



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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MISSOURIAN

MU announces provost search committee members

By: Kasey Carlson

MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright announced the members of a new committee to find MU's next provost and executive vice chancellor in an email Wednesday.

The committee will spend the next six months identifying candidates to replace Garnett Stokes, [who will be leaving MU to become president of the University of New Mexico starting March 1](#). Stokes will leave her position at MU on January 31. An interim provost is expected to be announced by the end of this week, according to the email.

The committee will be co-chaired by Joi Moore, a professor and director of the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies, and Marshall Stewart, vice chancellor for extension and engagement.

- Sarah Bush, Teaching Professor of Biological Sciences
- Sandy Davidson, Curators Teaching Professor, School of Journalism
- Rhonda Gibler, Vice Chancellor of Finance
- Virginia Huxley, J.O. Davis Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology
- Bill Horner, Teaching Professor, Department of Political Science
- Alex Howe, President, Graduate-Professional Council
- Hsun-Ta Hsu, Assistant Professor of Social Work
- Chrissy Kintner, Chair, Staff Advisory Council
- Thom Lambert, Professor, School of Law

- Camila Manrique, Assistant Professor of Medicine
- Kevin McDonald, Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity & Equity
- Mark McIntosh, Vice Chancellor for Research, Graduate Studies & Economic Development
- Joi Moore, Professor and Director, School of Information Science & Learning Technologies
- Pat Okker, Dean, College of Arts and Science
- Marilyn Rantz, Curators Professor Emerita, Sinclair School of Nursing
- Margorie Skubic, Professor of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science
- Marshall Stewart, Vice Chancellor for Extension and Engagement
- Ajay Vinze, Dean, College of Business
- John Walker, Curators Professor of Biological Sciences
- Bill Wiebold, Professor of Agronomy, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and Faculty Council Chair
- Nathan Willett, President, Missouri Students Association

According to the email, Isaacson Miller, a firm that specializes in executive searches, will help to identify candidates.

Cartwright is asking the committee to complete the search by May.



[Search committee named for MU provost and executive vice chancellor](#)

COLUMBIA, Mo. - On Wednesday, Chancellor Alexander Cartwright announced who would make up the search committee for the University of Missouri's next provost and executive vice chancellor.

In a release, Cartwright said the committee will work together throughout the next six months to identify candidates. He has asked Joi Moore, professor and director of the school of information science & learning technologies, and Marshall Stewart, vice chancellor for extension and engagement, to be co-chairs of the committee and carry out the search.

The search will be facilitated by Tim McIntosh and the executive search team at UM System.

The university will once again use search firm [Isaacson Miller](#) to help identify candidates.

"I have asked that the committee try to complete the search by May 2018 with finalists interviewing on campus in late April/early May 2018," Cartwright said in his release.

The person selected will be filling the role left by Garnett Stokes, who has accepted the president's position at the University of New Mexico. Her last day is Jan. 31. An interim provost is expected to be announced by the end of the week.

The full search committee includes:

- * Sarah Bush, teaching professor of Biological Sciences
- * Sandy Davidson, curators teaching professor, School of Journalism
- * Rhonda Gibler, vice chancellor of Finance
- * Virginia Huxley, J.O. Davis Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology
- * Bill Horner, teaching professor, Department of Political Science
- * Alex Howe, president, Graduate-Professional Council
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- * Pat Okker, dean, College of Arts and Science
- * Marilyn Rantz, Curators Professor Emerita, Sinclair School of Nursing
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- * Nathan Willett, president, Missouri Students Association

MISSOURIAN

MU examining academic programs that don't meet state requirements

By: Jenna Kieser

Out of 197 academic programs offered at MU, 63 do not meet state requirements, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education. This includes nearly half of MU's graduate certificate programs.

MU and many other higher education institutions in Missouri are reviewing their academic programs after the department found that many programs are not producing enough graduates.

To meet state requirements, an academic program must average a certain number of graduates over the previous three years. For any undergraduate degree, including associate's and bachelor's degrees, the program must average 10 graduates. For master's degrees and graduate certificates, there must be an average of five graduates, and doctorate degrees need an average of three graduates.

The department also requires all degree programs in Missouri to meet several other criteria. Each program must contribute to its institution's mission; meet statewide needs or contribute to

statewide goals; be accessible to students of varying abilities, interests or career goals; efficiently use state resources; and regularly produce highly-qualified graduates.

MU's [Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement and Opportunities](#) is conducting an in-depth analysis of all MU academic programs, including those that don't meet the department's standards.

The task force [released an initial report](#) in early September and will make recommendations on which programs should be kept, which should be cut, and which should be consolidated. It is supposed to give its final report to the Office of the Provost by Jan. 15.

Matthew Martens, a professor in the College of Education and faculty fellow for academic programs in the Office of the Provost, is a co-chair of the task force. Although the task force is factoring in the criteria given by the Missouri Department of Higher Education, Martens said they are "looking at a much broader array of factors." These factors include the total number of credit hours taught by faculty in a degree program.

Almost half of the 63 programs identified as underperforming at MU are graduate certificates.

"These graduate certificates have not had the enrollment that we would have expected," Martens said. "What we don't know is why that is the case." He said that it's possible the programs haven't been marketed effectively or that what is being taught in the program is no longer relevant to the field.

The task force has been gathering data to determine whether or not MU should keep the programs, including the number of graduates from the past few years.

The number of students enrolled in graduate school has been decreasing since the fall of 2014. According to MU's Division of Enrollment Management and Strategic Development, the number of students enrolled in graduate school dropped from 6,565 in 2014 to 5,872 this past fall.

According to the Missouri Department of Higher Education, these are the programs that are underperforming at MU:

The three bachelor's programs under review are:

Educational Studies, Russian and Pre-Professional Physical Therapy.

The 18 master's degrees under review are:

Communication, Russian & Slavonic Studies, German, Classical Languages, Architectural Studies, Textile & Apparel Management, Biological Sciences, Clinical & Translational Science, Biochemistry, Microbiology (Medicine), Pathology, Applied Mathematics, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Chemistry, Sociology, Rural Sociology and Theatre.

The 15 doctorate degrees under review are:

Special Education, Agricultural Education, Chemical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Romance Languages, Classical Studies, Genetics Area Program, Pathobiology Area Program, Nutrition Area Program, Soil, Environmental & Atmospheric Sciences, Geology, Psychology, Social Work, Rural Sociology and Accountancy.

The 27 graduate certificates under review are:

Agroforestry, European Union Studies – Interdisciplinary, Educational Leadership, Educational Leadership (coop. W/UMR/CMSU), Special Education, Education/Teaching of Individuals with Autism, Career & Technical Education, Nuclear Safeguards Science and Technology, Nuclear Engineering, Personal Financial Planning, Food & Safety Defense, Science Outreach, Neuroscience, Gerontology, Positive Psychology, Lifespan Development, Public Management, Global Public Affairs, Organizational Change, Gerontological Social Work, Youth Services/Administration, Analysis of Institutions & Organizations, Jazz Studies, Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders – Interdisciplinary, Global Public Health, Nonprofit Management and Center for the Digital Globe.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

[St. Charles planning board delays vote on subdivision proposed for river bluffs](#)

By Jacob Barker

The developers behind a proposal to turn 400 acres of Missouri River Bluffs into a subdivision with a “resort feel” faced a skeptical zoning commission in St. Charles County on Wednesday night.

Commissioners questioned the street layout and size of the roads on the steep terrain NT Home Builders, led by New Town St. Charles developer Greg Whittaker, wants to buy from the University of Missouri.

Residents of the nearby Weldon Spring Heights neighborhood showed up to oppose the plan for a 315-lot subdivision with room for up to 120 multi-family units, saying it would add more traffic on top of that from the busy Missouri Research Park next door.

And groups concerned about the impact to the Katy Trail, just under the bluffs, sent in experts to testify against it.

In the end, after three hours of testimony and back and forth between the developer’s attorney and the commission, the body decided to to continue the proposal until its next meeting in January.

“I do think there’s additional information we need to bring back to this commission,” said Brad Goss, an attorney for NT Home Builders.

Whittaker’s plan, in the works for three years, had been to tackle the unique terrain of the Missouri River Bluffs right across the river from Chesterfield. The home builder best known for

the new urbanism design of New Town said he hired experts to help him design the houses into the bluffs, preserving the trees and varying elevations.

But he found little support Wednesday night, save from the land's seller, the University of Missouri, which spearheaded development of the Missouri Research Park to the north.

In a statement read by Goss, the university said Whittaker had agreed to density restrictions and preservation requirements that "ensure the land is developed in a responsible way."

But opponents claimed just the opposite. The attorney for the Katy Land Trust, which works to protect land near the Katy Trail, argued that there weren't any binding tree preservation or grading restrictions. And she pointed out that even St. Charles County staff noted the proposal doesn't meet the county's master plan because the land was envisioned to remain undeveloped.

"It's at odds with the very intent and the goals set out in the master plan," said Land Trust attorney Traci Pupillo, drawing applause from the audience of about 75 people who had stayed late into the evening.

St. Charles County staff, however, had recommended approval for the plan, citing the "minimal impact" it would have. An 18-hole golf course, the Missouri Bluffs, has already been developed there on a long-term lease from the university. Whittaker's plan is to build the homes in around it.

Commissioners had questions, though, about roads and lot sizes in the development.

Goss argued that the narrow streets, winding through changing elevations, would force drivers to slow down.

But commissioners took notice of the lack of sidewalks and the few walking trails on the site plan. The county often tries to encourage more walkable and connected neighborhoods, said Mike Klinghammer, the St. Charles County Council's representative on the zoning commission.

“I don’t know if I’d want to be walking on these streets,” he said.

Goss said he understood the concern. “That’s something that, I get it,” he said.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

[Lawsuit filed against University’s School of Medicine](#)

By RUDI KELLER

A new lawsuit against the University of Missouri School of Medicine accuses Dean Patrick Delafontaine of discrimination when he removed Rachel Brown as associate dean in October 2016.

The suit alleges that Brown, who is white, was the victim of racial discrimination, age discrimination and a hostile work environment in the months after the Concerned Student 1950 protests that led to the resignation of then-President Tim Wolfe. In the aftermath of the protests, the university promised to significantly increase its efforts at diversity and inclusion.

At the same time, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, the accrediting body for the medical school, made a regular review of the school and found deficiencies in diversity, treatment of students, curricular management and affiliations with other medical organizations.

Brown’s lawsuit claims she was pushed out because she questioned the legality and cost of proposals for increasing the number of minorities, upsetting Warren Lockette, senior associate dean for Diversity and Inclusion. The lawsuit also alleges Brown was regularly excluded from meetings about diversity that included discussion of medical school practices and policies that were part of her responsibility.

During a diversity meeting on Aug. 30, 2016, the lawsuit alleges, Lockette accused Brown of obstructing change and asserted that Missouri students were homogenous and discriminatory.

“After the August 30, 2016 diversity meeting, Delafontaine became even less responsive to issues raised by Dr. Brown and largely ignored her input and recommendations,” the lawsuit states.

Brown was hired to her post in 2006 from Mercer University School of Medicine in Georgia, where she was director of admissions and student development and acting assistant dean for student affairs and admissions. During her tenure at MU, she won professional awards from the

Association of American Medical Colleges and was three times chosen by medical school students for the Robert N. McCallum Student Advocacy Award.

The lawsuit alleges Delafontaine started telling others at the school that he intended to dismiss Brown from her job by early October. When she confronted him about it, he told her he was replacing her with Layne Young-Walker, a black faculty member, in order to “make a change in leadership.” During that meeting, Delafontaine asked Brown to resign, offering her a position as a faculty member.

Instead, Brown landed a job at Central Michigan University College of Medicine as a professor of clinical psychiatry, associate dean for student affairs and diversity and inclusion officer. She returned to MU to give the School of Medicine commencement speech in June at the request of graduating students, her attorney, Paul Gardner said Wednesday.

While Missouri is an at-will employment state, the power to hire and fire is not absolute, Gardner said.

“The Missouri Human Rights Act is an exception to at-will employment,” he said. “It is not a protection against alleged violations under that act.”

The School of Medicine declined to comment on the pending litigation through spokeswoman Jennifer Coffman.

MISSOURIAN

Citing discrimination, former associate dean sues MU School of Medicine

By: Kasey Carlson

The former associate dean for student programs at the MU School of Medicine has filed a lawsuit against the UM Board of Curators and the School claiming she was wrongfully fired because of her age and her race.

Rachel Brown, a 60-year-old white woman, alleges in the lawsuit that she was the victim of discrimination when she was removed from the associate dean position Oct. 28, 2016. She was replaced by Laine Young-Walker, an African-American faculty member in her 40s.

According to the lawsuit, Patrice Delafontaine, [dean of the School of Medicine, replaced Brown in order to “make a change in leadership,” but assured her the decision](#) had nothing to do with her performance.

The medical school has been criticized in recent years for a lack of diversity, and [was deemed “non-compliant” in its last accreditation review](#). The school may face probation or may lose its accreditation if sufficient progress isn’t made. [In 2015, only 5 percent of medical students at MU were underrepresented minorities. In 2017, that total raised to 9 percent.](#)

The lawsuit also claims that Brown was removed in retaliation for opposing certain diversity initiatives because of her concern about their legality.

The suit refers specifically to Warren Lockette, the senior associate dean for diversity and inclusion, who allegedly pushed for an “aggressive increase in the numbers of out-of-state students” at the school. Lockette viewed any opposition to his views as “obstruction,” according to the suit.

The suit claims that Lockette referred to Missouri resident students as “bumpkins, [hicks and illiterates](#) who lived in Hootersville,” and that Missouri students were “homogenous” and “discriminatory.” He accused Brown of “obstructing change” and became aggressive and rude toward her.

Delafontaine encouraged Brown to resign, the suit alleges, but she declined. The suit claims that Delafontaine removed her and told med school students and the media that she had resigned.

Brown is seeking to either return to her position as associate dean or to receive salary and benefits for the period remaining until her retirement in lieu of reinstatement. She also asks for back salary, attorney’s fees and punitive damages for emotional distress consisting of outrage, shock and humiliation.

Jennifer Coffman, a spokeswoman for MU Health Care, said that it is policy not to comment on pending litigation.

The attorney representing Brown, Paul Gardner, did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

[University of Missouri settles wage lawsuit for \\$3.6 million](#)

By RUDI KELLER

Clinical employees who [sued University of Missouri Health Care](#) for missed meal periods docked from their paychecks will share \$3.6 million under a settlement agreement awaiting approval in Boone County Circuit Court.

A hearing Tuesday to determine whether the lawsuit would be a class action was canceled because of the agreement, which will cover 2,601 current and former employees. The lawsuit, filed by respiratory therapist Richard Hunsley and nurse Donna Reeves, had claimed that MU Health Care owes the employees as much as \$10.1 million.

“The matter was resolved to everybody’s satisfaction,” said attorney Brendan Donelon of Kansas City, who represented Hunsley and Reeves. The settlement limits his ability to discuss the details or comment on the outcome, he said.

The case challenged a system that automatically deducted 30 minutes from employees’ reported work hours for meals, whether they received a break or not. The lawsuit claims the practice violated federal labor law and MU Health Care policies that employees should be paid if their meal is interrupted or otherwise do not receive a full 30-minute break.

In its filings, MU Health Care argued that the class should only include people who worked in clinical care who carried pagers allowing their meals to be interrupted. There was a system for employees to manually report they had not received their full meal break so they could be paid for the time, the university argued.

“While MU Health Care believes that it has acted in accordance with law regarding its payroll practices, the settlement prevents further legal expenses and ends any uncertainty created by the pending litigation,” Jennifer Coffman, spokeswoman for MU Health Care, wrote in an email. “The parties will be presenting the settlement to the court for preliminary approval, after which class members will be provided with a notice containing additional information.”

Under the terms of the settlement, Hunsley and Reeves will each receive \$5,000 as representatives of the class of employees covered by the payments. They will also receive a payment for back wages withheld as a result of the automatic deduction.

The settlement will also pay the attorney fees for Donelon and other lawyers employed on the case. If any funds are left over after the claims are paid, the money will be returned to the university.

By taking the payments, employees who believe they have been slighted in their paychecks will give up their ability to sue on their own for back wages.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

[Higher education exemptions survive in new tax law](#)

By RUDI KELLER

The tax bill signed Wednesday by President Donald Trump preserves all the major deductions and exemptions important to college students and their families but makes predicting state revenue for the coming years more difficult.

A provision taxing tuition waivers for [graduate assistants](#) and the [spouses or children of college and university employees](#), which generated a national wave of organizing in opposition, was removed from the final bill. The plan also retains deductions for [student loan interest](#) and tuition available to all taxpayers.

“I think it is a victory and victories are rare these days,” said Joe Moore, spokesman for the Coalition of Graduate Workers at the University of Missouri.

U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Harrisonville, speaking after she returned from the signing ceremony at the White House, said the efforts to protect the higher education provisions made an impact on her views.

“We heard from several of the graduate students there at Mizzou and I did weigh in with the chairman of the conference committee and I told him I supported the Senate version, keeping it intact,” she said. “I was pleased to see they listened.”

The UM Board of Curators, at its meeting this month, voted to make it easier for spouses and dependents of employees to qualify for tuition benefits. A change in the tax status of those benefits would have been a new barrier, spokesman Christian Basi said.

“Without this it would have been more difficult for some to continue their education or utilize the benefits available,” he said.

The bill signed by Trump cuts taxes for most income earners by increasing the standard deduction and lowering tax rates. It includes cuts in the corporate tax rate and lowers the tax bite on income from business included on individual returns. Most of the cuts for individuals expire over the next 10 years while business cuts are permanent.

Major personal income tax changes

Tax brackets: There will continue to be seven tax brackets. The rates are lowered for five of the six top income brackets and the income levels subject to each marginal rate are decreased for four of the five highest brackets.

Standard deduction: Increases to \$12,000 for individuals, \$18,000 for single head of household with dependents and \$24,000 for married couples.

Personal Exemption: Eliminates \$4,050 exemption per taxpayer and dependent.

Child Tax Credit: Increased to \$2,000 with up to \$1,400 refundable; begins phasing out at \$400,000 taxable income

Itemized deductions: Limited to \$10,000 for state and local taxes; allowed for interest on first mortgages for a first or second home on the first \$750,000 owed; allowed for charitable deductions up to 60 percent of income; repealed for interest on home equity loans.

Higher education: Maintains deductions for student loan interest, tuition and fees; retains non-taxed status for tuition waivers granted to graduate assistants and spouses or children of college employees; makes no changes to American Opportunity and Lifetime Learning tax credits.

Throughout the debate on the bill, Hartzler issued news releases praising it and supporting its passage. She never wavered in her support, she said.

“I think from the beginning, with the first draft, that we saw that it was going to bring relief to every tax bracket in America,” she said.

The [impact on Missouri revenue](#) will become clearer as the tax bill is analyzed, a process that must happen quickly because state budget decisions for the coming fiscal year must be made starting in January. The state budget for the current year is based on an estimate of \$9.3 billion in general revenue.

An [analysis of the House version of the bill](#), produced by the Economic and Policy Analysis Research Center at the University of Missouri, stated that the increased standard deduction allowed by the tax plan would have cut state general revenue by \$516.2 million if applied to state

tax returns for 2016. Other changes in the bill, positive for general revenue, would have trimmed that loss to \$121.6 million, the analysis states.

An analysis of the new law is underway, Joseph Haslag, director of the center and co-author of the report, stated in an email Wednesday. There are significant differences from the House bill, including the treatment of pass-through income from businesses and a larger deduction for medical expenses, that need to be studied, he wrote.

While the increased standard deduction cuts state revenue, the loss of the personal exemption will increase it. Missouri uses the same standard deduction as the federal income tax and only grants a personal exemption if one is allowed on a federal return.

For a married couple with two children, the standard deduction will increase to \$24,000 from the \$12,700 allowed for this year. That family will lose \$16,200 in federal personal exemptions — \$4,050 for each person — and \$8,400 in state exemptions, or \$2,100 per person.

The analysis conducted by Haslag and co-author Dean Crader for the House bill found that state revenue from returns reporting less than \$100,000 taxable income would decline while receipts from people with incomes above that level, about one-fifth of all tax returns, would increase.

Joel Walters, director of the Missouri Department of Revenue, is estimating the change in state revenue could be a gain or a loss of about \$100 million. He's read Haslag's analysis of the House bill, he said, and is anticipating the final version.

The changes in the treatment of business income and expenses will also impact the state's treasury, Walters said. The bill reduces the deductibility of interest expenses, increasing taxable income and increases the ability to deduct research costs, lowering taxable income. The requirement that corporations repatriate foreign earnings would be a positive for Missouri revenue, he said.

"I think you can take away from this conversation that there are a lot of moving parts to this bill," he said. "There is uncertainty as to how all these provisions work and that is still really challenging right now because the ink is still wet."



[Final version of tax bill spares graduate students from much higher taxes](#)

By MATT SCHMITTDIEL

COLUMBIA - Graduate students will no longer see a proposed tax on their tuition waivers in the final draft of the Republican tax bill.

The original draft included a provision that would count tuition waived by the university as taxable income, meaning graduate students would potentially be paying thousands more in taxes each year.

MU Graduate Student Association President Sarah Senff said many graduates would have suffered under this proposed tax bill.

"I know that a number of graduate students had spoken to me about feeling like they would have to potentially drop out in January and even to be able to finish the year if this had gone through," Senff said.

CNBC reported in an article the American Council of Education estimated approximately 145,000 graduate students could have been affected by this measure.

MU Director of Student Financial Aid Nicholas Prewett said graduate waivers make up a substantial portion of payment for graduate education.

"Last year \$36,000,000 was paid by graduate student waivers. If you compare that we had graduate students take out about \$50,000,000 in student loans."

Prewett said MU has been very outspoken against making tuition waivers taxable.

"Our institution and the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies Jeni Hart has been very vocal on behalf of the graduate students," Prewett said. "Letting our members of congress and Missouri delegation know that it would have an impact on our graduate students in the total amount of money that they would have to finance education."

Prewett said about 3,800 MU graduate students last year received some sort of tuition remission or graduate teaching assistant role to help finance their education.

"Over half of our graduate students receive direct support for their education from the institution," Prewett said. "So any change in income or any change to the tax code, could increase the burden on our graduate students."

Senff said there is a general sense of relief, but she cannot relax just yet.

"There are plenty of other things to be concerned about that affect graduate students and the working and middle class pretty negatively with this plan anyway. It's better, but it's not good," Senff said. "It is hard to feel really joyous when you know your friends and your family are getting screwed."

Senff and Prewett agree on that graduate students are part of a non-traditional population and they do not just live single issues lives.

"While there is some sort of ability to take a breath now when it comes to this part of myself that is a graduate student. . . There's this part of me that is a women. This part of me a middle class person. This part of me who has had very serious issues with my health insurance at this institution and grows nervous what is happening with the federal budget," Senff said. "Those parts of me are struggling to remain calm I think still."

"A lot of students are coming back to school married, or with children and you know the budge set up to handle graduate students is really focused on a single student going through college," Prewett said. "From what we see a lot of graduate students are trying finance not only there education, but also some of those extra factors."

Prewett said his office sees a dramatic increase in the total amount of student loans for students living with theses types of situations.

Senff said it has been interesting to see how higher education has really come together about this issue to make sure this tax proposition does not go through to the final draft.

"I am and have been very grateful to all the administrators and professors and graduate students who worked really hard on this campaign to make sure this doesn't happen," Senff said.

Senff said even though this is one issue she does not have to worry about anymore, she still suggests everyone to keep calling your senators and representatives to make your voice heard. She said we can change more in the upcoming vote on the tax bill than just the cut to the tuition waiver tax.



[Reflecting on MU Graduate Student Rights Two Years After Upheaval](#)

By Elena Rivera

Two years ago, graduate students at the University of Missouri found out in an email that their health insurance would be cut. Students began protesting around the issue, eventually creating a group called the Coalition of Graduate Workers.

Sarah Senff was a member of that coalition to improve working conditions for graduate students. KBIA's Elena Rivera spoke with Senff about the organizing in 2015 and what has changed in the past two years for graduate students at MU.

***Sarah Senff:** It was a bunch of people going "There's a problem here and I can do something about that. I am very skilled and articulate and passionate and so I'm going to use those skills to help everyone around me." And so that was--even though that was very stressful, a very moving and empowering moment I think at the University of Missouri for graduate students. It was moving to see our faculty and staff come out with us the day that we walked out that first Wednesday of classes in August of 2015. It was moving to see librarians marching beside us. Right? So, I think it's important to recognize that graduate students through a collective effort have made some important gains, even though there is some ground left to cover.*

***Elena Rivera:** And one of those gains is definitely related to stipends, right?*

***Senff:** It increased in three thousand dollar increments over two years. And that's an increase from the minimum stipend. People who were making over that didn't necessarily see an increase. So, that was really important in helping raise the quality of life for graduate students who are making at or near the federal poverty level for a single individual. And some of those*

people were supporting families on the stipend of the federal poverty level for a single individual.

Rivera: What was it like to be doing organization around grad rights and then also knowing, “Hey, there's this other big group, Concerned Student 1950, also organizing.” And there’s a lot of overlap. There were a lot of grad students in Concerned Student 1950. What did that look like?

Senff: *It was really interesting to be on the action committee at that time, and responding to a really big direct action kind of movement that was happening on Mizzou's campus. We were literally around the corner from the car where the homecoming parade incident happened. We were waiting for our float to go, not realizing that one of reasons we were waiting so long was because of this protest that was happening at the homecoming parade. So, we tried really hard to be supportive but not get in the way of what they were trying to do. I have learned so much from particularly women of color in this movement who have been doing this work for a very, very long time and not necessarily always getting the recognition for the emotional and political labor that they have been doing. That tends to be pretty invisible.*

Rivera: So there have been a lot of things that have changed or have updated. What are hoping we'll see in terms of changes in the next couple of years?

Senff: *Personally speaking on behalf of myself and not on behalf of GSA, I think that a collectively bargained contract is very important for graduate students to be able to plan. We all come to grad school knowing we're going to live on a narrow margin. Right? And so we plan our lives to account for that. And then we need to know that the promises made to us by the university are going to be honored. It's not about getting more. It's about knowing we can count on what was promised.*