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# AP Associated Press

*A version of this story appeared in outlets across the country.*

## **Deaton: Big 12 future rests with Sooners**

By The Associated Press

COLUMBIA (AP) — The head of the Big 12 board of directors says the future of the embattled league largely rests with Oklahoma.

**Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton, president of the Big 12 board, told the Associated Press he and other university leaders “are working every day to hold the Big 12 together” but the next move is largely dependent on the Sooners.**

Oklahoma president David Boren said earlier this month the school was in contact with multiple conferences and expected to decide soon whether to remain in the Big 12. Oklahoma regents are scheduled to meet Monday and conference affiliation — including the legal ramifications of a switch — is on the agenda.

One possible destination: the Pac-12, which lured Colorado away over the summer and unsuccessfully courted other Big 12 schools a year ago. Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said his conference isn't actively pursuing expansion, but also won't sit by if the conference landscape is altered again.

Neither will Missouri, which had hoped last year to join the Big Ten before that league added Nebraska.

While Deaton professed conference unity, he also noted “every member of the board's primary commitment is to their own institution.”

Without prompting, he suggested Missouri would have no trouble finding a BCS conference home should the Big 12 disintegrate. He declined to discuss possible destinations, nor reveal schools under consideration to join the Big 12 should the remaining members choose to fight for survival.

Texas A&M has announced it intends to leave by next July and the Southeastern Conference has voted to accept the Aggies if there are no legal entanglements in the way.

Several Big 12 schools have not waived that right, a potential hurdle in Texas A&M's departure. Deaton said that decision would be up to Missouri's governing board, but the curators "have certainly not" made that decision, nor talked about it.

"I'm very proud of the University of Missouri and its brand, the high esteem by which we're held in the nation," he said. "Our (Association of American Universities) status is very important, our athletic competitiveness is very important. That combination gives us a sense of comfort."

"There's real virtue in patience these days," he added. "It's changing all the time ... Our position is we're waiting to see what the rest of the conference does, particularly Oklahoma."

On Thursday, Deaton and Missouri athletic director Mike Alden met with a 20-member campus athletics oversight committee whose members include faculty, staff, students and alumni. The meeting was closed to reporters.

"Alden just said it's up in the air," according to a participant in the meeting, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the session was supposed to be private. "That we're waiting on Oklahoma. There weren't even any questions. I was kind of surprised."

Even with Texas A&M's looming departure, it was Boren's comments that have shaken the Big 12.

Oklahoma was offered chances to join both the Pac-10 and the SEC last year but decided to stay in the Big 12 despite the losses of Nebraska and Colorado. Boren said he tried to prevent Texas A&M from leaving and "there's nothing that says the conference will collapse at nine" -- but he also said he would feel better about the league if it had 12 members.

"I do not know with certainty or perhaps even can't hazard a totally intelligent guess as to what our final decision will be," Boren said then. "But we are carefully looking over all of the options. There is no school in the Big 12 more active than we are right now."



## Missouri chancellor 'hopeful' Big 12 can be saved

Can the Big 12 pull off the year's biggest comeback?

Even as Oklahoma weighs an exit that could push the distressed conference toward extinction, the chairman of its board of directors says he has gained confidence in the past week that it can survive.

**Brady Deaton is heartened, he said, that OU and others are looking before they leap. "I think this period of just a bit more calmness and reasoning . . . makes us all feel as if the various issues can be dealt with in a rational way and in a way that's in the best interests of each of our institutions and the Big 12 - and of other leagues around the country," the Missouri chancellor told USA TODAY on Wednesday.**

"I'm not Pollyannaish about it. I'm not naïve. But I'm looking at the factors that are important to the future of the athletics and the academics of institutions in the Big 12. And as we all assess them, my hopes are that more and more will conclude, as I have, that a continuation of a strong Big 12 is in all of our best interests right now.

"I am hopeful, let me say."

He didn't speculate beyond that on the league's chances of survival. It's teetering, with Texas A&M pointed toward the Southeastern Conference and multiple Big 12 officials telling USA TODAY this week that Oklahoma is conditionally pursuing a move to the Pacific 12.

Those officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the Sooners are exploring the financial parameters of Pac-12 membership and where they'd fit in its divisional alignment, as well as how open the league is to accepting them - almost certainly with Oklahoma State in tow. Texas, in turn, is weighing its own options, though the Longhorns have made it clear they prefer Big 12 preservation.

Nebraska and Colorado opted out of the conference a year ago. The Big 12 seemingly weathered that, but was destabilized anew by Texas A&M's pending departure.

"It's not what I think any of us want as a characteristic of our conference," said Deaton, a former agriculture economics and sociology professor who became Missouri's chancellor in 2004.

"We've worked hard for a stable, strong, aggressive, fast-moving Big 12, and spent the past year

looking at new ways in which we can be a more exciting league, one that's stronger in all dimensions, going beyond athletic competition and beginning to think about the ways in which we could strengthen ourselves in academic cooperation.

"To have that dialogue interrupted or altered by the range of considerations going on today certainly is a concern to all of us."

Chances of preserving the Big 12, slim or otherwise, hinge on somehow re-stabilizing the conference and convincing member schools that it's for good.

"That's the challenge that the Big 12 board has in front of it," Deaton said. "I think we have a pretty good understanding of the various tools and structures that would lead to that, but we don't have them all resolved."

He told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that he expected a decision from Oklahoma on its future within the next two weeks.

"I just have had an understanding that within 10 days to two weeks we were likely to have some indication of where things stood, but with no firm deadlines there," Deaton told the newspaper. "We're being patient and working together, and certainly right now we're in a little bit of a position where we need for Oklahoma to give us a sense of what they're thinking about and take it from there."

## Deaton admits all eyes are on OU regents meeting

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 15 September 2011

**Whether the Big 12 Conference survives primarily as a legal entity or a viable athletic league is the prime question being acknowledged by Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton.**

"Surviving legally is one thing," Deaton told The Star in a Thursday evening telephone interview. "Surviving as a strong, competitive conference is the key to what you're asking."

The pivot point could be what is decided by the Oklahoma University Board of Regents on Monday. If OU remains, the Big 12 will "aggressively," Deaton said move toward adding a school to replace Texas A&M. If OU decides to leave the Big 12, and that triggers other schools to leave, then the remaining schools may have no choice but to consider collecting punitive exit fees from the departing schools.

"Right now certainly Oklahoma is deliberating and I feel we'll know where they stand shortly," Deaton said. "My sense is that Oklahoma is the key right now."

"We're hoping they stay with the Big 12 and if so we're going to be in a real solid position with the nine schools that are there, assuming Texas A&M remains on the path they are on."

Deaton said he told a meeting of Missouri's intercollegiate athletic committee, an advisory body, on Thursday largely what he said to the Associated Press first earlier in the day.

"I'm very proud of the University of Missouri and its brand," Deaton said, "the high esteem by which we're held in the nation. Our (Association of American Universities) status is very important. Our athletic competitiveness is very important."

"That combination gives us a sense of comfort."

And, more as the chancellor at Missouri but also the head of the Big 12 Board of Directors, Deaton said:

"There's real virtue in patience these days."

The OU Board of Regents has published an agenda for its Monday meeting that includes the topic of conference reorganization.

Deaton said that if the Big 12 retains its current nine committed members that the first order of business would be to aggressively pursue one elite-level addition to bring the Big 12 membership back to ten.

Deaton said he could not respond to speculation that the Big 12 has already approached Arkansas of the SEC and BYU, an independent.

"We feel that we could be an exciting conference at ten," Deaton said. "We want the tenth nailed down. Then we will assess how we would look with perhaps a couple more.

"That's not been decided yet."

## Oklahoma may play its hand on Monday

By BLAIR KERKHOFF

Another day of clue-unearthing and guesswork in the Big 12. Texas to the ACC, why not? The Longhorns have been associated with every other conference.

Word filtered down Thursday that the league's presidents would convene a conference call. Then they wouldn't. The same thing had happened Sunday. That day, the call was postponed when Oklahoma's David Boren and Texas' Bill Powers held their own meeting — with other officials — in Norman, Okla., to exchange ideas. That torpedoed the leaguewide call.

Circle Monday on the calendar. That's when the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents meets, and Agenda Item 28, Conference Alignment, may be of interest.

*Action proposed: The Board of Regents will discuss potential legal ramifications of athletic conference realignment options and/or consider new athletic conference membership and take any appropriate action.*

Could that "appropriate action" be an announcement that this Pac-12 drama was a big misunderstanding by the media and that Oklahoma was merely exploring its options?

Is it possible that Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott might signal to Oklahoma that his presidents are satisfied with the current membership and the new media-rights fees will be divided by 12 and not 14 or 16?

How bizarre. Two days after Oklahoma plays one of the biggest games of the college football season at Florida State, the bigger event involving the Sooners might take place in a board room.

Wonder who's favored?

But the strangest puzzle piece was the one about the Big 12 continuing to exist beyond the academic year.

**Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton, chairman of the Big 12 board of directors, described his feelings about the conference's prospects as "hopeful" and "optimistic" to reporters over the last two days. He didn't specify why.**

Good vibe? Wishful thinking? Whatever it is, the on-the-record comments were the first of a positive nature — by anybody — in weeks.

By positive, I mean those who want the Big 12 to endure and remain a conference home for schools in the middle of the nation. Those who believe it is utter folly to have schools around here scattered from the Atlantic (Coast Conference) to Pacific (12).

For two weeks the Big 12 has been stuck in the mud, waiting on Oklahoma and unable to proceed on expansion. The expansion committee had identified targets and assigned people to speak to specific schools. That barely got going when Boren's comments two weeks ago about an uncertain Big 12 brought it to a halt.

The strangest thing about this round of realignment panic, which started with Texas A&M sticking its tongue out at Texas, is there has been no demand for it.

Last year, the Big Ten and Pac-10 desired conference football championship games. TCU, BYU and Boise State wanted better situations for themselves.

All of that happened. Nobody thought the landscape wouldn't change again, but as countless coaches, commissioners and administrators have said, nobody thought it would happen so soon.

Now, super conferences are inevitable because the Pac-12's Scott, who had no involvement in college sports administration until becoming the Pac-10 commissioner in 2009, says it is so.

Perhaps Scott is a visionary, and creating a monster media-rights deal for a conference that exists in the worst time zone was genius. If these latest moves trigger a land rush, we may look back on this time as the one that changed college sports for the better, and it took an outsider to make it happen.

But it remains difficult to see this playing out favorably for the schools in the nation's heartland. The Big 12, as Deaton said, could stick together in some form, and that's an obvious advantage to area schools.

But how long until the next realignment scare?

No good answers. Just rumors and guesswork, until Monday, when Oklahoma may have an outcome that's bigger than anything that happens on the field Saturday.

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## Bernie Bytes: Keep talking, Frank Haith

BY BERNIE MIKLASZ, Post-Dispatch Sports Columnist | Posted: Thursday, September 15, 2011 12:17 pm

Reading Time 5 Minutes:

**\* I like it that Mizzou basketball coach Frank Haith is punching back, at least as much as he can. If Haith believes he did nothing wrong at Miami, then he should be grabbing a bullhorn to loudly and repeatedly declare his innocence.** Rather than sit silently as his future swirls in uncertainty and doubt, Haith should fight hard to clear his name. And his bosses at MU ought to encourage him to do so. Why? Well, two obvious reasons: (1) by saying nothing and declining to defend himself, Haith could be giving the wrong impression. Critics, skeptics, doubters will interpret the silence as some sort of tacit acknowledgement of wrongdoing. (2) if Haith truly did nothing wrong, then he should aggressively defend his honor, and take a proactive approach with media, fans, alums, boosters, administrators, recruits, high school coaches, etc. *Especially the recruits*, since Haith believes that opposing college coaches are using the Miami stuff as a weapon against Haith during these nasty recruiting battles.

**\* Haith and Mizzou shouldn't be sitting and waiting (and waiting, and waiting)** for the NCAA to make a ruling on the accusation, made by disgraced Miami booster **Nevin Shapiro**, that Haith was aware of an alleged \$10,000 offer/payment to Miami basketball recruit **DeQuan Jones**. Who knows how long this will go on? According to the Miami Herald, the imprisoned Shapiro is cooperating with NCAA investigators, and there's a lot of junk to sort through. We have no idea what Shapiro is dishing to the NCAA on Haith. But the alleged \$10,000 payoff has been debunked by the recruit's mother, who offered a seemingly credible smack-down of the charge in an interview with the Miami Herald. And really, from what we know, the only thing that can bring Haith down is proof that he knew of this alleged payment.

**\* I haven't changed my original position that Haith is compromised at Missouri.** That's because (as I wrote at the time) when Haith takes the Mizzou job and immediately proclaims his high standards for character and ethics, and when MU director of athletics **Mike Alden** cites Haith's integrity as a primary reason for hiring him, then Mizzou and Haith have an obligation to be unassailable in this area. When you hire a guy and promote him as a combination saint-humanitarian-coach, then he must strive to live up to it. And payment or no payment, Haith had something of a relationship with Shapiro. And that's bad news. And, just as most of us predicted, Haith will face a tough time recruiting under these circumstances.

**\* But: if Haith believes that he has done nothing improper,** then he should go all out to defend his honor. It would send the right message. It would project strength. It would counteract attempts to smear him. And I stick with my belief that the best way for Haith to rehab his image

is to win games. If he can ride this out for a while, coach the Tigers in 2011-2012, and put together a terrific season, few will care about Shapiro, accusations at Miami, or even the NCAA. If you win, you're pretty much safe. That's all that really matters in the amusingly shallow culture of College Sports Inc. There are exceptions to this of course; ask Jim Tressel. But most coaches can survive at least one scandal as long as they are piling up the victories.

Moving On ...

\* **Obviously the Rams have their reasons**, but I'm puzzled as to why the Rams would add cornerback **Tim Atchison** to the active roster when they didn't even keep him on the practice squad. (He was on the practice squad for a brief time then released when the Rams signed another CB to the squad.) Are we really supposed to believe that there was nothing better out there?

\* **Belatedly, let me join the crowd that was impressed with MU sophomore quarterback James Franklin** for his play in the loss at Arizona State. Way too many people freaked out and overreacted after Franklin's so-so first start against Miami (Ohio.) But in his second start of his career, Franklin was exceptional in the heat and pressure of Tempe. The kid is smart, he's tough, and he's a gifted athlete. This will take a little time; part of the process includes offensive coordinator Dave Yost and Franklin customizing the playbook to learn what plays work best for the QB. Along those lines, I wish Yost had given Franklin more middle-field throws against ASU.

**I'll be polite and presume that Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton is being diplomatic for political reasons when he expresses such naive views on the future of the Big 12 Conference. Deaton is in a tight spot; as chairman of the board for the B12, he must say the right thing and try to keep the peace. As a Missouri honk, I just hope that Deaton is just offering some pre-packaged lines that reinforce the politically correct talking points. I'll go and assume that Deaton and Alden have done their advance work and are prepared to move quickly and aggressively to position Missouri in the best possible conference when the B12 dissolves. I can't believe that Alden and Deaton would be caught flat-footed.**

\* **Illinois and coach Ron Zook** really need a win over Arizona State on Saturday night in Champaign.

\* **The loss of Adam Wainwright for the entire season was obviously** an important factor in the Cardinals' fading quest to win the NL Central. No one could provide the consistent dominance, brilliance and innings supplied by Wainwright. That said, we should give some deserved credit to **Kyle McClellan** and **Edwin Jackson** for their work as the two starters that were plugged into the gap left by Waino's elbow surgery. In 27 combined starts for the Cardinals, McClellan and Jackson were/are 11-8 with a 3.87 ERA. That's more than solid, more than acceptable.

**Story continues...**

# Missourinet

## How I see the future of college football taking shape

by Bill Pollock on September 15, 2011

**I saw an article on ESPN.com by Andy Katz who offers some interesting insight into the future of the Big 12, but also where the University of Missouri could be headed and it got me thinking about the future of college football in the next 10 years.**

Katz raises a good point about how Missouri's recruiting, especially in the hot bed of Texas, would be compromised severely if the Big 12 dissolved. Missouri's best selling point to Texas recruits who don't go to Texas or A & M is the fact that the Tigers face so many Texas teams. Now, if the Tigers were in the powerhouse SEC, that's still a good selling point to play in that competitive conference.

According to sources for Katz, Missouri has held off on a major campaign to raise money, because donors want to see where Mizzou shakes out in all of this. Many are hopeful the SEC is interested in the Tigers, but if not there, then the ACC, then Big East. However, if none of those conferences go after the Black and Gold, then the school is looking at the Mountain West.

I find it amazing that writers, experts, bloggers, etc. all say that the institutions and athletic programs are not interested in big super conferences, but yet all the rumors we hear are the Pac 12 going to 16 or the SEC going to at least 14. To be honest, nobody is really sure how this will all end up, but if super conferences are formed, here is what eventually would happen.

Five super conferences would be built to 16 teams. The Pac 16, The Big 16, the SEC 16, the ACC 16 and the Big East 16. That would take up 80 of the D-I football programs, but as the years play out, certain schools would shake down to the bottom of the standings year after year all across the country...schools for example you might have schools like Kansas State, Colorado, Washington State, Northwestern, Mississippi State, Georgia Tech, Texas Tech, etc...realize being a part of 16 team super conferences is a losing proposition and those schools would break off into their own groups. What would happen is that eventually there would be 32-48 programs that would be labeled as true Division I programs and that would lead to a playoff system at the highest level of college football.

The true D-I programs will consist of four power conferences with twelve teams and would hold no particular geographic boundaries. Why would that happen? Because television deals would

dictate that. No longer would fans want to see Texas vs. Arizona State or Alabama vs. Vanderbilt on conference schedules. National audiences would want to see Texas vs. USC, Oklahoma vs. Alabama, Florida vs. Penn State, Ohio State vs. LSU...over and over, week after week. ESPN, Fox Sports, CBS and NBC would each have the right to one of these four conferences.

At the end of the season, the top four of each "Mega Conference" would advance to a playoff, with those conference champions facing off in a four team playoff to determine the national champion with those four major networks rotating between semifinal and championship games.

The college football industry is driven by money. Alums would still continue to cheer for their teams, but imagine the national draw of seeing this country's top institutions battling it out each week. You argue there are more than 48 teams in the country that could draw good national ratings? I would argue that point. For as long as I've been paying attention to college football, the same programs remain top of mind. Ohio State, Penn State, Alabama, LSU, Oklahoma, Texas, USC...I could go on, but you get my point. Eventually these programs will outgrow (if they haven't already) the numerous other current D-I programs. There are just perennial powerhouse football programs. They will continue to strive. Let's do this the right way and see the elite programs battle each other.

Before this would ever happen those, college conferences would have to grow to 14, 16, maybe even 20 programs, but eventually the bubble will burst. When it did, would your favorite college program be near the top?

You bring up the argument of what would happen to men's basketball. Nothing. Traditional conferences could still align with other schools within their region as well as the other non-revenue sports that school's offer. Football will become it's own machine. They make the most money for schools, it needs to be treated differently.

## **After career at NASA, astronaut back at MU**

### **Godwin teaches astronomy class.**

Linda Godwin remembers the teachers in Jackson, Mo., who encouraged her love of math and science — support she says ultimately helped her become a NASA astronaut and one of the few women who have walked in space.

“Never underestimate the importance that teachers have on stuff like that,” she said.

Now, Godwin hopes to have a similar influence on University of Missouri students.

After retiring from a 30-year career at NASA, she has landed a full professorship in the physics department and this semester is teaching an introduction to astronomy class. Godwin said she’s trying to show the undergraduates that science will play key roles in their lives regardless of their jobs, likely influencing who they later vote for or what issues they choose to support.

“I want the class to be more than a general education credit,” said Godwin, who earned graduate degrees at MU. “I want them to take away a greater appreciation of science and the world around us and what it means.”

In the future, it could mean more space exploration. Even though NASA has ended its 30-year-old space shuttle program, yesterday administrators there announced plans for a new rocket system aimed to carry astronauts deeper into space in coming years.

Godwin said she was sad to see the space shuttle program end, but she’s excited about what the future of space travel might bring, not only in government-funded operations but also from private investors. “I grew up reading science fiction and dreaming about the time people would be doing this,” she said.

Godwin has traveled to space four times, two of which included spacewalks.

Her first flight was in 1991. She described it as powerful but not as rough as a roller coaster. In 1996, she walked at the space station Mir, and in 2001 — her last flight — she helped bring cargo to the International Space Station.

There were always tasks to perform during the trips, but Godwin did take advantage of any downtime. “Looking out the window was one of my favorite things to do,” she said.

She doesn't dramatize the impact of the view from space. Perhaps as influential on her perspective, she said, was having the opportunity to work with international groups. The space program has required not only scientists to pull together globally but also politicians, she said.

Sophomore Jordan Fort is taking Godwin's class in hopes of earning a bachelor's degree and becoming a pilot for a commercial airline. He already has his pilot's license and is familiar with a lot of the concepts she talks about in class. Fort doesn't have ambitions to travel beyond the friendly skies but said it's "pretty cool knowing she has some 900 hours in space. It's a reason to come to class."

Godwin is joined at MU by her husband, Steven Nagel, who also was a NASA astronaut. He will start teaching a course in the College of Engineering next spring.

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



## Student loan default rate climbs in Missouri

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS | Posted: Friday, September 16, 2011 6:55 am

### No MU mention

**JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.** • More Missourians are defaulting on their student loans.

The Department of Higher Education says Missouri's default rate rose from 5.8 percent in 2008 to 7.6 percent in 2009. However, officials say the default rate in Missouri was less than the national average of 8.8 percent.

The department says more than 84,000 people in Missouri were paying back student loans, with about 6,500 in default. Those figures count borrowers whose first loan payments were due between October 2008 and September 2009 and who stopped making payments by the end of last September.



## **Brothers sentenced to probation in spamming case**

*Posted: Sep 16, 2011 6:55 AM CDT Updated: Sep 16, 2011 6:55 AM CDT*

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - Two Missouri brothers were sentenced to probation for their roles in a nationwide spamming scheme that involved more than 2,000 college students.

Twenty-7-year-old Osmaan Ahmad Shah and his 30-year-old brother, Amir Ahmad Shah, both of Ballwin, and their business, i2o Inc., were sentenced Thursday to three years of probation.

The Columbia Tribune reported (<http://bit.ly/oQpVLx>) that the brothers will have to spend three months on home detention and three months in a halfway house. The Shahs and the company also must forfeit \$439,820 in cash and property.

**In July, the Shahs admitted that they and others conspired to illegally extract student e-mail addresses at hundreds of colleges and universities including the University of Missouri. They then sent targeted spam promoting various products and services to the students.**

## **Former MU student, brother sentenced in spamming case**

A former University of Missouri student and his brother were sentenced to probation Thursday for their role in a nationwide email spamming scheme that victimized more than 2,000 college students.

Osmaan Ahmad Shah, 27, and his brother Amir Ahmad Shah, 30, both of Ballwin, and their business, i2o Inc., represented by company president Amir Shah, were sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs to three years of probation, including three months of home detention and three months at a halfway house, according to a news release from Beth Phillips, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri.

The court also ordered the Shahs and i2o to forfeit to the government \$439,820 in cash and property. The forfeiture includes \$78,980 in several bank accounts, residential properties in St. Louis and Columbia (valued at a total of \$344,250), a 2001 BMW belonging to Amir Shah and a 2002 Lexus belonging to Osmaan Shah and several Internet domain names, Phillips said.

The Shahs also forfeited hundreds of computer and electronics items that were either purchased with proceeds of the scheme or were inventory marketed and sold through the scheme, including computers, digital cameras, more than 200 iPods, 175 Brighter Image Teeth Whitening Kits and numerous other items.

On July 28, the Shahs pleaded guilty to creating a spam email scheme that targeted college students across the U.S. They developed individualized email extracting programs that they used to harvest student email addresses from the University of Missouri and hundreds of other universities and colleges, Phillips said.

They then used this database of more than 8 million email addresses to send unsolicited commercial email selling various products and services — such as such as digital cameras, MP3 players, magazine subscriptions, spring break travel offers, pepper spray and teeth whiteners — to those students.

From Jan. 1, 2004, to Feb. 28, 2005, the Shahs and their co-conspirators were successful in sending emails that were not caught by university and college spam email filters by using a variety of methods.

They set up hosting in China, which they called “Offshore Bullet Proof Hosting,” meaning it was immune to complaints from recipients of their emails and provided them anonymity. They bought and sold open proxies — computer servers that enabled them to make indirect network connections to other computers in order to camouflage the original source of their email. They

used bulk email software to falsify email header information and rotate subject line entries, reply-to addresses and message body content in their messages. They also provided false information when registering some of their domain names.

The Shahs also admitted that they initiated their spam campaigns by using the bandwidth provided by the University of Missouri's computer network, thereby causing damage to the network and its users. Osmaan Shah, who was a student at the MU, connected to the Internet via the campus wireless Internet service and also connected directly to the network through an ethernet cable connection in a classroom or other campus building.

The university's network sustained damage from the large amount of network resources and bandwidth used during the transmission of millions of spam email through its system.

Co-defendant Paul Zucker, 58, of Wayne, N.J., also pleaded guilty to his role in the conspiracy and was sentenced to three years of probation and ordered to pay \$7,562 in restitution.

Zucker admitted that he provided proxies, which were intended to be used both inside and outside of the U.S. for the purpose of sending spam email. Zucker also admitted that he provided bulk email software that was designed to falsify email header information and rotate subject line entries, reply-to addresses, message body content, and URLs in their messages. This allowed conspirators to penetrate university and college spam email filters.

In addition to the conspiracy, the Shahs and i2o also pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting each other to access a protected computer without authorization and transmit multiple commercial emails with the intent to deceive or mislead the recipients (or any Internet access service) about the origin of those messages.

"It was extremely helpful, in the investigation of such a highly technical case, for us to reach out to industry experts in both the public and private sectors for their input," Phillips said in the release. "Their collaboration and the excellent work of the FBI's Regional Computer Forensic Lab were integral to this successful prosecution."

Phillips cited assistance of personnel at Cisco, the IT department at the University of Missouri and other universities, and the U.S. Office of Inspector General Defense Criminal Investigative Service



## **Police track thefts of catalytic converters**

Columbia and University of Missouri police are reporting a rash of catalytic converter thefts.

Since June, Columbia police have investigated 14 theft reports taken during daytime hours in large business parking lots. University police have seen similar problems on campus, taking nine reports from a university lot at Stadium Boulevard and College Avenue and an Ellis Fischel Cancer Center lot between Sept. 5 and Monday.

So far, vehicles targeted included Chevrolet Cavaliers, Oldsmobile Aleros and Pontiac Grand Ams and Sunfires, according to police news releases. The vehicle parts are targeted for their expensive metals, which can fetch as much as \$30, according to Advantage Metals Recycling LLC. No arrests had been made as of this morning.

The two departments are asking the public to report suspicious activity or call CrimeStoppers at 875-8477 to give anonymous tips.