

From the *desk*  
of the *Editor*

## We are all united in tragedy



Emily Wichmer  
News Editor

Nov. 13, 2015, was the day Paris was attacked. I've tried more times than I can count to begin this column. There is so much I want to say, but no words can capture all the emotions I feel.

Nov. 13, 2015, was the day my home was attacked. Angers, France, a small town located an hour outside Paris, was the place I called home for nearly five months. I walked those streets every day. I explored nearby towns. I made friends with the bakery owner down the street. France gave me memories I'll never forget and friends I'll always value. For me, France is home — a second home, maybe, but a home all the same.

When tragedy struck the city of Paris, my initial reaction was shock. I couldn't understand why this would happen to a country that is so supportive of and open to other perspectives.

France is a country of acceptance. From the moment I would enter a shop, I was greeted with a smile and a friendly, "Hello," and left with a parting "Have a good day!" Children at a nearby daycare would call out, "Bonjour, mademoiselle!" as they played jump rope in the schoolyard. Fellow students would wait for me after class and ask if I knew where Minnesota was, and if it was close to New York. Residents in the dormitory giggled as I taught them that, bien sûr, it is acceptable to eat a hamburger without a fork and knife. Late night discussions about politics always ended pleasantly, even if no one agreed about any topic. Everywhere I looked there was happiness and acceptance exuding from the face of every passer-by, and I realized this is routine — this quality of life is part of the French culture.

After the attacks, I saw a similar spirit of unity rise among those not part of the French culture. Friends from the U.S., Canada, Scotland and Austria posted messages sharing their condolences for those affected by the attack. While adding a tricolor filter to a profile picture or sharing a news update won't bring back those killed in the attacks, it still shows the world is willing to unite to express solidarity during times of tragedy.

In addition to the outpouring of sympathy for the attack on Paris, I also saw people share a sense of exasperation, because the tragedy of Nov. 13 was not limited to Paris. There was an earthquake in Japan. Mexico experienced an earthquake and a hurricane. There were suicide bombings in Baghdad and Beirut. As Facebook and Twitter feeds filled with sympathy for Paris, there also were posts complaining these other catastrophes were not as widely acknowledged.

The Paris attacks do not detract from other tragedies that occurred. What happened in Paris serves as a reminder tragedy can happen anywhere, whether it be Beirut, Japan, Mexico or Baghdad.

We feel for France because it is a tragedy. And during a time of tragedy, it's important to be united no matter what the issue is. While outward signs on something as shallow as social media might be filled with the blue, white and red of the French flag, in a much deeper way our hearts and minds are with all victims of the Nov. 13 tragedies.

Tragedy is senseless. It is gut-wrenching. But tragedy also unites us. Whether it be France, Mexico, Beirut or any other part of our world, tragedy is what reminds us that concepts such as borders have no real meaning. We all feel the same emotions, the same sense of solidarity. We are all united.

Nous sommes tous Paris.  
Nous sommes tous le monde.  
We are all united in tragedy.

Emily Wichmer is a senior French and communication double major from St. Louis, Mo.



## Student protests are catalysts for change



Will Chaney

The Concerned Student 1950 movement on the University of Missouri's campus recently succeeded in pressuring Mizzou President Tim Wolfe to step down. Despite obvious pressure from students, faculty and other members of the Mizzou community, the mainstream media has framed Wolfe's resignation primarily as the result of the football team's actions. This is evident in the headlines of stories about Mizzou in both the conservative and liberal media. CNN's Nov. 8 story is titled "Football players demand president's resignation." The Springfield News Leader's Nov. 10 story reads, "Missouri players didn't recognize how much power they had," and STL Today's Nov. 9 article is called, "Mizzou football protest proves players have power now." While the football team's support made a powerful statement, these articles downplay the impact the rest of the student movement had to affect change on Mizzou's campus.

Concerned Student 1950, which derives its name from the first year Mizzou admitted black students, emerged recently in response to building racial tensions on campus. During September, Mizzou student Payton Head, the Missouri Students Association president, was called a racial slur by passengers in a passing vehicle, according to a Nov. 9 Bustle article. Concerned Student 1950 then began organizing protests, sit-ins, a hunger strike, a petition signed by more than 7,000 people, and boycotts on goods and services the university profited from, which eventually included an entire football game. MU faculty also joined the cause by forming the Concerned Faculty group and organizing a two-day teach-in in place of class, according to a Nov. 9 Time article. Members of the football team then approached Jonathan Butler — who was on a hunger strike at the time — at Concerned Student 1950's encampment on The Quad after a couple players saw the tents one night while driving by. About 30 players met with Butler and were so moved by his case they agreed to strike until Wolfe resigned, according to a Nov. 11 ESPN article. This was strategically important for the movement, because each missed game costs the univer-

sity more than \$1 million. Out of all the protest tactics, the football strike seems to have been the most effective.

Does this mean the football team really enacted social change? Not quite, but it does expose a serious flaw in our education system. Like most capitalist businesses, Mizzou is run by a board of about 10 individuals who make all the university's major decisions, including the appointment of the university president. The board of governors is selected by government officials instead of the university community, which might explain Concerned Student 1950's demand that administrators be elected. Furthermore, before becoming president of the Mizzou higher education system, Wolfe was a high-ranking manager in multinational corporation IBM, according to the World Socialist Website on Nov. 10. The president before Wolfe came from a similar background. Because Mizzou is organized like a business and run by businesspeople, it is no surprise its decisions are made based on profit calculations instead of principles of education, equality or justice. When the football team pledged its support, the movement was able to present a dollar figure cost to the university's decision makers — something they knew how to measure.

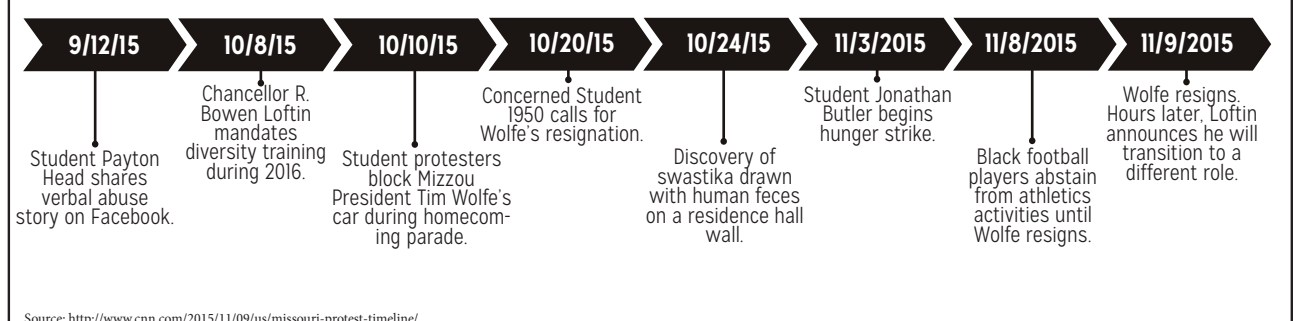
There are two lessons we can take from Mizzou. The first is an optimistic one — college students have real power if they unite and articulate their situation. Student activists historically have made great changes, especially during the Civil Rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and '70s. More importantly, we are better equipped to organize than our predecessors, and can transmit our own news without the help of the mainstream media. The Homecoming protest, where activists stopped Wolfe's car during the parade, was posted on YouTube and now has more than 400,000 views.

The second lesson might be hard to swallow — our power to resist systematic oppression is limited by the system we resist. Ninety percent of American media, including our news, movies, soap operas, educational television and game shows, are owned by only six capitalist corporations, according to a June 2012 Business Insider article. Just like Mizzou, these six corporations are run by boards of 10-15 people with no democratic accountability to the public they are supposed to serve.

The recent events at Mizzou give us hope for a better future. As Butler said during the Homecoming demonstration, quoting Karl Marx, "We have nothing to lose but our chains."

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## A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE MIZZOU PROTESTS



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