More students are falling in to colleges’ ROTC ranks

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

When Lt. Christopher Smiley was a student in the Army ROTC program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, his class could have fit in a foxhole.

Just him and one other cadet, he recalled.

“There was a lot of one-on-one time with the instructor.”

Graduating in 2007, he did a tour in Iraq with an engineering unit. Now he is back at UMKC’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, this time at the front of the room teaching military science.

And now, with all the would-be officers facing him in today’s ROTC classes, let’s just say that he would need a bunker.

Last fall, enrollment climbed to 25, Smiley said, and indications are the trend has not peaked.

Across the country, 3,511 more cadets are sitting in ROTC classrooms than were there two years ago.

Army ROTC enrollment for 2009 is up 8 percent from the previous year, as is the Air Force’s program. Navy ROTC, which also supplies officers to the Marine Corps, saw a 17 percent jump.

“The program is the largest it has ever been,” said Smiley, referring to UMKC’s.

He also teaches ROTC students and serves as a scholarship and enrollment officer at Northwest Missouri State, Rockhurst and Park universities, and William Jewell College. Combined, they give Smiley a cadet corps of about 140.

Many see the tough economy behind the renewed interest in officer training.
Students on ROTC scholarship can get a full tuition ride, plus $1,200 a year for books and a monthly stipend. For freshmen without the scholarship, the stipend starts at $300 a month and goes up to $500 for seniors.

To Smiley, however, it’s more that “in general, the military has been in the news more. People are exposed to the many career opportunities, and I think that has led more students to inquire.”

The more students become familiar with education and career opportunities that come with military service, the more likely they are to sign up, he said.

Students graduating with a degree and an ROTC commission are likely to lead 30 to 40 soldiers in their first assignments.

“They find that appealing,” Smiley said.

With the ROTC commitment comes an eight-year obligation. Those winning a scholarship must serve four years on active duty and four years in the reserves.

Interest in ROTC echoes that in the nation’s top military academies. The New York Times reported last year that applications were up almost 10 percent for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., and the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo. The Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., was getting 40 percent more requests.

About 273 colleges and universities in this country have ROTC programs, enrolling about 32,000 cadets, according to the U.S. Army Cadet Command at Fort Monroe, Va.

Some elite private schools, such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Brown, don’t provide the program, usually as a protest against the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on homosexuals in military service. Others protest teaching the art of war.

Instructors at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University also report higher numbers in the last two years.

ROTC at KU has hovered at under 100 cadets for a couple of years, but this year it broke the ceiling with 114 students, said Capt. Will Chuber. Many more ROTC scholarships are awarded than when he went through KU’s program from 1999 to spring 2004, Chuber said.

 Maj. Lance O’Bryan, enrollment and scholarship officer at the University of Missouri, said he believes “an increased sense of duty during a time of war” is pushing up the numbers.

The MU cadet battalion has grown from 105 last year to 128, and applications for scholarships this year is up as well, O’Bryan said.
Eat breakfast to have a baby boy

According to the University of Missouri study, what women eat while they are in the early stages of pregnancy influences the sex and health of their unborn baby, reports The Telegraph.

Women who eat a full breakfast and a high fat diet at the time of conception are more likely to have a boy, scientists claim.

A low fat diet with periods of long fasts favours girls, the researchers have found.

Dr Cheryl Rosenfeld, of the University of Missouri, and colleagues said: "High calorie diets generally favour birth of males over females, whereas low calorie diets tend to favour females over males.

In humans and mice, food restriction and a suboptimal diet during the period around conception and early pregnancy also lead to a surfeit of daughters, most probably due to selective loss of male foetuses, the most vulnerable sex in the womb."
A primer on 8 schools here for NCAA Tournament

From Barney Fife to Bing Crosby, NCAA competitors have varied alumni, histories

By Gene Warner and Jay Rey
News Staff Reporters
Updated: March 17, 2010, 11:15 am /
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Most avid college basketball fans know that West Virginia won the Big East basketball championship in thrilling fashion last weekend.

Fewer people know that its prominent alumni include Don Knotts, the beloved Deputy Barney Fife from "The Andy Griffith Show."

The University of Missouri is renowned for its journalism school and its Big 12 teams. It's also known as the university that gave us the homecoming tradition.

And Florida State University claims to be one of only two colleges in America with their own student circuses.

The eight schools heading to Buffalo today for the first two rounds of the NCAA men's basketball tournament — West Virginia, Missouri, Florida State, Syracuse, Morgan State, Gonzaga, Vermont and Clemson — boast rich histories dating back as far as 1791.

One started as a Bible institute, another as an all-male military school.

All eight are thriving universities today.

They span the nation, from Florida State to Gonzaga in Washington State, from the University of Vermont to the University of Missouri.

And two of the schools, Syracuse and West Virginia, are within easy driving distance of Buffalo.

All eight universities have sent athletes to the professional ranks, but they also groomed undergraduates who later excelled in politics, literature, the arts and business.

Here's a small list of those alumni. See if you can match them up with their schools.


These schools range from small private ones, like Gonzaga with 4,729 students, to large public
universities like Florida State with 30,400.

Their mascots include three cats, a bulldog, a mountaineer and a guy named Otto who replaced the Saltine Warrior following a battle over political correctness.

Their school colors cover most of the spectrum, including red, orange, green, blue and purple. One school once sported the colors pink and pea green before coming to its senses.

But they all share one common denominator — chasing their dream as far as they can in the basketball tourney.

For all of them, and perhaps for the one team cutting down the nets in Indianapolis, it all starts here in Buffalo this weekend.

To catch a glimpse of the teams before the games begin, check out practice sessions Thursday in HSBC Arena. Practices last 40 minutes each and are open to the public.

Here's the schedule: noon, Morgan State; 12:45 p.m., Missouri; 1:30 p.m., West Virginia; 2:15 p.m., Clemson; 4:25 p.m., Gonzaga; 5:10 p.m., Syracuse; 5:55 p.m., Florida State; and 6:40 p.m., Vermont.

The games start at 12:15 p.m. Friday, when West Virginia takes on Morgan State.

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Trib Talk

End to hate starts within ourselves

Editor, the Tribune: The cotton balls incident on campus involves more than racism. Many groups and individuals are victimized by demeaning statements and deeds. America in general decries such behavior, yet most individuals privately laugh at demeaning jokes — if they are not targeted.

Reduction of hate crimes and harassment is sure when every individual becomes courageous enough to speak out immediately when witnessing an assault. Many people cringe when they hear something offensive but fear retribution.

People who enjoy offending others usually feel assured of support. Communal disapproval and censure would prevent such bullying with immediate responses toward all harassment (i.e., whites taking up for blacks, Hispanics taking up for the disabled, etc.).

An angry response to hateful behavior is almost a justification. Responses to harassment need to be impersonal. A simple statement, such as, “Did you just make a racist statement?” while waiting calmly for the response in front of witnesses is more effective than a vitriolic assault because it allows each person the luxury of being self-reflective instead of defensive.

Let’s all search our memories for when we have laughed at offensive jokes. We are all guilty.

Let’s stop the behavior in ourselves, even in our thoughts, and be tempered and impersonal toward others’ misdeeds.

Julia Williams

211 Bourne Ave.
While Berger called for immediate use of clean energy, some in the audience questioned how to do that. Mizzou students pointed to the campus’s Sustainability Office and ongoing efforts to move away from coal use, suggesting that solutions will take time.

But colleges would move more quickly toward no-coal campuses with increased demand and pressure from students, Berger said.

In her Sierra Club post, Berger said, she hopes to create a Midwest coalition of college students and groups that support clean energy. The point, she said, is to make sure politicians know young voters want to see change.

“Young people need to stand up and say, ‘This is not acceptable,’ ” she said.

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Writer sees redemption for language on Internet

By Juneve Heavin

Saturday, March 20, 2010

After decades of a television era that subjected viewers to visual and audio absorption but not much thought, an award-winning writer hopes the Internet era marks a revival of critical thinking.

"We're not expressing ourselves very eloquently in cyberspace yet, but we're in the early stage," Ron Powers said.

A novelist, journalist and the first TV critic to win a Pulitzer Prize, Powers has spent the week on the University of Missouri campus to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain’s death.

His three-part lecture series explored Twain’s role in shaping narrative, truth-telling in writing and the evolution of that over the decades. After what MU philosophy Professor William Bondeson described as a “glorious” series, Powers wrapped up yesterday by focusing on those who have turned language into marketing spin over the past century.

Powers couched his presentation on Walter Williams’ journalism creed of 1914. Even though idealistic journalism students hope to define careers by that creed, Powers — a former Missouri School of Journalism student — said most recognize it’s not entirely true.

As a case in point, Powers said the reason newspapers tout unbiased reporting is not because of that idealist mission but rather because it sells to a greater cross section of society.

Not long after Williams penned his creed, marketing mastermind Edward Bernays brought public relations to American mindsets, forever changing political and advertising campaigns, Powers said. He pointed to Bernays’ description of cigarettes as “torches of liberty” and imprisoning people as “elimination of undesirable elements.” The idea, Powers said, is to create or diminish a visual image associated with words.

“Black is white, war is peace and Fox News is fair and balanced,” Powers quipped, referring to the conservative news station.

Television, with its combination of pictures and sounds, diminished the need for language to conjure up mental images, Powers said. The by-product has been mass marketing centered around neuroscience, figuring out which visuals trigger which chemical reactions in the brain.
Unlike written words that require a decoding of symbols and comprehension, eyes anticipate and absorb images in the same way ears anticipate and absorb syllables and sentences.

“There’s no filter,” he said.

While Powers lamented the loss of libraries, bookstores and newspapers — a result of diminished literacy, he said — he’s optimistic the Internet age will save words and, ultimately, narratives and truth telling.

By equipping users with a keyboard and “making words at our fingertips,” he said, “we have a fighting chance.”

The Mark Twain centennial celebration continues today when Michael Budds of the School of Music will discuss the musical landscape of Twain’s time. That presentation starts at 10 a.m. in the Reynolds Alumni Center. Also at 10 a.m. in Wrench Auditorium at Memorial Union, Keith Eggerner, associate professor of art history and archeology, will discuss Twain’s boyhood home in Hannibal.

At 1 p.m., Powers will join English Professor Tom Quirk, Louis Budd of Duke University and Bruce Michelson of the University of Illinois for a panel discussion about why Twain remains popular 100 years after his death.

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
LETTER: MU Student Recreation Complex is wrong to bar breast-feeding from pool area

By Ericka Alten, Fulton
March 19, 2010 | 6:30 p.m. CDT

I am an MU graduate student, and I would like to publicize an experience I had on March 5 at the MU Student Recreation Complex's “Family Night.”

Sitting poolside while my family swam, I nursed my 2-month-old son under a discreet nursing cape, until we were rudely interrupted by an employee. She told me not to breast-feed there by the pool and suggested a high-traffic locker area with no seating instead. Flustered by the confrontation, I chose not to press the issue.

Since then, I have looked into Missouri law regarding breast-feeding in public: MO Rev. Stat. § 191.918 (1999) allows a mother, with as much discretion as possible, to "breast-feed her child in any public or private location."

As I was thoroughly covered by a nursing blanket, I had a legal right to breast-feed him there by the pool, as I fully intend to do again in the future. Alternatively, if the MU rec complex would set up a temporary Lactation Area on Family Nights, with a chair and a privacy screen, I would be happy to use it.

Today's mothers face an unfortunate double standard: doctors recommend breast-feeding our babies, yet doing so continues to be "frowned upon" by some people, and we end up feeling ashamed for making the healthiest choice for our babies. What else is the purpose of Family Night at the MU rec complex, if not to promote healthy family activities?

Well, I am not ashamed of nursing my son, and I will not be marginalized into silence by any ignorant staff person again.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Search for new Board of Education commissioner put on hold

NO MU Mention

By Nicole Lebsack
March 19, 2010 | 6:21 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Coordinating Board for Higher Education voted Thursday to postpone its search for a new commissioner as a result of diminishing state resources.

In an emergency session via a conference call, the board agreed to put off the hunt for four to six weeks until more decisions are made about potential changes to the Department of Education.

“The board agreed that additional time will ensure a well-informed decision,” said Lowell Kruse, chairman of the board. “We want to be part of the solution for making government more efficient.”

Robert Stein, the current commissioner of higher education, will retire July 1.

The Missouri state government is working on a plan to reduce the number of employees on the state’s payroll. In keeping with this need, Stein told the board he wanted to lay off about a quarter of the department’s general revenue-funded positions by the end of the fiscal year. In addition, he said he will reorganize staff for smaller, more effective departments.
Sustainability gets political

MU event links state's students.

By Jonene Hegwin

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Roughly 60 college students from across Missouri gathered this weekend at the University of Missouri to share ideas about becoming more sustainable on their respective campuses and to voice support for clean energy.

The Show-Me Sustainability conference — hosted for the second year by Sustain Mizzou — featured keynote speakers and interactive workshops. Attendees came from Missouri State, Truman State and Washington universities, as well as UM's Rolla and Kansas City campuses. Two high school students, including one from Hickman High School, also participated, said Grace Rathert, an MU junior and event organizer.

Rathert said students were encouraged to talk about sustainability projects that have succeeded or failed in their schools and to exchange contact information.

"Hopefully a lot of attendees will get to know each other and form a collaborative network across the state," she said.

Having a network of college students unified in the desire for clean energy is especially critical in Missouri where a U.S. Senate seat is up for grabs in November, said Lindsey Berger, the Midwest organizer for the Sierra Club's student coalition. She said she expects numerous political insiders to descend on the state this fall, giving students a chance to voice their thoughts about energy.

During her presentation, Berger encouraged attendees to sign a national online petition calling for a world fully powered by clean energy. That petition is part of the "Define Our Decade" movement out of the Energy Action Coalition. When students sign up, they can access other people who signed from their school or community, she said. Berger said that list of names will be a key tool when petitioning politicians or campus leaders to make energy policy decisions.

"They know they need to listen to us because if they don't, they're not going to be in that position much longer," she said.