

MAY 23 2011



## Membership in MU alumni group soars

By JANESE SILVEY

The University of Missouri's alumni organization has reached an all-time membership high.

As of this week, the Mizzou Alumni Association has 42,178 members, Executive Director Todd McCubbin said. That's up about 5 percent from 40,212 members last year and up 20 percent from 2007.

Although membership has been steadily increasing over the years, it's not guaranteed to go up every year just because more graduates become alumni. That's because most people pay yearly, and not all renew.

"In essence, we start over every year," McCubbin said. "So we celebrate every time we get one more than the year before."

He credits the increase to several strategies the association has used over the past few years. For the past three or four years, for instance, MU graduates receive a one-year membership when they buy a graduation pack that also includes their caps and gowns.

The association also has a student branch to get students thinking about the organization long before they graduate.

"Our goal is when they leave here, they know who we are and what we do," McCubbin said. "They're going to be alumni a lot longer than they're going to be students."

Other departments on campus also can take some credit for more involvement from alumni, he said. In addition to the educational experience, the Department of Student Life provides memorable speakers and events for students, renovated residential halls have improved living situations on campus, and the recreation center is "first-class," McCubbin said. "All of those things lead to a great experience."

The record MAA membership is a reflection of what association President Randy Wright considers a positive time for the university right now.

"I've been around Columbia and the University of Missouri all my life, and there seems to be an extremely positive momentum right now at Mizzou," said Wright, executive director of multimedia properties at the University of Florida.

Over the past year, he said, MU has received positive feedback about campus leadership and various academic and research successes.

"I think some people around the state and even around the country are finally realizing that Mizzou is a very unique and extraordinary place, and I think they're proud," Wright said. "One of the ways that pride comes through is increased membership in the alumni association."

Although the group is the official voice of alumni, the Mizzou Alumni Association also includes members who didn't graduate from MU but still want to support the university.

Some give more, but joining is \$45 a year for most alumni — not enough to get your name on a building, but part of an important revenue stream, McCubbin said.

"When you give us your \$45, we pool it with money from 42,000 other people to support every college on campus, athletics, scholarships — we're one of the largest scholarship operations on campus — and faculty research, to a certain extent," he said. "We just feel like it's a great mutual fund investment approach for alumni to be involved with."

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbiatribune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbiatribune.com).

## Curators keep lid on names

Search for president yields diverse pool.

By **JANESE SILVEY**

KANSAS CITY — **University of Missouri curators** spent nearly four hours behind closed doors yesterday talking about people vying to become the next president of the UM System.

"We're looking at a whole bunch of names," Curator Wayne Goode said while taking a quick, mid-session break from the meeting.

"We're not narrowing them down, just seeing what's there."

Goode wouldn't quantify "whole bunch," other than to say curators had a "long list" of names.

Curators are tight-lipped about who's on that list.

Asked in several different ways whether would-be candidates include minorities or women, board chairman Warren Erdman simply said the pool of candidates reflects the criteria curators outlined earlier this year.

Those qualifications include traits such as having a passion for higher education, having academic, business and political know-how, and having an appreciation of Missouri's culture.

"When we started this search, we said we wanted to reach far and wide," Erdman said. "We have done that. The pool reflects that effort."

Curators are on the hunt for a new leader after Gary Forsee stepped down in January, a month before his third-year anniversary. Steve Owens, general counsel, is serving as interim president and has repeatedly said he's not interested in the job on a permanent basis.

Curators and an advisory committee formed to assist them have said they're interested in finding someone with a business background similar to Forsee's, but Erdman said the candidates and nominations don't favor any particular skill set.

Yesterday's meeting was simply a way to get familiar with the people and backgrounds on the list, Erdman said.

"This is a process where you need to really get acquainted with it over time," he said.

He doesn't expect curators to start interviewing candidates anytime soon.

The next step will be another presidential search committee meeting in closed session during the curators' meeting in Columbia in June.

"We're moving along, but we're not going to be in any hurry," Erdman said.

The search is happening without a curator from Columbia's congressional district. Gov. Jay Nixon had appointed local attorney Craig Van Matre to serve for the Ninth Congressional District — replacing Bo Fraser, who stepped down in December — but lawmakers failed to confirm that appointment by the end of the legislative session.

But the lack of a Columbia member shouldn't matter, Erdman said, because curators represent the state as a whole, not just their districts.

Plus, he said, they're all familiar with the needs and climate at MU, the system's only member of the Association of American Universities.

"We've spent a lot of time there," Erdman said. "We are keenly aware of the role of our AAU flagship campus plays."

*Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbiatribune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbiatribune.com)*

## Revenue ills challenge UM system

Board ponders national goals.

By **JANESE SILVEY**

KANSAS CITY — The board that governs the four-campus University of Missouri System is dusting off its three-year-old strategic plan to make sure goals still make sense in a higher education landscape that's changing.

The Board of Curators spent six hours over two days on the Kansas City campus discussing myriad challenges with Rick Staisloff, a consultant who works with the Association of Governing Boards. His presentation was paid for by the Lumina Foundation.

By the end of the last session, Curator Chairman Warren Erdman was ready to form a task force of curators and administrators to further delve into the issues. But first, curators will spend time at their June meeting reviewing what's currently in the plan.

Here's the dilemma. Missouri — along with the rest of the country — has a goal to boost the percentage of residents with college degrees from 37 percent to 60 percent. To do that, college is going to have to be affordable.

But universities also are grappling with revenue shortfalls as they deal with cuts in state funding.

Meanwhile, universities have to hire and keep quality faculty members — who also are some of the highest-paid employees — if they want to keep academic quality high. And the cost of employee benefits just keeps rising.

"It's time for higher education to really be thinking about how it needs to change in order to accomplish this," Staisloff told curators after outlining attainment goals and challenges. "Don't kid yourselves. If we're going to accomplish the goals, it's going to be up to us."

At the forefront of the discussion in higher education is the cost of college as state funding dwindles.

Historically, colleges have increased tuition to offset losses of public funding, but that's becoming less of a reality, as well. In Missouri, universities need permission from the state to increase tuition by more than inflation or else face a penalty. The UM System was granted state approval and is increasing tuition by an average of 5.5 percent.

"The days of pricing going up double, triple inflation is over," Staisloff said. "Political tolerance of higher education is waning."

Students themselves are driving up some of the costs. Many today don't want to live in cracker-box-sized dorm rooms; they want renovated residential halls that provide spacious suites. At MU, students in past years have voted to tack on fees to pay for state-of-the-art recreational and student centers.

"College students are living better than they did at home," said student representative Laura Confer, who attends the Rolla campus.

And that's what students want, said Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration. They decide where to go to college, in some cases, based on those niceties, she said.

At the same time, federal lawmakers have discussed doing away with grant funding that makes college affordable for low-income students.

Providing quality education to more students and getting them to graduation day in light of new political and fiscal realities will take fresh eyes looking at where money is spent. Staisloff encouraged curators yesterday to start thinking about ways to more efficiently spend money to meet goals.

The UM System already has central administrative operations, such as system-wide procurement, legal and auditing services, but Staisloff urged them to think about how they can apply the same concepts to academia.

Newly-appointed Curator Don Cupps suggested campuses look at sharing coursework.

He said he's heard from parents who get upset when their child can't graduate on time because he or she can't get into a certain class. Cupps suggested that students should be able to take the same class on one of the other three campuses.

But it's not that simple, Krawitz said. While the system is trying to coordinate online options through an electronic portal, just swapping a course between campuses would be challenging.

"Campuses take great pride in their brands and the academic programs they deliver and the degrees they grant," she said. "That's what faculty hold dear ... The notion of standardization of a course would undermine that because they would lose control over certifying who could deliver that course and what the content of that course would be for that campus."

And the UM System doesn't want to lose campus autonomy, which is considered an asset, Erdman said. "We allow a lot of freedom at the campus level to innovate and try things," he said. "We don't want to be a homogenous system."

Finding a way to better prepare students for the professional world is critical, Staisloff said. "Not only does the University of Missouri System need you to do it and do it well, the country needs you to," he said.

"This country needs us to figure out how to get more and more students into our institutions and educated."

*Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbiatribune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbiatribune.com).*

# The Boston Globe

## Solar energy — as easily as unrolling a yoga mat

Yes, you have heard it before: In five years, solar panels will be super-flexible and incredibly efficient — capable of powering everything from smartphones to homes after a few hours in the sun.

This time, it may be real.

Cambridge-based MicroContinuum Inc. is working with researchers at the University of Missouri, University of Colorado, and Idaho National Laboratory on “nantennas” — small antennas that gather much more energy from the sun than existing solar cells.

MicroContinuum’s challenge is to form nantennas into thin, flexible sheets that can be produced inexpensively in high volumes. Those thin sheets could then be incorporated into building materials and other products. Imagine a roll-up sheet, like a yoga mat, that you can toss over any structure, or roof tiles whose outermost layers are laced with nantennas.

**The nantennas, according to a University of Missouri announcement, will collect 90 percent of available light.**

Current solar panels capture only 30 percent of the sun’s energy, at best, the researchers said.

And yes, prototypes of the flexible film should be available within five years, they added.

Technologies similar to nantennas might include infrared sensing devices that can spot contraband at airports or be incorporated into line-of-sight communications and optical computing, the researchers said.

Mobile technology

### **This phone is smart about simplicity**

It’s a smartphone whose functions a 5-year-old can master, which means it’s one I am going to love.

I recently gave a Samsung Infuse 4G to a 5-year-old, only to suffer unflattering photos of Baba (that’s me) in the blinding LED flash on the device’s outward-facing, 8-megapixel camera.

## **Mizzou Archeologist Discovers Oldest Statue in Western Hemisphere**

By Aimee Levitt, Fri., May 20 2011 at 1:54 PM

Remember all the fuss over the "new" astrological sign Ophiuchus a few months back? It may have nothing on the fox, a key figure in the Andean zodiac.

**On a recent dig in the Andes Mountains, about 30 miles north of Lima, Peru, University of Missouri anthropology professor emeritus Robert Benfer discovered a 4,000-year-old mud plaster bust of a figure blowing a trumpet, which, along with another mask-like figure flanked by foxes, may give anthropologists some insight into ancient Andean religious and agricultural rites.**

As an extra bonus, if the trumpet-blower is as old as Benfer thinks it is, it's the oldest statue ever found in the Western Hemisphere, which gives Benfer -- and Mizzou -- significant bragging rights.

"This is really the find of a lifetime," Benfer said in a press release.

In ancient Andean mythology, the fox was considered the bringer of cultivated food. According to one legend, the fox found a rope to heaven, where it discovered a whole cache of crops. When it fell back to earth, it brought the food with it.

Because of this, Benfer explains, the sign of the fox in the Andean zodiac is still tied to planting and irrigation. All of which explains the presence of the fox reliefs at the site, called Buena Vista, which Benfer believes served as a temple.

"Anthropologists think that many of our beliefs today stem from ancient beliefs, but only occasionally can these beliefs be confirmed," Benfer said. "This is one of those times. Myths and symbols are reused and recycled in different ways, but the lessons remain the same. The Andean people couldn't read; yet, the fox story survives and is at least as old as the horoscopes many people read today. The story depicted in the statuary symbolizes the basic opposition between the sun and the moon, male and female, day and night, good and evil."

The three-dimensional statue doesn't appear to have such grave mythological significance -- Benfer thinks it represents a horn player announcing the entrance of the priests to the temple -- but, hey, it's really, really old.

Along with Louanna Furbee, a MU professor emeritus of Linguistic Anthropology, and Hugo Ludeña, of the National University of Federico Villarreal of Perú, Benfer has written a paper about his findings, which will be published in an upcoming issue of *Journal of Cosmology*.



## Hot slag caused fire at plant, report says

Hot slag was to blame for a fire Wednesday morning at the **University of Missouri Power Plant** at 419 S. Fifth St., a fire marshal's investigation revealed.

On the morning of the fire, crews were working to refurbish the chimneys of the power plant, according to a previous article. A canvas tarp covered with a flame-retardant blanket that was located beneath the worksite caught fire. According to a news release from the Columbia Fire Department, cinder from a cutting operation at the work site caused the blaze.

Sumner Dismukes, the senior project manager for McCarthy, the general contractor for the chimney restoration, said that the canvas tarps were protecting scaffolding beneath the work site. Before fire crews could begin to extinguish the fire, construction crews held the fire back with the help of a garden hose.

There were no injuries reported as a result of the fire

# MU professor creates sculpture of President Ford

By DEREK SMITH

May 20, 2011 | 7:36 p.m. CDT

Grill commissioned to create work for White House

COLUMBIA — President Gerald Ford is back in the White House, and this time he's here to stay.

**On May 3, MU assistant professor J. Brett Grill unveiled a statue of the former commander in chief. The Gerald R. Ford Foundation in 2008 commissioned him to do the piece.**

For now, there is no statue of President Richard Nixon for Grill's creation to pardon.

The statue joins sculptures of Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, James Garfield, Andrew Jackson, Ronald Reagan and George Washington in the rotunda of the White House.

While the foundation was obtaining congressional approval for placing a statue in the White House, Grill was preparing for the monumental task of sculpting an artwork that would stand in a city full of sculptures depicting the nation's historical figures. He read biographies of Ford and carefully studied photographs of the 38th president.

The foundation's chairman emeritus, Marty Allen, said Grill was the perfect choice.

"I think from the beginning when we interviewed the five finalists, it was very clear that Brett had really done his homework," Allen said. "He had grasped his feeling about President Ford, and all of us who knew President Ford knew it was right on."

This wasn't the first time Grill had studied Ford, the only Michigan resident to occupy the White House. That's because Grill, like Ford, grew up in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"It's part of the lore of the area," Grill said. "The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum is in Grand Rapids, and I had been there as a child."

The Gerald R. Ford Foundation selected Grill after he submitted a proposal and a portfolio of his previous sculptures. Grill was honored the foundation selected him from a national pool of talent.

“Seeing the statue in place for the first time in such a grand, public setting was so humbling,” he said. “I had done a few public sculptures, but this is my biggest.”

The few public sculptures Grill had done include a bust of Ford that he created for the Boys and Girls club in La Quinta, Calif. That sculpture, Allen said, gave the selection committee “a strong working knowledge of Brett’s work.”

The bronze statue, which stands 7 feet tall, features the former president leaning slightly forward and wearing a three-piece suit. Grill said the stance was intended to “embody the idea of someone standing up to serve their country when called.”

Several Michigan politicians, including Gov. Rick Snyder, attended the unveiling. So did Steven Ford, chairman of the Ford Foundation and son of the former president. Steven Ford said he was pleased with the statue’s resemblance to his father, according to a news release from MU.

That was exactly the type of reaction Grill wanted to inspire in the Ford family, whose approval Grill said would help gauge the statue’s similarity to its subject.

“The family is the toughest critic because they saw President Ford’s face on a daily basis. Being able to satisfy them was my first priority.”

Allen agreed. “Steve was a member of the selection committee, and we paid more attention to what he had to say than anyone else.”

The statue of President Ford, representing Michigan in the collection, will replace a statue of Zachariah Chandler, a former Michigan politician. That statue will be moved to the Detroit Historical Museum. The statue of Ford will be added to the National Statuary Hall Collection, an assemblage of statues that individual states donate to celebrate their history.

A copy of Grill’s statue will be placed in front of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum in Grand Rapids on July 14, which would mark the late president’s 98th birthday.

*Derek Smith is a senior at Columbia Independent School who participated in a one-week internship at the Missouriian.*

## Proposal eyes alcohol

Training is key to compliance.

By **BRENNAN DAVID**

A local Substance Abuse and Advisory Commission will propose an ordinance to the Columbia City Council mandating server training for alcohol-related businesses.

The commission in March submitted a report to the council documenting the benefits of combining mandatory server training with the random compliance checks that Columbia police already conduct. The city-created subcommittee writing the ordinance is comprised of representatives from several city departments and area stakeholders that have not set a deadline to submit the ordinance, said Michelle Baumstark, who represents Columbia Public Schools on the commission.

"It's important that people who provide alcohol be trained and serve it responsibly," said **Kim Dude, University of Missouri Wellness Resource Center director**. "They play a part in bars, restaurants and liquor stores. They are part of a group of people that need to help make this a safer community."

Dude serves on the commission that was appointed in November 2008 to study the effectiveness of compliance checks. According to the commission's report, the proposed ordinance would require all employees associated with the sale or service of alcoholic beverages at any "by-the-drink" or "package alcohol" outlet to complete server training.

Individuals would have one year from the date the ordinance becomes effective to take the class and obtain a two-year permit. The ordinance would not create additional costs for the city.

The city could utilize the free State of Missouri Alcohol Responsibility Training, or SMART, program designed for all sellers and servers of alcohol. Individuals can complete the SMART program training online or use a three-hour classroom training program conducted by the Missouri Alcohol Tobacco Control twice a month at a Columbia police facility.

A server permit fee would be required for the classroom training session. Fees likely would range from \$15 to \$30 to recover the cost of the program that will include supplies, a badge and a background check.

Server training programs can potentially lower nighttime driving-while-intoxicated crashes by 17 percent.

"The employees that have trained didn't realize they were so regulated," Lt. Chris Kelley said of servers who have already completed training. "They just didn't realize it. They didn't realize the liabilities — what they could do and didn't do."

Kelley supervises Columbia police's downtown unit and has convinced several business owners to take advantage of the training resources available to them and their employees. Some owners have not been as responsive, he said.

"Anything that makes us look in the mirror is a good thing," said Jared Ater, general manager at Harpo's.

Two Missouri communities — Blue Springs and St. Joseph — already have adopted ordinances mandating server training.

Sgt. Larry Stobbs of the St. Joseph Police Department said his department learned in 2007 after conducting a two-week compliance check that area businesses failed at a rate of 52 percent. That staggering number jump-started the northwest Missouri city's effort to reinforce its compliance checks with a mandatory server training ordinance.

Businesses in his community now have a failure rate of 5 percent.

"We noticed the places that repeatedly violated the law didn't send anyone," Stobbs said.

Stobbs said he was surprised Columbia has yet to enact such an ordinance because of the large population of underage college students. Over the long term, the cost savings for his department is significant because so many man-hours no longer need to be devoted to compliance checks due to the small failure rate.

Reach Brennan David at 573-815-1718 or e-mail [bpdavid@columbiatribune.com](mailto:bpdavid@columbiatribune.com).