of Henan in 2016, despite the fact that Henan has four times more people than Beijing, at 95 million people. Students in Shanghai enjoy similar odds.

Education policies have not kept up with the realities of China's migration patterns. Some researchers have likened this household registration to a caste system or to "Chinese apartheid."

**Q: The university entrance test is of supreme importance in China. What are some of the things you saw students (and parents) do to prepare?**

**A:** It's an endless marathon of bending heads over books that last year of high school. I follow one Chinese student throughout the preparation process; I call him Darcy. Six months before, he told me, "my life *is dandiao*" -- a single color. Monotony. His days at school were plotted with precision: six o'clock rise for a seven o'clock school bell. Morning calisthenics. Meals of rice, vegetables and soup stolen in the time between classes, with 15 minutes allotted for dinner. A 6 p.m. prep class held him for four hours, until a 10 p.m. evening dismissal, after which he headed to his room for some shut-eye. He would start all over again within just a few hours. Weekends brought more classes. He sleeps late only on Sundays, his day of rest. "But even then, I think about *gaokao* [the national admissions test]," Darcy said. "It comes at the expense of everything else."

After the test was done, Darcy liked to say he experienced life for the first time. Dad bought him an iPhone. He got driving lessons. He was allowed to travel for the first time with his friends. Note, though, that Darcy was a rural *hukou* holder. In an unguarded moment, he let slip that his father divorced his biological mother and remarried a Shanghainese woman. A pile of cash exchanged hands. Having a "mother" with Shanghai *hukou* qualified him to attend high school in Shanghai and sit for college exams in the city. An illicit move, yes, but it was life-changing.

**Q: You note the role of gift giving/bribery in the educational system. How does this play out in university admissions?**

**A:** Nearly 10 million students sit for the university exams -- though the numbers are falling year by year -- and only two-thirds will snag a university spot at one of China's 1,200 colleges. Only 3 of 4 percent will ascend to what's called the top tier.

The system is high stakes. In the admissions process, back doors can be found when resourceful parents meet a receptive administrator. There have been some fantastic cases of bribery and corruption; in one of the most famous cases of recent years, a Renmin University official [confessed to taking more than \\$3.6 million](#) in exchange for helping students to secure spots at the college or for other favors surrounding the admissions process. (Obviously, this is the exception, not the norm.)

Gray areas are enabled in part by the fact that China's recent education reforms have introduced human judgment into the college admissions process. As you lessen the importance of entrance exams, universities have begun to introduce other ways to select for college -- such as interviews and teacher references, or extraordinary talent in music or athletics. That opens the door to possible human error, as well as the trading of influence, and corruption.

Here's an example of how catering to your superiors in some way can make all the difference: I'll use the example of Darcy again. The year he applied, Jiaotong University was one of 70 universities allowed to participate in "independent recruitment," and the admissions office invited hundreds of students from all over China to "interview." Students who passed the interview might be awarded bonus *gaokao* points -- or be allowed to score at a lower threshold than normally required for admission.

Because he passed this interview, Darcy needed only clear the cutoff for first-tier universities -- that cutoff was 423 that year -- to get into Jiaotong (rather than the bona fide, higher cutoff for Jiaotong). How was Darcy selected to participate in "independent recruitment"? By his high school teachers and administrators.

Education reform is tricky. It's fair to say an anticorruption crackdown has made the Chinese more wary of participating in back doors, and anecdotally there seems to be real progress. Yet others say illicit activity has only been pushed underground.

**Q: In your discussions of elementary and secondary education, you are critical of what appears to be the squelching of creativity and curiosity. How much of this is a problem?**

**A:** The traditional Chinese classroom discourages students from exploring their own interests and from expressing contrary opinions. These activities are central to how Westerners define the creative process. Electives -- having the freedom to choose subjects of interest -- are only recently being introduced into more progressive urban schools. But the Chinese are very much aware there's a problem, and encouraging creativity is a goal of the latest national education reform plan.

Here's the long-term positive view: creativity can't be permanently quashed -- only discouraged in its expression. Most Chinese who have come through the system aren't skilled at offering new

ideas, especially with a superior in the room, and they're certainly not accustomed to problem solving in groups. It's just not the way the Chinese were educated or culturally conditioned to behave.

That doesn't mean there's little creative thought going on inside the head, nor does it mean individual Chinese can't thrive once they enter the right environment. And, don't forget that most educated urban Chinese bring a high level of math, science or technical skill to the equation. Innovation is not only about creativity -- it's about having the skills, as well as the ingenuity and opportunity to push the envelope.

Sometimes it's a matter of training. "It's my job to unwrap the chains," said one Chinese chief technology officer who works with Chinese engineers on this very issue. "Some of them are extremely quick studies, and they become the cream of the crop." And if you look at what's happening in the marketplace in China, entrepreneurs are very much pushing the envelope, especially in industries such as drones, social media, sharing apps and mobile payments.

**Q: Based on what you saw and wrote about, what should American admissions officers be thinking about when evaluating Chinese applicants?**

**A:** The number of Chinese undergraduates at American universities has grown 14-fold over the past decade or so, to roughly 135,000 in 2016, not to mention another 125,000 in graduate schools, according to the Institute of International Education. Admissions officers should realize that the Chinese are very savvy when it comes to college applications. Information about what seems to work and what doesn't is shared very widely and quickly. You'll see loads of résumés that look the same. For a time, participation in Model UN was a line that showed up on every CV, as was the internship at a recognized multinational company. Lately the Chinese have become aware that Americans value community service.

The challenge is to truly distinguish one applicant from the next, and that's why the interview is important. Find a way to suss out information that can't be coached or prepared for. Ask unexpected questions. Also be aware that just as there's an enormous coaching and prep industry around SATs and other parts of the application process, there's also one burgeoning around interview prep. How quickly will the kids learn to master these interviews before admissions offices must change their approach again to better differentiate their applicants?

**Another important point: the Chinese are so obsessed with college rankings they'll generally prioritize a higher-ranked school over one that's actually a better fit culturally or financially. One Chinese friend got a full ride to go to the University of Missouri, but because New York University was ranked slightly higher in her desired field, her parents sold their house to pay for it. I think Mizzou would have been a better fit. Chinese applicants will need some help thinking about fit, and the indication of intent part of any application should be carefully considered with this in mind.**