

AUG 16 2011



MU welcomes grad students

More than 7,000 expected for fall.

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Monday, August 15, 2011

Amanda McCroskey's job in pharmaceutical and device sales wasn't immediately in jeopardy, but she didn't want to chance it. Too many colleagues, she said, have been laid off.

"The industry is changing, so I wanted a Plan B on my terms," she said.

McCroskey is now pursuing a master's degree in social work at the University of Missouri, hoping to move into a career that includes helping patients with end-of-life issues.

She's among roughly 4,919 graduate students registered at MU today. That number will keep rising as registrations come in, and by the time school is under way, graduate student enrollment, including professional students, is expected to exceed 7,000, said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management.

Total enrollment at MU could be as high as 33,800, although it will likely be lower when classes start a week from today. Undergraduate registration currently sits at about 25,000, but Korschgen said students are continuing to enroll this week.

It has been a decade since McCroskey was a college student at Southwest Missouri State University, now Missouri State, and she admitted she's nervous about returning to school. An orientation for social work students last week eased her mind a little because there were more people her age, she said. McCroskey also said she couldn't put graduate school off. "I knew if I was going to do it, I'd have to do it now."

Todd Oberlin thought the same thing when he quit his job teaching music at Moberly High School to pursue a master's degree in music.

"It's harder to go back the further away from your undergraduate studies," he said. "I thought I might as well do it now while I'm still young and don't have a wife or kids."

Oberlin, who earned a bachelor's degree in music education four years ago from Central Methodist University, isn't sure what he wants to do with an advanced degree. Returning to the

classroom is one option, although Oberlin said his dream job would be in music ministry at a church.

“I’ll follow the path that leads me,” he said.

Before their next career moves, there are plenty of MU administrators willing to help them navigate their studies, Graduate School Dean George Justice told incoming students this morning at t

“There are people here who will help you get through this,” he said, adding that customer service and friendliness set MU apart from research university counterparts.

“It’s a wonderful institution not only for what we provide but for who we are,” Justice said.

It is partly up to older graduate students to preserve that friendly identity, Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said. “Help us ensure an environment that is safe, welcoming, supportive and conducive to the free flow of ideas,” he said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Missouri colleges compensate for population drop

BY TIM BARKER | tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Tuesday, August 16, 2011 12:15 am

The coming school year is the first in which area colleges and universities will have to deal with the reality of smaller high school graduating classes.

So far, so good.

Official fall numbers won't be available for weeks but area schools are reporting steady, if not rising, fall enrollment projections, despite the fact that there are fewer Missouri high school graduates to go around this year.

Most are indeed expecting a drop in new freshmen from Missouri. But those losses are being offset by rising numbers of community college transfers and an infusion of out-of-state recruits.

This long-awaited demographic shift is largely attributed to the youngest children of post-World War II baby boomers finally making their way through high school. It's a population bubble that fueled a 36 percent increase in high school graduates nationwide from 1994 to 2008.

"Within the UM system, we've been talking about it for the past eight years. We knew it was coming," said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management at the University of Missouri-Columbia. "What we were hoping was that we could maintain enrollment."

Most states, including Illinois, peaked a few years ago. But Missouri hit its high point last year, when some 64,000 students graduated from public schools. The number is expected to drop each year until 2015.

For Mizzou, this deflating bubble is contributing to a 2 percent drop in Missouri freshmen, based on early estimates. Yet overall enrollment could grow by nearly 5 percent, in part because the school has been successful at nabbing students from other states. Mizzou anticipates a 9 percent boost in that lucrative pool of students, who often pay double the in-state rate.

Already active in the fertile Chicago and Dallas markets, Mizzou also is starting to spend more recruiting dollars in Denver and Minneapolis and is considering stronger international efforts.

The approach is not unique to the state's flagship school. St. Louis University attributes an estimated 4 percent to 5 percent enrollment surge to new recruiting efforts. Those include earlier direct contact with prospective students from other states.

Typically, students don't gain a clear understanding of their financial aid packages until they visit campus during summer orientations. But this year, the school sent counselors around the nation, visiting applicants in key markets to go over aid packages and answer questions about the school, said Jean Gilman, dean of undergraduate admission.

At the same time, full-time recruiters in Chicago have been joined by a permanent recruiter in Dallas and, soon, California.

"We're taking the time this year to develop new markets," Gilman said.

The nonresident market may also be the key to Southern Illinois University Carbondale's effort to reverse an enrollment slide that started in 2005. The school's strategy, which appears to be delivering growth this fall, includes in-state tuition rates for students from Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, Arkansas and Tennessee.

There's another market, however, that doesn't require quite the same level of effort to tap into.

In recent years, community colleges here and across the nation have seen record growth, in part, because of a struggling economy that's sent many people scrambling for new training and education. Many of those students are now finishing their community college work and moving on.

Officials at four-year schools have been watching the ballooning enrollment for years.

"We knew those were potential students for us. We knew they were coming," said Alan Byrd, director of admissions at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

It's not surprising, he said, that this year's transfer class is on pace to be UMSL's largest ever, contributing to a projected 2.5 percent increase in enrollment.

In Springfield, at Missouri State University, transfers and new graduate students may provide the boost needed to maintain a growth spurt that started in 2006.

Along with a shrinking pool of Missouri freshmen, the school is coping with fallout from its decision to reduce the value of one of its more prestigious scholarships. "That cost us a few students," said Don Simpson, associate vice president for enrollment management.

There may be some elements of area campuses, however, that wouldn't mind seeing fewer students. Steady or rising enrollment means that schools such as Mizzou, Southeast Missouri State University and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will continue dealing with a shortage of dorm rooms.

Southeast Missouri, which expects a 2 percent enrollment hike, stopped accepting new students in July for the fall semester. It was a decision driven, in part, by a requirement that freshmen and sophomores from more than 50 miles away must live on campus.

"We have 50 students living in a hotel in town this fall," said Debbie Below, director of admissions.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville also is struggling with housing, despite the fact that enrollment is projected to grow only slightly this year. Because of the growing popularity of the school's residence halls, SIUE has been forced to turn away nearly 300 students vying for one of 3,500 spaces, said Scott Belobrajdic, assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management.

"Those are at a premium," Belobrajdic said.

MU students begin move-in for fall semester

By Alison Matas

August 15, 2011 | 12:20 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Like many other parents of new students, Michelle Dumont has spent the past week going through checklists and making sure her daughter, Melissa Nieder, has all she needs.

“I’m emotional,” Dumont said, her eyes welling up with tears. “Scared.” Despite the preparations, Dumont said she wasn’t sure if her daughter was ready.

Freshman move-in began Sunday for special interest groups, such as sororities, ROTC and Marching Mizzou. Freshman interest groups move in Tuesday, and the remaining freshmen move in Wednesday, said Sylvia Jauregui, a residence hall coordinator. Nieder said she was excited about the prospect of joining a sorority and bonding with a new group of people.

“Even if you don’t get along you still have that common sisterhood thing that brings you guys together,” she said. Aside from Greek life, other students arrived early for professional programs. Freshman Connor Rockholm came for the Naval ROTC. After spending the morning moving in, he said he was feeling more confident about the transition.

“I was a little nervous,” he said. “Now I’m more excited.”

But while some students started to feel better, there were parents who were still upset. Mark Voltz, stepfather of freshman Kate Weinzirl, who came for recruitment, said he’d already shed private tears.

“It’s a terrible feeling,” he said. “They say real men don’t cry. That’s bull.” But as students left one support system, they joined another. Jauregui said that’s what makes move-in an important day.

“We’re welcoming our new students into the Mizzou family,” she said.

Star Magazine Interview | Laura Page is the pilot of 'helicopter' parents at UMC



Laura Page, Parent Liason, University of Missouri. ©2011 John Mutrux

How long has the job of coordinator of parent relations been around? I never heard of that when I was in college.

Right. At Mizzou it's only three years old. Nationwide it's still pretty new. Around 2000, when everyone started talking about millennial generation, people started paying more attention to the parents as well.

What characterizes the millennial generation?

This generation of college students is extremely close to their parents. We call these parents the soccer moms, the PTA presidents — these are the parents that have been completely involved since the second their baby was born, and the students are used to that relationship.

A less-flattering description is "helicopter parents" ...

(Laughs.) I'm being very positive.

... because they hover.

They do.

How has that group changed things for university faculty and staff?

It went against everything universities were used to saying: "Let go. Your student is an adult now."

What problems prompted universities to create jobs like yours?

It starts with campus tours. You no longer just see students. You see the entire family — siblings, sometimes grandparents. That continues all the way through orientation and moving day. Once classes start, you had parents calling professors to inquire why a certain grade was assigned.

Something professors are not used to having to deal with.

Right. They are there to teach the student. And we stick to that. Our primary relationship is with the student. We are not giving in to this helicopter-parent phenomenon. We tell parents, "We want your student to succeed. You want your student to succeed." There has to be a positive partnership.

So you are the gatekeeper. You tell parents to call your office, not the faculty or staff.

Yes. Don't call the chancellor if the air conditioning in your daughter's dorm breaks. We have things in place to deal with situations like that.

How do those kinds of messages at orientation go over with parents?

Pretty well. You would think they would be slightly offended, but these are parents that identify themselves as helicopter parents. They hear me out, and in September and October, our busiest time, we'll get about 80 or 90 calls a week, and most will preface their question with, "I'm not trying to be a helicopter parent, but ..."

What kinds of questions do you get?

Anything from conflicts with roommates to homesickness — it runs the gamut.

Where do the students stand? Are they OK with the parents getting involved in the roommate conflict?

I actually think so. And that's an interesting point because when this whole phenomenon of over-involved parents showed up, everyone wanted to blame the parents and tell them to let go. But we are starting to see that there are two people in this relationship.

Meaning some students are happy to transfer responsibility for problem-solving to their parents?

Yes, and decision-making. Very happy. It's what they're used to.

I think in the coming years we're going to be shifting our focus to teaching our students more independence. Sometimes after my presentation, parents will come up and say, "All your information is great. But you don't know my kid. He can't make decisions." And I'll say, "Let's let him try. And I'll be here to help if it doesn't turn out so great."

Why is it a good idea to make the student deal with the problem?

Because college is a gateway between high school and the real world. And you can't go with your child on a job interview, although I have heard of that happening.

No.

Yes. And calling Human Resources trying to negotiate salaries. Even if it's just to arrange an internship, it is detrimental to the student if the parent gets involved, because the employer forms a negative impression of the student based on the parent.

That type of parent probably feels they are protecting their child.

Yes, but college isn't the parent's experience. It is the student's experience. The parent doesn't know the whole story. The parent wasn't in the classroom taking notes. The parent wasn't living with the roommate. We really need the student to develop autonomy and independence.

We typically respond to parents who call wanting to resolve something for their student by saying, "Has your student done A, B and C?" That passes ownership of the situation back to the student.

Isn't there a likelihood that a student who has never had to solve problems alone will fail at it?

We want students to face some challenges. That doesn't settle well with some parents, but we know that is part of the development that needs to happen at college. If they have setbacks, that's actually a good thing. We have a plethora of offices to help your student succeed, so let us do our job.

Besides not calling professors or the chancellor, is there anything else high on your "don't do this" list for parents?

Try to avoid the "we" terminology. As in, "We want to major in mechanical engineering" or "We have to live in Johnston Hall because it's closest to the rec center."

Have parents actually said those things?

Oh, yes. Yes. The parent has been there for all the soccer practices and competitions, so the two identities are maybe a little more connected than they were between parent and child when we were growing up.

Are you worried about job security? Are there any signs at the early education level that a new generation of parents who promote self-sufficiency is emerging?

No, not at all. Talking to our colleagues in early education, it seems like this type of very involved parenting is here to stay.

Interview conducted, condensed and edited by Cindy Hoedel, choedel@kcstar.com. Follow her at www.twitter.com/cindyhoedel.

Big 12 stays on offense as A&M move put on hold

By BLAIR KERKHOFF



Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman said his only focus is football. “My comment that I don’t pay a whole lot of attention to (realignment talk) is accurate,” he said.

Statements, rather than responses from interviews, rarely reveal useful information. But the paragraph issued by the Big 12 Conference on Saturday evening included a sentence that the conference trusts will be a game-changer.

Not the one where the Board of Directors “strongly conveyed to Texas A&M its unanimous desire to remain a Big 12 member.”

I believe that’s true. The other schools are angry with the Aggies, who never purged their desires to join the Southeastern Conference, but they know the Big 12 is better with them.

Oh, and don’t read much into the SEC not inviting the Aggies to its party after presidents convened Sunday. A&M has to get squared away on its end and let the Texas Legislature have its say before moving forward.

No, the Big 12 buried the money line toward the end.

“Although the Board hopes Texas A&M remains in the conference, the Board is prepared to aggressively move forward to explore expansion opportunities.”

There it is. The Big 12 goes on offense. A year late, some will say. Too late, others might suggest, to save the conference.

Perhaps the skeptical view ultimately will win the day. It’s difficult to muster the faith in a conference that already has lost two members, has a third with a foot out the door and constantly battles the perception that programs like Texas and Oklahoma would feel more secure with another address.

Even Missouri, stung by last year’s Big Ten decision, has entered the grass-is-greener pasture with SEC talk, at least by fans.

That is the power of 40 football triumphs in four years.

But Mizzou chancellor Brady Deaton, who also serves as the chairman of the Big 12 Board of Directors, told The Star’s Mike DeArmond on Sunday that the Tigers were riding the Big 12 rails.

“I’m very confident in the stability of the Big 12 Conference going forward,” Deaton said.

Deaton said he was speaking for the entire conference, and that comes as welcome news at outposts throughout the conference and fans of the Big 12 basketball tournament. That never gets much consideration in realignment scares, but Kansas City would stand to take a \$14 million revenue loss if the hoops bounced away.

The Big 12 intends to go on the prowl whether Texas A&M goes or stays. Does that mean the league isn’t simply in a replace-Aggies mode?

The first kickoff as a 10-team league hasn’t happened, and three weeks ago the Big 12 rolled out a “true champion” branding campaign, playing on the league’s complete round-robin scheduling in football and basketball, and now it may be making a play to return to a dozen schools.

There are two reasons for this. First, bigger is better. The football championship game cost some Big 12 teams a national championship appearance, but the conference event was a bigger deal than any bowl game, even a BCS game that wasn’t for the title.

The Big 12 title game held a prime-time spot on the final evening of college football’s regular season. That’s valuable property that the conference earned and will surrender this year with 10 teams.

The Big 12 also wants to grow to at least maintain the value of the \$1.17 billion, 13-year Fox Sports cable-rights deal and remain attractive for first-tier rights that come up for bids. Those belong to ABC/ESPN and expire after the 2015 season.

When membership changes, rights holders can adjust, and Texas A&M, although mediocre in football for more than a decade until last year’s second-half charge, is an attraction that cannot easily be replaced.

This is where the “aggressively” exploring expansion part of the statement becomes interesting. Texas talks about Notre Dame.

Arkansas speculation won’t go away. Both suggestions fall under my wishful-thinking category but aren’t eliminated based on my never-say-never policy.

Brigham Young, TCU and Louisville will be often discussed, and denials already have been issued, as if any other response would be appropriate at the moment.

These are the obvious candidates, but there are others, and you wonder about the out-of-the-box ideas by Big 12 leaders. How far would they be willing to stretch a footprint?

We’ll soon know. If and when Texas A&M joins SEC competition, the Big 12 will want its new look by then.

The league is also about to find out something about itself: how confident other schools are in the Big 12’s future.

SEC WON'T ADD ANY TEAMS — FOR NOW

•**SUNDAY:** Southeastern Conference presidents and chancellors met but took no action on Texas A&M, instead reaffirming the league is satisfied with its current 12 members. But in a statement, the league didn't rule out adding a school. "We recognize, however, that future conditions may make it advantageous to expand."

•**TODAY:** Texas A&M regents are scheduled to meet at 3 p.m. to discuss conference realignment.

•**TUESDAY:** The Texas House Committee for Higher Education is set to have a hearing in which Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe and SEC commissioner Mike Slive are scheduled to testify.

Texas A&M president says future conference realignment still possible

NO MU Mention

By KRISTIE RIEKEN, The Associated Press

August 15, 2011 | 5:04 p.m. CDT

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M is looking into joining the Southeastern Conference, and contemplating remaining in the Big 12.

School President R. Bowen Loftin offered his first detailed comments Monday on the Aggies' rather public interest in joining the SEC — a move that almost surely would set off another round of conference realignment.

"We've made no decision about terminating our relationship with the Big 12," Loftin said. "This is all about what is best for Texas A&M, along with ... visibility for us and our athletes and financial resources. That's what it's all about. I think anybody in my shoes would have exactly the same kinds of concerns."

He said there is no timetable for any decision and any realignment by Texas A&M will take place after a "lengthy" process. He acknowledged that Texas A&M had approached the SEC, which has won the last five BCS championships in football but on Sunday reaffirmed its 12-school membership while leaving the door open to expansion.

"There is no bid," Loftin said. "There has never been a bid to invite us into the SEC at any time in the past and if it were to occur in the future, we would certainly want to evaluate that."

Loftin met with reporters shortly after receiving authority from the board of regents to take any action he deems necessary in terms of realignment. He said Texas A&M is looking only at the SEC right now, but didn't rule out other possibilities.

"It's not so much what's wrong with the Big 12, it's what's right for Texas A&M and where we want to go in time," he said.

The Big 12 will begin the football season in a few weeks with 10 teams after Nebraska (Big Ten) and Colorado (Pac-12) left in July, a year after a seismic shift in conference alignment. The Big 12 did not respond to requests for comment Monday, though Commissioner Dan Beebe told USA Today on Sunday that the Big 12 was interested in maintaining 10 member schools.

"We're just working hard to try to figure out how they can stay with us because of the value that institution has and the quality academic and athletic programs it offers," Beebe told the newspaper. "We'll see. We've seen the odds stacked against us before."

Loftin said he began discussing Texas A&M's interest in the SEC with Commissioner Mike Slive on July 21. A&M's departure would cast doubt on the future of the Big 12, and Loftin said he would consider the ramifications for the conference before doing anything.

"What we do, if anything, will be in the best interest of Texas A&M and the state of Texas," he said. "We're also very concerned about the members of the Big 12. We don't want the Big 12 to go away. We have no intention of doing anything that might precipitate that."

Another key for Texas A&M in negotiating with another conference would be continuing its more than 100-year-old football rivalry with Texas.

"That's a historic rivalry," he said. "We see no reason why it could not continue under a different conference arrangement if they chose to do so. We certainly want to make that part of any discussion we have with another conference."

Loftin said he would have to consider the financial consequences to leaving the Big 12, if Texas A&M wants to go somewhere else. The Big 12, including Texas A&M, agreed to a 13-year television deal with Fox Sports in April that is worth more than \$1 billion. If the Aggies leave the conference, there is a chance the contract could be voided, which could lead to legal issues for Texas A&M and its new league.

Texas A&M also could be subject to buyout or exit fees if it bolts.

"I've read the bylaws of the Big 12 and they're confusing to some extent," Loftin said when asked about what costs could be associated with leaving. "So I think there's a lot of room to talk about what that might mean if we choose to explore that option. We have not yet begun that process yet. This is one of the steps we have to take. The issue is looking at the long-term and any short-term costs must be weighed against long-term costs and benefits."

Hope Leadership Academy, a charter school, to open Wednesday

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

The Kansas City Star

After seeing Don Bosco Charter School close this summer, the University of Central Missouri is sponsoring a new charter in Kansas City.

It opens Wednesday.

The Hope Leadership Academy, which eventually will serve 180 students from kindergarten through eighth grade, has been preparing to open for the past year, but it only received state approval of its charter in March.

It will be the second new charter opening in Kansas City this school year. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is opening a college preparatory charter —the Ewing Marion Kauffman School, **sponsored by the University of Missouri**. That charter is for students in grades five through 12.

Hope Leadership Academy was founded by the Hope Center, which is a faith-based, education and social service urban neighborhood outreach operation. It is starting with 60 students — 20 children each in kindergarten, first and second grades. A grade will be added each subsequent year until it has nine classrooms, said Principal Mike Coulter.

Coulter said that while the school, at 2800 E. Linwood Blvd., and the center share a building and a vision to rejuvenate the surrounding neighborhood, “we are separate from them because of course we are a public charter school and can’t have religious affiliation.”

He said the idea for a neighborhood school became more important to the Hope Center after the Kansas City Public School District closed nearly half of its 61 schools last year. Three were in that community.

“The neighborhood feels like it needs a school that children can walk to,” said Coulter, who was an elementary school principal in Lee’s Summit for 20 years before coming to Hope.

“We want a school that’s small, where parents know one another, teachers know the students and the families and what’s going on in them.”

The school has hired four full-time teachers, one for each grade and a special education teacher. Music, physical education and art teachers will work part time.

Coulter said that to recruit students, he walked the neighborhood knocking on doors, "and people were receptive to what we are doing." He said there is no attempt to compete with the district schools.

"We feel like we are just offering people choice."

Hope Leadership doesn't have a theme, Coulter said, but "we want to develop leaders who will then come back and serve this community."

The neighborhood school concept is what appealed to the University of Central Missouri and why it decided to sponsor the charter, said Vici Hughes, director of the Midwest Center for Charter and Urban Education in Warrensburg.

As the sponsor for Hope Leadership Academy, the university will offer training to the school's board of directors, its administrators and teachers. It also will help it monitor and use academic data collected on each student and meet state deadlines.

Hope Leadership is the ninth charter school that UCM sponsors in Kansas City. Don Bosco, a high school that for more than a decade served students at risk of dropping out, closed at the end of the last school year.

That school had financial problems brought on by years of low enrollment and poor attendance.

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