

The Report to the University of Missouri Board of Curators omits a number of crucial descriptions and events that give context to my actions at both the MU Homecoming Parade on October 10, 2015, and the events on Carnahan Quadrangle on November 9, 2015. I believe you need a fuller picture of the environment in which I found myself. While some would judge me by a short portion of videotape, I do not think that this is a fair way to evaluate these events. Those videotaped moments (for which I have formally and publicly apologized) deserve to be understood in a wider frame of reference, among all of the momentous events of the fall semester.

In addition to Page 2's description of events, a number of prior events demonstrate the escalation of racial tension of the MU campus during the fall semester. This racial tension was palpable to many, many campus members, as evidenced by the number of times in the fall semester Chancellor Loftin made public statements responding to MU's racial climate. These events drew my attention and concern, and shaped my interest in supporting MU's Black students as they worked to call attention to these issues in hopes that MU could become a more inclusive environment:

- September 12, 2015: Missouri Student Association President Payton Head writes a long post on Facebook in which he describes that on campus the night before a pickup truck had driven past him and repeatedly called him "the N-word." The post went viral.
- October 5, 2015: The Legion of Black Collegians writes that the night before on Traditions Plaza a "young man" approached the group and when asked to leave he used racial slurs.
- October 24, 2015: A swastika made of human feces is drawn on the wall of a bathroom in MU's Gateway Hall.
- November 5, 2015: On Twitter, Payton Head posted a slideshow of racist comments made by MU students.
- November 5, 2015: November 5, 2015: Concerned Student 1950 had planned a protest that evening for the football game, but called it off due to concerns about their safety.
- November 7, 2015: When the MU football team lends their support to Concerned Student 1950 and says they won't play again until President Wolfe resigns, MU football fans respond in social media with outrage and scorn.
- November 8, 2015: A pickup truck flying a confederate flag drives around the tent camp on Carnahan quad in the evening, assumedly to intimidate the protesters.
- November 10, 2015: In the evening, threats against black people are posted to the anonymous messaging app Yik Yak. One message says, "I'm going to stand my ground tomorrow and shoot every black person I see." Another says, "We're waiting for you at

the parking lots.” “We will kill you.” The protesters break down their temporary tent city under police protection.

At the Homecoming Parade on October 10, 2016, I encountered a group of 10 students who were recounting racially charged moments in MU’s history to a crowd that was angry and indignant. I was deeply moved by the scene and felt ashamed that the campus community was using our familiar school chant, “M-I-Z Z-O-U” to silence the students. Eight minutes after the ten-minute protest began, I stepped up to the students to ask if I could stand with them so that they would know they were not alone. I stood with them as the Columbia Police pushed us to the sidewalk and threatened them with pepper spray. I stood with them as they wept and offered them hugs and praise for their strength and courage.

I feel the report’s description does not accurately characterize the precarious environment of the Homecoming Parade, and because it draws only from one brief, edited video of the day it provides a limited description of these tense moments. The scene I encountered included older, mostly male, white adults from the crowd using their hands and bodies to move the protesters so the parade could pass by them. I heard angry and threatening language, including swear words directed at the students. Tension was palpable and members of the crowd, who lined the sides of the streets and outnumbered the students, were angry. The car President Wolfe was sitting in was revving its engine and slowly rolled forward toward the students and crowd. Many of the students stood with tears streaming down their faces. I saw MU students wanting to be heard and using their voices to ask the community to hear their experiences. When the police arrived, one officer was aggressively using his hands to push the students back and was shaking a can of pepper spray. It was a fast-paced, challenging scene. I was worried about the safety of the students in the middle of that angry crowd, and I was concerned that the one officer’s actions were too aggressive with the students.

The edited footage of the Columbia Police officers’ body cameras corroborates that the crowd was loud and using the school chant to silence the protesters. The video also shows that one of the two officers used his hands to push back the protesters while the other officer used outstretched arms and did not push. A full video of the protest can add needed context to that day. One video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zwnmlzZSQ>.

In the coverage of the Concerned Student 1950 protests at the Homecoming Parade, the *Columbia Missourian* ([http://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/in-homecoming-parade-racial-justice-advocates-take-different-paths/article\\_24c824da-6f77-11e5-958e-fb15c6375503.html](http://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/in-homecoming-parade-racial-justice-advocates-take-different-paths/article_24c824da-6f77-11e5-958e-fb15c6375503.html)) reported that MU students watching the protest said “The car carrying Wolfe and his wife bumped one of the protesters.” The article also reported that people in the crowd used the MIZ- ZOU chant in an attempt to drown out the protesters. A bystander reportedly said, “it was hard watching the demonstration because the protesters started getting really emotional.” In the video that accompanies this article, you can hear the crowd cheer when the protesters are removed, and you can see a police officer shaking a can of pepper spray. At the end of the video, you can see the students embracing and hear them sobbing. This is the tense and tricky environment I stepped into. I had no training or experience with public events such as this, but felt that someone should step in to support and protect these MU students. I was not the only person who stepped forward to offer the students support.

Another video of the parade from a different perspective can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imMEpuYdTyY&ebc=ANyPxKoEUsePgcZ5DULWxm6brDSeok7XMoCsXZnyURM\\_K2LwmUiUFC7cqAfw7HjmI2IXIBLbrhA6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imMEpuYdTyY&ebc=ANyPxKoEUsePgcZ5DULWxm6brDSeok7XMoCsXZnyURM_K2LwmUiUFC7cqAfw7HjmI2IXIBLbrhA6) It shows the aggressive actions of one of the officers who continues to push protesters after they have stepped onto the curb. Because national events since the Ferguson shooting in August 2014 have highlighted the tension between white police officers and black citizens, I was concerned that the situation could have escalated, leading the students, and the nearby children in the street, to be harmed.

The timeline of events between the Homecoming Parade and November 9, 2015 demonstrates a growth in racial tension on campus. I had little involvement with the student group until after the MU football team lent their support to the hunger strike. Because football fans had expressed anger with the students—and the students were living in a wide-open, unprotected space—I stopped by to see if the students needed anything. Seeing that members of the MU administration were present to support the students assured me that the students' safety and comfort were being discussed, but I remained concerned that the students were vulnerable to an attack from angry students or community members.

The student camp on Carnahan Quad was relatively quiet on Sunday, November 8, 2015, when I worked with others to sort the students' donations, except for a few brief encounters with press and angry community members. However, that evening, the intimidating presence of a pickup truck circling the quad while flying a confederate flag was reported to police. This report raised concerns that the students were under threat. The scene I returned to on the morning of Monday, November 9, 2015 was much more hectic and chaotic. While the interviews conducted by the investigative team contained many mentions of the volatile and tense environment on the Carnahan Quad that day, the report fails to include these details. I believe these details are critical for understanding my actions that day. For example,

- Student 5 describes the press as “agitated.”
- Student 4 described the press as “very aggressive” and “like paparazzi.”
- Win Grace describes joining the circle to help because she saw no police present and that “she might have done the same thing Professor Click did in the crush of international press with no police or security present.”
- Alejandra Gudino recounted that the press was “difficult to deal with” and that members of the press “put their hands on her shoulders, put cameras in people’s faces, and even picked students up to move them.” Gudino described the quad on November 9<sup>th</sup> as “tense” and “physical” and suggested that the press had “overstepped their bounds.” Ms. Gudino also corroborates the presence of a truck with a confederate flag driving around the camp.
- Student 3 described the atmosphere on Carnahan Quad as “very hostile,” and describes Tim Tai’s behavior at the afternoon press conference on November 9<sup>th</sup> as “highly aggressive.”
- Cristina Mislán, present next to Click in the video, described the Quad on the 9<sup>th</sup> as “intense” and “chaotic.”
- Student 2 described Mark Schierbecker’s actions as “aggressive” and “disrespectful” and describes that national media tried to “infiltrate the campsite” and that they “would ‘shove’ cameras in the faces of students who were crying or having emotional conversations.”
- Student 1 said the media had been “disrespecting” the members of Concerned Student 1950.

There were no police present (a observation others corroborate), and those of us present felt that someone needed to help maintain order and keep the students—who had by all accounts just succeeded in their contentious goal of pressuring MU’s president to resign—safe from retaliation. Indeed, the MU community saw the angry response to the students’ actions on social media shortly thereafter, including threats to shoot MU’s black students. I firmly believe that the report’s failure to characterize the environment of the Carnahan Quadrangle as a challenging and volatile environment excludes critical details for understanding the actions that took place on that day. A fuller account can help the report’s audience to understand my fears and motivations.

#### Errata:

Page 12: I never believed that Mark Schierbecker definitely had a gun, but I did acknowledge that he could have and that my fears about his intentions shaped my actions. Also, I knew that the MO Legislature had not passed legislation allowing concealed firearms on campus. At the time of the interview, I mentioned that such a law was being debated.

Page 13: I never believed that someone at the camp was nicknamed “The Muscle” as stated by Esther Thorson. Given that none of the students from the group and another Journalism faculty member do not corroborate this, it seems unnecessary to describe it in the report.

Page 5: This page of the report describes the Columbia *Missourian*’s inaccurate transcription of my comments. I did not say, “Get your hands off the children,” I was commenting that there were children around them and said, “there are kids in the street.” The video corroborates this.

Page 5: This page of the report describes that I puts my hands on one of the officers at the Homecoming Parade. There is no video evidence of this from any of the Homecoming Parade video and thus I believe this mention should be removed.

Page 5: This page of the report describes that I continued to discuss the parade with my classes. I mentioned the event only in one class period after the parade and not again.

Page 6: This page of the report describes that I had a heated discussion with a Geology professor. However, the Geology professor was engaging students and another faculty member, not me. I observed this interaction as I walked back and forth carrying donations between two tents. I did stop at one point as the discussion became heated, but I had not been the primary conversant with the Geology professor.

Page 7: This page describes that I was frustrated and angry with Wolfe’s statement. During the interview with the investigator I described that the people at the camp were frustrated and angry with Wolfe’s statement. I recalled encountering camp members listening to the statement as I was moving donations around the camp and observed their reactions.

Page 7: I described in the interview that I mentioned my concerns about students’ safety to a police officer parked at the south end of the quad when I was leaving the camp on November 8<sup>th</sup>

at approximately 5pm. I was motivated to do this after I observed a truck with several white male students in the back call out to me in a threatening manner as I waited to cross the street.

Page 15: Mitchell McKinney (Communication Department Chair) and I have a long history of disagreement about department affairs. His characterizations that I am “dramatic” and “frequently gets upset” can be attributed to that history of disagreement. The Communication Department includes an entire four-floor building with many classrooms, offices, and meeting areas. Given this, the Chair’s suggestion that I can be heard through the Communication Department seems hyperbolic. It does not seem appropriate that McKinney’s evaluations of my behavior on November 9<sup>th</sup> should be included in the report given that he had never been to the camp.

Page 18: I did not tell members of the Journalism faculty that there was a student nicknamed, “The Muscle,” nor did I ever believe this. Because this was mentioned only by one interviewee and could not be corroborated, this inclusion seems unnecessary.

Page 19: On page 3, the report describes that I resigned my position on the MU Student Publications Committee. Page 19 mischaracterizes the facts. I never communicated with Vice Chancellor Scroggs. Page 3 accurately characterizes the events. I resigned my position.

Page 19: The meeting between Schierbecker and I described on November 11 took place on November 10.

Page 20: Schierbecker typed up his summary of our November 10 meeting and slipped it under my door in the late afternoon of November 10, before I met with the Journalism faculty. I told the Journalism faculty about Schierbecker’s demand and they advised me not to go on the School of Journalism-run station. I believe that Schierbecker was interviewed by KBIA after the note was slipped under my office door.

Page 21: I stated in my interview that I was willing to go on KBIA with Schierbecker after charges were filed. He had said in national interviews that he would drop charges if I would go on the radio with him: <http://money.cnn.com/2015/12/01/media/melissa-click-assault-charges/>. Nothing ever became of these discussions due to no fault of my own. KBIA’s statement about these events describes why the interview did not take place: <http://kbia.org/post/explanation-kbias-involvement-mark-schierbecker-and-melissa-click>

Page 22: The misdemeanor assault charge is dismissed as well as deferred. If desired, paperwork that supports this assertion can be shared.