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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Brady Deaton, board discuss Big 12's next move

By Andrew Wagaman

September 7, 2011 | 3:15 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Big 12 board of directors held a teleconference Wednesday afternoon during which it discussed Texas A&M's desire to join the Southeastern Conference, said Missouri Chancellor and board chairman Brady Deaton.

"It was gauging where we are, why the actions were taken by the SEC and as to where we stood," Deaton said. "I don't think we have any results to report on at this point of time as far as sharing information. Discussing perspectives is really what it was."

After the SEC released a statement Wednesday morning announcing it has unanimously voted to accept Texas A&M into the conference, Texas A&M wanted assurance from the remaining nine Big 12 schools that they would not sue the SEC. At least one school — reportedly Baylor — would not give its consent.

If and when Texas A&M does join the SEC, that conference will have 13 teams and will most likely look to add one more team.

Asked if Missouri has been in contact with other conferences, Deaton said, "There's so much discussion around the nation right now that I think there's probably not an institution in the Big 12 that has not been in discussions with other institutions."

"I don't think there's any process going on in terms of expansion, that's just my assessment of it."

In an official statement, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said that while the Big 12 board of directors accommodated Texas A&M and the SEC's request to waive any legal claims for "any damages suffered with a membership change," the waiver did not apply to individual schools.

"The waiver did not and could not bind the individual member institutions' governing boards to waive institutional rights," Beebe said. "If the departure of Texas A&M results in significant changes in Big 12 membership, several institutions may be severely affected after counting on revenue streams from contracts that were approved unanimously by our members, including Texas A&M. In some cases, members reasonably relied on such approval to embark on obligations that will cost millions of dollars."

Asked if the board discussed the legal threat posed by any of the schools, Deaton said he could not comment.

Last Friday, Missouri football head coach Gary Pinkel voiced his frustration with the Big 12. Deaton said Pinkel has been "very responsible with everything that he has said in that respect."

"I was aware of the comments he made and felt good about them," Deaton said. "We have full confidence in Coach Pinkel."



Statements on A&M, SEC expansion

The Associated Press, Updated 08:33 p.m., Wednesday, September 7, 2011

MU mention page 2

Statement released Wednesday from Dr. Bernie Machen, chair of Southeastern Conference Presidents and Chancellors:

'After receiving unanimous written assurance from the Big 12 on September 2 that the Southeastern Conference was free to accept Texas A&M to join as a new member, the presidents and chancellors of the SEC met last night with the intention of accepting the application of Texas A&M to be the newest member of the SEC. We were notified yesterday afternoon that at least one Big 12 institution had withdrawn its previous consent and was considering legal action. The SEC has stated that to consider an institution for membership, there must be no contractual hindrances to its departure. The SEC voted unanimously to accept Texas A&M University as a member upon receiving acceptable reconfirmation that the Big 12 and its members have reaffirmed the letter dated September 2, 2011.'

'We are certainly pleased with the action taken last night by the presidents and chancellors of the Southeastern Conference to unanimously accept Texas A&M as the league's 13th member. However, this acceptance is conditional, and we are disappointed in the threats made by one of the Big 12 member institutions to coerce Texas A&M into staying in Big 12 Conference. These actions go against the commitment that was made by this university and the Big 12 on Sept. 2. We are working diligently to resolve any and all issues as outlined by the SEC.' — Texas A&M President R. Bowen Loftin.

Copy of Sept. 2 letter from Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe to SEC Commissioner Mike Slive, released Wednesday by the SEC:

'This is to confirm our discussion yesterday during which I informed you that the Big 12 Conference Board of Directors unanimously authorized me to convey to you and their colleagues in the Southeastern Conference that the Big 12 and its members will not take any legal action for any possible claims against the SEC or its members relating to the departure of Texas A&M

University from the Big 12 and the admission of Texas A&M into the SEC; provided, however, that such act by the SEC to admit Texas A&M is publicly confirmed by 5:00 p.m. (CDT) on September 8, 2011.

Such admission of Texas A&M will result in the withdrawal of Texas A&M from the Big 12 Conference effective June 30, 2012. We both agreed it is in the best interests of each of our conferences and our member institutions of higher education to waive any and all legal actions by either conference and its members resulting from admission of Texas A&M into the SEC, as long as such admission is confirmed publicly by September 8, 2011.

If any of your presidents and chancellors have concerns about this commitment of the Big 12 Conference, they may contact me or Brady Deaton, Big 12 Board of Director chairman and chancellor of the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Sept. 6 letter sent by Beebe to Slive at 10:39 p.m. (provided to The Associated Press by Loftin):

'Dear Mike:

You have notified me that the SEC is willing to accept the application of Texas A&M to become a member of the SEC, provided that the Big 12 member institutions individually waive any legal actions against the SEC for its decision. I recognize that this issue has been raised due to Baylor University's indication that its governing board has not waived the university's rights. As you know, the attached letter waived the right of the Big 12 Conference Inc. to take legal action against the SEC. Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton, chair of the Big 12 Board of Directors, has told me that he informed Texas A&M President Bowen Loftin that such action by the Big 12 Conference Board of Directors was not binding on the individual institutions' governing boards. If you seek waivers by the individual institutions, you must receive them from those institutions directly. I regret any confusion on this issue.

Best regards, Dan'

Statement from Beebe late Wednesday:

'This is the first time to my knowledge that a conference has been requested to waive any legal claims toward another conference for any damages suffered with a membership change.

The Big 12 Conference was asked by Texas A&M University and the Southeastern Conference to waive any such claim to help facilitate Texas A&M's departure from the conference without any consideration to the Big 12. Although they were not obligated to do so, the Big 12 Board of Directors decided to accommodate that request as it relates to The Big 12 Conference Inc., which is reflected in the Sept. 2 letter sent to SEC commissioner Mike Slive.

However, the waiver did not and could not bind the individual member institutions' governing boards to waive institutional rights. If the departure of Texas A&M results in significant changes in the Big 12 membership, several institutions may be severely affected after counting on revenue streams from contracts that were approved unanimously by our members, including Texas A&M.

In some cases, members reasonably relied on such approval to embark on obligations that will cost millions of dollars.

Deaton seems to indicate MU is talking to other conferences

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 07 September 2011

Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton had nothing to share regarding what went on during Wednesday's Big 12 Board of Directors teleconference.

But when a reporter from the Columbia Missourian spoke briefly to Deaton, he seemed to come as close as any MU official ever has to confirming a rather huge point: That Missouri officials have spoken to other conferences or at least officials from schools in other conferences, about MU's status and possible future in a move away from the Big 12.

"There's so much discussion around the nation right now that I think there's probably not an institution in the Big 12 that has not been in discussions with other institutions," Deaton, who's the chairman of the Big 12 Board of Directors, was quoted by the Missourian as saying.

"I don't think there's any process going on in terms of expansion; that's just my assessment of it."

Deaton — as MU athletic director Mike Alden did on Saturday — supported statements made by MU football coach Gary Pinkel in which he criticized the instability and uncertainty of the Big 12.

"I was aware of the comments he made and felt good about them," Deaton said.

Missouri in the past two weeks has been generally portrayed in as a possible target for any number of other conferences should the Big 12 implode.

Included as possible landing points for Mizzou have been the SEC, the Pac-12, the Big East and the Big Ten.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Big 12's problems reach a new level

BY VAHE GREGORIAN vgregorian@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8199 | Posted:
Thursday, September 8, 2011 12:05 am

MU mention page 2, 3

What might already have seemed like confusion in the conference realignment shuffle morphed into chaos and farce Wednesday, leaving officials at two BCS conferences saying they can only guess what will happen and that there are too many tentacles for anyone to reliably foresee the outcome.

In the latest twist, Baylor stoked a revolution to block Texas A&M's departure from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference by reasserting its right to sue over the issue.

The move was in apparent contradiction of the Big 12's assurance to the SEC in a letter last week stating that "the Big 12 and its members will not take any legal action for any possible claims against the SEC."

But that Sept. 2 letter, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe suggested in a statement Wednesday, was not intended to make the SEC immune from the possible consequences of taking A&M: namely, further destabilizing the Big 12 and taking it to the brink of dissolution with Oklahoma now publicly hinting it might leave.

"The waiver did not and could not bind the individual member institutions' governing boards to waive institutional rights," Beebe said. "If the departure of Texas A&M results in significant changes in the Big 12 membership, several institutions may be severely affected after counting on revenue streams from contracts that were approved unanimously by our members, including Texas A&M. In some cases, members reasonably relied on such approval to embark on obligations that will cost millions of dollars."

Beebe did not comment on another aspect of the Sept. 2 letter: that the conference itself was only giving its consent for the SEC to take A&M without maintaining its own legal action "provided such act by the SEC ... is publicly confirmed by 5 p.m. CDT on Sept. 8, 2011."

It's unclear whether that deadline will be extended or how it will impact the situation if not.

The maneuvering at least momentarily stymied A&M, which canceled a celebration of its SEC-ession from the Big 12, and gridlocked the SEC, which on Tuesday night had voted to accept A&M contingent on "no contractual hindrances to (A&M's) departure."

Those hindrances seemed to be increasing by late afternoon, following a conference call among the Big 12's directors.

Iowa State went public to the Des Moines Register in also reserving its right to go litigious on A&M. Kansas told The New York Times it also had not waived its rights but said it had no intention to sue.

Several other schools were believed mulling doing the same, but there were conflicting reports about who else was aboard the movement.

A Mizzou spokeswoman said she did not know MU's stance and that there would be no comment forthcoming from chancellor Brady Deaton, the chairman of the Big 12 board.

All the posturing on the surface is directed at A&M. But it's impossible to understand how there could be a cooperative future between A&M and the Big 12, in which the Aggies a year ago had pledged to stay for the foreseeable future. It's thus with a certain nerve A&M now is chastising Baylor.

"We are disappointed by the threats ... to coerce Texas A&M into staying in the Big 12 Conference," A&M president R. Bowen Loftin said in a statement, adding, "These actions go against the commitment that was made by the university and the Big 12 on Sept. 2."

In fact, the moves actually seem more directed at keeping the Big 12 alive — even without A&M — and specifically aimed at keeping the University of Oklahoma from defecting, as OU president David Boren hinted it was considering last week.

The Waco (Texas) Tribune-Herald reported that a Baylor source said Mizzou, Kansas, Kansas State and Texas Tech also would not give up their rights to legal action but with a caveat: They would let go if Oklahoma reaffirmed its commitment to remain in the Big 12.

The report — Texas Tech denied it was part of that group — could not be independently confirmed, but it was hardly the wildest thought out there Wednesday.

And this one was on the record from West Virginia athletics director Oliver Luck:

"Maybe we as the Big East should talk to the Big 12 and say, 'Let's merge,' " he told West Virginia Illustrated, a website that covers the Mountaineers. "Call it the All-American Conference or whatever it may be, you know? And we'll be at 18 teams with pretty good schools."

Never mind that his math was fuzzy: Who knows how many schools really consider themselves in the Big 12 now?

Is A&M really gone?

Has OU checked out?

Who isn't actually looking or at least developing backup plans?

MU athletics director Mike Alden declined through a spokesman to be interviewed Wednesday. Deaton did not respond to a text message and declined to be interviewed through the Mizzou news bureau.

But Deaton was quoted by the Columbia Missourian on Wednesday saying: "There's so much discussion around the nation right now that I think there's probably not an institution in the Big 12 that has not been in discussions with other institutions."

For that matter, Deaton told the Missourian that the board teleconference was simply "gauging where we are, why the actions were taken by the SEC and as to where we stood."

"I don't think we have any results to report on at this point of time as far as sharing information," he added. "Discussing perspectives is really what it was."

At least from the outside looking in, the perspective is bedlam with no end in sight. Or an end that some find inevitable, even if it figures to get curiouser and curiouser through the looking glass along the way.

"I really think we're headed to the 16-team leagues," Florida coach Will Muschamp said during the SEC football teleconference. "Eventually I think there will be four of them at some point if you ask me personally. I don't know how it will work. Honestly I haven't put any thought into it at all. But I do think that's where it will go eventually. I think there's the haves and have-nots, essentially."

Big 12 in holding pattern as schools retain legal rights

MU MENTION PAGE 2

By **BLAIR KERKHOFF**

No results were posted in the conference realignment saga on Wednesday, but there was a clear winner.

The lawyers.

Texas A&M's entrance to the Southeastern Conference was held up by Big 12 schools saying they wouldn't waive their rights to take legal action against the Aggies and the SEC.

Baylor, Iowa State and Kansas communicated they would not waive their rights. ESPN reported that eight schools — all but Oklahoma — came to that conclusion during a teleconference of the league's board of directors, and the motivation was two-fold.

- Schools are protecting themselves against the collapse of the Big 12 and possible financial damage caused by joining a lower-paying conference.
- They hope to force the Sooners to remain in the Big 12 and allow the conference to continue its quest to expand and survive with its strongest members.

According to reports, the Big 12 schools would drop their right to legal action if the Sooners agreed to remain part of the conference and stop casting a gleaming eye at the Pac-12.

A source close to Oklahoma could not confirm the ESPN report to The Star.

"I don't know if there are more than three or four people who know exactly what's going on," the source said.

Anyone call for a negotiator?

"We are being held hostage right now," Texas A&M president R. Bowen Loftin said in an interview with the Associated Press. "Essentially, we're being told that you must stay here

against your will and we think that really flies in the face of what makes us Americans ... and makes us free people.”

Oklahoma may feel the same way.

The Sooners can't be happy with the latest developments that appear intended to put pressure on them to keep the Big 12 alive with nine teams.

Wednesday started with a statement from Florida's Bernie Machen, chairman of the Southeastern Conference presidents.

“The SEC stated that to consider an institution for membership,” he said, “there must be no contractual hindrances to its departure.”

The SEC learned Tuesday that would be the case. Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe told his SEC counterpart, Mike Slive, that at least one school, Baylor, had not waived its right to take legal action.

This created confusion. In a letter dated Sept. 2, Beebe said the Big 12 and its members wouldn't sue the SEC or any of its members over Texas A&M if the deal was completed by today.

On Wednesday, Beebe issued a statement to clarify that stance. He said the waiver, agreed upon by the league's board of directors, applied only to the conference itself, which cannot bind individual schools to waive their rights.

“This is the first time to my knowledge that a conference has been requested to waive any legal claims toward another conference for damages suffered with a membership change,” Beebe said.

“... If the departure of Texas A&M results in significant changes in the Big 12 membership, several institutions may be severely affected after counting on revenue streams from contracts that were approved unanimously by our members, including Texas A&M.

“In some cases, members reasonably relied on such approval to embark on obligations that will cost millions of dollars.”

In April, the Big 12 had agreed to a 13-year deal with Fox Sports Net valued at nearly \$1.2 billion. Schools were expected to gain at least \$15 million-\$17 million annually from conference contracts.

But there's no deal if there's no Big 12. As schools contemplate options in other conferences — Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton told the Columbia Missourian, “There's so much discussion around the nation right now that I think there's probably not an institution in the Big 12 that has not been in discussions with other institutions” — some could take a pay cut by not landing in a BCS automatic-qualifier conference.

Simply, the financial rewards for being in the SEC, Pac-12, Big Ten, ACC, Big East and the Big 12 are greater than any other conference.

Some Big 12 schools, such as Baylor, may not land in one of those conferences if the Big 12 folds. KU, while retaining its rights, also indicated it was not currently planning litigation.

Texas A&M had planned a celebration today upon acceptance of its SEC invitation. But the party was postponed and Loftin wasn't happy.

"I felt that was really a violation of trust right there," Loftin said. "We took this (Sept. 2) letter very seriously. We asked for such a statement. They gave it to us freely. It says here unanimous vote was taken and yet when we look at Beebe's letter last night it says, 'No we didn't really mean that,' and I find that to be rather difficult to digest."

Big 12 officials said the league's expansion talks were on hold as the conference determines its membership.

"We are basically sitting in a traffic jam and going nowhere fast," said Texas Tech president Guy Bailey, the former UMKC president. "Recent events have put conference discussions in a holding pattern."

MU alert system to be tested Thursday

By Julia Boudreau

September 7, 2011 | 5:43 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – MU hopes students, faculty and staff will respond to a mass emergency test via text message at 2:50 p.m. Thursday.

The text message, meant to practice notifying the university community in case of emergency, will be sent to everyone who has registered their phone number on either myZou or myHR. In addition to the text message, the same emergency alert will be sent to university email accounts, according to a MU News Bureau press release.

Returning students may remember the emergency alert system when it was used during the February snowstorm. The system can also be used for other emergency situations.

“(The purpose is) to let faculty, staff and students know of danger on campus to which they need to respond – whether it’s a tornado, gunman or gas leak, chemical spills, that kind of thing,” said division of IT spokesman Terry Robb.

Unlike some emergency alerts of the past, Thursday’s notification will ask recipients to confirm the message by texting back, according to the press release.

Robb said MU is interested in text delivery speed and the percentage of successful deliveries.

“We also want to make sure cellphone companies don’t block massive number of texts coming at them from the emergency system,” Robb said. “If you respond to a text, we will see your words to verify that you did receive the message.”

While staff members can initiate the emergency messages, certain events such as tornado warnings are capable of automatically sending alerts, such as when the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning, Robb said.

MU hopes to encourage more students to opt into the text message notifications. Project specialist for administrative services and MU alert, Katie Whitman, is unsure of the exact number of current text message participants but is positive that not everyone participates.

“We encourage people to sign up; we know that everyone hasn't,” Whitman said. “MU Alert has its own website where everyone is directed to go to get directions to sign up either through myZou or myHR.”

In efforts to encourage students to sign up for the text alerts MU plans to send postcards to undergraduate parents soon, Whitman said.

It also plans to provide emergency cards for students to place in their wallets. These cards will have the [MU Alert system website](#), as well as contact information for emergency centers on campus such as the health center, poison control, University Hospital, the crisis line and campus facilities, Whitman said.



Evolution lecture packs MU hall

Professor plans new fossil search.

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Wednesday, September 7, 2011

Evolution is apparently a popular topic on the University of Missouri campus: A lecture on fossil discoveries attracted a standing-room-only audience yesterday.

Carol Ward, professor in the Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences in the School of Medicine, was this year's 21st Century Corps of Discovery lecturer. She's the researcher who released findings earlier this year about a foot bone that proved the early human ancestor known as Lucy walked upright instead of swinging from trees.

The lecture was at Jesse Wrench Auditorium, which seats 222. After those were filled, attendees opted to sit on the floor in front of the stage and along the aisles. A few sat onstage; others stood in the doorways.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said administrators were "somewhat surprised but very gratified" by the crowd. Then again, Ward's recent discovery garnered "national and even international media coverage, so it shouldn't have been a surprise."

Organizers chose the room based on past Corps of Discovery lectures, Banken said. In this case, they learned too late that professors of several disciplines encouraged their students to attend.

The subject of evolution crosses disciplines. Ward is working with orthopedic surgeons and engineers to use 3-D imaging to study spinal mechanics. Her lab has studied the effects of exercise on bone and joint form. And Ward teamed up with Mark Flinn from the Department of Anthropology and David Geary from the Department of Psychological Sciences to co-publish a paper on ecological dominance and social competition that's used in a number of classes.

"The study of the past doesn't live in the past," Ward said. "It has important implications for how we live today."

During her lecture, she outlined fossil records that prove the early species of *Australopithecus afarensis* was more human than chimpanzee. Fossils of teeth show they had the ability to eat nuts and seeds instead of just fruit, giving them the ability to relocate from the jungles. Footprints preserved in fossilized volcanic ash show they walked like us. And recent findings of rib bones show they likely had more of a waist than scientists originally thought.

Ward urged audience members to ditch the notion that chimps gradually learned to stand upright. "We've been evolving for the past 5 to 8 million years," she said. "So have chimps. I don't want us to get caught in the comfortable thinking that we evolved from chimps. We did not. We both evolved from something different."

As people have continued to evolve, she said, our brains have become more complex and oriented toward social relationships. "Being social is the fundamental feature of our daily lives," Ward said. People spend more time thinking about social interactions "than where our next meal will come from."

In January, Ward will travel to western Kenya to search for additional fossils. "I don't know where this trip of discovery will take us or what we will find," she said, adding that she hopes to return in a couple of years to shed new light on the history of man.

Organizers will be prepared: Banken said future discovery lectures will likely be held in larger auditoriums. In the meantime, those unable to attend yesterday's lecture can find it online in a couple of days at www.missouri.edu.

St. Louis Business Journal

Monsanto gives \$100,000 to University of Missouri

St. Louis Business Journal

Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2011, 1:32pm CDT

The University of Missouri in Columbia said Wednesday it has received a \$100,000 grant from the Monsanto Co. to support student research in the plant sciences.

The \$100,000 gift, to be distributed over the next three years, will be used to support a Monsanto Undergraduate Fellowship Program, which will pay high-achieving undergraduate students up to \$5,800 per year to do research in plant science laboratories at the university.

Students participating in the Monsanto fellowship program will conduct an extended internship with a plant science research group, where they will participate in research projects, use advanced molecular and genetic methods, participate in fieldwork, and attend lab meetings and seminars, the university said. Students also will be encouraged to interact with Monsanto scientific staff and to apply for summer internships at the company.