University of Missouri officials say they have cut 16 degree options

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA | University of Missouri officials say they have lopped 16 degree options following a state-mandated review of academic programs with low numbers of graduates.

Most of the dropped programs have been merged with other programs, Chancellor Brady Deaton said in a letter last week to Higher Education Commissioner David Russell, although a few have been cut altogether.

In October, the state ordered all public universities to review programs that awarded an average of fewer than 10 bachelor’s, five master’s and three doctoral programs a year.

The state’s Coordinating Board of Higher Education will review the proposal in February.

Deputy Provost Ken Dean said it could take years to change some of the degree programs because the university did not want to implement anything that would have a negative impact on current or enrolled students.

"Some of these degrees are not going to go away for a while because there are people in the pipeline," Dean said.

Although the latest moves were the result of a state mandate, he said the school is constantly reviewing its academic offerings. He said the university had eliminated as many degrees as it had created over the past decade.

Missouri’s proposal includes:
• Combining bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Spanish and French to create new romance language bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Spanish was not a low-producing program, but the department agreed to take in the French program.

• Merging three master’s programs within the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources into one catchall degree.

• Combining two doctoral programs — forestry and soil, environmental and atmospheric science — into one doctorate.

• Combining pharmacology and physiology medicine master’s and doctoral programs into one degree in the School of Medicine.

• Merging exercise physiology and nutritional area master’s programs into one degree in the School of Human Environmental Sciences.

The university’s proposal also recommends dropping education specialist and doctoral degrees in career and technical education, and a specialist degree in special education.
Nine curators: One from each district. Eight districts

By Henry J. Waters III

This equation is legally required but soon to be mathematically impossible. The Missouri Constitution says the University of Missouri Board of Curators shall have nine members and no more than one from each state congressional district. This has worked fine so long as Missouri has had nine such districts, but now population shifts will reduce our congressional representation from nine to eight. A plain reading of the law seems to indicate one-per-district will produce eight of the nine members, fomenting a debate about how to constitute the ninth.

Local Reps. Mary Sil and Chris Kelly think the ninth member should be a student with full voting rights.

Currently a student serves on the board, able to attend all meetings but without voting rights. The governor appoints students from the system’s four campuses on a rotating basis.

Earlier, current board members considered this matter and decided firmly against the idea, citing a student’s lack of experience and potential long-term interest in broader statewide issues. I agreed with the curators’ position then and still do.

It can’t hurt for a student to sit in board meetings, but I doubt if student interests are any better represented by that technique than an energetic student lobbying effort. Most likely a student on the board will become swayed to support fellow board members and their actions, perhaps with good reason but not representing an invasive student attitude from the outside.

To me this indicates the student member should be retained but not given full member status. Let the ninth regular member be a statewide at-large nomination allowing the governor to choose for quality rather than geography. A governor might think the best two prospects come from the same district.

A constitutional amendment might be needed. A debate should be undertaken promptly. Meanwhile, as seats become vacant, if the governor does nothing, willing incumbents can continue to serve. Curator Bo Fraser has resigned, and three others’ terms are expiring. While we sort it out, the board can amble along in an extralegal but satisfactory manner.

HJW III
Tiger fans on board for bowl game

By Janese Silvey

It might take 23 hours on a bus, but Steve Monson will be there — complete with tail and cowboy hat to cheer on his beloved Tigers.

“I’m a big Tigers fan,” Monson, a University of Missouri graduate student, said yesterday while standing in below-freezing temperatures waiting for his ride.

Monson and girlfriend Alex Ott were among 100 students and their guests traveling today on two MU-sponsored buses to Tempe, Ariz., where MU will take on the Iowa Hawkeyes tomorrow at the 2010 Insight Bowl game at Sun Devil Stadium.

MU’s ticket office sold 7,200 tickets from its 11,000 allotment before returning unsold tickets to bowl officials.

Students got a special deal, thanks to funding from donors. MU’s Student Life office worked with the MU Athletic Department, the Mizzou Alumni Association and individual donors to offer student packages that include transportation, game tickets and four nights — two in Tempe and two in Zona Rosa, N.M. The price was $99 a person for those agreeing to stay three people to a room and $185 for those preferring two to a room.

“We were trying to figure out how to get there,” Monson said. “This was better than anything else.”

Before boarding the buses at 11:30 a.m. yesterday, participants gathered across from the Virginia Avenue parking garage to sign in. Many carried pillows, hoping to sleep through most of the two-day drive. Monson packed his Tigers tail, cowboy hat and face paint — game day staples and a handheld game to play on the way.

Tammy Johnson and daughter Tristan — who graduated from MU this month — packed books and magazines to help them pass the time. Although Tammy Johnson admitted she was not looking forward to riding a bus for two days, she was excited to have the chance to see the Tigers. She’s a season ticket holder.

The schedule puts the buses in Tempe at 8 tonight, giving participants all day tomorrow to explore the area, said Kirsten Temple, an associate director of residential life who is serving as a chaperone. Then tomorrow afternoon, the group will meet up with MU alumni for a pre-game tailgate.
Some 300 alumni are traveling with alumni association officials to cheer on the Tigers. Yesterday, 135 alumni arrived in Phoenix by plane, and another 70 drove to meet up with the group, said Carin Huffman Grinch, assistant director of alumni relations. Another 105 alumni were expected to arrive today.

"It's great," said Grinch, speaking on the phone from Phoenix. "Everyone is really excited to be here for a great match-up."

Last night, the group got together for "Tiger Talk" with head Coach Gary Pinkel, and tonight, alumni are invited to a spirit rally. There are about 2,200 MU alumni living in Arizona, roughly 1,700 of whom live in Phoenix, Grinch said.

Ott is optimistic the Tigers will defeat the Hawkeyes, but she also hopes for an exciting game. "I want them to win, but not a blowout," she said.

Her boyfriend was quick to correct her. A blowout game, Monson said, "is the best kind."

Regardless, the Tigers "definitely need to win," Ott said. "Otherwise, the bus ride home is going to suck."

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Volunteers make Tempe bowl games possible

Monday, December 27, 2010 | 7:09 p.m. CST
BY Len Goldman

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — For the thousands of people who watch in person and the millions who tune in on ESPN, the four hours it takes for Missouri to play Iowa in the Insight Bowl will be all they remember of the event.

What the vast majority of fans don’t get to see is the massive amount of preparation that goes into hosting Tuesday’s game.

This year, Tempe, Ariz., is hosting three bowl games: the Insight Bowl, the Fiesta Bowl and the national championship. The football games set to take place this week are a tiny fraction of everything else that surrounds the bowl games.

“We have a very small staff, probably about 35 full-time people,” said Andy Bagnato, Fiesta Bowl Director of Public Relations said. “Those are year-round jobs. A lot of people like to say, ‘What do you do year round at a bowl? You only have three games.’”

The bowl committee hosts more than 40 events across Arizona throughout the year. There is a seven-on-seven flag football tournament for high school students, a volleyball tournament at Northern Arizona University and a basketball game the University of Arizona to name a few.

“Throughout the year we’ve got things going on all the time,” Bagnato said. “The football games are probably the most notable thing we do. Our mission is to do year-round community based organization events.”

But it takes far more than 35 employees to make all of that possible. Fortunately, between 2,500 and 3,000 Arizona residents volunteer their time to work for the bowls.

“The volunteers are the ones who really do the work,” Bagnato said. “We grew up at a volunteer organization, 40 years in Phoenix now as the Fiesta Bowl, 22 as the Insight Bowl. Without the volunteers this couldn’t happen.”

Volunteering for the bowl games is something that Bagnato said people truly enjoy doing.

“They’re doing this because they love college football,” he said. “They want to be a part of something that’s really fun and really just a very important thing for the state of Arizona economically, too.”
Bagnato said most of the volunteers work year round, but during the bowl season is when they are most essential.

"Almost all of them are employed and engaged now during the bowl game," Bagnato said. "You get on a shuttle bus at the airport, that’s going to be volunteer driver. You’re looking for directions or tips for dinner, that’s going to be a volunteer. Down on the field we need to take somebody out for the coin toss, volunteer.

"They’re an intricate part of the machinery. Without them we wouldn’t be able to put this on."

Judging by the way Missouri junior quarterback Blaine Gabbert described the hospitality, the volunteers have made the machine run smoothly.

"The Insight Bowl has done a tremendous job," he said. "This is the best bowl we’ve ever been to. They’ve done everything first class."
Anderson gets 100th win in rout

Denmon has 24, Pressey 18 in milestone victory.

By Steve Valentik

Mike Anderson always seemed to want emphasize the intangibles he expected Matt Pressey to bring to the Missouri basketball program.

It was high praise when the coach compared the 6-foot-2 junior college transfer to past players such as J.T. Tiller and Zaire Taylor, though it still gave the impression that his contributions would often be little things like keeping the ball moving on offense, applying pressure at the point of attack on defense or sticking his nose in to come up with a loose ball.

But over the summer and throughout the preseason, Pressey surprised people within the MU program with the offensive skills he displayed on the practice floor. A crowd of 10,776 finally got a chance to see them, too. Monday night at Mizzou Arena as he scored a career-high 18 points — most of them right at the basket — to help the 10th-ranked Tigers roll to a 97-61 victory over Northern Illinois. It was Anderson’s 100th win at Missouri.

"Coach had a talk with me and he just really emphasized me being a little more assertive and aggressive," Pressey said afterward. "I wanted to be assertive on the defensive and offensive end. That was kind of my mindset coming into the game."

Pressey was making his second straight start at point guard with his younger brother, freshman Phil Pressey, still mending a fractured finger and sophomore Mike Dixon still coming off the bench after returning from a two-game suspension. When he got the ball on the Tigers’ first possession, he immediately looked to score, drawing a foul 12 seconds in.

His two free throws started a 17-0 opening run that put aside any concerns Missouri might suffer a letdown in its first game since an emotional Braggin’ Rights victory and the brief holiday break that followed. Fellow starters Ricardo Ratliffe, Marcus Denmon and Laurence Bowers actually did the bulk of the damage during that early surge, which Ratliffe capped by connecting on two free throws with 15:55 left.

Northern Illinois, coached by former Colorado head man Ricardo Patton, couldn’t make enough shots or stand up to the Tigers’ pressure defense enough to ever get closer than 15 points the rest of the way. The Huskies (3-7) wound up shooting 31.8 percent and committed 19 turnovers.

Pressey, who also had a career-high five rebounds and three assists, helped Missouri steadily add to their advantage by scoring 11 points over the final 13 minutes of the first half. He was the
recipient of a pair of well-thrown passes — one by Justin Safford, the other a lob by Dixon — that led to a layup and a dunk, respectively. They were two of the 26 assists the Tigers had in the game.

But he also created opportunities on his own with a quick first step and a sense of purpose he took with him to the rim.

“He actually showed what he’s capable of today, going down the hole, dunking the ball,” junior forward Laurence Bowers said of Pressey. “He’s one of our more athletic guards, and he put it on display.”

Pressey, who came in averaging 5.9 points, had seemed hesitant to show off that side of his game, often spotting up near or beyond the 3-point arc and hoisting jumpers with mixed results in the early part of the season.

“As a player, you’ve got to figure things out. You can figure it out in a day, you can figure it out in a month, you can figure it out in a year,” Anderson said. “The good players, they figure it out a little quicker, and I’m of the opinion that Matt’s a pretty good little player. ... I thought tonight he played with a lot of confidence.”

One play showed demonstrated that better than any other, and also showed the Huskies’ defensive shortcomings. It came after Steve Moore got his hands on a defensive rebound with about 1½ minutes left. He quickly tossed it over to Pressey, who dribbled the remaining 90 feet to the basket, needing only a hesitation step to get into the lane, where he exploded into the air and slammed the ball through the cylinder.

That was the last basket Missouri scored in the first half, which it wound up leading 57-17. The 40-point margin was believed to be the Tigers’ largest ever against a Division I opponent.

MU kept its advantage right near 40 for most of the second half.

Marcus Denmon scored 13 of his game-high 24 points after the break and finished the night shooting 9 for 11 from the field, including 5 for 7 from 3-point range. He also added three rebounds, two assists and three steals.

Laurence Bowers added 16 points, Ricardo Ratliffe 14 and Justin Safford provided 10 off the bench to give Missouri five players in double figures. Safford also had a season-best eight rebounds.

Forward Tim Toler scored 13 in the loss for Northern Illinois, but no other player had more than eight.

That was the finally tally for senior guard Xavier Silas, a Colorado transfer who came in averaging 26.2 points, second most in the country. He missed 10 of 12 shots in his lowest scoring game of the season.
Anderson became the fastest MU coach to reach the 100-win plateau, surpassing Quin Snyder, and improved to 100-47 since taking over the program in 2006.

The Tigers (12-1) are now off to the school's best start since beginning 21-1 and ascending to the No. 1 ranking in the 1989-90 season. They will meet Old Dominion (9-2) at 7 p.m. Thursday at Mizzou Arena.

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Skelton loss chosen top Missouri story in 2010

By The Associated Press | Posted: Monday, December 27, 2010 2:33 pm

In a year dominated by big winners in the November elections, the biggest headline was about who lost.

Missouri voters ended the 34-year career of Democratic U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton on Nov. 2, electing Republican Vicky Hartzler after a campaign in which the GOP worked furiously to connect Skelton to an unpopular President Barack Obama and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The result was ranked as the top news story of 2010 in a survey of Associated Press member newspaper and broadcast editors.

Skelton had long maintained a strong grip on a 4th District that otherwise tilts toward Republicans by emphasizing his military expertise and social conservative views. But Hartzler scored points with voters by casting Skelton as out of touch with his constituents and portraying her congressional campaign as a "fight to take back our country."

The state's budget mess was the second-ranked story. Gov. Jay Nixon's administration has estimated that Missouri faces a shortfall of between $500 million and $700 million for the next fiscal year, a gap equivalent to almost 10 percent of the state's general tax revenues.

Through two years of slumping tax revenues, the Democratic governor and Republican-led Legislature already have eliminated more than 2,000 state jobs and reduced funding for public colleges and universities, early childhood programs, public health clinics and home care providers for the disabled, among other things.
U.S. Rep. Roy Blunt's ascendency to the Senate was ranked as the no. 3 story by editors after his 14-point win over Democratic Secretary of State Robin Carnahan. It was the largest margin since John Ashcroft's Senate victory in the Republican wave of 1994.

The rest of the top 10:

4) Missourians approved a ballot measure expressing opposition to a federal health care mandate and Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder filed a lawsuit against it.

5) Because of the budget shortfall, Gov. Nixon warned the state's public colleges and universities to prepare for tuition increases and significant funding cuts after two consecutive years of tuition freezes.

6) The University of Missouri remained in a scaled-down Big 12 Conference after the Big Ten, which was believed to be courting Mizzou, instead chose Nebraska amid conference realignments.

7) Kansas City school officials vote to shut down nearly half the district's schools in a bid to improve academics and avoid using what little is left of the $2 billion it received as part of a groundbreaking desegregation case.

8) Missouri lawmakers met in special session to approve tax breaks intended for Ford Motor Co and a pension overhaul after overcoming an all-night filibuster.

9) The Veterans Administration urged nearly 2,000 veterans to return for blood tests because inadequately sterilized equipment may have exposed them to viral infections such as hepatitis and HIV during dental procedures. The news angered lawmakers and triggered a congressional hearing in St. Louis.

10) Four masked gunmen cart away containers of cash in an armored van in one of the biggest heists ever in St. Louis. They remained on the loose into December.
Thunder, Lighting and... Snow

Scientists study winter storms involving thundersnow to pinpoint where heavy snowfalls may occur.

By Nikhil Swaminathan | Monday, December 27, 2010 | 0

Editor’s note: This article originally was published March 4, 2009. We are re-posting it because thundersnow was observed in New York City during the storm that hit the East Coast in the past few days.

It’s been more than 30 years—during the Blizzard of 1978 to be exact—since Neil Stuart saw "thundersnow," a weather phenomenon featuring the unusual combination of thunder, lightning, and snow. The National Weather Service (NWS) meteorologist was 10 years old, living near Boston. The storm—which he says "is famous in meteorological circles" and influenced his career path—dumped 27 inches (67 centimeters) of snow on the ground over two days. The heaviest snow, however, came during a six-hour thundersnow storm that delivered one foot of snow over a six hour period.

Seeing thundersnow come down is "like watching a time-lapse movie of the snow building up, because it falls so quickly," Stuart says.

Thunder and lightning during a snowstorm is different from a run-of-the-mill snowstorm; it is extremely rare—lower than 1 percent of observed snowstorms unleash thundersnow, according to a 1971 NSW study. But recorded observations of the phenomenon date back to 250 B.C., say ancient Chinese records translated in 1980 by atmospheric scientist Pao-Kuan Wang, now of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Today, researchers are interested in thundersnow for its predictive value. According to Patrick Market, an associate professor of atmospheric science at the University of Missouri, a 30-year study of snowfall found that when lightning is observed during a snowstorm, there is an 86 percent chance that at least 15 centimeters of snow will fall within 113 kilometers of the flash. Researchers are trying to determine the combo of atmospheric conditions required to create thundersnow to help them better predict heavy snowfall—which they define as at least 20 centimeters falling at a rate of 7.5 to 10 centimeters per hour—and issue warnings about hazardous weather before it hits, giving people time to prepare, take cover and get off the road. (The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 800 deaths were caused by snow-related traffic accidents in 2007.)
By the time the lightning flashes during a thundersnow-storm, it is often already too late to prepare local residents for the whiteout on the way. "If we're talking about the observation of thundersnow," Market says, "the predictive value is on the order of minutes to hours."

Thundersnow-storms share some characteristics with summer thunderstorms. In both, a region of relatively warm air causes moisture to condense into clouds. A temperature gradient then forms with colder air farther up and warmer air closer to Earth's surface. If the relatively warm air begins to rise, the turbulence causes some water molecules to lose electrons and others to gain them, forming charges within the atmosphere that lead to electrification (discharged as lightning) and a sudden heating and expansion of the air. Thundersnow is unique, scientists believe, because due to the subzero temperatures, interactions between supercooled liquid water, ice crystals and larger ice particles can also generate lightning. In both types of storms, thunder results from the sound waves created by the rapid cooling and contraction of the air superheated by the lightning.

In the U.S. thundersnow is most likely to form in mountainous regions like the Rockies (thanks to warm air pockets caused by sudden changes in elevation) as well as in the vicinity of comparatively warm and large bodies of water such as the Great Lakes. Snow requires a cold environment, adequate moisture to form clouds, and rising air; thundersnow makes an appearance when a fourth ingredient is added: thermal instability, which is created by the addition of relatively warm air. (Market estimates that temperatures need to get cooler by at least four degrees Celsius per 1.6 kilometers of altitude as warm air travels upward to create the needed turbulence. Scott Steiger, an assistant meteorology professor at the State University of New York at Oswego, recently discovered that there are about six thundersnow storms a year in the Lower Great Lakes (Erie and Ontario) region, most of them in November and December.

"These storms don't move, so they can dump up to seven feet [two meters] of snow in one day," he says. "They are very intense snowstorms, but they are very local."

When thundersnow occurs away from mountains and lakes, its heat sources aren't found near the ground but rather at altitudes upward of 10,000 feet (3,000 meters). It is these less-frequent occurrences—in more populous areas in the Great Plains and the Northeastern U.S., as during the 1978 blizzard—where this type of storm has the greatest potential to cause damage. During a March 1 thundersnow storm that covered parts of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, five to 7.6 centimeters fell per hour, an extremely rare occurrence in that part of the country, Stuart says. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport reported visibility of only about 402 meters for more than an hour around noontime that day, and there were power outages in some areas of northern Georgia due to the heavy, wet snow, he adds.

Market last month joined a team of storm-chasing University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign researchers using various radars to examine what takes place inside storm clouds to cause snowfall. The team is surveying atmospheric conditions in several locations in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. A field mill, a device that measures electric fields near the ground, will be used to determine whether there is an accumulation of charged ice particles in the clouds above. The team next year plans to fly into snowstorms in NWS planes and drop parcels containing thermometers, barometers and other devices that, like weather balloons, will measure
temperature on their way down. If the team encounters thundersnow during its study, it may be able to confirm the conditions needed to produce it, making such icy tempests easier to forecast.

"With some lead time, [be it] hours or even a day or two," Stuart says, "we can see a big storm and predict which areas will see extreme snowfall."
Professor's work draws Google's attention

By Kris Hilgedick

It didn't take retired geology Professor Tom Freeman long to realize the images shared through Google Earth were far superior to the dusty black-and-white 3-D stereograms -- complete with funny cardboard glasses -- he was using in the lab manuals he authors.

And so he set about getting permission to use the images from Digital Globe, a satellite company that produces photography of the Earth's surface as it appears from outer space. A former chairman of the University of Missouri Department of Geological Sciences and now a professor emeritus, Freeman said he believes he's one of the first scientists to use the online images in textbooks.

Freeman is the author of two geology laboratory manuals he said are used by about 60 universities and colleges nationwide. His work has led him to be selected as one of 75 people who will travel Jan. 3-8 to the Google Inc. headquarters in Mountain View, Calif., to attend an invitation-only conference.

Titled "Google Earth: Visualizing the Possibilities for Geoscience Education and Research," the conference will focus on ways to disseminate Google Earth-based educational materials in the scientific community. Participants will visit geologic sites in the San Francisco Bay area and hear Google Earth staff presentations on state-of-the-art technology. Google Earth is partnering with the Geological Society of America to host the conference, Freeman said.

John Bailey, a research assistant professor at the University of Alaska, is one of four leaders to convene the meeting.

Bailey said the conferences typically are tightly focused on one aspect of geologic study, so "it's a little bit unique" to hold one on education. But he noted the satellite imagery broadcast by Google Earth is transforming geologic science.

"Just walk around any poster session in a geography conference, and two out of three posters have a snapshot" using "Google Earth," Bailey said. "We've got all this expertise. The question is: How can we get the best out of it for education, particularly undergraduate education?"

Freeman said he is looking forward to exchanging ideas with others in the field. And he hopes other scientists and educators in Mid-Missouri will see his work and want to know more about how to use the images themselves.
Throughout his teaching career, Freeman always tried to make learning as visual as possible. In the 1960s, he was one of the first professors on campus to make use of overhead projectors, he said.

Being able to see the geologic fabric — the anatomy of the earth’s surface — is critical for students’ understanding, he said.

"Geology is the most visual science," he said.

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