UM curators

Hitting the ball in the rough

On Monday in this column I teed off on the subject of University of Missouri curators whose membership status will become legally conflicted when Missouri loses one of its nine U.S. congressional districts. Having hit the ball in the rough, I herewith perform an extra shot to get back on the fairway.

The state constitution requires a nine-member UM Board of Curators, and a separate state statute prohibits more than one member from each congressional district, resulting in the current pattern of one member per district. In my initial hurried swing, I said the constitution contains both requirements, and an amendment might be necessary to resolve the conflict. Wrong. The state legislature can do the deed with a new statute.

I then guessed the governor might refrain from making new appointments pending the pending redistricting, as if that deed is imminent.

You readers and I are blessed with an attentive cadre of advisers ready to help when I go astray. Our university reporter, Janese Silvey, and a local lawyer steeped in state politics quickly got in touch. Silvey provided a copy of her Dec. 21 story describing what the law really says; Mr. Lawyer, who will remain anonymous since I have no permission to name him here, reminded me the statutory restriction will become unconstitutional only when redistricting takes effect in 2013.

So, I advise readers to remain light afoot while this saga unfolds. I suspect changing board membership specs will become a somewhat partisan issue, with Democrats favoring the addition of a permanent student member with full voting rights and Republicans coming out for a statewide at-large appointment to round out the constitutionally required nine members. Both sides will be able to make good points.

With the help of ever-diligent editorial caddies, on this and other subjects I will try to keep the ball out of the thick grass. Don’t hold your breath waiting for a hole-in-one. Pray for par and an occasional birdie. Some days we’ll have to settle for bogie.

HJW III
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU professor named one of top 25 professors in the U.S.

By Aimee Gutshall
December 29, 2010 | 5:44 p.m. CST

Benyamin Schwarz, an MU professor for 25 years, researches environmental gerontology. Courtesy of MU News Bureau

COLUMBIA — MU professor Benyamin Schwarz thinks of himself as an advocate for his students.

"I challenge myself to cater individually to each student rather than using my authority to teach to an anonymous group," he said.

Schwarz, a professor in the department of architectural studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences at MU, was named one of the "Top 25 Professors and Education Leaders in the U.S." by DesignIntelligence magazine.

"This award is rewarding because it gives recognition for the kind of education that you try to provide your students," Schwarz said. "It is the idea of meeting young people and adding something to their life through teaching."
The honor is given annually to educators and education administrators across the country who display excellence in design education leadership. The “2011 class of education role models” include faculty in the Ivy League and the Big 12, according to an MU news release.

Schwarz, who has been an MU professor for 17 years, studied for his doctorate at the University of Michigan after working as an architect for many years in Israel. His research at MU focuses on environmental gerontology, which is the study of the social, psychological and biological aspects of aging.

“The students’ opportunity to grow is a tremendous asset that you hold in your hand as a teacher, and if you use it with passion and love, then it is a tremendous reward,” he said.

Former student Liz Pettit said that Schwarz’s enthusiasm as a teacher thrives on the enthusiasm of his students.

"He's willing to go above and beyond what is expected of a teacher," Pettit said.

In addition to teaching, Schwarz is editor-in-chief of the Journal of Housing for the Elderly. The publication focuses on the creation of residential environments for the elderly through architecture and housing, urban planning and public policy, according to the release.
MU professor given education honor

A University of Missouri faculty member has been named one of the top professors in his field.

Benyamin Schwarz:
Honored by trade magazine

Benyamin Schwarz, a professor in the Department of Architectural Studies, is among the top 25 "Most Admired Educators of 2011," according to the trade magazine DesignIntelligence. The magazine selected the honorees with input from design professionals, academic department heads and students.

"I am honored to be in the company of so many remarkable people from distinguished universities around the country," Schwarz said in a statement.

Schwarz's research focuses on the study of the social psychological and biological aspects of aging. He also is editor in chief of the Journal of Housing for the Elderly, which serves professionals who create residential environments for the elderly through architecture and housing planning and public policy.
Education value

How much could the state actually save by consolidating or eliminating some university degree programs?

By J-W Editorial

December 30, 2010

The efforts of the Kansas Board of Regents and other higher education officials to prove the value of higher education to the state’s economic health are a positive trend.

However, it’s important to remember that state universities also play a less tangible, but equally important, role in providing a liberal arts background to people who pursue a variety of careers. Liberal arts, such as philosophy, history and literature, provide context for a whole range of situations university graduates will face in their work and personal lives.

In a recent Journal-World interview, Gov.-elect Sam Brownback mentioned that Kansas universities might consider following the lead of universities in other states that are discontinuing degree programs that are graduating small numbers of students. That thought was linked to his desire to reallocate higher education resources to areas directly linked to the economy such as programs in medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine and aviation.

Tight funding will drive many difficult decisions in the upcoming legislative session, but how much money can the state actually save by trimming degree programs?

Earlier this week the University of Missouri made what seemed like a major announcement that it would drop 16 degree programs that have a low number of graduates. However, a detailed listing of the plan revealed that almost all of the changes involved degrees being combined or merged, not really eliminated. The changes may have had a small impact on administrative costs, but the savings on faculty salaries and other costs likely would be minimal. A good example is the merging of Spanish and French programs into a single “Romance” languages program. MU students still will be earning degrees in Spanish and/or French. They’ll just be called something else.

The reallocation of funds to areas such as pharmacy, engineering or business implies that money to support humanities faculty and courses would be reduced. Before taking such action, state officials should carefully consider what would be lost. Isn’t it a good idea for pharmacists, engineers and business people to have a background in liberal arts that lends perspective to the ethical and philosophical questions that arise in their professions? Isn’t it beneficial for people in almost any profession to have some knowledge of foreign language or literature? As Kansas
University Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little pointed out in a recent speech, such classes are important to maintaining the humanities "voice" that is "so key to a liberal arts education."

It's likely that there are places where university degree programs can be consolidated or combined. In some cases, that might save the state some money. However, before making such cuts, state and higher education officials should be sure to examine not only what the state would save, but what it would lose.
Farmer is suing vet, university

Suit claims doses made cattle sick.

By Janese Silvey

A Hallsville cattle farmer has filed a lawsuit against the University of Missouri and veterinarian Loren Schultz over the death of 17 cows.

Gary Morrison alleges that Schultz administered a worming product to his herd without permission during a visit in December 2008. Shortly afterward, 17 of his cross-breed black Angus cattle died. Morrison said he sold another 12 later because of the effects of the treatment.

“The cattle never did act right after that,” Morrison said. “It affected the whole herd.”

In the lawsuit — filed last week in Boone County Circuit Court — Morrison claims Schultz injected the cattle with an unauthorized worming product, even though Morrison had told him that his cattle had had previous adverse reactions to such products.

Within four days of the injections, nine of Morrison’s 72 cattle were dead, and another eight died over the next several weeks, the lawsuit says.

According to the lawsuit, Morrison contacted Schultz, who “did not deny that he had injected” the “cattle with unauthorized substances.”

Morrison is asking a judge to award him double damages, although the court documents do not cite a specific number. Previously, he had asked the university to settle with him for $25,000.

“I feel strongly they owe me for the cattle deaths.” Morrison said. “This is my only recourse.”

Tracey Berry, spokeswoman for MU’s College of Veterinary Medicine, said the university will not comment on pending litigation.

Morrison initially launched a complaint in 2009 with the Missouri Veterinary Medical Board. News of the allegations and board’s investigation prompted an outpouring of support for Schultz from other animal owners who wrote letters to the Tribune praising his expertise and professionalism.

The veterinary board dropped the charges in October 2009. In a statement after the board’s decision, John Dodam, chairman of the college’s Department of Veterinary Medicine and
Surgery, praised Schultz, calling him a “hardworking, dedicated and talented veterinarian who exemplifies our college’s commitment to provide excellence in animal care to Missourians who own livestock and companion animals.”

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia Missourian's most viewed stories in 2010

By Aimee Gutshall
December 29, 2010 | 6:40 p.m. CST

An article about the arrest of two MU students after cotton balls were scattered in front of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center on Feb. 26 received more views than any other story on ColumbiaMissourian.com in 2010. At 47,020 views, the article received more than twice as many page views as the second-most viewed story of the year, an article about Derrick Washington's suspension from MU's football team. | Wonsuk Cho

COLUMBIA — With 2011 upon us, the Missourian staff went through website analytics to show you the Top 10 most viewed stories of 2010. Here they are:

1. 2 MU students arrested in cotton ball incident
March 3
47,020 views
Two MU undergraduates, Sean D. Fitzgerald and Zachary E. Tucker, were arrested on suspicion of second-degree tampering and temporarily suspended from the university. The two students scattered cotton balls in front of the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center on campus. (They later pleaded guilty to littering.)

2. Derrick Washington suspended indefinitely from MU football team

Aug. 26
23,377 views
Derrick Washington was accused of sexual assault and had an order of protection issued against him. He was suspended indefinitely from the MU football team. (Washington has a trial Jan. 20, 2011, and is seeking a change of venue.)

3. Kansas lab looked at synthetic marijuana's effect on brain

Feb. 17
18,313 views
A substance known as K2 mimics the effects of marijuana but also can cause users to experience increased heart rates, loss of consciousness, paranoia and, occasionally, psychotic episodes. Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, and other legislators hope to ban K2 in Missouri though there is not a large presence of it in mid-Missouri. (Later, it was banned in Missouri.)

4. TODAY'S QUESTION: What do you think about Proposition B?

Sept. 15
11,373 views
Proposition B aims to prohibit cruel treatment of dogs in large breeding operations and requires proper nourishment, shelter and veterinary care for them. Readers voted on the online survey whether they supported the proposition. (Want to know what happened? Check out top story No. 8.)
5. After an epic Missouri victory, pandemonium in the streets

- Oct. 24
- 11,314 views
- MU Homecoming: Missouri upset Oklahoma, 36-27, the first time in a decade. The crowd rushed the field and flooded the downtown streets of Columbia. Fans gathered outside of Harpo's to cut the goal post in pieces. (M-I-Z!)

6. UPDATE: Columbia Police Department still dealing with backlash about SWAT raid

- May 10
- 10,396 views
- Columbia Police Chief Ken Burton outlined changes in the way the department uses a SWAT team. The department faced criticism after a video of a drug raid at Jonathan Whitworth's home was posted on the Internet. The video showed Whitworth's pit bull, Nola, being shot by a SWAT team of at least eight officers.

7. COMMENTARY: Ten Things you didn't know about Buffalo

- March 19
- 10,005 views
- Buffalo, N.Y., is home to many unique events and traditions, among them the buffalo wing, windshield wipers and the Miss Buffalo Wing pageant. (Some Buffalo residents were not too happy about this article and let us know that vehemently in the comments section. Ouch.)

8. Proposition B passes narrowly

- Nov. 3
- 8,252 views
- Proposition B passed with 51 percent of Missouri voters approving and 48.5 percent against. In Boone County, however, the vote was 55.4 percent against and 44.6 percent in favor of Prop B. The proposition adds regulations to existing laws for dog breeders in Missouri. (We're still receiving letters and comments about this one.)
9. Key witness recants in Ryan Ferguson case

- Feb. 8
- 7,762 views
- Chuck Erickson said he alone killed Columbia Daily Tribune sports editor Kent Heitholt. Erickson said his previous confession of him beating Heitholt with a tire tool and Ferguson strangling Heitholt to death was a lie. Erickson now says Ferguson had no idea what he was going to do and tried to stop it at the end. (In early November, Ferguson’s legal team planned to file a habeas corpus petition in Cole County before Jan. 1.)

10. Public airs frustrations with Columbia Police at Citizens Review Board Meeting

- May 12
- 7,641 views
- The Citizens Police Review Board heard citizens speak out about the Feb. 11 SWAT raid in which the police shot and killed Jonathan Whitworth’s dog. Citizens expressed their outrage at the incident; others thanked the review board for existing. Others asked the board to be more active in reaching out to citizens who might be intimidated by the police. (Want to serve on the review board? There’s an opening. Applications are due by noon Jan. 7 and available on the City Council page of the city’s website, gocolumbiamo.com.)