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## U. of Missouri facing image crisis after racial issues, upheaval

By Summer Ballentine  
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - With changes afoot, the University of Missouri is facing an image crisis after days of protests and concerns about the administration's handling of racial issues and subsequent leadership resignations. Upset and embarrassed, confused graduates are calling the alumni association to vent and ask questions about what's happened. State lawmakers who represent Columbia say state funding for the university likely will be under closer scrutiny this year. Worried parents have told the school they're concerned about their sons and daughters.

University of Missouri spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken says she's not denying that the school went through "a really unsettling time - and it's probably going to be somewhat unsettling for a while." As the school deals with its tarnished reputation, the University of Missouri System has hired the son of U.S. Sen. Roy Alton as a lobbyist, and about 20,000 newly accepted students who would start in the fall have been sent letters assuring them that campus is safe.

Banken said the focus has turned to communicating what steps are being taken to address student concerns, including development of diversity training for administrators, faculty and students and the new administrative position of vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity and equity.

"Yes, we do care about the image, that's important," Banken said. "But more importantly it's doing what needs to be done, and doing the right thing and then talking about it openly. I think then as a result of that, our image will improve."

Tensions at Mizzou came to a head earlier this month in response to numerous reports of racist incidents and administrators' perceived lack of response. A graduate student launched a hunger strike, and the football team threatened a boycott. Students camped in tents by Traditions Plaza - at the heart of campus - for days, calling for System President Tim Wolfe to step down or be removed from office.

Wolfe and Columbia campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced their resignations Nov. 9.

"My entire staff was doing nothing but answering the phone day," Banken said.

Lawmakers are bracing for the fallout during the 2016 session, which begins in January. Columbia Republicans Sen. Art Schaefer, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Rep. Caleb Rowden both say funding for the university likely will face greater scrutiny.

Schaefer said in an earlier interview with The Associated Press that his job to push for the university's interests among colleagues "has gotten a lot harder after the events of the past week."

"We're all pretty disappointed in how this makes our state and our leadership university look," said state Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, a Shell Oil Republican and vice chairman of the House Budget Committee, which determines state funding for public higher education institutions.

The heavy media coverage left an imprint on the minds of alumni, to the point that about 25 members left the Mizzou Alumni Association, Executive Director Todd McCubbin said. He tells graduates to call and are grappling with what has happened that, "Mizzou is what they've been seeing on the news."

"But it's also not sunny and 75 (degrees) on the Quad every day," said. "We're somewhere in the middle."

Ryan Rink, who graduated from Mizzou in 1995 and was in Columbia on Nov. 20 for a reunion, said he hopes what's happened at the university can motivate other schools to change.

"This is a bigger problem than just Mizzou," Rink said.

Other universities - such as Yale, where students protested following a professor's response to a university email warning about racially insensitive Halloween costumes - also are dealing with racial issues, Banken said. She said the school also is "gratified" by marches and rallies at other universities to show unity with the Columbia case, she said.

"We don't mind being the center of attention for a while," Banken said, "if it leads to something better."



The Durham Business & Professional Chain (The Chain) recognized nine outstanding entrepreneurs at its November 2015 Business Awards Luncheon. Awards presented included the New Business Award, the Business Achievement Award and the Business Longevity Award. 2015 Durham Business & Professional Chain Award-winner from left to right are: Mrs. Bertha Higgs, Dr. Amy Farrar, Ms. Alexandria Marrow, Roy Alston, Ed and Mrs. Genevia Fulbright and Ms. Maggie Singletary Lewis. See story and pictures on page 7

## Rosa Parks statue restored; her hands touched many visitors

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) - The artist who put his bronze sculpture of Rosa Parks in the Rosa Parks Museum 15 years ago has given the piece a makeover.

The bronze statue wore down and lost some color due to touching and interaction over the years, The Montgomery Advertiser reported.

The statue received the most wear around her hands, sculptor Erik Blome said. That's because people want to connect with the civil rights figure as they pose for pictures with her, he said.

"People are holding her hand as they sit next to her," he said. The sculpture depicts Parks sitting on a bus seat, hands settled on the purse in her lap.

"Most of my sculptures don't wear out quite like that from interaction," Blome told the Montgomery newspaper. "Most people just look at sculptures and mostly touch them here and there."

After Blome restored the sculpture Nov. 19, it was moved to a new spot in the museum's front atrium.

Stanchions now protect the sculpture from further wear, said Museum Scheduler Donna Beisel.

"It's in a more noticeable spot so visitors can see her in this place of prominence as soon as they come in," Beisel said. "We have the stanchions that will rope her off just to protect the finish."

While Parks' shine has been restored in advance of the 60th anniversary of the bus boycott, Beisel acknowledged that the decision to keep Parks out of hands' reach may upset some.

"I think people who have been here before and sat with her in the past will be a little upset," Beisel said. "We'll probably have some people upset that they can't get their picture taken."

The bus boycott began after Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus.



MRS. ROSA PARKS

## In governor's race, Spaulding highlights Cooper decision

RALEIGH (AP) - A Democratic candidate for North Carolina governor wants to draw more attention to Attorney General Roy Cooper's decision not to retry a white police officer in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black man.

Ken Spaulding of Durham released an online video Nov. 19 critical of Cooper, who is also seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in March.

Cooper's office declined in August to retry Charlotte-Mecklenburg Officer Randall Kerrick after a hung jury. Eight of the 12 jurors had backed Kerrick's



SPAULDING

acquittal. Cooper says prosecutors agreed a retrial would not lead to a different result.

Spaulding has said it was wrong for Cooper to interfere with the proper administration of justice in the case.

The video features footage from Cooper's gubernatorial announcement and news reports about the 2013 shooting of Jonathan Ferrell.

## NCCU, UNC Awarded \$7.5 Million to Study Alcohol Effects

National Institutes of Health director visits NCCU research laboratories and gives special presentation.

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Medicine have been awarded \$7.5 million to examine factors causing alcohol-related health disparities in African-Americans.

The grant from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded \$6 million to NCCU and \$1.5 million to the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, a research center at UNC School of Medicine.

The grant covers a five-year period and provides a boost to an ongoing collaboration between the institutions as they examine alcohol-related pathologies, which are more prevalent among African-Americans.

Dr. George Koob, director of the NIH/National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, visited NCCU's Julius L. Chambers Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute (BBRI) and the Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise (BRITE) research labs on Nov. 18.

During his visit, Koob discussed the cooperative agreement and its benefits with research professionals from NCCU and UNC.

"The partnership gives aspiring scientists an opportunity to examine the effects of alcohol and to receive training in the field of alcohol pathologies," said Koob. "Students will conduct research to produce breakthroughs in science to increase better health and fewer effects of diseases in communities."

Researchers from both institutions are studying the molecular mechanisms of fetal alcohol pathology, alcoholic liver disease, and alcohol-related cancers, including breast cancer. The investigators also will examine adolescent binge drinking and the effects of alcohol and marijuana on brain stem cells and neurotoxicity.

Gregory Cole, Ph.D., chair of Biological and Biomedical Sciences at NCCU, and Fulton Crews, Ph.D., director of UNC's Bowles Center, are lead investigators on the project.

"The UNC-NCCU partnership has been critical in establishing alcohol research as a focus at NCCU, providing new and exciting opportunities for students and faculty and creating beneficial collaborations with UNC Bowles Center faculty," Cole said.

The joint research initiative opens UNC research laboratories, core facilities and libraries to faculty and students at NCCU, allowing them to work with some of the world's leading alcohol researchers, Crews said.

NCCU's Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute and Biomanufacturing Research Institute and Technology Enterprise are strongly focused on research, particularly in the areas of drug discovery and manufacturing technology. These institutes combine highly credentialed faculty with state-of-the-art equipment and industry-modeled labs to create unsurpassed research and learning environments. Students conduct multidisciplinary and inter-institutional studies focused on health issues that disproportionately affect minority and underserved populations. The programs are designed to prepare students for careers in the biomedical sciences.



Dr. George Koob at NCCU Biomedical/Biotechnology Research Institute with NCCU and UNC faculty and students.