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Mizzou moves up a notch in magazine's college rankings

By MARA ROSE WILLIAMS

U.S. News and World Report is out with its 2012 America's Best Colleges rankings, **and University of Missouri is in the top 100.**

Among a category the magazine calls national universities — public and private schools with master and doctorate degree programs and that are heavy on research — MU ranked 90th out of 1,800 schools surveyed. It tied with St. Louis University and two out-state schools. The magazine doesn't say where schools ranked in previous years, but officials at MU said they moved up a notch this year, although they don't track rankings.

"We know students use these rankings as a starting point when they are trying to determine where to go to school, but we also know that students say they are most influenced by the strength of the academic program they are going to pursue once they get here," said Christian Basi, an MU spokesman.

"That said, we are always striving to improve so it's nice when we do see some improvement on the ranking."

University of Kansas also made the list at 101, Kansas State was at 143.

Data evaluated by the magazine is reported by leaders of the institutions and looks at, along with other areas; freshman retention rates, graduation rates and the number of faculty who are full time.

Harvard, Princeton and Yale, as they do every year, hold the top spots on the national universities list with, Harvard and Princeton this year in a tie for first.

The magazine, which publishes an annual "best of" edition, ranks schools within categories including the best regional schools, public, private and liberal arts schools. It also evaluates each of the college's professional schools.

Among liberal arts schools, William Jewell College ranked 127th and tied with Morehouse College and five others.

BUSINESS JOURNAL

University of Missouri ranks 90th among nation's universities

Kansas City Business Journal

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The University of Kansas in Lawrence ranks No. 101 in a ranking of the top national universities.

The University of Missouri ranks 90th on the latest U.S. News Media Group ranking of the top national universities.

The 2012 edition of Best Colleges ranks more than 1,600 schools nationwide in various categories, with Harvard University and Princeton University tied for the top spot among national universities.

MU's Columbia campus has in-state tuition of \$8,989, out-of-state tuition of \$21,784 and enrollment of 32,415, according to the report. The Tigers accepted 84 percent of fall 2010 applicants, had an average freshman retention rate of 85 percent and had a six-year graduation rate of 69 percent.

The University of Kansas in Lawrence wasn't far behind at No. 101. Tuition figures weren't available, but the school enrolled 28,697 students, accepted 93 percent of fall 2010 applicants, had an average freshman retention rate of 79 percent and had a six-year graduation rate of 61 percent.

Kansas State University in Manhattan ranks 143rd. Its tuition figures weren't available either. Enrollment tallied up to 23,588, and K-State accepted 99 percent of fall 2010 applicants, had an average freshman retention rate of 79 percent and had a six-year graduation rate of 60 percent.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City came in 181st. Its in-state tuition is \$8,898, out-of-state tuition is \$21,066 and enrollment is 15,277. UMKC accepted 69 percent of fall 2010 applicants, had an average freshman retention rate of 74 percent and had a six-year graduation rate of 46 percent.

The 350-page guidebook is available online or on newsstands Sept. 20. Other rankings look at national liberal arts colleges, regional universities and regional colleges.

MU climbs 4 spots in U.S. News rankings

University lands at No. 90 on list.

By Janese Silvey

The University of Missouri landed in the 90th spot on this year's U.S. News & World Report "Best Colleges" list, up four notches from last year.

The rankings, though, mean little to MU administrators, who don't put much stock in the list because it mostly relies on opinions and because criteria change every year.

"We're gratified to see that; however, we don't take these rankings too seriously," spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. "What we do take seriously is continuing to offer our students a top-notch education in every area — academic and the opportunity to work in laboratories alongside world-renowned faculty — for a reasonable price."

U.S. News & World Report researchers ask university presidents, provosts and deans of admissions to judge peer institutions based on academic reputation. Those scores combine to make up 22.5 percent of a university's overall rank. Peer institutions gave MU 3.3 points out of a possible 5.

In other criteria, MU scored well on freshmen retention rates, six-year graduation rates and the percentage of faculty members who are full time. MU had one low score for having too many classes with 50 or more students.

Princeton and Harvard tied as the No. 1 national university.

There's been plenty of talk in higher education circles about the legitimacy of U.S. News & World Report rankings.

This year, the magazine began its own report on the rankings by saying the "host of intangibles that make up the college experience can't simply be measured by a series of data points." The magazine goes on to say the list should provide a starting point for families on the hunt for a college education.

Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate education, doesn't pay much attention to the annual rankings, saying he is more interested in MU's focus on educating students, research and economic development efforts, and providing Extension services to Missourians.

“At the end of the day,” he said, “those are the people whose rankings mean the most.”

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Big 12 Conference Not OK

Willie Springer September 13, 2011 2:00 PM

ST. LOUIS (KMOX) — According to multiple reports, Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State University are looking to leave the Big 12 Conference and join the Pac-12 Conference, which would turn into the Pac-14 Conference. If true, the two would become the second and third schools this year to declare their intention to relocate.

An article in the Austin American-Statesman written by Kirk Bohls & Alan Trubow reported that a meeting that took place between University of Texas and Oklahoma officials did not go well since the objective was to salvage the Big 12. Without Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, and probably Texas A&M going to the SEC, the Big 12 will be down to 7 teams. If the three schools leave, then Texas would surely jump ship as well.

There is no guarantee that either Oklahoma or Oklahoma State will have their applications accepted. Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said last week they are happy with their conference as it is.

Dennis Dodd of CBSSports.com looked at what Texas may do if both Oklahoma schools head west. Now with the Longhorn Network, which started all of this trouble, Texas could go independent if necessary. However, reports are surfacing that Texas is talking with the ACC. So if Texas were to leave as well, the Big 12 would be down to 6 teams.

With no solution in sight, the Big 12's future is very bleak. Yet, the University of Missouri has tried to remain optimistic that the Big 12 does indeed have a future. Mizzou has been mentioned in reports about possibly joining either the SEC or Big East Conference to create super conferences of their own. If teams keep leaving the Big 12, hopefully the University of Missouri will make a move of their own or be picked up by a conference that has a legitimate future.

The SEC has said that they are planning for a 13-team schedule for next season with anticipation of adding Texas A&M, but they have not admitted to creating plans for a 14-team conference.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Education digest

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA > Damaged library reopens • **The University of Missouri-Columbia's Ellis Library reopened Tuesday after being closed several days because of a Saturday fire that resulted in the arrest of a Columbia man.** Police said Christopher C. Kelley was being held on suspicion of burglary and arson. The fire started early Saturday morning, damaging several small areas, including the circulation and inter-library loan offices. Also housed in the building is the State Historical Society of Missouri, which sustained water damage. It is slated to reopen today.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Campus Gallery and Museum Crawl will start Thursday

By Di Zhu

September 13, 2011 | 8:21 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – The MU Campus Gallery and Museum Crawl, where students can tour all the MU museums for free and be entered to win a \$100 gift certificate to the University Bookstore, will be on Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m.

Nine venues, including the George Caleb Bingham Gallery and the State Historical Society of Missouri, will be open for audiences from different schools to view.

Ferrie Craighead of the MU Art Department said the goal of the crawl was to let students who may not ordinarily go to the museums participate in and learn about MU's art community.

Participants will receive door prizes at each location during the evening. Those who get their Crawl postcard map stamped at all nine locations will be eligible to enter a grand prize drawing.

Due to the recent fire in Ellis Library, the State Historical Society of Missouri was closed Monday, but it still planned to participate in the crawl Thursday, since none of the collection in the gallery was damaged during the fire, said Joan Stack, the curator of art collections.

The MU Center for Arts and Humanities is partially sponsoring the MU Campus Gallery and Museum Crawl this year.

Contract between Walgreens and Express Scripts in jeopardy

By Kellie Kotraba

September 13, 2011 | 7:16 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Walgreens could soon no longer be an option for people whose prescriptions are managed through Express Scripts — and that includes UM System employees.

Walgreens and Express Scripts have been in contract negotiations that remain contentious. On June 21, Walgreens announced the separation. As of Dec. 31, Walgreens won't be part of the Express Scripts network, according to a letter it sent out to its Express Scripts customers. The letter urges customers to talk to their human resources departments and let them know they want Walgreens to remain an option.

Express Scripts is a pharmacy benefit manager — a company that negotiates with drug manufacturers, mail-order pharmacies and retail pharmacies to keep medications affordable.

The UM System will continue using Express Scripts despite the potential loss of Walgreens, Jennifer Hollingshead, assistant director of publications and marketing for the UM System, said in a statement. But Hollingshead said she was hopeful Walgreens and Express Scripts might still reach an agreement.

Express Scripts is still open to negotiations, but Thom Gross, Express Scripts spokesman, said, “Walgreens walked out of negotiations in June.”

Gross said the central issue is price competitiveness. Express Scripts agrees to reimburse pharmacies in its network for filling prescriptions at discounted rates. Savings are passed along to Express Scripts' clients — health plan sponsors. Walgreens is the highest-priced pharmacy in the Express Scripts network and

wants to charge more than other pharmacies, yet continue doing the same service, Gross said. That means Walgreens would be paid more to perform the same service other pharmacies do for less, he said.

If Express Scripts accepted Walgreens' contract terms, the chain would be priced 20 percent higher than the rest of the pharmacies in the network by the end of the three-year contract. Express Scripts can't allow that, Gross said.

"We think that Walgreens should be competitive with other pharmacies in the network," he said. With Walgreens in the mix, that network includes more than 60,000 pharmacies nationwide. Without Walgreens, there are more than 56,000 pharmacies in the network.

Patients who want to continue using Walgreens after the contract ends will have to pay full price for their prescriptions. He said the best alternative is to change pharmacies.

That's a change UM employees will most likely have to make. Hollingshead said in her statement that ". . . our employees, like several hundred thousand other Missourians who use Walgreens to fill their prescriptions through Express Scripts, as well as millions more nationwide, will need to transfer their existing prescriptions to another pharmacy."

A directory search for Express Scripts-related pharmacies in the Columbia area yielded plenty of results — there were at least 20. None of them, however, are 24-hour pharmacies, like the Columbia Walgreens store at 222 E. Broadway. In fact, there aren't any 24-hour pharmacies within a 25-mile radius of Columbia that Express Scripts supports.

MU Children's Hospital clinic shows progress

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Melissa Lawson has witnessed the evolution of the University of Missouri Health Care system since 1999, and now she's a primary part of the system's latest addition.

Lawson is medical director of the new pediatric specialty clinic at MU Children's Hospital that opened yesterday for tours and an open house ribbon-cutting event. Doctors at the new clinic — including Lawson, an adolescent medicine specialist — started seeing patients there today.

The new clinic continues MU Health Care's consolidation of pediatric services at Women's and Children's Hospital, formerly Columbia Regional Hospital, at 404 Keene St.

The clinic more than doubles the size of the previous location in the University Physicians Medical Building and includes 39 exam rooms and two rooms dedicated solely to telehealth, a process where a doctor can "visit" a patient via video.

The former spot required doctors to find an empty exam room for telehealth visits. Lawson said she recently used the technology to see a patient on the Missouri-Arkansas border.

The relocation of the clinics should provide more seamless treatment for patients, she said. If patients at the new location need radiology or other diagnostic services, "they can now walk down the hall to Children's Hospital, rather than driving across town," Lawson said.

On the other hand, if a physician working in the clinic is needed for an emergency at the hospital, the doctor "can be at the patient's bedside in minutes," she said.

The clinic will have blood-draw services on site. The previous lab shared space and duties with walk-in and urgent care services. The new clinic also has a pulmonary function testing lab for respiratory therapy patients, with room for parents.

"In the old building, we were doing this in a converted closet," said respiratory therapist Todd Bocklage. In that building, he said, parents had to stand in the door to offer support for children undergoing lung function tests.

Timothy Fete, medical director of Children's Hospital, said the new clinic gives the hospital "plenty of room to grow" and was built to be "modern and kid-friendly."

“We anticipate it’s going to be a better experience for patients and families,” he said.

Thirty-five pediatricians and specialists from nearly 20 areas, including pulmonary medicine, nephrology, neurology, genetics and endocrinology, will provide care in the clinic.

The hospital opened last September as the first hospital in Missouri dedicated to the care of women and children. Children’s Hospital features 43 private inpatient rooms, a 13-bed pediatric intensive care unit, a Level 3 neonatal intensive care unit and expanded playroom.

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