Mizzou leases historic theater
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COLUMBIA, MO (AP) -- The University of Missouri has agreed to lease a historic Columbia theater that some local preservationists feared would close its doors.

The university announced a three-year deal Thursday with the nonprofit Missouri Symphony Society, the group that manages the 83-year-old Missouri Theatre on Ninth Street in downtown Columbia.

The university will pay $12,000 a month and have an option to buy the theatre for $3.7 million once its lease expires.

The former vaudeville house reopened in 2008 amid a $10 million renovation but was soon unable to pay its bills.

The theater temporarily closed in 2010, only to open again on a limited basis while relying on symphony society volunteers rather than paid employees.

MU's lease of Missouri Theatre costs $12,000 monthly

By JANISE SILVEY

The deal to transfer operation of the Missouri Theatre to the University of Missouri was finalized yesterday, with MU paying $12,000 a month to the Missouri Symphony Society to lease the theater for three years.

The money for the lease will come from the campus rental account, a fund used for university facilities. MU will only be out $8,500 a month, though, because two subtenants in the Ninth Street building — the Columbia Art League and Yogoluv yogurt shop — will pay rent to the university now instead of MOSS. The combined rent is $3,500, MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said.

At the end of the three-year lease, MU will have the option to buy the property for $3.7 million — the same amount MOSS owes in unpaid debt.

The purchase price includes some of the fixtures, furniture and equipment, although MOSS will retain but loan to MU the musical instruments. In exchange, MOSS will have office space in the theater rent-free.

MU is expected to host performers at the 1,216-seat theater who are now being turned away because the university has lacked venue space. Also, the university plans to use the building, which is just north of campus downtown, for large events such as graduations, Summer Welcome programs and other student programs.

The building doesn't replace the need for a new School of Music building with classrooms and a recital hall. Rather, it allows the university to scale those building plans down, shaving millions off construction costs, said Michael O'Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science.

The Missouri Theatre has had a long and unstable history since it opened in 1928, just before the Great Depression. From the 1960s until 1983, it served as a single-screen theater. MOSS began renting it in 1987 and soon after purchased the theater for $370,000.

In 2001, David White was hired as executive director and proposed massive renovations that, over the next seven years, rose to a cost of about $10 million, according to Tribune archives. MOSS was able to raise money for the project but not enough to cover the debt.

The Missouri Theatre reopened in 2008 just before the economy tanked, and its future has been uncertain since. Last year, staffers were let go and the doors were shut temporarily; MOSS has been relying on volunteer staff this year.
Carole Sue DeLaite, co-president of MOSS, said the university's management will preserve the theater for historians, music and theater lovers.

Talks between the university and MOSS have been in the works for months. Mayor Bob McDavid this week said he is pleased the transaction has been finalized.

"It's nice to see it in stable hands," he said. "It ensures the Missouri Theatre will be an institution in the city of Columbia for years to come."
Jefferson City — Missouri state Auditor Tom Schweich filed a lawsuit against Gov. Jay Nixon Friday alleging the governor violated the state constitution when he withheld millions in state funding for various programs in order to pay for disaster recovery.

"Our state has recently experienced natural disasters of historic proportion," Schweich said in a statement. "There is no dispute that the victims of the tornadoes and floods must be fully compensated for their tragic losses. But the process must be legal and transparent."

Nixon's office says the withholdings were needed as the state continues to grapple with costs from a string of natural disasters and are part of the governor's constitutional responsibility to balance the budget.

In June, after one of the nation's deadliest tornadoes hit Joplin and widespread flooding ravaged southeastern Missouri, Nixon announced he was holding back $172 million in state money, including $57 million in general revenue appropriations for the 2012 budget. Higher education took the biggest hit — $15 million from public universities and $2 million from community colleges. In all, 45 programs saw their funding reduced or eliminated. The governor pledged $50 million of that money to disaster relief.

In recent weeks, numerous Republican lawmakers — including the House and Senate budget chairs — accused the governor, a Democrat, of using disaster recovery as justification to overstep his authority and make cuts he wanted to make earlier, without danger of having the Legislature override a veto. The debate came to a head Friday with the lawsuit by Schweich, a Republican, against Nixon.

The lawsuit argues that withholding money before the fiscal year begins and then reallocating it without any legislative approval is unconstitutional. The suit seeks to have the money reinstated to the original programs.

In the budget, lawmakers establish an estimated amount for disaster recovery and make it possible for the governor to add to the fund to cover expenses from an emergency.
The constitution says that when revenue falls short of the estimates, the governor has the authority to withhold money from some programs.

The lawsuit also claims Nixon's cuts were "arbitrary and capricious" because he lacked justifying data and because he reduced spending for the Republican-led Legislature and Schweich's office but not for his own office or those of other Democratic statewide officeholders.

Nixon chose to withhold the money instead of issuing vetoes for specific budget items so he could have more flexibility in handling disaster recovery, said Linda Luebbering, the governor's budget director. Because damage assessments are not yet complete, withholding money allows the state to cover immediate costs but still return the money to programs if expenses are lower than anticipated.

"When we get a bill from (the Federal Emergency Management Agency), we have to pay the bill," Luebbering said. "We don't yet know the full extent of the cost of recovery, but holding back some money gives us flexibility to change as the situation changes."

The state has already incurred about $10 million in disaster-related expenses, Luebbering said, and bills are coming in nearly every day. If the governor had waited for bills to come in, state agencies could have faced cuts throughout the year, Leubbering said.

Republicans note that after Nixon's withholdings in June, the budget lined up much more closely to his original recommendations than it did after the Legislature adjourned. And in announcing the withhold, Nixon made it clear that the University of Missouri and Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph would face even bigger revenue reductions because they have backed tuition increases larger than what the governor believed was needed.

"If the governor thought the Legislature appropriated too much money for higher education, he has the constitutional authority to use a line-item veto," Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said. "But the problem is that the Legislature then has the ability to override that veto. There is nothing we can do in regards to the withholdings."

Moreover, Republican lawmakers said, the governor didn't need to take money from other government programs in order to pay for disaster relief. Instead, they said, he should have come to the Legislature and tapped the state's Rainy Day Fund.

"This is why we have a Rainy Day Fund," said state Rep. Bill White, R-Joplin. "Higher education shouldn't have to pay for debris removal in Joplin. We have other money for that."

During Senate testimony earlier this week, Schaefer said expenses for disaster recovery come in slowly and stretch out over years. The state isn't likely to be hit with a major bill from the federal government overnight, which means the funding plan could be crafted by the normal legislative process, he said.
In a letter to Attorney General Chris Koster, legislative leaders argue that Nixon's actions "could set a precedent that, if not immediately addressed, calls into question the constitutional separation of powers."

Koster, a Democrat, has not yet issued an opinion on the matter.
Tom Schweich files lawsuit against Gov. Jay Nixon over state funds

By JANESILVEY

State Auditor Tom Schweich has filed a lawsuit against Gov. Jay Nixon a week after warning him that he's unconstitutionally withholding state funds.

Schweich's lawsuit, filed in Cole County Circuit Court, says Nixon overstepped his authority. Schweich is asking the court to order him to release the funds. Nixon's withholdings include $4.3 million to the UM System.

Nixon announced in late May that he would reserve $25 million from the 2012 budget to help Joplin recover from the tornado that hit May 22. That was on top of $25 million Nixon wanted to spend to help pay for flooding in southeastern Missouri.

In June, Nixon withheld $170 million from the 2012 budget, including funds that lawmakers had appropriated for universities, scholarships, school transportation and other programs. Nixon then reallocated $50 million of that to fund disaster relief.

Schweich argues that governors can withhold funding only if revenue during a fiscal year comes in under budget predictions, and that Nixon's office has not provided proof that revenue this year will come in below estimates. Nixon's office has continued to assert that the governor does have the power to withhold that money — not only for the disasters but also because the budget lawmakers approved wasn't balanced.

In a statement, Schweich said victims of the natural disasters should be fully compensated for their losses. "But the process must be legal and transparent," he said. "There are many legal and transparent ways to do this."

Litigation, he said, was a last resort to resolve the issue.
Nixon seeks to fund colleges based on performance

By JANESI SILVEY

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon yesterday unveiled a plan to make colleges and universities meet certain academic targets to get increases in state funding.

"It's kind of like No Child Left Behind for higher education," said Leona Rubin, a University of Missouri faculty member who joined university leaders across the state for Nixon's higher education summit.

Under the proposal, the state would base increases in appropriations to schools on whether they meet a handful of statewide goals and one goal specific to an individual institution. Then, Nixon said in an example, if the state were to appropriate a 5 percent increase to higher education but a school only met 60 percent of its goals, that school would receive a 3 percent increase instead.

A task force has been studying a performance funding model for months and is expected to submit a recommendation to Nixon by December in time for his January budget proposal.

The task force is charged with coming up with specific performance targets, but Nixon has set some guidelines for those. Schools that emphasize science, technology, engineering and math might see extra points under the system. Nixon also recommends tying funds to a college's affordability, accessibility and degree-completion rates.

Asked whether the latter would lead to grade inflation, Nixon told the Tribune that some students are leaving college with more than 100 credit hours but no degree. When a reporter suggested those students might have flunked out, he didn't directly respond and instead suggested the state might see competition among schools and faculty.

Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration for the UM System, serves on the task force. She said a degree-completion goal would give institutions incentives to find students who are struggling and make sure they get the help they need to succeed.

Nixon also suggested national tests, such as professional certification exams, be used to ensure students are getting a quality education. But not all careers require professional exams, and college students do not take standardized tests. Asked how those students would be assessed, Nixon said: "We need to get everybody as educated as we possibly can."

MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said he fully supports a performance model based on the right measurements that would deliver a more stable funding stream. The UM System already has an accountability system in place that tracks some 80 targets, including graduation rates.
Most college administrators are “enthused” about the idea “because they’ve got a good story to tell,” said David Russell, commissioner of the Department of Higher Education. And other schools that have a "ways to go," he said, aren’t shying away from accountability.

"The universities are going to say positive things about this because they do it already," Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, said. “This is just another layer of bureaucracy.”

He and Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, pointed out that this funding model is a proposal, not a done deal.

"Under the constitution, the legislature determines what's appropriate as far as funding levels," Schaefer said. "Every year, we have institutions come in, and they justify the amount they’re seeking in appropriations. ... If the governor is implying the General Assembly appropriates money and doesn’t look at performance, including efficiency, graduation rates and other performance factors, he’s wrong."

Kelly said the discussion distracts from the core problem of the state not adequately funding higher education. He questioned why Nixon formed a task force to study college efficiency but not task forces to study the efficiencies of his own departments.

"We need a task force to study the failure of the state to fund higher education more than we need a task force to study higher education," Kelly said. The problem and solution “are much closer to the Capitol than they are to Jesse Hall.”
Graduate from college in 4 years? Unlikely in Missouri, Illinois

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Sunday, August 28, 2011 11:30 pm

For parents sending children off to college for the first time, here's a sobering bit of reality: If you expect your son or daughter to graduate in four years, be ready for disappointment.

At the vast majority of Missouri and Illinois schools, fewer than half of new freshmen finish in four years. Only one in five schools managed to do better than that in 2009, according to a review of more than 100 public and private institutions.

That's not necessarily an indictment of the region's schools. The National Center for Education Statistics doesn't yet have national data for 2009, but two years earlier the four-year graduation rate for the country was 36.7 percent.

It takes most students more than four years to get the traditional four-year bachelor's degree — something that may come as a shock to many.

"I think the majority of families are uninformed or not as informed as they should be," said James Minor, director of higher education programs at the Southern Education Foundation.

Four-year graduation rates aren't necessarily the best measurement of school success. For one, the federal government and schools look more closely at the six-year rate, which is typically 10 to 20 percentage points higher. The government also only counts first-time freshmen who go on to get a degree at their first school. Students who transfer and graduate elsewhere don't count for either school.

Regardless, the rates represent one of the only uniform measurements available to the public for comparing institutions. And they show quite a range in the local market.

At the top is Washington University, where 84 percent of students graduated in four years. "There is a culture and climate here. Students want to work hard. They expect to graduate. It's just what's expected," said Ed Macias, provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs.
Near the bottom is Harris-Stowe State University, where students are more likely to attend part time and where only 8 percent of them picked up a degree in four years.

In between are St. Louis University at 60 percent, University of Missouri-St. Louis at 21 percent, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville at 23 percent and the University of Missouri-Columbia at 43 percent.

A MONEY OBSTACLE

There is no single answer to the question of why so many students are slow to earn their degrees.

But education experts and school officials say one of the biggest obstacles is money. Increasingly, students are unable to get through college without working part time or even full time, making it difficult to keep up with the course load demanded by a four-year track. Others need to take noncredit remedial courses just to catch up academically.

And there are students like Chesley Waddell, 22, of Edwardsville. After graduating from high school in 2007, she decided to go the community college route. She spent three semesters at Southwestern Illinois College before transferring to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Unfortunately, a sizeable chunk of her SWIC credits didn't count for the mass communications degree she is pursuing. And despite taking a full course load each semester, as well as extra classes in the summer, she'll need five years to finish.

"When I went to junior college, it threw everything off. It was kind of like taking a year off," she said. "I wish I would have known earlier what I wanted to do."

Other students run into trouble in classes, particularly in the first semester, and never recover, said Marcia Cantarella, author of "I Can Finish College: The Overcome Any Obstacle and Get Your Degree Guide"

Many, she said, don't ask for help until it's too late to save their grades: "There is a fear of being found out. Of appearing to be stupid."

And in the end, experts say, it is largely the student's responsibility to graduate on time. It's virtually impossible if students don't take enough credit hours every semester.

With the typical bachelor's degree requiring 120 credit hours, that means a student needs 15 hours each semester.

That's a mark not attained by the average Mizzou student, said Jim Spain, the school's vice provost for undergraduate studies.

"Right out of the chute, we know the students are taking too few credit hours to be able to graduate in four years," Spain said.
That's where Josh Cherry, 18, of Reeds Spring, finds himself in his first week at Mizzou. He came to campus with a few college credits from advanced high school courses, but he knows he'll have to take more than the 13 hours he signed up for this semester if he wants to get out in four years.

But it's not something that he's all that concerned about — even if it means an extra year's worth of college expenses.

"Once you are paying that kind of money for four years, one more year isn't going to ruin it," Cherry said.

EVERY SAVED DROPOUT...

The truth is, schools can't force students to graduate on time, or even at all. But there are things they can do to nudge them in that direction.

Across the region, schools are opening or redesigning campus operations aimed at improving graduation rates. Whether it's the Student Success Center at SIUE, or the Center for Retention and Student Success at Harris-Stowe or the Academic Success Center at Missouri Baptist University, they share the same goal of helping students navigate their way through school.

There's good reason for it. On one hand, every saved dropout is one fewer student who needs to be replaced. But schools also face pressure from everyone — including President Barack Obama — wanting more graduates.

Last week, Gov. Jay Nixon told higher education leaders he wants the state to develop a formula for divvying up future funding increases. Among possible factors in the formula — expected to be developed by year's end — are retention rates, course completion and degree attainment.

"This is priority for an awful lot of governors and legislators. The institutions are paying attention," said Jane Wellman, executive director of the Delta Cost Project, a Washington-based nonprofit group that works to improve college affordability and efficiency.

So schools are working harder to come up with ways to keep students from drifting away.

- SIUE has added 13 academic advisers and revamped placement testing to better match freshmen with first-year courses. Two years ago, the school opened its academic center, combining a range of services, including academic advising, career development and tutoring.

In 2006, the school's six-year graduation rate was 46 percent. Last year it topped 51 percent.

"We're basically working with the same students, but we're getting better results," said Scott Belobrajdic, assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management.

- Mizzou, 18 months ago, put together its Commission for Student Success, a standing committee that has been examining problems standing between students and graduation.
Like many campuses, it is considering an early-warning tracking system that would help professors let others know when a student is having trouble. Also in play is another program that keeps tabs on students who have failed to enroll for the coming semester.

"Instead of asking them why they left, after they left, we ask them much earlier," said Spain, Mizzou's vice provost.

- A sagging graduation rate at Missouri Baptist University prompted administrators a few years ago to make several changes, including the creation of an academic center for counseling and tutoring services. They also raised admission standards. It's too soon to see an improvement in graduation rates, but the school notched a 9 percent increase in its freshmen retention rate last year.

"We were admitting more at-risk students than we should have," said Terry Dale Cruse, director of admissions at Missouri Baptist University.

- Webster University, where graduation rates went to 48 percent in 2009 from 36 percent in 2004, has hired a retention coordinator and strives to get students into their majors as soon possible.

"We want you to explore. But at some point, you need to move toward your major," said Paul Carney, vice president of enrollment management and student affairs at Webster.
Haith denies lying about booster ties

BY VAHE GREGORIAN vgregorian@post-dispatch.com | 314-340-8199 | Posted: Monday, August 29, 2011 12:00 am

Seeking to "fight back a little bit" for his name and a job he says he plans to have a long time, Mizzou basketball coach Frank Haith said he knew nothing of allegations pending against him at Miami when MU approached him in March and he did not lie to an MU official about his relationship with Miami booster Nevin Shapiro.

Haith said he was "stunned" by the recent allegation and added, "No one lied. That's the truth."

In his first interview since a Yahoo Sports report alleged Haith was complicit in a $10,000 payment Shapiro made for a recruit, Haith said he wanted to clarify what he could but was not at liberty from the NCAA to discuss the particular charge.

Pointing back to his hiring, he said, "I was not aware of any allegations against my program (at Miami) until this story was written."

Most specifically, Haith sought to dispel a perception that he had lied to MU basketball spokesman Dave Reiter in response to the Yahoo report.

"I just don't like the fact that that's lingering around any article I see, that I lied," Haith said by telephone Friday night. "And I never lied. And neither did Dave Reiter. No one did. It's the truth."

In question was Reiter's response to a Yahoo query for reaction to the story that was released Aug. 16. According to Haith, a Yahoo reporter called Reiter on Aug. 15 asking for comment from Haith about "Miami basketball's involvement with Nevin Shapiro regarding allegations of NCAA violations."

"When I'm asked that question, I'm thinking, 'There's no NCAA violation in my program with Nevin Shapiro,' " Haith said. "I wasn't saying I didn't know Nevin Shapiro; I was saying there was no involvement with Nevin Shapiro per NCAA violations in our basketball program."

Reiter "put it to paper," Haith said. He was quoted by Yahoo saying: "We had a chance to talk with (Haith), and he's had no involvement with this Mr. Shapiro guy. There's nothing."

That was read by many as a denial that Haith even knew Shapiro. But Haith said he would never have denied knowing Shapiro and had focused his answer on "involvement" in terms of violations or allegations.
Graduation rates give incomplete picture

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Sunday, August 28, 2011 12:00 am

No MU mention

When it comes to measuring schools by graduation rates, students like Buddy Pearson are a bit of a problem.

It's going to take Pearson, of Cuba, Mo., more than five years to complete his education at Missouri University of Science and Technology, where he's doing no favors for the school's four-year graduation rate.

"I've been having a good time while I'm here. I'm really not in that much of a hurry," Pearson said.

But he's working toward a double major in civil and architectural engineering, illustrating one of the hazards of trying to measure a school based on graduation rates.

Education experts argue that some schools are essentially penalized in ratings because of their student mix.

In 2009, Missouri S&T's four-year graduation rate stood at 25 percent. But its six-year rate is a much stronger 63 percent, reflecting the extra time it can take to finish engineering degrees, which often include lengthy internships like Pearson's recent eight-month stint with a firm in Kansas City.

Further, the graduation rates collected by the federal government only track freshmen who start and finish at the same school. Transfers are left out.

That's painful for schools like the University of Missouri-St. Louis and Missouri Baptist University, where transfers make up the majority of each year's new students.

"The numbers are what they are. But there is a huge flaw in this measurement of student success," said Terry Dale Cruse, director of admissions at Missouri Baptist, where the 2009 four-year graduation rate was 33 percent.

The folks at UMSL agree, pointing out that last year's incoming class was made up of 476 freshmen and 1,881 transfer students.
The government's statistics will never credit the school, which had a 21 percent four-year graduation rate in 2009, for its work with its largest pool of students.

"We have a lot of students who aren't on the four-year or six-year track," said Bob Samples, a university spokesman. "The focus for us is not on first-time, full-time freshmen. It's a more complex story for us."

There's also no rate measuring students who aren't able to pursue college full time. That means a part-time student who takes longer than six years to graduate ends up hurting a school's rating.

It's one of the factors cited by officials at Harris-Stowe State University, which has one of the region's lowest four-year and six-year graduation rates, at 8 percent and 21 percent.

The combination of a rough economy and a large population of first-generation students means most have little chance of finishing their degrees in four or even six years, said Michelle McClure, assistant vice president of academic affairs.

And while it might be easy to cast some blame on the school's open enrollment policy — which virtually guarantees there will be students who need remedial classes from the start — McClure refused to do so.

"Every great teacher knows that every student has the capacity to learn," McClure said.
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Reiter "put it to paper," Haith said. He was quoted by Yahoo saying: "We had a chance to talk with (Haith), and he's had no involvement with this Mr. Shapiro guy. There's nothing."

That was read by many as a denial that Haith even knew Shapiro. But Haith said he would never have denied knowing Shapiro and had focused his answer on "involvement" in terms of violations or allegations.
"The question was all about was there 'involvement' between Miami basketball and Nevin Shapiro considered an NCAA violation or allegation," Haith said.

So when the article was released the next day, Haith said, the response was out of context for the story, which featured photos of Haith with Shapiro, documented 85 phone or text exchanges between them and Shapiro's $50,000 payment to the basketball program.

None of that was problematic in itself ... unless Haith was trying to deny knowing Shapiro.

Yahoo declined comment on Haith's assertions.

The day after the story was launched, Yahoo substituted Mizzou's response with an updated statement released by Haith, reading in part: "The reports questioning my personal interactions with Mr. Shapiro are not an accurate portrayal of my character."

Haith's reputation also has been left dangling by the timing of the start of the NCAA investigation of Miami five-plus months ago, believed to be at least a few weeks before Haith was offered the Missouri job on April 3.

That left open to speculation whether Miami officials or Haith himself had suppressed that news when MU came calling.

But Haith denied any knowledge of any allegations against his basketball program at the time, saying he believed the investigation to be all about football and that the Miami administration would back that up.

Now that the allegation has surfaced, Haith and Mizzou seem to be in limbo as they await NCAA findings.

MU athletics director Mike Alden said Wednesday that the process must play out and that he didn't know what the future holds for Haith.

Haith declined comment when asked if he had already spoken with the NCAA, which has asked to interview him and told MU chancellor Brady Deaton it will try to expedite his case.

But from his recent actions, including attending a Cardinals game with Alden and their spouses on Thursday and eating lunch among students in a campus dinery on Friday, Haith is speaking as if he expects to survive the accusation.

"Now," he said, "the healing process starts."
MU's Haith gains a recruit, seeks to ‘fight back’ for his name

By MIKE DeARMOND

Has the ground beneath Missouri basketball coach Frank Haith’s feet firmed up enough that he can ride out the storm of an allegation regarding his time at the University of Miami?

It certainly looks that way with Haith picking up an oral commitment from Shawn Smith, a 6-foot-3 Class of 2012 guard from Jacksonville, Fla., on Saturday and also making comments to “fight back” for his name.

“I wanted to get it over with,” Smith told PowerMizzou.com on Saturday afternoon. “I felt like Missouri was the place. The head coach, I have a great relationship with him and Coach Chew (assistant coach Isaac). That’s what college is all about, finding a place with great relationships.”

Smith said he would not have committed to Missouri if he wasn’t confident that Haith would be his coach at Missouri.

On Wednesday, Missouri athletic director Mike Alden told The Star that the decision on whether Haith would start this season as MU’s coach was part of a “process.”

“I don’t know what the future holds on all of those types of things,” Alden said. “Certainly, Frank’s doing a great job. I’m working with him every single day.

“But we have to make sure that we go through the process.”

It was also revealed Saturday that Haith also called the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in an effort to “to fight back a little bit” for his name and a job he says he plans to have a long time.

He addressed two issues with the Post-Dispatch in what the newspaper said was a call made on Friday evening. The first was the allegation of Haith knowing of a $10,000 payment to a recruit raised in a wide-ranging story published by Yahoo Sports into corruption at the University of Miami.
The Post-Dispatch quoted Haith as saying he was "stunned" by the allegation and that "I was not aware of any allegations against my program (at Miami) until this story was written."

Haith also addressed the contention that he told MU media relations official Dave Reiter that Haith did not have a relationship with Nevin Shapiro, the former Miami booster who alleged Haith knew about Shapiro’s payment to the recruit.

When the Yahoo story showed Haith in two pictures with Shapiro, one with Shapiro presenting a $50,000 check to Miami, Reiter’s statement reflecting Haith’s assertion appeared contradictory.

“No one lied,” Haith told the Post-Dispatch. “That’s the truth.

“I just don’t like the fact that that’s lingering around any article I see, that I lied. And I never lied. And neither did Dave Reiter. No one did. It’s the truth.”

Neither MU chancellor Brady Deaton nor Alden returned telephone calls made by The Star on Saturday afternoon.

Meanwhile, with one 2012 commitment in hand Saturday, Haith and the Missouri basketball staff also were playing host to Ryan Rosburg, a 6-9 center from Marquette High School in Chesterfield, Mo.
Frank Haith denies lying to Missouri official
BY THE TRIBUNE’S STAFF

Missouri basketball Coach Frank Haith told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that he didn’t lie to an MU athletic department official about his relationship with Miami booster Nevin Shapiro.

Haith spoke publicly for the first time since a Yahoo! Sports report accused him of acknowledging Shapiro’s $10,000 payment to a recruit while Haith coached at Miami.

In the Yahoo! report, MU basketball spokesman Dave Reiter was quoted as saying: “We had a chance to talk to Coach Haith, and he’s had no involvement with this Mr. Shapiro guy. There’s nothing.” But when the story came out, Haith was shown in two photographs with Shapiro and the booster’s phone records indicated 85 calls or text messages between the two.

“I just don’t like the fact that that’s lingering around any article I see, that I lied,” Haith told the Post-Dispatch. “And I never lied. And neither did Dave Reiter. No one did. It’s the truth.”

Haith also told the paper he was “stunned” by the allegations against him.

“I was not aware of any allegations against my program” at Miami “until this story was written,” he said.
From the University of Missouri-Columbia's Department of Psychological Sciences comes a valuable tip for parents of boys: When they say they don't want to talk about their problems, it's not because they're embarrassed about it. It's because they don't see how it will help.

Amanda J. Rose, associate professor of psychological sciences, told the Mizzou news bureau that she and her team had conducted studies of some 2,000 children and adolescents. Girls tended to believe that talking about problems would have positive results. Boys just didn't see the point.

"For years, popular psychologists have insisted that boys and men would like to talk about their problems but are held back by fears of embarrassment or appearing weak," Ms. Rose reported. Instead, she added, "boys' responses suggest that they just don't see talking about problems to be a particularly useful activity."

Her tips for parents: Help your sons see how talking about problems might help. And, because excessive problem talk is linked with depression and anxiety, help your daughters understand "that talking about problems isn't the only way to cope."

Our own non-scientific observations suggest that when girls and boys grow up, their approach to talking things out doesn't change much.
Texas A&M set to leave Big 12

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted: Sunday, August 28, 2011 12:15 am

Texas A&M removed any lingering doubt about its intentions to leave the Big 12 Conference, apparently for the Southeastern Conference, during a conference call Saturday with the Big 12 board of directors, sources told The New York Times and Associated Press.

According to the Times, Texas A&M president R. Bowen Loftin essentially said the Aggies were leaving and there was nothing the Big 12 could do to stop it. The Times cited "multiple presidents on the call" using the term "amicable divorce."

Or as Texas Tech chancellor Kent Hance was quoted as saying in a Twitter posting from a Lubbock radio station: "I think the Aggies have made a decision that in their opinion is irreversible."

With the next phase apparently merely sorting out what it will cost Texas A&M to leave, most likely for the 2012 school year, the question becomes what next for the Big 12 and Mizzou?

Simply put, the conference isn't likely to disband as long as Texas and Oklahoma stay put, and neither seems at this stage interested in leaving.

MU chancellor Brady Deaton, the president of the conference board of directors, did not respond to a text message seeking comment.

In a statement, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said: "The Big 12 Conference members have been and will continue to conduct meetings related to the situation with Texas A&M and conference membership. There will be public statements as appropriate and necessary if and when action is taken."

Sources in and around the conference previously have told the Post-Dispatch that the remaining conference members would seek to expand back to 10 if A&M leaves, most likely going after a school outside the already established conference footprint to add broader TV rights appeal.

The most desirable target — improbable as landing it may be — is Notre Dame.

Despite Notre Dame's longtime commitment to independence, the Big 12 believes its third-tier rights package could accommodate Notre Dame in ways the Irish could find appealing.
Brigham Young and Air Force, the sources have indicated, also could be targeted. One knowledgeable source previously had mentioned the possibility of targeting Arkansas of the SEC and formerly of the Southwest Conference.

That prospect, or at least consideration, seemed to be gaining traction Saturday, when the Times reported that the Big 12’s expansion committee has spoken several times and has a top wish list of ND, Arkansas and BYU, like ND now an independent and one that could benefit from being in a BCS-automatic qualifier conference.

A fresh name mentioned for the first time on the call Saturday, the Times added, was Pittsburgh.

Internally, the sentiment had seemed to be strong only to add one school in the event of A&M's departure.

But in the radio interview, according to Double T 104.3 in Lubbock, Hance said A&M would be "replaced by at least one and maybe three significant teams that will be a bigger story" than A&M leaving.

According to the AP, the only thing that would prevent A&M from making public its decision to leave as early as this week would be if SEC officials decide against adding another team now.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

More than $25,000 worth of goods missing from MU Bookstore Distribution Center

By Melissa Gilstrap
August 26, 2011 | 6:12 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Twenty-eight MacBook Pros have been reported stolen from the University Distribution Center on 1400 Rock Quarry Road.

More than $25,000 worth of property and services were stolen from the distribution center, according to an MU Police report.

Thirteen of the laptops have been confirmed missing, said MU Bookstore spokeswoman Michelle Froese. The other 15 may have been reported stolen due to a transfer error.

The 13 confirmed stolen were 15 inch 2010 MacBook Pros, valued at $1,599, said MU Police Captain Scott Richardson; the 15 unaccounted for laptops were 15 inch 2011 MacBook Pros, valued at $1,999. Richardson said the theft happened over a three-month period, between May 16 and Aug. 23. It was first reported to MU Police Wednesday morning.

MU Police are still investigating the theft, Richardson said. As of now, no one is in custody or has been charged. There was no forced entry or violence involved, Richardson said.

Inventory is done on a quarterly or monthly basis at the MU Bookstore and at the distribution center depending on the category of product, Froese said. Not all employees are allowed the same access to the distribution center, Froese said.

“IT depends on where the responsibilities lie,” she said.

The University Bookstore Distribution Center distributes products to all campus bookstores within the UM system.
E-learning efforts at MU consolidate

The University of Missouri has merged its online and distance education programs into one office.
MU Direct and the Center for Distance and Independent Study have combined to become Mizzou Online. Administrators will spend the coming year merging operations from the two offices into one office in Clark Hall.

Gera Burton, from the CDIS staff, and Kim Siegenthaler, from MU Direct, will serve as interim co-directors of Mizzou Online.

The university has been realigning its online learning system for a year to better coordinate distance education, online classes and hybrid courses that combine Web-based activities with classroom instruction. MU Faculty Council has formed a task force to study online and distance course development.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU veterinary professor receives award for 'professional excellence'

By Alicia Stice
August 26, 2011 | 5:18 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU professor of veterinary neurology has been recognized for professional excellence by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

Dennis O'Brien was the 2011 recipient of the Robert W. Kirk Award for Professional Excellence, given for outstanding achievements and dedicated service to the veterinary profession, according to a news release from the MU College of Veterinary Medicine.

"I was kind of humbled because it's really the result of a team effort by a lot of people who all contribute," O'Brien said. "It was kind of embarrassing to be singled out as the person to get the award."

O'Brien helped found the Comparative Neurology Program at MU, which is dedicated to researching degenerative and developmental diseases in domesticated animals and using this knowledge to develop treatments for people and animals.

His work has focused heavily on researching genetic disorders in the nervous systems of domesticated animals. Some of his research has centered on Parkinson's disease in dogs.

"The bottom line is that dogs and people suffer from a lot of the same diseases, so anything that we can learn about this disease in one species helps us deal with that disease in another species," he said.

O'Brien said he hopes his research can lead to genetic tests for these disorders in dogs as well as treatments for them.

"All of his colleagues and students here at Mizzou have long known what an incredible clinician and scientist he is, but it was great to see his contributions so prominently
recognized," said Leah Cohn, a professor of veterinary internal medicine at MU and president of ACVIM, in the release.

O'Brien began working at MU as an assistant professor of veterinary neurology in 1985, and he became a full professor in 2003, according to the release. He received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Illinois in 1975 and earned his doctorate in neuroscience in 1987.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM curators interview presidential candidates in St. Louis

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
August 26, 2011 | 8:19 a.m. CDT

ST. LOUIS — The UM System Board of Curators is continuing to meet in private with prospective presidents of the four-campus system, this time at a St. Louis airport hotel.

The 10 curators scheduled confidential interviews with an unknown number of candidates Thursday and Friday morning at the airport Marriott. Those sessions come after a similar round of interviews last week at a downtown Kansas City hotel.

The board is seeking a replacement for Gary Forsee, the former Sprint Nextel CEO who resigned in January after nearly three years as president to care for his ill wife. The system's acting president, general counsel Steve Owens, has said he is not interested in the permanent job.
Greg Scott, 1957-2011

Professor Gregory J. Scott, J.D., 54, of Columbia died Monday, Aug. 22, 2011, while on his way to teach a class at the University of Missouri.

A gathering to honor Greg’s memory, followed by a dessert reception, will be at 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 29, in the Parish Hall of the Calvary Episcopal Church, 123 S. Ninth St. Please bring a great story and happy memories of this wonderful man. If you’re not a Boy Scout, please wear casual dress. If you are a Scout, you know what to wear.

Much as it is hard for people who knew him as an adult to believe, at one time Professor Scott was a little baby, 8 pounds, 8 ounces, born June 10, 1957, in Sedalia to parents Joe and Marlene “Perky” Scott.

Where to begin? Scouting, of course. Greg was involved with Scouting for almost 44 of his 54 years, ever since he joined Troop 707 in 1967. After he earned his Eagle Badge, he went on to become an adult leader of the troop until the day he died. Greg wishes to express his eternal gratitude to all the fine young men of Troop 707 who allowed him to be a part of their lives.

Son, brother, uncle, Scout, school bus driver, Stephens Lake lifeguard, editor of the MU Law Review, lawyer, leader, friend, teacher and mentor, Greg crammed three lifetimes of fun and friends into his 54 years and had a fabulous time doing it. Greg’s words: “Life is fun! Too bad it’s so dadgum short!” (As is this obit.) And, remember, if you’re not having fun, you’re doing it wrong.

After receiving his J.D. from MU in 1988, he worked at the Swanson Midgley Law Firm in Kansas City. He moved back to Columbia in the early 1990s and took a position with the Missouri Attorney General’s Office in Jefferson City, and he eventually returned to MU to teach in their schools of law and business. He received numerous accolades in his career, such as the Gold Chalk Award, given in recognition of professors who have made significant contributions to the education and training of graduate and professional students at MU.

Survivors include brother Tim Scott (Dorothy Burggraaff) of Kansas City; sister-in-law Donna Scott-Heermann (Jon) of Independence; nephews Brandon Scott (Hatti) of Manhattan, Kan., and Tyler Scott; and dogs Scout and Pup-Pup of the home.

In lieu of flowers, Greg suggested contributions to Troop 707, c/o Laura Sandstedt, 501 Overland Court, Columbia, Mo., 65203, or the Central Missouri Humane Society, 616 Big Bear Blvd., Columbia, Mo., 65202. You also can honor Greg by simply grabbing every opportunity to live life and help those around you.

Online condolences may be left at www.parkerfuneralservice.com.
Incubator helps startups survive vulnerable stage

By JAKE HALLIDAY

My grandson Liam, now 5 and thriving, entered this world in a hurry. Out he came after just 27 weeks and weighing only 1 pound, 7 ounces. He spent two months in the neonatal intensive care unit, or NICU, and headed home a month before his original due date. He has not looked back since.

Much of the time that Liam was in the NICU, he was in an incubator. That clear plastic box and all of its attachments provided the protection and supportive environment that such a vulnerable baby requires.

During that period, I was heavily involved in the funding and construction of what is now our region's business incubator — the University of Missouri Life Science Incubator at Monsanto Place. The most frequently asked question was, “What is a business incubator?”

Infant incubators dramatically improve the odds of survival for at-risk newborns. In many senses, business incubators do the same thing but for startups. They provide a protective and supportive environment for companies at their most vulnerable stage. Business incubators change the odds of survival and success for young companies.

Just as the incubator for infants is part of a support system, including doctors and nursing staff, business incubators offer a lot more than just space. Clients of the business incubator in Columbia can tap three support programs:

Business mentoring in the practical aspects of finance, accounting, management and marketing;
Facilitated access to researchers, facilities and equipment to accelerate their research and development;
and Technology commercialization assistance. The last program entails guidance on R&D planning, prototype development, identifying alliance partners and coaching on how to secure financing.

The individual companies and entrepreneurs at the business incubator are absolutely fascinating. They are curing cancer, solving the energy crisis and feeding the world. Their stories have been covered in this and other outlets.

In this column, I will be looking at where those companies come from, examining the pathway by which research at the university results in innovation and exploring how those innovations move along the commercialization pathway to become products and services that make our lives better.

Complex infrastructure has been put in place in Mid-Missouri over the past five years or so for expediting the translation of research to commercial applications. We have a fascinating view of the entire process from the business incubator, which is one component of that infrastructure.
We sit right at the interface where the university meets the world of business. We can look down the technology transfer road to the origins of innovations in the research labs and the turns that bring them to our door, and we can look ahead to the steps that still await our entrepreneurs.

Maybe Liam will take that path someday.
Finally, less than a month after his 52nd birthday, Howard Richards will enter the profession he began preparing for while in college three decades ago. And his route to a sportscasting job has taken a twist that might be unprecedented.

Phase One of his path is fairly routine. He protected the quarterback as an All-Big Eight offensive lineman at Mizzou and in the NFL after being a first-round draft pick by the Dallas Cowboys in 1981. Many sports commentators have tread the field-to-booth road. But it was Phase Two that isn't on many (any?) sports broadcasting résumés. After his playing days, he continued protecting the man calling signals at a much more important level — the head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Now Richards is back in private life and is set to begin working in the field he wanted to be in all along — sportscasting. He is about to replace John Kadlec, who retired in January, as the analyst on University of Missouri football radio broadcasts.

"To be able to come back and be part of Mizzou football on this level, I couldn't have found a better opportunity to sort of begin my broadcasting career again," said Richards, who was recruited out of Southwest High in St. Louis by Kadlec — an MU assistant coach at the time. "This opportunity is a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

The latter statement could apply to his previous job, in which the longest-running assignment he had was on the VIP protection staff for four CIA directors.

"It was interesting, to say the least," Richards said.

He didn't intend to have that kind of a career. When his NFL days concluded in 1987 after a short stay in Seattle, he returned to Mizzou to take the last courses he needed for a degree in communications, with an emphasis in radio, television and film. He also helped out at a Jefferson City television station.

Richards shot video of Mizzou home games in 1988, then went to the station to edit the tapes. He'd either discuss the game on the air or give the video to whomever was on camera. On Fridays, he'd cover high school football, and on Mondays he would recap the Sunday NFL games as well as the MU contest and some key college games.
"And I'd preview the Monday night (NFL) game," he said. "That was my foray into the broadcasting business."

He got the gig through Jim Riek, at the time a KRCG sportscaster who covered Richards as a MU player.

"Howard was always very gracious, he was prepared to do interviews whether they won or lost," Riek said. "I'd always scout Howard out because I knew he was a good sound bite."

Riek and Richards had a rapport, and that led to Richards calling years later about the internship.

Riek said he told him, "'I don't think the station management will pay you, but as long as you don't mind not getting paid, sure.' I knew how well-spoken he was, that he'd be great."

But it wasn't a typical apprenticeship.

"Most interns merely lug around gear — which he was great for us because he was so big," Riek said. "But I went to station management and said, 'This guy is gold. We need to put him on the air.' I think he's like the first intern to have his own TV show."

SHIFTING GEARS

With the NFL behind him and the degree now in hand, Richards pursued a full-time sportscasting job. He began sending out résumés and tapes of his work, but reality slowly settled in.

"There were fewer athletes in the industry then, and they were mostly big names," he said. "The opportunities just weren't there."

He was back in Texas figuring out what to do when his life sidetracked.

"One Sunday I was looking at the Dallas Morning News and saw a full-page CIA recruitment ad," he said. "One of the subsets of employments was communications, so I thought, 'OK, this might be an angle for me.'"

He applied for a job.

He also had interviewed with Anheuser-Busch for a position in its sports marketing department, but officials there pointed him toward a one-year program at Ohio University that would better prepare him. He was told that if he completed that, there was a good chance he would be hired. But he didn't want to wait a year to go to work.

"I had been living off savings, so I needed a paycheck," he said, and the CIA came calling in 1990.
"Their offer was better than anything I had on the table, so I took it," he said. "Then once I got there I quickly realized their idea of communications was nowhere near what I was looking to do."

The CIA job didn't involve talking about football or writing news releases. It was dealing with 'secure communications,' transmissions going to facilities overseas that needed to be protected from interception. It was more clandestine than what he had in mind.

"I figured I'd be there for two or three years, then leave," he said. "I figured I could always go back and go to that (Ohio) program."

But his new job quickly evolved to something a lot more hands-on than sending coded messages.

"I did a number of jobs there from investigations, worked in education and did some security policy (work), where we reviewed and wrote personnel and physical security standards for all the intelligence agencies," he said. "It was a tremendous experience."

But the highlight came when he moved to the front lines, serving on the security detail for CIA directors Robert Gates, James Woolsey, John Deutch and George Tenet. As a former NFL player who was 6 feet 6 and 265 pounds, he was an imposing figure alongside one of the country's top officials. It was his longest assignment in his 13 years with the agency — just don't say he was a bodyguard.

"On no, we don't use the term 'bodyguard,'" he said, chuckling. "It's the same job the Secret Service does to protect the president."

Richards was based in Israel for 2 1/2 years.

"I was responsible for our personnel and facilities in Tel Aviv at the embassy there and at the consulate in Jerusalem," he said. "I also had some responsibilities in the Palestinian territories, in Gaza (Strip) and the West Bank."

The job had its dangerous moments protecting the head of the agency.

"One time we're in Gaza and we got a call saying we need to leave immediately," Richards said. "Within 15 minutes (a bomb) hit the building that we had been in. A friend in America called and said, 'I just saw this on CNN.'"

Richards didn't want to get into too many details of some other tense situations, but said there were other close calls with violence in the Middle East.

"You know the risks," he said. "You survive the best you can."

RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE
He was on that protective staff from 1991-99, and after that assignment ended, he had trouble surviving in a much more mundane role — a desk job.

"I hated it," he said. "I needed to be more involved."

So he left the CIA, got into real estate in the Washington area before deciding last year it was time to move back to St. Louis, where he had been a standout in the 1970s at Southwest High (now Central Visual Performing Arts High).

"I needed to be closer to my family," he said. "I wanted to come back and see what opportunities existed for me."

Richards owns a small private security business that provides protection to businessmen going to the Middle East and other foreign locations. (He put that work on hold when he recently was named head of security and public safety at Harris-Stowe State University.)

Richards was in Saudi Arabia when he found out through Facebook that Kadlec was retiring. So he encouraged a couple of longtime friends and influential Columbia residents to lobby those choosing the replacement on his behalf.

"I hadn't talked to him in a long time, but I immediately recognized the voice," Riek said. "I said, 'Hi, Howard, what can I do this time?' and I quickly put it together."

Riek now is a news anchor at KOMU, the NBC-TV affiliate in Columbia that is owned by the University of Missouri, and sent an email to MU athletics director Mike Alden touting his long-ago intern.

"I said 'Howard, he's the guy,'" said Riek, who also is a broadcasting instructor at MU. "I remember the way he'd do interviews, how he was on the air."

Richards was in a group of about a half-dozen finalists that included former MU quarterback Corby Jones, who has broadcasting experience. They all had an audition, in which they went to the radio booth at Faurot Field and sat in front of a TV monitor to do a mock broadcast of the MU-Oklahoma game from last season. Longtime Tigers play-by-play announcer Mike Kelly was alongside. The sessions were designed to be realistic, with a producer and engineer also on hand as well as commercial breaks being taken. Promotional announcements even were read.

"We tried to give them as much a feel as to what it would be like on game day," Kelly said.

The tapes were sent to officials of Learfield Communications, which holds the MU broadcast rights, then a recommendation was made to Alden.

"He's a great fit for us," said Jeff Shoults, general manager of Mizzou Sports Properties, the Learfield division that produces MU broadcasts. "He played for the Tigers and brings his experience in the NFL. He'll be able to break down plays and tell fans why a play worked or why it didn't."
Kelly was impressed with all the candidates.

"But I think the things that set Howard apart were his playing résumé, his life experiences, his passion for the position and his passion to reconnect with his institution and his football program," Kelly said. "When you combine all four of those, I believe that's what set him apart.

"And he really wanted the position. He made it very clear through the process he'd do whatever he had to from a preparation process, and from other aspects, and how interested he was in having the role. For Howard it's much more than the broadcast. It's also about reconnecting with the institution and trying to bring some of the former players of his era back into the program."

FULL CIRCLE

The hiring completes a long-developing circle, and Richards is thankful to finally have the opportunity.

"Since my time at KRCG I always wanted to work in the industry," he said. "It's not for lack of trying that I didn't get a job before. So I owe myself this shot."

Riek said Richards is ready for his new gig, which begins Saturday when the Tigers entertain Miami (Ohio).

"I was elated" when Richards was hired, Riek said. "He'll do great."

Richards said he won't be bombastic on the air, instead taking a more analytical approach than one would expect for a guy who was in the CIA for so long.

"I think I'm low key, I'm not going to be screaming and jumping in the booth," he said. "I'll probably be more methodical. That's the way I am on a day-to-day basis. And my experience as a player and elsewhere will help bring a unique appeal. It feels like a natural fit. I've been very, very blessed in my life."