

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

New opportunities for research at Brain Imaging Center

By Andrew C. Jenkins

November 16, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Researchers Shawn Christ and John Kerns both agree that without MU's new Brain Imaging Center, only a fraction of their research would likely ever be completed.

"There's no way for the research to survive without the center," said Kerns, an associate professor of psychological sciences at MU. "There would be no way to do it."

A dedication celebration for the center was recently held, but researchers such as Christ, whose focus is better understanding autism in children, and Kerns, who is looking for better ways to prevent and treat schizophrenia, have conducted research there for more than a year now.

Before then, one of the only options Christ and Kerns had for conducting brain imaging research was to use University Hospital's magnetic resonance scanner.

That was not as easy as it sounds, though.

The hospital's scanner is tailored for patient care and not ideal for research, said Christ, an assistant professor of psychological sciences at MU. And the allotted times available to researchers for use of the machine were often limited to Saturday mornings.

Now MU is home to the only magnetic resonance scanner in mid-Missouri used solely for scientific research, said Nelson Cowan. Cowan, the center's director and Curators' professor of psychological sciences, is researching the brain's capacity for memory retention.

Many major universities have access to a magnetic resonance machine in a hospital setting, but "only a handful" do in a non-hospital setting, Cowan said.

The Brain Imaging Center, affiliated with the department of psychological sciences, is housed within the Melvin H. Marx Building on the Research Park area of campus.

The renovation of the building for the new center cost \$3.8 million, and the new equipment accounts for about half of that total, Cowan said.

The magnetic resonance scanner at the center is specifically designed for scientific research and features a computer screen for testing visual stimuli and earphones and a microphone so that researchers and the person in the machine can communicate with each other.

The scanner can provide researchers with both magnetic resonance images, which show the structure of the brain, and functional magnetic resonance images, which show the parts of the brain that are active during specific tasks.

It also has the ability to examine neural tracts in a method called diffusion tensor imaging. With some auxiliary equipment, the scanner will have the ability to scan the body and its metabolism in addition to the brain.

A "practice scanner," which simulates what the scanning experience will be like, is also available.

Any MU department can use the scanner for research, and roughly 15 departments have already expressed an interest in using the center, Cowan said. There is a fee of \$372 per hour for use of the scanner. Expertise on operating the machine is an additional \$46 per hour, but Cowan said the center is willing to share the expenses for new projects to get them going until grant funding can be obtained.

Christ, who is working with the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders to study autism, said that about 60 to 70 percent of his research depends on the imaging center.

One of his projects involves tracking changes in brain activity in children with autism while they perform attention tasks requiring them to ignore distracting information. Christ said that once they determine which regions of the brain are most affected in autism, they can then look for ways to develop an intervention to help the child's brain focus better.

His second primary project tests children with autism before and after participating in a 10-week social competence intervention developed by MU special education professor Janine Stichter. Christ said the intervention is successful for most children, but he hopes to use magnetic resonance imaging and other tools to help predict for whom the intervention will and will not be beneficial, thus allowing some families to avoid committing their resources to an intervention that does not assist them.

“Our ultimate goal is to better understand cognitive and brain development,” Christ said. “It will help us design more effective interventions for children and adults with diseases affecting the brain.”

Kerns is conducting research on people with schizophrenia to help explain why they often have trouble controlling their thoughts and emotions. By scanning people during the performance of a test involving psychological control, Kerns has determined that those with schizophrenia have a problem activating the frontal cortex of their brain. He also scans people over time to see if strategies such as offering rewards can rehabilitate the individual’s brain.

Kerns hopes to understand the risk of developing schizophrenia and the mechanisms behind the risks in order to treat and prevent the disorder.

Both Christ and Kerns experienced limitations when trying to conduct research through the hospital’s scanner and are grateful for the new imaging center.

“The center is vital for productive research,” Kerns said. “If there are treatments found through our research, they will hopefully be implemented in Columbia first.”

Cowan said the Brain Imaging Center has already created a few jobs and could ultimately create about 50 jobs, although that would take some time.

One such job is the Miller Family Chair in cognitive neuroscience. Cowan said that the center is hoping to fill this position as soon as possible and that the person selected would also be the director of the center.

He also said the center has been a major factor in recruiting quality faculty.

“We wouldn’t have the same researchers without the center because that’s why they came here,” Cowan said. “They are banking their careers on it.”



UM navigates budget barriers

Student access to quality education is a main priority.

BY NIKKI KRAWITZ

Sunday, November 15, 2009

As the chief financial officer for the University of Missouri System, I believe the Tribune's Oct. 27 editorial "UM funding: More money or less spending?" missed the mark in capturing the complexities of the university's budget and noting all the university has done to tighten its belt.

The editorial claimed university officials "focus first and foremost on the revenue side" of the budget and fail to encourage "serious internal reallocation of spending." It suggests a better approach would be one taken by President George Russell several years ago that called for funding one-third of its costs through internal financial reallocation, with the state and students funding the other two-thirds.

A little history about declining state support for higher education in Missouri reveals:

Missouri higher education is underfunded when compared to higher education in other states. Missouri's 8 percent enrollment growth between 2003 and 2008 was above the national average, but the state ranked 42nd out of 50 states in appropriations per full-time-equivalent student, declining 9.5 percent. And even with large increases in tuition, total educational revenues per student — state support plus tuition — declined 2.9 percent, resulting in a rank of 47th.

The story is even worse for the University of Missouri, where state support has declined as enrollments have grown significantly, threatening the quality of educational programs. Full-time enrollment has grown by 25 percent during the past seven years while state funding per full-time student has declined 18 percent.

This decline has threatened the university's commitment to providing affordable student access to a quality education by shifting the cost of education from the state to students and their families. As a result, we've seen loan indebtedness increase for students and the university's ability to recruit and retain top faculty jeopardized.

How has the University of Missouri managed to educate significantly more students with significantly less funding per student? Not by focusing first on revenues.

Since 1998, the university has relentlessly pursued expense reduction, revenue enhancement and strategic reallocation — all documented on our Web site at <http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/about/reports/>.

The most recent report for the fiscal year ending in June lists \$66 million in cost savings, including budget and work force reductions and academic program consolidation. This doesn't include two actions taken after June 30 that will generate considerable cost savings in the future: employee contributions to their retirement funds and the use of Build America Bonds to finance critical building projects. In addition to cost reductions, revenue enhancement generated \$27 million from unprecedented enrollment growth, recovery of overhead costs and entrepreneurial activities.

Contrary to the assertion that “reallocation will be avoided most diligently,” our online reports show our campuses have continuously performed strategic reallocation. This year alone, \$7.1 million was reallocated from lower priorities — in part to address ranked faculty salaries, which on average are in the lowest quintile of peer institutions, and in part to higher-priority programs and services. This means faculty positions in certain academic programs were eliminated, and the savings then funded salary increases and new positions aligned with our strategic priorities.

The editorial reinforces a common misperception that significant resources are allocated to low-priority programs. While hundreds of programs are listed in course catalogs, these courses often fulfill requirements in multiple degree programs; eliminating a degree program might only cause one or two fewer course listings in the catalog with no cost savings.

Academic programs are driven by student demand and marketplace needs. Our campuses continually look at enrollments in courses and programs to determine viability. MU is not seeking new programs in performing arts. MU is seeking resources to renew and expand the infrastructure to support existing programs in antiquated facilities that are bursting with students. Just take a walk through the art classrooms or the music practice rooms.

It's important Missourians understand their premier public research university has long been committed to working with the state to provide a world-class education. We always frame our appropriations request as a partnership among the state, students and the university — and we uphold our end by continuously looking at the expense side of the budget. But realistically, when state funding in real dollars has decreased as it has since the mid-1990s, there comes a point when the ability to find dollars from within is severely limited.

Our board and president have been clear that student access to a quality, affordable education is a top priority. The university has a roadmap that charts our way in the form of campus strategic plans and accountability measures for evaluating how well we're doing. We continue to look for more efficient, effective ways to meet our teaching, research, public service and economic development obligations at the highest level.

The challenges are complex, and the solutions are not simple. The support of the public is critical if Missouri wishes to strengthen its economy by educating an intelligent work force that is a

magnet for more entrepreneurial and high-tech industries with better-paying jobs and all the socioeconomic and cultural benefits that come with them.

Nikki Krawitz is vice president for finance and administration with the University of Missouri System.

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1 reader comment

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BoCo66 says...

The effect of budget cuts are eroding the quality of MU. Morale is low, stress is high, and institutionalized hatred runs rampant. Attempts to address workloads are met with "there's no money, so suck it up." Some administrative offices have been reduced to skeleton crews, with staff members donning many different hats & enduring grueling work loads with little to show for their efforts. Maybe an "atta boy/girl". Yearly cost of living increases at 2-3%, if there's money for them, barely cover the costs of insurance premium increases & the everlovin' parking fees, so even maintaining the status quo for lower income personnel is difficult. 3% of \$100,000 is much different than 3% of \$20,000. But, hey, peons, if you don't like your wage, get a college education, right? 'Cause there are so many well-paying jobs waiting for college graduates these days, you'll have no problem paying off those student loans. You can probably get your old job back if you can't find anything else.

November 15, 2009 at 3:14 p.m. ([link](#) | [suggest removal](#))



Tribune Column

MU is crucial to jobs and growth for the area

By Bob Roper

Sunday, November 15, 2009

First of two parts:

“When you always do what you always did, you always get what you always got.” That old chestnut, which I first heard in a speech years ago by a successful sales manager, comes to mind when I think of our community’s history with respect to creating quality jobs and growth. It’s not a perfect encapsulation of our system, but it is close.

Consider this: Back in the 1950s some community leaders formed the Columbia Area Development Corp. They capitalized the company appropriately and proceeded to buy substantial acreage along Route B. The intended use was what it became: a tool to attract small manufacturing companies, warehouses, distribution companies, etc. — a manufacturing and industrial region that would provide growth and quality jobs. It was successful over time, as is easily evidenced by a drive up Route B.

We had a lot of advantages going for us in those days, starting with a stable and growing university. We also had access to rail transportation and close proximity to an interstate highway. We had at least a decent-size regional labor force. And it turned out College Town USA was (and still is) a great place to live.

We stayed with this model far too long, though it is hard to blame anybody for that. After all, we were doing very well until roughly 15 years ago, when the sands started shifting under our collective feet and the model became more and more tenuous.

Consider: Not since we recruited Quaker Oats in 1996 have we had many success stories along that Route B corridor. Instead, it has been a slow drain (speeding up recently) of companies laying off workers or moving elsewhere. We will still enjoy some successes with this model — usually based on some special circumstances — but it will be a minor part of our future success. This is particularly true when one realizes more and more small manufacturers will send their operations overseas or consolidate elsewhere.

At this juncture, it is fair to ask, “OK, Roper, if the old model doesn’t work, what is your recommendation going forward?” My answer: Partner with the University of Missouri with

respect to technology-based economic development. The university is moving along at a good clip with respect to this — and not just at the Columbia campus.

The university began a push in this direction several years ago. Unquestionably, and with the additional spur of our state's funding difficulties, President Gary Forsee is a huge proponent. In fact, his goal was to take the University of Missouri's revenues attributable to patents and royalties from the current \$10 million annually to \$50 million annually in five years. It's a challenging goal, but it probably can be done.

This is a natural for the university and a potential blessing for Columbia. The university is a \$2 billion operation and a \$230 million to \$300 million research institution. The Columbia campus is one of only six public universities in the United States with colleges of agriculture, engineering, law, medicine and veterinary medicine. It also has the world's most powerful university research reactor. It has the Research Animal Diagnostic Laboratory, the second-largest in the world. The National Swine Resource Research Center is the only such site. We are home to the Bond Life Sciences Center, the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center and the International Institute for Nano and Molecular Medicine. All of this greatly increases the stature and reputation of the university. It also brings about 30,000 visitors to Columbia every year. That is a huge help to our local economy.

It is inconceivable that all these university entities, and more that I have not named, will fail to come up with an increasing number of research discoveries that will lead to commercially viable products and services. The university has set up a system to identify such opportunities and move them forward where appropriate. Bird-dogging discoveries and pushing them through the pipeline to the finished product of patents and royalty income is an ongoing process, and Forsee is investing more resources in this process.

Another important part of the process kicks in when commercial applications to quality research discoveries become obvious. A key component of the process — the MU Life Science Business Incubator — was formed a few years ago. Run by Jake Halliday, its vision regarding economic development is the creation of a cluster of high-tech companies. A special emphasis is the recruitment of startups that value being next to the MU campus. This vision is already starting to work, as the incubator building houses some homegrown MU companies, such as Equinosis (equine lameness detection) and ValueAg (agribusiness consulting). It has also recruited companies from elsewhere, all of which are working with MU researchers. These include PetScreen Inc. (veterinary diagnostics); Immunophotonics Inc. (laser-assisted immunotherapy for breast cancer); and Terminus Energy (ceramic fuel cell technology for distributive electricity production).

The goal is to create and grow these companies and attract others from elsewhere. When they get to a certain size, the goal is to keep them in this community. For that we have Discovery Ridge, a research park on the east side of town. There are roughly 100 acres devoted to this purpose at present, but many more acres are available if the need arises. They won't keep them all here, but they are set up for a good success rate.

Purdue University and the University of Texas have pursued this model with great success. Our university has the assets in place to do the same, and it is the single best opportunity for our community with respect for our own desire for quality job growth and economic development.

One caveat: As I talked to people about this endeavor, I noticed a lot of interplay between University of Missouri System and Columbia campus people. I also noticed a lot of solid lines versus dotted lines when it comes to reporting. All this can spell trouble, though organizations with quality people can get it done. Still, this looks like a bit of a challenge for top management (read: President Forsee), and I wish he and others well on that.

Next: MU aside, the potential for job creation and growth in Columbia and Boone County presents a mixed bag.

Tribune columnist Bob Roper is a former local banking and investment executive with a longstanding interest in public issues.

NEWS-LEADER

Tanning beds at MU to stay open for now

Columbia Missourian

Columbia -- A court has ruled that a privately owned tanning salon on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus can stay open at that site for another year, despite the school's concerns about the health risks for students.

The university had tried since May 2008 to end its contract with the tanning salon in the Student Recreation Complex, citing cancer risks.

The owners of The Spa filed a breach-of-contract lawsuit in July 2008 against the Board of Curators for the four-campus University of Missouri system.

Boone County Circuit Judge Kevin Crane ruled Tuesday that the earliest the university can terminate its lease with Tan Time, the company that owns The Spa, is Dec. 31, 2010, the Columbia Missourian reported.

Crane also ruled that MU need not compensate Tan Time for lost profits and improvements of the leased space.

"We are glad to know that we can terminate the lease at the end of next year," said Kelly Mescher, attorney for the Board of Curators. "We hoped that we would be able to terminate in less than a year because we had the provisions in the contract, and it's in the best interest of the students."

Thomas Schneider, attorney for Tan Time, said he also was happy overall with the judge's decision, but he was disappointed by the ruling against the damages.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Tanning beds at MU to stay open at least through 2010

By Mina Mineva

November 13, 2009 | 5:15 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Despite MU's efforts to shut down the privately owned tanning salon in the Student Recreation Complex, The Spa will remain open at least until December 2010 because of a court decision this week.

Since May 13, 2008, MU has tried to terminate its contract with The Spa because of the cancer risk associated with tanning beds. But The Spa's owners, Terry Wilson and Randy Dawson, filed a breach-of-contract lawsuit against the UM System Board of Curators in July 2008.

After a year-and-a-half of legal battles, Boone County Circuit Judge Kevin Crane ruled in chambers Tuesday that the earliest MU can terminate its lease with Tan Time, the company that owns The Spa, is Dec. 31, 2010. In his decision, he also wrote that MU will not have to compensate Tan Time for lost profits and improvements of the leased space.

"We are glad to know that we can terminate the lease at the end of next year," Kelly Mescher, attorney for the Board of Curators, said. "We hoped that we would be able to terminate in less than a year because we had the provisions in the contract, and it's in the best interest of the students."

Thomas Schneider, attorney for Tan Time, said he also was happy overall with the judge's decision, but he was disappointed by the ruling against the damages.

MU added the sunless tanning services to the MU Student Recreation Complex after students expressed an interest in tanning and massages in a 2004 student survey, said Diane Dahmann, director of MizzouRec services and facilities.

Tan Time won the bid in August 2006 and invested \$250,000 to build The Spa.

In May 13, 2008, Dahlmann wrote a letter to Tan Time notifying the company that "in (the university's) best interest as determined by the university," MU was canceling the contract effective July 31, 2008.

The university "wanted to be out of the tanning bed business because there is a concern about cancer," Mescher said in a court hearing. The cancer risk was a "big issue" for MU Chancellor Brady Deaton, Mescher said.

Following Dahlmann's written notice, Wilson and Dawson sued the university for terminating the lease, for damages related to the termination and interior improvements, and for failing to disclose that some medical school professors were opposed to tanning.

Tan Time's claim: The signed contract stated the lease will last until December 2010 and can be extended every two years until 2016. This arrangement can be terminated at the end of an annual term with a 60-day written notice, so the earliest MU can cancel the contract is December 2010.

Crane's ruling: The lease cannot be terminated until December 31, 2010.

Tan Time's claim: Tan Time says it lost \$32,468 in sales August 2008 because MU closed The Spa for one week in August (before Tan Time received a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction).

Crane's ruling: Tan Time did not provide a pattern of lost net profits, and existing members could use Tan Time's other facility, Tan Rio, on Forum Boulevard. "The opportunity for new memberships was merely delayed but not lost," he wrote.

Tan Time's claim: Tan Time asked for a compensation for its \$250,000 investment in improving the interior of the leased space.

Crane's ruling: Tan Time "accepted the cost of the improvements as the cost of doing business at the recreation center for three years, and the court cannot rewrite the lease to give plaintiff a better bargain," he wrote.

Tan Time's claim: MU employees knew that one or more medical school professors opposed the tanning services before the business opened, and MU did not disclose this information to Tan Time.

Schneider dismissed this allegation in court in October.

Schneider said he has not had the chance to discuss the judgment with his clients yet, so he doesn't know if they would like to appeal.



Coexistence with Islam

Bond book sees hope for peace.

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, November 14, 2009

To establish global peace with Islam, the United States should build better relations with Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia, U.S. Sen. Kit Bond said.

“Traditionally, these have been our good friends, but unfortunately, a very dangerous terrorist organization also operates out of Southeast Asia,” Bond, R-Mo., said.

Bond urges the United States to counter that threat with what he considers “smart power” in his new book, “The Next Front: Southeast Asia and the Road to Global Peace with Islam.” **He spent about an hour at the University of Missouri Bookstore** yesterday signing copies of the book, which he co-authored with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Lewis Simons.

Bond began working on the book more than five years ago after unsuccessfully trying to convince his colleagues in Washington, D.C., about the importance of partnering with Southeast Asia, considered a security threat since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. That region includes Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world.

Bond suggests countering potential violence through goodwill efforts, such as offering educational exchanges in the areas and promoting free trade and sharing modern agricultural practices.

Bond joked that the book came about after his wife, Linda, told him no one was listening to his message.

Originally, Simons — whom Bond dubbed a “far liberal” — turned down the offer to help him write the book.

“Lewis disagrees with me politically on everything,” Bond said, “but we agree on Southeast Asia.”

“The Next Front” hit bookshelves last month. About 25 people, including university students, administrators and members of the community, lined the stairwell at the bookstore to get their copies signed.

Doug Clark of Columbia was one of the first in line. "I'm interested in reading about the subject and seeing what his thoughts are," said Clark, who described himself as a Democrat.

Niki Harris worked for Bond from 2000 to 2005 and now works as an academic adviser for the MU College of Arts and Sciences. She just picked up her copy of the book and hasn't yet read it but trusts that Bond's advice should be heeded.

"I think he has not only a technical understanding of what's going on, he gets the realistic needs of implementing a plan," she said.

While signing copies for bookstore staff, Bond joked about his recent appearance on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

Bond promoted his book on Monday's show and, by all accounts, held his own against the Comedy Central host known for taking jabs against conservatives. Bond came with his own barbs, quipping that he supports President Barack Obama's plan in Afghanistan more than the president does.

Bond said yesterday he went to Stewart's studio prepared. "I try not to go into a battle of wits unarmed."

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Open Column

To boost its rank, MU must raise standards

Friday, November 13, 2009

Editor, the Tribune: Over the past many years, the University of Missouri has witnessed a niche plan, a mission enhancement plan and now a "Mizzou Advantage" plan. Despite these well advertised efforts, MU's national ranking has only gone down.

A lack of state resources is not the main cause for the decline, as other universities also have lost state resources, some more than MU. The main cause is that MU does not respect merit and competitiveness sufficiently and that its reward system is heavily skewed toward "success" achieved by any means possible. As an example, MU has taken a heavy recourse to congressional earmarks. Although these bring in resources to a few faculty, they also tell most others that they toil in vain. The demoralizing effects of such shortcuts on many faculty and departments are substantial, as they view the earmarks and the various MU plans mostly as a system of spoils for the well connected.

To improve the rankings, MU needs to improve its standards. Its greatest challenges are undoubtedly its own self-inflicted and deep-seated disadvantages. No nicely packaged plans can address these disadvantages.

Name withheld upon request

College Students Find Support In 'Posses'

Program Seeks To Help Students' Emotional Transitions
KATHY MATHESON, Associated Press Writer

MU mention page 2

BRYN MAWR, Pa. -- When Sharhea Wade arrived at Bryn Mawr College from a big-city high school, it seemed as if every other student on the quiet, leafy campus had graduated from an exclusive private school.

"I felt intimidated by them," recalled Wade. "Bryn Mawr is a different world."

Yet whenever she felt like a fish out of water, Wade could turn to her "posse" -- nine other girls who, like her, had been recruited from struggling Boston-area school districts and sent on full merit scholarship to the elite women's college.

Wade's posse is one of dozens sent to top-tier universities each year by the New York-based Posse Foundation. The combination of monetary and social support is a model that experts say could help move the U.S. toward President Barack Obama's goal of having America lead the world in the percentage of college graduates by 2020. Next fall, the program hits the Ivy League when it debuts at Penn.

So far, Obama's focus has been on increasing access to higher education -- especially for minority and low-income students -- through expanded Pell grants and simplified financial aid applications.

But paying for college is only part of the battle. Keeping students in school by supporting their psychological and academic needs is equally important, said Laura Perna, an associate professor in the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

Posse founder Deborah Bial started the organization in 1989 after a once-promising inner-city student told her, "I never would have dropped out of college if I had my posse with me."

Since then, Posse has sent more than 2,600 students to its partner campuses, including Vanderbilt University, Colby College and the University of California at Berkeley.

The program targets students in disadvantaged urban districts who have strong leadership skills but may lack the guidance to wade into what can be an intimidating college admissions process. Posse is not need- or minority-based, though many students fit both categories.

The demand for such help is dramatic, Bial said. Posse, which had been recruiting from six major cities, added Miami as its seventh this fall. The program received more than 12,000 nominations this year for 460 slots nationwide, Bial said.

Posse provides academic support and help with college applications, but admission decisions are made by individual schools, which offer full merit scholarships. **A University of Missouri study presented last week links merit aid to increased freshman year grade-point averages, particularly for minority and low-income students.**

Students headed to the same universities are placed in posses of about 10 that begin meeting in high school. The meetings continue weekly at college, creating tight-knit groups where members can find motivation or comfort when they feel lost or frustrated.

"I have this incredible sense that I can succeed and take on whatever I want at school because I have this intensely supportive network behind me who believes in my potential," said Augusta Irele, 21, a member of Wade's posse at Bryn Mawr.

Research shows that integration into a community is important for college retention, Perna said. Having a posse of peers with similar backgrounds creates a bridge to the new institutional climate while helping maintain relationships at home, she said.

Matt Rivera, 20, said his posse helped him and other members through the culture shock of leaving their Chicago-area homes for selective DePauw University, set amid cornfields in Greencastle, Ind.

"Everyone calls it a bubble," said Rivera, a junior. "There's nothing for 45 miles."

Some Posse scholars say their presence has spurred some uncomfortable but needed conversations about race and class on campus. Jenny Rickard, a Bryn Mawr administrator and Posse liaison, said the program has been mutually enriching for the school and the students.

"The scholars have really energized the environment at Bryn Mawr, really creating a culture that is more inclusive," Rickard said.

Both DePauw and Bryn Mawr say Posse students are active campus leaders and have graduation rates on par with or higher than that of the general student body. Overall, Posse officials say their students have a 90 percent graduation rate, compared with a 58 percent rate nationwide for bachelor's degrees within six years.

Bial, whose work with Posse earned her a \$500,000 MacArthur Foundation "genius grant" in 2007, said the ultimate goal is for scholars to take their diplomas from the Main Streets of college towns to the boardrooms of Wall Street and beyond.

"We're creating a new kind of leadership network in the United States," said Bial. "It's not a good-old-boys network, it's not the Greek system. You've got young people who represent the real diversity of this country."



Medical school showcases findings

Research covers HIV, kids' health.

By Janese Heavin

Friday, November 13, 2009

Nearly 100 future doctors, nurses and health professionals showed off findings from their research projects yesterday at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

The 95 students made up a record-breaking number of entries in the annual Health Sciences Research Day. The event, which originated in the 1980s, gives young researchers a chance to showcase their projects and have their work judged by experts.

"The tremendous growth over previous years is indicative of the interest and excitement students have in research," said Jamal Ibdah, senior associate dean for research at the School of Medicine.

Brian Bostick, who expects to complete medical and doctoral degrees next year, said he was surprised to learn a few days ago he won the first medical school Dean's Award for Outstanding Student Research. Bostick is studying heart disease in those with muscular dystrophy. He discovered using gene therapy to restore just 50 percent of missing proteins in heart cells can prevent heart disease in muscular dystrophy patients.

Although she didn't win an award for it, Haley Becker, a graduate student studying public health, hopes her work will help Columbia's youths. At yesterday's fair, she showcased her findings on physical activity levels in minority children. Becker conducted a needs assessment in Columbia neighborhoods and found that, on a whole, white children get significantly more exercise than nonwhite children.

She's since teamed up with a local elementary school — Becker wasn't allowed to say which — to have children volunteer to wear monitoring devices that track their activity. She expects the data will tell her which times of the day, outside of the school day, children are most active. From there, Becker said community groups can organize activities that best meet the needs of minority populations.

Other dean's awards were given to Michelle Matteson, a doctoral candidate in the MU Sinclair School of Nursing, for her study into the longevity of transplants; and Kelly Baranyai, a graduate student in the School of Health Professions, for her research on how the Nintendo Wii can help those with multiple sclerosis.

For his work with SARS, foot-and-mouth disease and HIV, Stefan Sarafianos, an assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, earned the annual Dorsett L. Spurgeon, MD, Distinguished Medical Research Award, which comes with a \$5,000 cash prize. The award recognizes faculty scientists who are making strides early in their careers. Sarafianos' most recent work involves coming up with a chemical compound to block the spread of HIV through use of vaginal gels and creams. He's in the process of patenting the compound.

"Dr. Sarafianos' work could make a tremendous difference in terms of both preventing the spread of HIV as well as in the treatment of the more than 33 million people living with the virus," Ibdah said in a prepared statement. "We are extremely proud of the research powerhouse he is building with his expertise and his mentorship here at MU."

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Danforth-Freeman 2.0 should define new era of stability for St. Louis schools

Monday, Nov 16 2009

St. Louis' civic dynamic duo — civil rights attorney Frankie M. Freeman and Washington University Chancellor Emeritus William H. Danforth — has been pressed back into service on behalf of St. Louis Public Schools.

Missouri Commissioner of Education Chris L. Nicastro has asked them for independent advice on the best way to move the district forward.

The decision to do so is timely and wise. Dr. Danforth and Ms. Freeman's advice, if it replicates the tenor, soundness and incisiveness of their past recommendations, could result in St. Louis Public Schools' best chance in decades to achieve lasting stability.

Ms. Nicastro's predecessor, the late D. Kent King, first asked Ms. Freeman and Dr. Danforth to lead a five-member committee to study the district in 2006.

The committee's recommendations have had a huge impact on the district. They led the state Board of Education to withdraw the district's accreditation in 2007. The city's elected board of education was stripped of authority in favor of a three-person Special Administrative Board appointed to run the district.

Last week, Ms. Nicastro asked Ms. Freeman and Dr. Danforth to continue their work; all of their committee's original members — Donald M. Suggs, publisher of the St. Louis American newspaper, attorney Ned O. Lemekmeier and **Michael M. Middleton, a deputy chancellor and professor of law at the University of Missouri-Columbia** — have agreed to continue their service.

The committee has been given broad authority to consider what comes next for St. Louis Public Schools. What measurements — in terms of student achievement, financial stability and other criteria — will signal that the district is ready to be returned to local control? Where should that transition lead? Should the

district be returned to a locally elected board of education? Or would the city's children, and the stability of the district, be better served by some form of appointed board?

Ms. Nicastro correctly emphasized that no one should expect quick action on state oversight. St. Louis Public Schools' progress — including any return to local control — is a long-term project.

She made clear that reconvening the Freeman-Danforth committee should not be seen as a slight to the Special Administrative Board that is overseeing the district. She voiced "support and confidence in the board and Superintendent Kelvin Adams," but noted that, by its very nature, the SAB is not a permanent arrangement.

The Freeman-Danforth committee will present its findings and recommendations by next fall — leaving adequate time before the state Legislature's 2011 session to ready legislative proposals.

The committee's meetings will be open — with plenty of notice to the public, and opportunities for all interested parties to be heard. It could have a major impact on the district — this time for the long term.

Dysfunctional school board leadership was a huge factor in the intractable decline of St. Louis Public Schools. Electoral politics have been driven by special interests, resulting in a see-saw of board control. Inattentiveness and uncontrolled egos led to administrative and financial chaos, frequent turnover in superintendents and other education leaders and a loss of public confidence.

The state takeover, and the appointment of the SAB, restored good order to the administration of St. Louis Public Schools. The Freeman-Danforth committee's central challenge is to recommend a permanent system of stable governance for St. Louis Public Schools. All other progress and reform depends on it.