MU student's condition worsens after near-drowning

By Andrew Denney
July 22, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU graduate student who nearly drowned in an apartment complex pool last month is back in critical condition, a University Hospital spokeswoman said Tuesday afternoon.

On June 30, the Missourian reported that the status of Yirui Wei, 22, had improved from critical to serious, but her condition has since worsened, University Hospital spokeswoman Barbie Morgan said.

Wei, an MU graduate student from China, was transported to University Hospital in critical condition at about 9:30 p.m. June 25 after firefighters arrived and found her unconscious at the bottom of the pool at Tara Apartments. Bystanders said she had been underwater for about five minutes.

She was an inexperienced swimmer, the Columbia Fire Department has said.
Residential Life continues to offer 'extended campus' housing

By Michelle Pais
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COLUMBIA — An increase in student housing demand has prompted MU’s Residential Life to continue to lease housing from Campus View and Campus Lodge apartments, said Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life.

The university will lease nearly 400 beds from Campus View, also called Tiger Diggs, and 200 beds from Campus Lodge, also known as Mizzou Quads, Minor said.

This fall, the Office of Admissions anticipates that 5,700 freshmen will enroll in classes, a number slightly lower than the 2008 class of 5,782 freshmen, Director of Admissions Barbara Rupp said earlier this summer.

Residential Life stopped accepting housing contracts from transfer and returning students in April to ensure enough space for incoming freshmen, Minor said.

Demand for housing has increased from all groups of students, Minor said. Even with new campus housing projects completed, making 350 additional beds available for students, additional off-campus housing is still needed, he said.

This year, Residential Life will lease 100 fewer beds on the "extended campus" than last year, Minor said.

"For a few years, we were seeing less students interested in coming back," Minor said. "I think we are seeing this turnaround because more and more of our housing is new or renovated. The quality of the housing is going up."

Many parents are also concerned with security or their student’s academics and want them to stay on campus, he said.

"Extended campus is a good compromise — we still have our staff, programs and services," Minor said.
Buildings & Grounds

Colleges Continue Construction Projects, Some with Stimulus Money

While economists spend the summer debating how close the recession is to bottoming out, a number of colleges — large and small — are busy building or preparing to build, in some cases with stimulus money from the federal government.

The University of Notre Dame, for instance, has projects worth $243-million under way, according to the South Bend Tribune. And a development company has a $200-million mixed-use project going up just south of the university.

The on-campus projects alone are keeping between 500 and 700 construction workers busy, the paper reports. “I can tell you year in and year out Notre Dame is our best customer for the building trades,” said Mike Compton, the business manager for the local electrical workers’ union. “There are jobs that go on in our area that are bigger jobs and employ more people but Notre Dame continually employs our members year in and year out.”

On a smaller scale, Moravian College is wrapping up construction of a $25-million, 231-bed housing complex in time for fall occupancy, says The Express-Times. The six-story, 100,000-square-foot facility also houses a dining area, a wellness center, and four classrooms.

The University of Missouri System has issued bonds worth $332-million for projects on four campuses, reports radio station KBIA. About three-quarters of the debt was issued under the federal government’s stimulus rules, so the government will pick up 35 percent of the interest payments. The bonds were issued at an interest rate below 4 percent, university officials said. The system’s vice president for finance and administration, Nikki Krawitz, told KBIA, “The cost of capital for us will be probably the lowest it has been, it will ever be.”

And Rice University has just been awarded $11.1-million in federal stimulus money through the National Institute of Standards and Technology to help pay for a new 110,000-square-foot physics building. The facility, designed by KieranTimberlake and already under construction, is due to open in 2011.
Swine flu was ‘surprise’ to student

Trip brought China first case of illness.

By Janese Heavin

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

Advertisement

Xueyang Bao just wanted to go back to his hometown to marry his sweetheart and visit family.

Instead, the University of Missouri graduate student made world news when he brought mainland China its first case of swine flu. Back in Columbia with his new bride this week, Bao reflected on his trip and the temporary fame that followed.

He felt tired, but having just rearranged his apartment, the fatigue seemed normal. So Xueyang Bao (pronounced Shay-young Bouw), 30, thought nothing about boarding a plane May 7 in St. Louis and taking off for China.

“I was feeling fine,” he said yesterday outside of his University Heights apartment. “I had no feeling of a cold.”

It wasn’t until the last leg of his flight — which took him through Minnesota, Tokyo and Beijing — that Bao began to feel feverish, he said. When he arrived in Chengdu, Bao went straight to the hospital.
It's at this point, Bao notes, he could have ignored his symptoms and made the nearly two-hour trip back to his hometown before seeing a doctor. But he didn't. "I went to the hospital directly," Bao said. "I did it correctly. Just like any normal passenger who feels badly, I went to the hospital."

After some tests, doctors diagnosed him with H1N1, the first case of the so-called swine flu in mainland China.

"It was a surprise to me," he said. "I should think it would be a surprise to anyone. I didn't know anything about swine flu before that."

With memories of the 2003 SARS scare, the Chinese government panicked. Bao was immediately put in quarantine while officials scrambled to contact and quarantine other passengers on his flight. Some fearful Chinese residents lashed out at Bao. One Chinese blog written in English said individuals were accusing him of being a traitor.

But alone in a hospital room visited only by medical staff, Bao was oblivious to the outside world. Doctors allowed him to have Internet access but warned him not to read online reports of his situation for fear it would hinder his recovery.

"The doctor said I should not read too much; it would make me angry," he said. "Even now, I try not to read too much."

Bao recovered and was released from quarantine May 17, the original date of his wedding. The couple wed June 6 instead.

Leaving the hospital, Bao was greeted by reporters. He didn't like the attention but said he wanted to "get the truth out" that he did not know he was sick when he began his trip. And he insists there's nothing he could have done differently.

Local health officials are treating H1N1 like the seasonal flu, urging anyone with symptoms to stay home, wash their hands and cover their mouths when they cough. The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services expects to receive H1N1 vaccines later this year, which will be offered alongside regular flu shots, spokeswoman Geni Alexander said.

Meanwhile, a healthy Bao is ready to return his attention to his research on seismic waves. After completing work on his doctorate, likely next year, he plans to return to China, where he hopes to help the country better prepare for earthquakes like the one that killed thousands of people last year.

Bao hopes that work earns him attention for something other than being the man who brought swine flu to China. "I want you and other reporters to interview me after a few years," he said, "and we are talking about earthquakes instead."

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OUR TOWN

By Don Shrubshell

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

Photo by Don Shrubshell

Paige Rakes, left, a student at the MU School of Health Professions, introduces Vince Twenter, a client in the university's Eldercare program, to a dog brought for a visit from Columbia Second Chance.

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Paige Rakes, 22, introduced Blender, a shepherd/hound mix, to Vince Twenter at the Eldercare Center at the University of Missouri School of Health Professions last week.

"Well, I used to have a dog," Vince Twenter said as he stroked Blender's fur. Vince owned a fox terrier — the best squirrel-treeing dog he ever had.

Vince and six other Eldercare clients were introduced to five dogs, a cat and three kittens from Columbia Second Chance animal rescue center. "I like it," Vince said. "I left the country, and I can't have a dog in town."
Paige, an occupational therapy student at the School of Health Professions, is working on a five-year bachelor’s/master’s program. She and three other students were working on a class project to introduce animals to clients at the Eldercare program and other adults during the eight-week course.

“Our group decided to do a program about the benefits of people with disabilities, particularly adults with disabilities, interacting with pets and just volunteering,” she said. “Research shows it can increase an adult’s worth and therefore increase a person’s quality of life.”

Columbia Second Chance — which has a program that gives pets to people with special needs for free — brought the pets in to visit. All of the animals put smiles on the faces of the Eldercare clients, but the kittens stole their hearts.

Giuli Krug, clinical assistant professor and coordinator at the School of Health Professions, said 24 students in the department of occupational therapy class of 2011 are working on six projects, from a sensory movie for kids with autism to a group setting up an ergonomic washing and packing work station for organic farmers at the Columbia Farmers Market.

“What they’re looking to do with this is to introduce how pets can ... help reduce stress and anxiety,” Krug said. “Also to increase people’s awareness of people with disabilities being able to adopt and properly care for pets.”