

MAR 30 2011

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

The★Star
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

Painter ponders Mizzou offer

COLUMBIA, MO. — After a Purdue counteroffensive and his meeting with Mizzou, Purdue coach Matt Painter apparently still was weighing late Tuesday whether to remain at his alma mater or start a new adventure at Missouri.

"He has a decision to make tonight," a source close to the situation said, adding that Mizzou would like an answer early today after a session with Painter that the source said "went really well."

Painter is considered methodical and was unlikely to give MU an answer during its trip to see him in Orlando, Fla., where Painter and his family were on vacation before returning to West Lafayette later Tuesday as originally planned.

But two sources attuned to Painter's thinking believed he remained more likely than not to take the MU job, and it's clear he's invested energy in further researching an area he got a feel for during six seasons at Southern Illinois Carbondale.

For example, Painter has solicited information from Missouri-based coaches about recruiting potential around the state as he considers whether a move to Mizzou would enhance his winning potential after going 163-69 with six NCAA Tournament appearances in seven seasons as a head coach.

In response, Painter was provided a list of 60 Division I players over the last six years who didn't go to Missouri.

Purdue of the Big Ten is in more fertile recruiting territory but also in more contested terrain among the likes of Indiana, Notre Dame, Kentucky, Louisville, Michigan State and Ohio State — and now Butler sure to make it more thorny.

That's just one of myriad matters Painter probably is sorting through after Mizzou made its play and Purdue awakened.

After days of staying mum on Mizzou's courtship of Painter, Purdue indicated Tuesday it would fight for the coach. Never mind if it seemed to miscast itself as taking initiative.

"We are proactive," assistant athletics director Tom Schott said, according to The Associated Press. "Although we will not go into any details at this time, we encourage Matt to stay, through our words and action. We want Matt to remain a Boilermaker."

Schott added: "An effort is being made, has been made, was made. What was demonstrated last night is certainly enough of a starting point that he'll understand our desires."

Though media reports out of Indiana hinted that Purdue is offering a major salary bump, it was not clear whether Purdue was actually with him Monday or just communicated by text message or over the telephone.

The fact the effort to communicate with him came three days after it was widely reported Missouri was in contact with Painter's agent seemed evidence of a disconnect between Painter and athletics director Morgan Burke, a dynamic that many suggest is a factor in Painter's willingness to consider Mizzou.

Further suggesting something awkward in the athletics administration was a letter sent out by Purdue athletics to the "John Purdue Club" of Purdue boosters, at once seeking to "allay many of your concerns and dispel ... the misinformation" about Painter, yet scolding boosters for the apparent predicament.

"Ironically, I do not believe we would be in this situation had more than 11 percent of our current membership participated in the Mackey Challenge and more than 150 of our nearly 9,000 members recruited at least one new member," said the letter signed by Nancy Cross, a Purdue associate athletics director. "More of the Big Ten television revenues could have been allocated for compensation for the basketball coaching staff members and less toward the critical path of updating Mackey Arena."

A source who spoke with Painter on Monday night said Painter had not mentioned a meeting with Purdue and believed Purdue's gestures to be a "face-saving" effort. The source also suggested Painter's desire to consider Missouri was more than about money in Painter's pocket.

Better pay obviously would be part of the point, and sources have told the Post-Dispatch that MU is prepared to give Painter between \$2 million and \$2.3 million a year for up to seven years.

Painter currently makes \$1.3 million, eighth highest in the Big Ten despite being the conference coach of the year three of the last four seasons.

But it's believed a broader issue with how Purdue conducts business is equally or more significant, a notion alluded to by former Purdue coach and Painter mentor Gene Keady in an interview with the Indianapolis Star.

"'Proactive' means they give him more money. But money's not keeping him from thinking about Missouri," he said. "It's about having the opportunity to win a national championship with the backing of everyone. He wants to know if an assistant coach needs a car, he can get it. If

something needs to be done, they'll do it, so he doesn't have to worry about all the nickel and dime stuff."

Ultimately, Painter's decision might come down to that more than the dollar signs. Or as one source put it: Are issues between Painter and Purdue merely strained or irreparable? And if merely strained, will he interpret Purdue's recent overtures as indicative of a sincere change of culture or just a superficial, last-ditch bid?



UMKC plans to duplicate MU's health sciences degree

By Janese Silvey

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

A plan to offer a health sciences degree on the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus has some in Columbia scratching their heads.

MU has offered that same degree since 2008, and by the end of this year, the entire program should be available online. MU could "absolutely" serve students who now might opt to attend UMKC, said Cheri Ghan, a spokeswoman for MU's School of Health Professions.

The UM System's Board of Curators last week unanimously approved UMKC's health sciences degree. The vote, perhaps, raised some eyebrows because it came less than two months after the Missouri Department of Higher Education finalized a plan to get rid of 119 degrees considered unnecessary or redundant.

Adding a new bachelor's degree in health sciences in Kansas City "is an interesting concept," Ghan said. "We developed the program here with the thinking that anyone anywhere could participate in our school and be in this degree program because of the online capability."

But distance education might not best serve the needs of students in the Kansas City area who could take the courses there and be able to work with the network of hospitals and clinics UMKC already partners with, said Steve Graham, vice president of academic affairs for the UM System. "Our program, certainly, is going to be on campus here for students who want to take face-to-face classes and stay in Kansas City," said Thad Wilson, interim dean of the UMKC School of Nursing. "If we were ever to consider going online, we would definitely sit down and work with the folks at MU to see where there would be differences and overlaps to best use all of our energies."

The health sciences degree is tailored for students who aren't admitted to or don't want to pursue a clinical professional program but are still interested in health. They go on to work in careers such as insurance, medical equipment and pharmaceutical sales.

UMKC expects to attract students who aren't admitted to any of the 22 nursing programs in the Kansas City area — which amounted to about 1,100 students last year, Wilson said.

“Those students didn’t have the option of doing anything anywhere else,” he said. “They clearly wanted to be in Kansas City, so this is another option for them. We feel like we’ve got a population here that may not be thinking about a program such as the one in Columbia.”

UMKC plans to enroll more than 95 new students to the program each year.

MU’s health sciences program has exploded in enrollment, with more than 670 students now pursuing the 3-year-old degree.

“I don’t think you can have that kind of growth without having quality,” Ghan said. “We’re just surprised” about the Kansas City program “because our program has been so successful. On the other hand, it’s flattering, too.”

The UMKC degree now goes to the state’s Department of Higher Education for review and ultimately to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education for final approval. Department spokeswoman Kathy Love expects the degree to be approved.

“Graduating more students in health-related fields is a priority for the state,” she said, “so I doubt expanding to UMKC would get much serious scrutiny.”

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Kelly proposes bond issue to fund building projects on state's campuses

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

JEFFERSON CITY — A major state bond issue would address vital needs on college campuses and help the state make important upgrades of office buildings and state parks, state Rep. Chris Kelly said today.

Kelly's proposal to ask voters for an \$800 million bond issue, with most of the money dedicated to higher education projects, received a hearing this morning in the House Higher Education Committee. The slump in the construction market and low interest rates make borrowing money a good investment, he said.

State colleges and universities have almost \$900 million of building projects identified as priorities for new construction, counting the top priority for each campus and the remaining projects for the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative begun under Gov. Matt Blunt.

For the University of Missouri's Columbia campus, the top priority is renovation and additions to Lafferre Hall, an engineering building. The project has a \$62.9 million price tag. Among the unfinished Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative projects, the biggest in Columbia is \$31.2 million for Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.

Although Kelly said he doesn't expect the bond issue to pass this year, he said having the bill heard is part of an education process that could see the measure on a statewide ballot in 2012.

The state this year will retire the last of the \$600 million of bonds issued in the mid-1980s. Kelly's bill, like that bond issue, is designed to meet needs and provide a boost to the construction industry during an economic slump.

Of the \$800 million, as much as \$250 million would go to state building needs and the rest to campuses. Community colleges would get about 15 percent of the money set aside for higher education; state parks would get at least 10 percent of the money dedicated to state buildings. The committee did not vote on the bill.



Ellis Fischel expands hours for mammograms

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

Ellis Fischel Cancer Center is offering expanded screening hours in the coming weeks to make it easier for women to receive their annual mammograms.

The expanded hours, aimed to accommodate those who work traditional hours, include:

- 4 to 5:30 p.m. next Tuesday, April 21, May 3 and May 19.
- 7 to 8 a.m. April 6, April 20, May 4 and May 18.

“We know many people live very busy lives,” said Deb Deeken, manager of breast health cancer screening services. “We hope that by providing these expanded hours, we can make it more convenient for working patients to receive their yearly mammograms.”



Mizzou hosts renewable energy conference

7:22 AM, Mar. 30, 2011 |

COLUMBIA, Mo. — State lawmakers and business leaders were gathering Wednesday at the University of Missouri for an annual conference on renewable energy.

The daylong session in Columbia includes discussions of wind energy, woody biomass and the economic benefits of renewable energy sources.

Scheduled speakers include the chairman of Missouri's Public Service Commission and the CEO of the American Wind Energy Industry Association. An official from Kansas was scheduled to discuss that state's clean energy and climate change initiatives.



COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

LETTER: KOMU shows it doesn't care about its viewers

By Dan William Peek

March 29, 2011 | 12:29 p.m. CDT

I will concede that I am embarrassed for Marty Siddall ("KOMU 8 values its viewers" - Tribune, March 22, 2011). What in the world, short of a direct order from Brady Deaton, would motivate him to submit such irony to the public? And, irony upon irony, to do so through a print media outlet?

For at least a couple of years, it has been clear to everyone of any prescience that KOMU takes no notice whatsoever of its viewers. There is little point in revisiting the Paul Pepper firing, but to note that it made clear that KOMU/Channel 8 values its viewers not at all.

And some of us are going to be angered whenever Marty starts with the nonsense about KOMU being an "independent business" and "committed to our viewers" and so on. The Pepper firing and the way it was handled was both injury and insult to the community, and I don't think the community is going to forget that.

Marty needs to assume the position that served him best during the Pepper firing: in his office under his desk, incommunicado. He'll be doing us all a favor.

Dan William Peek lives in Columbia.