Two Missouri universities earn $16 million in royalties

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Missouri Department of Higher Education says the University of Missouri system and the private Washington University in St. Louis earned more than $16 million in royalties and license fees last year.

The University of Missouri system has campuses in Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis. The four schools combined to earn $10.4 million in royalties and 48 patent applications.

Washington University generated $6.3 million and 106 patent applications.

The state department says universities across the country earned $1.8 billion.
Police searching Warrenton area for missing Mizzou student

BY SUSAN WEICH sweich@post-dispatch.com | Posted: Thursday, December 23, 2010 12:05 am

Police in Warrenton searched Wednesday for missing University of Missouri-Columbia student Nicholas Michael Coppola after learning he had been arrested for a home break-in and later released from the Warren County Jail.

Foristell Police Chief Douglas Johnson said Coppola, 25, had been arrested by Wright City police on Dec. 12, the day Foristell authorities first noticed Coppola's abandoned 1998 Subaru Legacy on Interstate 70, just west of the Foristell exit.

After his car ran out of gas, Coppola apparently sought shelter from the bitter cold by breaking into a house in Wright City.

Coppola left his wallet and cell phone in his car and did not attempt to call anyone for help after his car stopped running or after he was arrested, Johnson said.

Coppola was taken to the Warren County Jail but was released at 5:40 p.m. after the homeowner declined to press charges, Johnson said. Coppola walked away from the jail, which is situated on Main Street in Warrenton.

Johnson said that police now believe Coppola still may be in the Warrenton area in an abandoned building or vacant home.

"With this severe weather on the way and no resources to feed himself, I don't know what he is going to do," Johnson said. "I'm hoping somebody is helping him."

Coppola's family also has been checking area motels to see if he has been given a room by a charitable organization, Johnson said.

Johnson said Foristell police towed Coppola's car on Dec. 13, and sent a letter to him at his parents' home in Weldon Spring after they couldn't reach anyone by phone. The parents called police on Monday, and police began their investigation. Foristell police didn't know about the Wright City arrest when they found the car.
Coppola, a senior economics major, hasn't been seen by family since his mother visited his apartment in Columbia on Dec. 10. Coppola's father's birthday was Dec. 15, and family members believe he may have been traveling home to celebrate.

Coppola is 6-foot-1 and weighs about 180 pounds. He wears black-framed glasses.

Gene Coppola said Tuesday his son started talking less to friends and family about six months ago, after reading a book called "The Celestine Prophecy." The student apparently had a spiritual awakening and talked of taking a trip to California with a group. But Coppola recently told his parents he had decided against the trip. Family members could not be reached Wednesday.

Anyone with information can call Foristell police at 636-463-2123, ext. 227, or 636-639-2150 and ask for the on-duty Foristell officer.

Shane Anthony of the Post-Dispatch contributed to this report.
Authorities search for missing Columbia man

By Janese Silvey

Police in Foristell near St. Louis are searching for a Columbia man who has been missing since Dec. 12, when he was released from jail after being arrested for alleged trespassing in Wright City.

Nicholas Coppola

Nicholas Coppola, 24, lives in the 1700 block of Telluride Court, near Nifong Boulevard in southwest Columbia. Foristell police Chief Douglas Johnson said that’s where the family last saw him, when Coppola’s mother visited him on Dec. 10.

Johnson said police spotted Coppola’s 1998 Subaru Legacy on eastbound Interstate 70 just west of Foristell at about 1 p.m. Dec. 12.

Police believe he was on the way to his parents’ home in Weldon Spring when his vehicle ran out of gas. The driver’s seat was reclined, indicating he had waited for a while for someone to provide a ride, Johnson said.

Coppola later left the vehicle, leaving behind his cell phone and wallet.

Last night, police learned Coppola was arrested Dec. 12 after he allegedly tried to enter a residence in Wright City, Johnson said. Wright City police arrested him for peace disturbance and trespassing and took him to the Warren County Jail, where he was released on summons at 5:40 p.m. Dec. 12.
Johnson said Coppola probably was trying to seek shelter to stay warm. The weather in the area that Sunday was "nasty," he said, with single-digit temperatures and wind chills below zero.

Johnson said Coppola did not attempt to call his family from the jail, and his two roommates have not heard from him.

Coppola previously was a student at the University of Missouri, last enrolled during the spring 2010 semester, said MU spokesman Christian Basi. He had been studying economics.

Coppola's mother, Nellie, said about six months ago, Nicholas had met a religious group while attending a music festival. The group apparently is based off of content in the book "The Celestine Prophecy."

"I don't think it's the book itself — I have the book myself and have read it," Nellie Coppola said. "But Nick took it to extremes."

Before his religious experience, Nellie Coppola described her son as friendly and willing to help anyone.

"Nicholas was born with a smile on his face," she said. "He was the best kid. No problems. Everyone loves Nick."

Lately, though, he had become secretive, she said. He described the religious sect as being "higher than the CIA," she said. "He sounded delusional."

The family has filed a missing persons report. Nellie Coppola said she was somewhat relieved to learn that he had left his vehicle and been arrested on Dec. 12. Earlier, she'd feared that someone had taken him if he was walking along the interstate. "It's still frightening, but in a way, that was good news," she said.

Johnson said he suspects Coppola is in the Warrenton area, although there is a possibility he has returned to Columbia.

Nicholas Coppola is about 6 feet tall and roughly 180 pounds, his mom said. Anyone with information about Coppola's whereabouts should call the Foristell Police Department at (636) 463-2123, ext. 227.

"We're just asking anyone who sees or thinks they know anything to call," Nellie Coppola said. "Pray for us. Pray that we have Christmas with Nick."

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Falling behind: Foreign students eat our lunch

Foreign students eat our lunch

By Henry J. Waters III

We need look no farther than across town to see why Americans are falling behind in science and math.

A new program at the University of Missouri’s College of Engineering allows students from India to enroll here after taking only general education courses over there. Similar agreements have been made with engineering schools in China and the Ukraine. Our school is making no unwarranted accommodation to the visitors. As we know by now, they come well prepared, better on average than our own citizens.

It’s all part of a disturbing trend. The United States has the best higher education in the world but increasingly is not fielding the best students, particularly in math and science.

You can see the trend here at MU, where 56 percent of graduate students in engineering are foreign. Medical school enrollments are increasingly foreign as well.

For some reason, students in America don’t aspire to become scientists in numbers relative to our population. This does not bode well for our country and is odd, since science-related jobs are among the highest-paid.

Even in areas requiring higher education, youngsters in the U.S. drift toward lower-paying jobs, such as those in the social services.

We need a renewed emphasis on study and work in science-related fields, starting in the home and permeating K-12 education. As children begin to read, parents can make sure they get a healthy dose of numbers and sciences. They can learn in kindergarten and beyond that math and geometry — and geology, and geography and physics — can be fun. Even chemistry, my personal bane as I drifted through school.

Science learning must be grounded in superior literary skill, taught mainly with writing. From that, let us pray, will come more interest in the sciences.

Otherwise, we will continue to cede scientific skill and curiosity to other populations, losing a basic source of potential national power and economic growth.
MedZou jumps in rank in Pepsi Refresh contest

By Nick Schnelle
December 22, 2010 | 2:42 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — With less than two weeks to go, MedZou is close to winning a $50,000 grant from the Pepsi Refresh Project this month.

*MedZou, a student-run clinic that works with uninsured patients, was in 14th place Wednesday morning for the $50,000 prize level in the contest's "Health" category, up from 67th place at the start of December.*

The top 10 projects at the end of each month are awarded funding, and projects can enter for multiple months. MedZou first entered the contest in November but ranked 22nd at the end of that month.

According to its profile on the contest's website, the clinic would use the funding to offer critical diagnostic services for patients, such as X-rays, ultrasounds and electrocardiograms.

*Those who wish to participate can vote by creating an account on Pepsi Refresh Project's website, signing in with Facebook or texting "103787" to "73774."

Users can vote for 10 different ideas each day, and voting is open until Dec. 31.

Finalists will be announced Jan. 3.