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Closed sessions dominate Mo. curators agenda

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COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Curators at the University of Missouri are meeting Tuesday in St. Louis amid speculation that the Tigers are still considering a departure from the Big 12 Conference.

The meeting agenda posted on the university's website says nothing about conference affiliation. Missouri has been rumored to be considering a move to the Southeastern Conference.

The meeting includes a number of routine items such as retirement plans and investments as well as a series of closed sessions.

UM curators: Voting to join the SEC?

By Henry J. Waters III

Later this week the University of Missouri Board of Curators might consider whether Missouri athletics should leave the Big 12 and join the Southeastern Conference.

One can argue the hot topic of conference affiliation is important enough to warrant action by the system board. Its members have received scads of comment from citizens, most urging them to send Missouri to the SEC. Board Chairman Warren Erdman of Kansas City seems to oppose a move to the SEC. He is sensitive to the economic concerns of Kansas City interests who do not want to lose the city's pivotal role in Big 12 business. Other curators are noncommittal.

Curators are bound to discuss the general issue of conference affiliation simply because it has become such an overwhelming matter of public interest, but that does not mean they should issue a fatwa to MU Chancellor Brady Deaton and Athletic Director Mike Alden.

They should do what governing board regents did at Oklahoma and Texas, where athletics hang the moon even higher than here. Those governing boards approved the decisions of their chancellors and gave them unilateral authority to act on behalf of their universities.

In Missouri, delegation is doubly appropriate to keep the division of authority clear between the system and the campuses.

HJW III

Whether to trust Big 12 is at issue as Missouri curators meet today

By MIKE DeARMOND

COLUMBIA | As a football player, assistant coach, radio voice and story teller, John Kadlec has spent most of the past 64 years earning his nickname of Mr. Mizzou.

You will not find a man more steeped in the school's athletic history, and his love of it, nor one more appreciative of the people he has met along a path traced from the Big Six to the Big Seven to the Big Eight, and finally, the Big 12 Conference.

On Monday, Kadlec sat in an auditorium preparing to listen to Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel. But the ever-present smile fell from Kadlec's face when he was asked if he trusted the people managing the future of the fractured Big 12, either in the league office or at the individual schools.

"Not any more, not any more," Kadlec said with a mournful shake of his head. "I don't even trust us."

Welcome to the real reason that Missouri — a charter member of the Big 12's great-great-grandfather, the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association in January 1907 — stands at the crossroads of an historic quandary.

Whether to stay and try to help rebuild the now nine-member Big 12, and trust it can stay together for the long haul. Or to pursue the security of membership in the Southeastern Conference that even interim Big 12 commissioner Chuck Neinas openly speaks of as a possible alternative for Mizzou.

"They're Midwestern, not Southern," Neinas said.

On Monday, Neinas announced a proposal to equally share revenue from national over-the-air football games televised by ABC/ESPN and national cable games on Fox — known as tier one and tier two — plus all men's basketball and NCAA Tournament television revenue. Third-tier rights would remain property of the schools.

All that is needed for the sharing to take effect, Neinas said, is for the current nine schools to formally grant rights to those telecasts to the Big 12 for at least six years.

"I'm not objective on this," Neinas said. "But this should be a positive sign for Missouri."

Neinas also said some schools are proposing a longer commitment. Among them is believed to be Missouri, contending a term of 10 years or longer.

A longer term could provide more assurance that league powers Texas and Oklahoma — their coffers stocked to withstand the financial penalties for skipping out on a shorter agreement — would be less likely to leave the Big 12 if a better deal came along. The Big Ten, for example, has a grant of rights of at least 20 years.

The Big 12, meanwhile, has lost three members in the last 15 months — Nebraska to the Big Ten and Colorado to the Pac-12 this season and Texas A&M to the SEC next season. Last month, Oklahoma, Texas, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech were said to be considering moving to the Pac-12 before that conference called a public halt to its immediate expansion considerations.

In the Big 12, harmony has been a discordant affair for the last two years, leaving the impression that the only thing on which schools can agree is to disagree as much as possible.

One of those squabbles has been over content on Texas' \$300 million Longhorn Network venture with ESPN, which falls into the third-tier category. It planned to air high school football highlights, which coaches have perceived as a recruiting advantage.

Another point on which Neinas said there is no plurality, much less majority, is how many members the Big 12 should have going forward.

"Some wanted nine, some 10 and 12," Neinas said of discussions in a Sunday afternoon conference call with school presidents and chancellors. "There wasn't a majority (of opinion). So, we'll take that into consideration before we address expansion."

Some might contend that expansion cannot truly be addressed until Missouri makes up its mind.

That could come as early as this afternoon, when the Missouri Board of Curators meets in St. Louis. Other matters will be discussed in scheduled closed-door executive sessions beginning shortly after noon. But there is a real sense of high noon approaching on Missouri's pivotal role in conference realignment.

Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton, a member of the Big 12's expansion committee as well as chairman of the conference's Board of Directors, has walked a tightrope along a path defined by the uneven ground between what is good for the Big 12 and what is best for Mizzou.

Neinas said Monday that Deaton recused himself, on the advice of a university attorney, from part of Sunday's discussions. But when asked to identify what those discussions were, Neinas declined.

There appear to be three possible decisions that could come out of the curators meeting:

- Deaton and other MU officials become officially empowered to take part in negotiations with other conferences, which would seem to indicate Mizzou is serious about leaving the Big 12.
- Withholding that power, which would seem to indicate the curators are serious about staying in the Big 12.
- Or Missouri decides to fast-track the process with an announcement that it has received interest in joining another league — most likely the SEC — and decides to withdraw from the Big 12.

The third option seems the most unlikely at this point.

James Sterling, a former University of Missouri system curator, on Monday echoed the sentiments of Kadlec, his friend, about schools offering assurances of collegiality to Missouri as school officials ponder a decision.

“I know,” Sterling said, “I don’t.”

Big 12 agrees to revenue-sharing proposal

By **BLAIR KERKHOFF**

A revenue-sharing plan announced by the Big 12 on Monday is intended to benefit all schools equally. But the news might as well have been directed to one school, Missouri.

With the Tigers possibility considering an option to leave the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference, the plan, according to Big 12 interim commission Chuck Neinas, could be seen as an enticement to keep Mizzou in the fold.

“I’m not objective on this,” Neinas said Monday. “But this should be a positive sign for Missouri.”

The plan calls for the conference to equally distribute all revenue from its network and cable television football contracts — known as Tier I and Tier II, along with men’s basketball and NCAA Tournament television revenue.

The sharing would take effect this year if each school agrees to a six-year grant of its Tier I and II rights. Essentially, a school surrenders that income to the conference for that amount of time.

The schools are in the process of exploring that provision through their boards, but the vote to accept the proposal among presidents was unanimous.

“Each institution has its own protocol and policies,” Neinas said. “Each has to go through their own procedure to get the grant of rights approved.”

The University of Missouri Board of Curators has scheduled a meeting for noon Tuesday in St. Louis and conference realignment is expected to be on the agenda. The curators’ agenda shows the executive committee is scheduled to meet in closed session starting at 4 p.m.

Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton was on the presidents’ conference call Sunday when the revenue sharing plan was finalized but he wasn’t on the call for the entire time. Neinas said Deaton, on the advice of a university attorney, recused himself for part of the meeting. Neinas didn’t specify the reason.

The Big 12’s five-member expansion committee has been reactivated and that the conference has been encouraged by the amount of schools that have shown interest in the league, although Neinas wouldn’t be specific.

Also, the league doesn't know how many members will be in the future. Athletic directors met in Grapevine, Texas, last week to discuss the issue and didn't agree on a number.

"There's no plurality to what they prefer," Neinas said. "Some wanted nine, some 10 and 12. There wasn't a majority (of opinion). So, we'll take that into consideration before we address expansion."

If the Big 12 is to return to a dozen teams, it would be more likely to look outside of its current boundaries, Neinas said.

Among the possibilities could be Brigham Young and Big East schools such as TCU and West Virginia.

Deaton remains on the expansion committee chaired by Kansas State president Kirk Schulz.

But the school Neinas wants most in the Big 12 is Missouri.

"They're Midwestern, not Southern," Neinas said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

MU curators may open the door to flee Big 12

BY VAHE GREGORIAN | Posted: Tuesday, October 4, 2011 12:10 am

The course of Mizzou's athletics future, or at least a tell-tale sign of its intentions, might be in the balance today when the University of Missouri board of curators assembles at the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus.

While the agenda for the closed session has not been disclosed, it's believed that the meeting will include discussion of the merits of Mizzou leaving the Big 12, most likely for the Southeastern Conference, and could include a vote to empower chancellor Brady Deaton to act on MU's options.

If that sounds familiar, that's the tentative step Texas A&M took weeks ago before it moved to join the SEC.

Numerous signs point to MU being fed up with the Big 12, which has lost three members in just over a year.

MU football coach Gary Pinkel has been a vocal critic of the conference, and athletics director Mike Alden has publicly supported Pinkel's remarks.

Fans around the state have made administrators and board members aware of their preferences that the school leave.

It's uncertain whether the curators would vote in favor of giving Deaton the power to depart, or how Deaton would act if given that clout considering how much he has dedicated himself as its board chair to preserving the conference.

Deaton is believed to have mixed feelings, and it's notable that he did not fully take part in a Sunday teleconference among Big 12 board members.

"He participated in a part of the meeting ... and then recused himself from another part (on) the advice of his legal counsel," said interim Big 12 commissioner Chuck Neinas, who declined to specify from what part Deaton excused himself.

The full nature of MU's dance with the SEC remains clouded, as does the SEC's stance despite recent public statements that it is happy with 13 members.

But once the SEC determined behind the scenes in recent weeks that Mizzou was an attractive prospective for 14-school symmetry, the SEC's chief concern was whether poaching MU would make the SEC morally or legally liable for breaking up the Big 12.

It also seems largely evident and perhaps crucial to the SEC's view that the Big 12 believes it could go on without MU.

In a recent conference call, Neinas said he would consider the conference viable without MU.

In another call Monday, Neinas noted that the expansion committee had been "activated" and would start meeting some time this week.

With MU clearly mulling options, that's significant.

After all, it was after Oklahoma — and by extension Oklahoma State — announced in early September that it was considering its options that the expansion committee was put on ice. The belief then was that no exploration of expansion could be valid with the conference facing possible extinction if OU and OSU, and later saber-rattling Texas, were to leave. That most immediate threat ended when the Pac-12 announced two weeks ago it was not going to expand.

Asked Monday if he had the sense the Big 12 could make offers at this stage, Neinas said, "I think the answer is yes."

Deaton is among the five on the expansion committee, which is chaired by Kansas State president Kirk Schulz and also features Texas athletics director DeLoss Dodds and Oklahoma AD Joe Castiglione.

Not that Neinas is giving up on MU. He plans to visit the campus later this week, perhaps as soon as Wednesday, and he continues to extol the virtues of the Big 12 for Mizzou.

On Monday, he went as far as to compare how MU fits in the Big 12 vs. the SEC.

"I think they have to look at not only what the future best interests are for the University of Missouri but for the state of Missouri," he said, noting the Big 12 basketball tradition in Kansas City and the rich rivalry with Kansas. "It's one thing to talk about the Southeastern Conference, but how many people are going to be able to afford to travel to Gainesville, Fla., or Columbia, S.C., or Tuscaloosa, Ala.?"

"You know, John Q. Fan, he can get in the car and drive to Big 12 games."

He paused and added, "Besides, Missouri is midwestern, not southern."

Neinas also suggested that action taken by the Big 12 board Sunday should have a favorable impact on MU.

The board announced the adoption of "a position to equally distribute all conference related distributable revenue to include Tier I and II football television, men's basketball television and NCAA men's basketball tournament revenues."

But it came with a significant caveat.

"This action becomes effective after each member institution commits a grant of rights to the conference for its Tier I and II television rights for at least six years," conference officials said in a statement. "It is recognized by the board that each member is directed by institutional policy relative to pursuing its grant of rights and that process will commence expeditiously at the institutional level."

Tiers I and II refer to major network and cable package levels. Tier III would be each school's rights to its own institutional platform, which for Texas includes the controversial Longhorn Network.

By all indications, Texas is not willing to give ground on its right to that. Neinas reminded that all schools are entitled to package their own third-tier rights. Mizzou is among those working on a platform.

A grant of rights for six years would mean that an institution's share of that revenue would continue to go to the Big 12 for what remained of that six-year period even if the school left the conference.

Although Neinas said the vote was unanimous, it's uncertain whether Deaton was on the call for the vote and it's unknown whether the MU board would approve it. Even if its only action today is to vote that down or not act on it, that would signify that MU is likely to leave.

Neinas said a longer term for grant of rights was discussed but left on the table.

"I'm not objective on this, but in an objective view I think that (revenue sharing and the grant of rights) should be a positive sign for Missouri," he said. "And I do think that they'll consider what we're doing."

With MU also clearly considering doing something else, Neinas is appealing to all to put behind the acrimony in the Big 12's past.

"We have the opportunity for some prosperous times," he said, "and we should just be prepared to work together and enjoy the fruits of our labor."

Big 12 presidents approve revenue sharing

By LUKE MEREDITH/The Associated Press

October 3, 2011 | 5:03 p.m. CDT

Big 12 university leaders agreed to equally share the wealth from the conference's most lucrative television deals if its members agree to lock those top-tier TV rights into the league for at least six years.

The league's announcement Monday was an encouraging sign for the long-term health of the conference, but it is no done deal.

Missouri is considering leaving the Big 12, possibly for the Southeastern Conference, and the UM System Board of Curators is scheduled to meet Tuesday in St. Louis.

Interim Big 12 Commissioner Chuck Neinas hopes the approval by the presidents and chancellors of equal revenue sharing and a grant of tier-one and tier-two TV rights to the league will help convince Missouri to stay instead of joining Texas A&M in the SEC.

"In an objective view, this should be a positive sign for Missouri," Neinas said during a teleconference with reporters.

Neinas said he plans to visit with Missouri officials this week but not before Tuesday's Board of Curators' meeting.

Neinas said Missouri should consider its long-standing rivalry with Kansas, the Kansas City-based Big 12 basketball tournaments and the close proximity between Columbia to other Big 12 schools.

"It's one thing to talk about the Southeastern Conference, but how many people are going to be able to afford to travel to Gainesville, Fla., or Columbia, S.C., or Tuscaloosa, Ala.," Neinas said. "You know, John Q. Fan, he can get in the car and drive to Big 12 games.

"Besides, Missouri is Midwestern, not Southern."

The revenue-sharing model had been proposed by Texas several weeks ago, but was waiting for a vote by league presidents. Neinas said that school leaders, who make up the Big 12 Board of Directors, voted unanimously in favor of it on Sunday.

Each school must still approve the granting of TV rights, and that's where the Missouri curators come in.

The Big 12 also plans to move forward with expansion plans, apparently regardless of what Missouri decides.

Neinas said the Big 12's expansion committee has been "activated" and will start meeting sometime this week. Neinas said the league has been encouraged by the amount of interest other schools have shown in the Big 12.

Neinas said the move toward sharing TV rights for football and men's basketball will help the league's expansion efforts and pointed to the 13-year, \$1 billion television deal reached with Fox Sports in April.

Neinas said the conference has no timetable on expansion, though the league's athletic directors must still come to a consensus on what approach they want to take.

"We have some things in mind that I'm not prepared to reveal at this point, but we're working in a very positive way toward improving what is already a good conference," Neinas said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

ANALYSIS: Big 12 keeping eye on Tuesday's UM Board of Curators meeting

By Harry Plumer

October 3, 2011 | 8:58 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Here we go again.

For the second time in less than two years, **Missouri is at the center of the discussion when it comes to conference realignment, this time choosing whether to stay in a still-unstable Big 12 or explore its options, including potentially becoming the 14th member of the SEC.**

A big step in that process will come during Tuesday's meeting of the UM System Board of Curators in St. Louis. The board will discuss a variety of issues, most likely including realignment.

The Big 12 took a small step toward stability when it announced Monday that it had agreed to share revenue evenly for the conference's Tier 1 (over the air broadcast) and Tier 2 (cable) television money. Previously, the largest share of that money had gone to the schools that appeared on television more frequently (Texas, Oklahoma and Texas A&M), creating a sort of rich-get-richer type of system.

However, this agreement to share equally comes with an important caveat. Each school must agree to grant its rights to the league for a minimum of six years. That essentially means that if a school were to leave the Big 12 for another conference, its television revenues would still belong to the Big 12, regardless of where the school played its games.

That, as University of Oklahoma President David L. Boren said on Sept. 22, "is a pair of very strong handcuffs."

The specific language the Big 12 used Monday in its news release is important as well. Each school has a different process of how to approve the granting of rights, but the league's release stated that the "process will commence expeditiously at the institutional level."

Missouri's process requires the approval of its curators, hence the potential importance of Tuesday's meeting. A meeting without a decision on this topic would be tough to characterize as moving "expeditiously" on the issue.

During Chancellor Brady Deaton's Sept. 22 press conference, he notably did not commit to anything, only saying that the Big 12 had "specific issues to be addressed." While Boren claimed on that same day that the institutions had agreed in principle to the granting of rights, Deaton only said the schools had "agreed to pursue" it.

Missouri is widely believed, along with some of the other Big 12 institutions, to be unhappy with the overwhelming share of the power that Texas has inside the league. That sentiment only increased with this year's addition of the Longhorn Network, a cable network operated by ESPN that provides Texas with a \$20 million per year windfall, not to mention potential recruiting advantages that come from showing highlights from high school sporting events.

One aspect of Monday's discussion that is perhaps a signal of Missouri's unwillingness to commit to the Big 12 was that Deaton, who also serves as the chairman of the Big 12 Board of Directors, recused himself from a part of that group's Sunday conference call. Interim Big 12 Commissioner Chuck Neinas, however, declined to discuss which specific aspect of the call Deaton did not participate in, only saying that Deaton had done so "on advice of his legal counsel."

Neinas did confirm that Deaton is still the chairman of the board of directors as well as a member of the league's five-person expansion committee, which Neinas said was reactivated and will meet at some point this week.

Until then, though, the next move comes from the UM curators on Tuesday.

Neinas declined to comment on whether he was confident that the schools, including Missouri, would approve the granting of rights. He did say, however, that he had reached out to Missouri, and that he was set to visit Columbia sometime this week.

"Communication with the University of Missouri has already occurred," Neinas said. "I think granting rights is very important to the University of Missouri."

Neinas also said that Missouri had not requested any specific changes to the league's structure and that the items regarding revenue sharing were on the league agenda even before he took over for past commissioner Dan Beebe on Sept. 22.

There are many different scenarios that could play out at the curators meeting, which starts at noon inside the Millennium Student Center at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The following is a breakdown of what a few of the most likely ones would mean:

The curators vote to approve the granting of rights.

This would tie Missouri to the Big 12 for the next six years and likely prevent it from bolting to the SEC. The only way that would still happen would be if one of the other remaining Big 12 schools did not approve the granting of rights.

The curators vote to give Deaton the authority to explore options related to athletic conference alignment.

This signals that Missouri is probably headed out of the Big 12. If this were to happen, Deaton would have the power to apply and accept membership into the SEC.

The curators vote not to approve the granting of rights.

This is highly unlikely. The curators would much rather not vote at all and not commit than to take the option to grant rights off the table.

If it were to happen, however, it would be as strong a vote of no confidence in the Big 12 as the previous scenario.

The curators do none of those things.

If we've learned anything during this latest round of conference realignment talk, it's that nothing is ever simple. The curators could potentially do nothing definitive Tuesday, but it's important to remember that the schools have been instructed to move quickly on the granting of rights, and it would likely be a sign of discontent for the curators not to make any sort of ruling on the matter.

But as Deaton so aptly put it in his Sept. 22 press conference, "In a sense, anything is possible."

The Missourian will be in St. Louis to cover what decisions are made or not made. Look for Twitter updates at @CoMoSports.

MU blood drive looks to set record

When it comes to Tiger blood, Charlie Sheen has nothing on the University of Missouri.

MU Tigers historically donate significant amounts of blood to the American Red Cross during their annual Homecoming blood drive, but this year they're out to set a record in honor of Homecoming's centennial celebration.

The four-day drive kicked off this morning with a goal to collect 5,000 units of blood, but by the time the opening ceremonies were over, a top Red Cross administrator had upped the ante.

"Let's go for 6,000," said Chris Hrouda, the national group's executive vice president of biomedical services.

Hrouda is a 1987 graduate of MU and traveled from his Washington, D.C., office to be an honorary donor this morning, joining campus administrators and other alumni at the Hearnes Center.

That's where the blood drive will take place from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. today through Thursday.

MU's is the largest multiday blood drive in the American Red Cross system nationwide, spokeswoman Laurie Nehring said. Hitting the 5,000-unit goal would set a record for the organization and MU — and has the potential to affect 15,000 lives, Nehring said, noting that each unit can help as many as three people.

The drive has been part of Homecoming festivities for more than 20 years, fulfilling the philanthropic side of the campus festivities, said Hannah Bartfield, a junior who is on the Homecoming blood drive committee.

"There are several aspects of Homecoming — the service, blood drive, royalty — that's what makes it huge," she said.

The drive doubles as a contest among fraternities and sororities that vie to donate the most units of blood. The competition is so fierce, there's a rule book that outlines penalties for cheating. Soliciting volunteer donors within 500 feet of the drive, for instance, will cost a group 30 percent of its total points.

Community members also are welcome to donate by going to the Hearnes Center or scheduling an appointment through the Homecoming drive's website, www.donateblood.com.

Hearnes also is doubling as a Homecoming hub, with booths for T-shirts and other merchandise and a display of the winning entries from a Homecoming coloring contest.

“While every blood drive here is incredible, this blood drive is historical,” said Scott Caswell, chief executive officer of the Missouri-Illinois Red Cross. In “Tiger spirit,” he urged dozens of attendees this morning to roll up their sleeves and pitch in.

Homecoming events started Saturday with a day of service in which students helped clean up campus. They continue next week, culminating with the Oct. 15 football game against Iowa State.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1935

Columbia Transit reveals new black and gold buses

Mayor Bob McDavid said there will eventually be 40 black and gold buses on the streets.

By Daniel Shapiro Published Oct. 4, 2011

When coach Gary Pinkel saw a Columbia Transit bus one day, he thought something was amiss. Then it hit him. The bus was red and blue, the colors of dreaded MU rival University of Kansas.

He brought it up to KSSZ/93.9 FM talk show host Tom Bradley and a campaign started in August 2010 to change the colors of the Columbia Transit buses to MU black and gold.

"I could not believe we didn't do this years and years ago," Bradley said. "And I hate to give Gary trouble, but I wish he would have complained sooner. But it was great to have his story. It was so funny. He came to town and said 'Why do they have KU colors on their city buses?' I mean that's all he saw was KU colors. And you know what? My personal opinion, I think they were ugly too."

Columbia Transit unveiled its new black and gold bus design Monday outside of Mizzou Arena. Bradley led the presentation, which included Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid.

"You can look for all the buses in the future to be black and gold," McDavid said. "We'll call this one Big Mike, because we have Mike Alden and city manager Mike Mathis."

McDavid said in the future the city can look forward to 40 black and gold buses, all painted with a set of tiger's eyes on front and a tiger tail in back. There are currently three of the newly-designed buses on the road.

"Transit is a big operation," Bradley said. "Millions are spent on it. It should look like something you want to get on. People want to charter those because they look so good. It's like a limousine. Are you going to ride a bus that looks like crap or ride a bus that looks like this? And we have more students riding all the time, with parking being such a premium."

The new buses were designed by Brendon Steenbergen of Big Fish Creative.

"It looks much better in person than on a laptop screen," Steenbergen said. "We were excited to get the eyes and the tails on it because we knew it would be black and gold, but it makes it pop, having those tiger features. I told Mike Alden the real challenge of making a black and gold bus is making it not look like a school bus."

The project began about seven months ago. Although creating the design options did not take too long, there was a month-long back-and-forth between the athletics department and city officials before they decided on a design.

“It’s a good project,” Columbia Transportation Manager Kenneth Koopmans said. “It had to go through the transportation commission and then to city council. There were different choices, different alternates, but I’m happy with the one selected. It’s very sharp.”

Koopmans said the 40 black and gold buses should decrease the bus headway, which is the time it takes a bus to pass by a location. Current headway averages 40 minutes, but up to 80 minutes between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

Mizzou Online one step in MU's eLearning mission

Mizzou Online opens opportunities for students unable to physically attend MU.

By Ian Frazer Published Oct. 4, 2011

The best part of college can be the campus experience — a new town to explore, new people to meet and a sense of independence not found at home. But when factors such as employment constrain students, MU still has an option available.

Mizzou Online is a program that gives students who can't physically be in Columbia access to MU courses through the Internet.

“(Mizzou Online) is designed to provide educational programs via available information technologies, and there's a wide range that we use to make Mizzou available and accessible,” Interim Vice Provost for eLearning Jim Spain said. “You can live in San Diego, California or California, Missouri and have access to Mizzou's academic program.”

Former UM System President Gary Forsee sought to increase eLearning opportunities throughout the system.

“One of the goals (Forsee) wanted for us to achieve was for us to go out and support the campuses to develop their own eLearning infrastructure and programs we can pull new students into our campuses,” said Zac March, the director of eLearning and distance education for the UM System.

Spain said Mizzou Online represents an administrative reorganization. MU Direct, the Center for Distance and Independent Study and a marketing team have merged into one unit.

Associate professors Leona Rubin and John David will head a faculty panel that has been formed to make recommendations to the Faculty Council regarding policies that will govern online education.

The system has brought in instructional designers to help faculty convert face-to-face courses to an online format. MU has a team of nine of these individuals, one of which is funded by the system.

“If a faculty member has never taught online or has been teaching for 15 years and doesn't know how online works, these instructional designers can sit down with them and work with them

hand to hand to get their courses either 100 percent online or a blend (of online and face-to-face)," March said.

Mizzou Online has expanded since its inception. In the last five years, the program has grown from approximately 330 courses to more than 550. The program has also gained more than 4,000 students since 2006.

"Ten years ago, we had 11 HLC-accredited degrees, certificate and specialist programs," Spain said. "Today, we have over 50."

Spain said the College of Education and the Sinclair School of Nursing have the largest selection of courses. MU also has an online bachelor of health sciences degree, which caters to health care professionals who are seeking more advanced training in their field, but are place-bound by their job.

Other degrees offered by Mizzou Online include graduate courses in education, which cater to teachers who want to get advanced training in a specific area or convert to school administration.

Although MU is second in the Big 12 in total online courses offered, Spain said it is not the main mission to become an overall leader in the field, but rather to make MU's educational programs available across the state. Spain said about 6,600 of 8,400 of Mizzou Online's students are from the state of Missouri.

"We're just trying to provide access to citizens who want to have a degree from the University of Missouri," Spain said.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

Administrators keep lips sealed on UM System presidential search

The committee is still considering recommendations for the position.

By Caitlin Holland Published Oct. 4, 2011

The presidential search committee for the next UM System president began interviewing candidates after listening to public input and building a candidate pool, UM System spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said in an email.

She said the Board of Curators continues to receive requests for individuals to be evaluated and the position is still open.

The board does not have a timeline dictating when the official decision will be announced. The presidential search committee outlined 12 skills the candidates must have to be considered for the job. Included on the list are the abilities to cultivate strategic relationships with academic, political and business leaders and have a strong knowledge base to lead a complex university system.

“This continues to be an open process, with a number of recommendations still coming our way,” she said. “The search committee’s role continues to be to find and interview candidates who meet the criteria we set.”

Missouri Students Association President Eric Woods said he hopes to see the presidential role filled by an individual whose goal is to serve the best interest of students.

“If we could really get a person in that office who is sympathetic to the needs of students, who listens to the student voice, they can be a great ally in getting some of those system-wide initiatives accomplished,” he said. “We’re looking for someone, hoping to have someone, who can help us do that in the future.”

Woods said key issues like domestic partnership benefits and reforms to the student code of conduct are important to MSA, and ones the next president can advocate for.

“Ultimately, the president doesn’t have the ability to make those decisions, the Board of Curators has to vote on system-wide changes,” he said. “But the president is someone who has a lot of influence, a lot of sway, and can convince people on the curators level or on the legislative level in the state to look at these issues more closely.”

Woods said having a student curator on the board who can influence UM System decisions, a primary focus of MSA efforts in recent years, would benefit from an endorsement from the next president.

“The student is able to attend all the meetings and basically serve the same function and have all the same privileges in terms of information, meetings and all of that as the other curators, but they do not currently get to vote,” he said. “We really feel like as a major stakeholder in the university system and as a primary people for which the university serves, especially given that our tuition goes to fund it, that there is a definite need for that student vote.”

Woods said the UM System would benefit from a president similar to former president Gary Forsee, who left the position Jan. 7.

“Forsee was a very good listener, someone who didn’t rush to judgment, didn’t make harsh decisions,” Woods said. “He came from a business world where you had to evaluate all the facts, check out the data, make a decision that was best, not just in the short run but in the long run for your entire enterprise. He brought that critical thinking mindset of a CEO to the system, but he was also someone who was very personable, very friendly and interested in all aspects of the system.”

Numerous representatives from the presidential search committee declined to comment on the progress of the search.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

Homecoming Day of Service begins with centennial celebration

Volunteers cleaned communities across the country Saturday morning.

By Katie Yaeger Published Oct. 4, 2011

MU's first Homecoming Day of Service brought students and alumni together to give back in the name of the Tigers.

More than 350 students removed litter, tidied Peace Park and cleaned bus stops, lamp posts and bulletin boards 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday.

The Mizzou Alumni Association, which previously has hosted Homecoming service projects, wanted to do something special for the centennial celebration. Alumni Association Executive Director Todd McCubbin said staff members thought focusing a service project on campus was a great idea.

"Homecoming is about giving back to MU and seeing what we can do for MU and our campus," McCubbin said.

The Alumni Association and the Homecoming Steering Committee began planning Day of Service last spring. They partnered with MU Campus Facilities to choose the projects in which students could partake, McCubbin said.

"The whole goal is to spiff the university up for Homecoming in the next few weeks," he said. "Students are doing things that help Campus Facilities make the place look better and things the staff doesn't have time to get to."

So many students participated that Campus Facilities had to come up with more tasks to be completed, Homecoming Director Kelly Heins said.

"We had such high numbers that we tried to choose projects that worked well with those numbers," she said. "This was hard for them to staff."

Many students volunteered through one of 26 groups representing residence halls, Greek Life chapters and student organizations.

"We were so pleased to see the differing organizations," Heins said.

Freshman Jake Wallach, who picked up trash on Tiger Avenue with Schurz Hall, said he recognizes the importance of giving back to MU.

“I think if we’re going to be using all the resources, I feel like we should take care of the environment and keep it clean,” Wallach said.

Other worksites included Rollins Street, Hitt Street, Ninth Street, Conley Avenue, the Hearnes Center and the AV-14 parking lot.

Heins said she hopes volunteers personally gained from the experience.

“I hope they take a sense of community and pride in the university and in Homecoming,” Heins said. “Seeing so many people working together for this university and cleaning it up for alumni to come home is a great reminder that MU’s Homecoming is so huge. It’s not just about us, but about the alumni as well.”

While students volunteered on campus, 20 alumni chapters across the nation held their own service activities, McCubbin said.

“It was an idea by the staff to encourage all chapters, who do various projects throughout the year, to do something on the same day,” he said. “I think that’s an important part of the MU family.”

The San Francisco chapter held a beach cleanup, the Houston chapter participated in the city’s Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the Tampa chapter worked with tigers and other large felines at Big Cat Rescue.

McCubbin said the Alumni Association might make the Homecoming Day of Service an annual event.

“With the amount of response from alumni and the spirit of students, it’s something we’ll look at doing in the future,” McCubbin said. “Chancellor Brady Deaton and other campus leaders believe in service, so we want to instill it in students, and allowing alumni to gather and serve the community in the name of MU is a good thing. We see (Day of Service) as a start, not an end.”