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# AP Associated Press

## Nothing new on conference front

Missouri curators meet amid talk of an SEC bid

By The Associated Press Thursday, October 20, 2011

**KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri's governing board opened a two-day meeting Thursday amid speculation that the university is close to leaving the Big 12 Conference for the SEC.**

Conference affiliation wasn't listed on the agenda, which includes closed sessions Thursday and Friday. University spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said the curators do not plan to discuss the topic until at least Friday.

Steve Owens, acting president of the four-campus Missouri system, declined to comment about the curators' possible discussions, and board Chairman Warren Erdman added: "I'm not going to talk about that."

Earlier this month, the curators gave Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton authority to explore leaving the Big 12. Missouri officials are considering a move to the Southeastern Conference in hopes of getting greater television revenue.

An internal university document obtained recently by The Associated Press showed Missouri hopes to gain as much as \$12 million annually in additional television and cable revenue in the SEC if other factors fall into place. But the school could also face a hefty exit fee from the Big 12.

The SEC has not commented publicly on Missouri's interest. Adding a team would require approval by each member, which currently stands at 12 schools.

Missouri would be the fourth school to abandon the Big 12. Nebraska (Big Ten) and Colorado (Pac-12) left over the summer and Texas A&M will join the SEC next year. TCU will join the Big 12 next year, spurning a move from the Mountain West to the Big East.

The Big 12 wants to keep Missouri, and earlier this month endorsed a plan to potential stray members in the fold. It would require schools to give up their most lucrative TV rights to the league for six years in return for equal sharing of the revenue.

The plan would give each school an estimated \$20 million in June. The figure is expected to grow by 2013 when the league's new 13-year contract with Fox Sports kicks in and the Big 12's television contract with ABC/ESPN expires in 2016 and could bring in additional money when renegotiated.

The SEC, by contrast, distributed \$18.3 million in revenue to each of its 12 members this year. But that league can also expect more lucrative contracts when the next round of TV rights negotiations occur.

While Missouri is a charter member of the Big 12, founded in 1996 when the Big Eight schools added four members of the old Southwest Conference, dissatisfaction with the conference has grown. In the early '90s, with the Big Eight on the verge of collapse, Missouri pushed to join the Big Ten and a group of state business leaders even formed a lobbying group.

Its desires to leave the conference it helped shape grew stronger in recent years, with suggestions that Texas and its Longhorn television network would only entrench Texas' power and create an uneven playing field for the rest of the conference, especially the northern schools.

Besides being a fresh blow to the Big 12, a Missouri departure could threaten the school's long-standing rivalry with neighboring Kansas, one of the oldest in college sports, and could drain event revenues from Kansas City, a longtime host to Big 12 basketball tournaments and the now-scraped conference championship football game.

## **Missouri curators take no action on realignment, will meet again today**

By MIKE DeARMOND, The Kansas City Star

Those who wanted a decision sooner rather than later on Missouri staying in the Big 12 or applying for admission to the Southeastern Conference were disappointed Thursday.

**The subject was surely discussed in the afternoon at a closed executive session of the University of Missouri Board of Curators. MU athletic director Mike Alden was included in that session.**

But Alden and the curators took a back-door exit out of their meeting room at the UMKC Student Union. At that point, a spokesman told reporters that no action had been taken and there was no comment to be made.

Curators chairman Warren Erdman told The Star earlier Thursday that he would not talk about a timeline for such a decision "until the appropriate time." He said Wednesday evening he would "have nothing to say on that until Friday. If there is anything to say then."

Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton on Thursday referenced Erdman's mention of today as the earliest time for possible comment on conference alignment.

"That would be consistent," Deaton said.

The curators resume meeting at 9 a.m. at UMKC, with another closed executive session scheduled for 10 a.m.

Sources who have consistently indicated to The Star that Missouri was moving forward with strong interest in becoming the 14th member of the SEC remain steadfast in that point of view. The New York Times, citing a source familiar with the situation, reported earlier this week that Missouri's move to the SEC was "inevitable and imminent."

The Birmingham News, citing multiple sources, has reported Alabama would not oppose adding Missouri to the SEC as long as the Tigers were put in the East Division, keeping Auburn in the SEC West with Alabama.

Alabama apparently does not want to allow Auburn to gain a bigger recruiting presence in Florida and Georgia. Also, adding Missouri to the East Division would allow Alabama to continue playing archrival Tennessee every year.

It's assumed that Missouri would not object to either divisional placement. If Mizzou were added to the East and Texas A&M — set to leave the Big 12 and join the SEC next season — landed in the West, the traditional SEC powers would be evenly split.

Alabama, Auburn and LSU would be in the West; Florida, Georgia and Tennessee in the East.

No school outside that group has won an SEC football title since the league went to a championship-game format.

As for the Big 12, Missouri officials want changes involving Texas' Longhorn Network, a long-term grant of media rights, bowl-slotting rules and a return to 12 teams with divisional play.

Texas recently promised not to show any high school games or highlights on the Longhorn Network but in return agreed to only a six-year grant of first- and second-tier television rights. Is a six-year grant of rights enough of a deterrent to keep Texas or Oklahoma from relying on their deep financial resources to make a jump to another conference? If Texas or Oklahoma were to leave — an option both schools acknowledge they have explored — the Big 12 would be severely crippled.

The Big 12 has not made an announcement regarding Missouri's concerns over bowl slotting procedures. Nor has there been any guarantee of the Big 12 restoring its membership to 12 schools with divisional play in football and a return to a football championship game.

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

## Possible Mizzou move remains in limbo

BY VAHE GREGORIAN > vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted:  
Friday, October 21, 2011 12:15 am

**KANSAS CITY • With Mizzou's fans and followers, the Big 12, the Southeastern Conference and infinite others who could be affected by MU's next actions anxiously awaiting a move, any move, on conference realignment, the University of Missouri board of curators took no specific action on Thursday.**

And signs arose that there may be no new developments even by the end of today's sessions.

The inertia likely reflects an ongoing cautious and meticulous approach to seeking a departure from the Big 12 and applying to the Southeastern Conference, but it also could reflect ambivalence.

MU chancellor Brady Deaton, the former chairman of the board of the Big 12, has long been thought to remain conflicted on what to recommend to the board, which ultimately will make the decision.

But Deaton's input matters plenty, and the Post-Dispatch has learned that as of Thursday afternoon he still had questions about the pluses and minuses of leaving.

Missouri has taken several robust measures to distance itself from the Big 12, including Deaton recently stepping down as its chair and being empowered by the curators to explore other options and the school later abstaining from two votes pivotal to the Big 12's future.

But MU hasn't quite stepped off the plank yet.

If it follows the template for departure that Texas A&M did, as multiple sources have said it would do if it tries to break away, the step of no return likely would be seeking a clarification from the Big 12 of the process for doing so.

That clarification by all indications would include a declaration of battle from the Big 12 on the timing of MU's departure.

Because of scheduling considerations for next football season, particularly concerning television inventory, the Big 12 will not want Mizzou to leave for 2012, indications were Thursday.

Although it's generally thought the Big 12 has designs on a replacement for MU and perhaps would add three members to get back to its namesake number, there also is no immediate guarantee of that.

Even if it's only for one year, a nine-team conference likely would make for reductions in the television and cable revenues for the whole.

That may be why interim commissioner Chuck Neinas said last week that it's too late for MU to leave for next year ... even though the Big 12 ushered in Texas Christian just the day before.

Neinas likely was setting the table for legal strategy should MU try to depart.

In short, if it does want to leave, Mizzou may be forced to confront how much it's worth to it to leave right away or to go in two years.

Those specific potential figures can't be known, and the Big 12's bylaws have proven to be negotiable, even pliable, when it came to the exits of Colorado and Nebraska.

But an internal MU document that was produced for the curators and examined pros and cons of leaving the Big 12 for the SEC was leaked last week to The Associated Press, and it assessed MU's view of the difference.

According to the AP, the document said MU would risk losing \$25.9 million if it soon gives the Big 12 notice it will leave for next year.

The projected fee would be greatly reduced, to \$10.4 million, if MU gave two years notice.

Meanwhile, the other side of the equation, the SEC, apparently remains hospitable to MU as its prospective 14th member to alleviate scheduling quirks and complications otherwise posed by A&M joining the league as its 13th next year.

But the SEC wants no part of any legal entanglements, as it demonstrated when it only conditionally approved A&M's entrance in the throes of a Baylor-led legal gambit to block the disintegration of the conference.

The initiative was more a reaction to Oklahoma's flirtation with the Pac-12, which may have been enough to kill the league.

There is no immediate reason to believe that any such gamesmanship will be in play again since the conference clearly will remain viable even if MU leaves, but the SEC remains sensitive to any complications.

Nothing that developed Thursday suggests that MU is walking back any of its actions — athletic director Mike Alden was in attendance — and nothing suggests the SEC is posting red flags.

But it all serves as a reminder that the dynamics of conference realignment are multi-layered, seldom what meets the eye, endlessly complicated and fluid — and will be settled at their own unpredictable, at times seemingly interminable, pace.



## MU remains quiet on conference future

By David Briggs

Columbia Daily Tribune Thursday, October 20, 2011

**KANSAS CITY — Missouri's future conference affiliation gained no clarity Thursday as the UM Board of Curators remained quiet — and out of sight — after a brief closed meeting on the campus of Missouri-Kansas City.**

The curators took no action during an hour-and-a-half executive session at the UMKC student union, then left the building through a back exit to avoid a pack of waiting reporters. Chancellor Brady Deaton, Athletic Director Mike Alden and Interim System President Steve Owens also escaped through an interior stairwell.

The curators will reconvene here Friday morning for the third and final day of the board's regularly scheduled meetings. They will open in a public session at 9 a.m. before heading into a closed session at 10, in which they are expected to continue discussions on the the possibility of Missouri withdrawing from the Big 12 and joining the Southeastern Conference.

A press conference is scheduled for before -- but, curiously, not after -- Friday's closed session. UM System spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said Missouri officials will not be available after the executive session.

The curators last met two weeks ago in St. Louis, where they unanimously voted to grant Deaton the authority to explore conference affiliation outside of the Big 12. A university source told the Tribune earlier this week that Deaton was expected to update the board on his findings Thursday.

According to UM System bylaws, the board and Owens are required to approve any proposal by a campus to withdraw from one athletic conference for the purpose of affiliating with a new league.

## Here's a clear case for Big 12 tournament staying in KC

BY BLAIR KERKHOFF

The Kansas City Star

The Big 12 came to Kansas City this week to roll out the basketball welcome mat, but it was difficult not to wonder how many more of these occasions will be held at the Sprint Center.

You know, the \$276 million building, part of the \$1 billion entertainment district, built with the Big 12 in mind. But events like the conference's men's and women's basketball tournaments may not exist in a Big 12 state if Missouri decides to jump conferences.

As the familiar voices of Bill Self and Rick Barnes filled the building Thursday for men's basketball media day — and we became reacquainted with Billy Gillispie and Lon Kruger — the impact of the Tigers' possible departure, especially as it relates to the ultrasuccessful tournament in Kansas City, carried the day.

**Would it stay in KC if Mizzou left? Mayor Sly James made his feelings known in a letter to the University of Missouri Board of Curators and chancellor Brady Deaton. The Kansas City Sports Commission offered its viewpoint in a full-page ad in The Star two weeks ago. Missouri's decision potentially affects Kansas City more than any other place, including Columbia.**

The thought of the Big 12 leaving the Sprint Center had heads spinning and some interesting suggestions for alternatives. Could a roof cover Livestrong Sporting Park? The soccer stadium on the Kansas side of the state line works from a configuration standpoint, but what makes the Sprint Center ideal isn't just the venue and the Power & Light District but the number of appropriate hotels for team headquarters. That doesn't exist in Village West. Yet.

There are new arenas in Wichita and Des Moines, Iowa. Either would love to grab this crown jewel.

But don't give up hope on Kansas City. The tournament is contractually set in Kansas City through 2014, and the league won't be looking to break the deal.

There also may be a realization that the matter of the state line won't change the idea that Kansas City continues to be the best location for the event.

"It has always been well-received by the membership," said John Underwood, Big 12 associate commissioner for men's basketball. "It's been a great experience for the student-athletes."

That point cannot be overemphasized. Attendance throughout the week is the best thing Kansas City has going for it. The conference touts the tournament as a great experience for the players, and that means more than rolling out a red carpet. The atmosphere has to work. At the Sprint Center, it does.

“We’ll have teams go on to the NCAA Tournament, and they won’t be treated as well as they are here,” Underwood said.

To the Big 12, the head-shaking aspects of Missouri’s possible move to the Southeastern Conference include student-athletes and their road trips to distant campuses and missed class time. Playing in front of large crowds in a basketball tournament isn’t the same issue, but it comes from the same place — the athletes’ best interests as a priority.

If the location remains a bother to some, there’s the bowl-game argument. The Big 12 is a partner with seven bowl games. The three in Texas are within the league’s boundaries. The others are the Fiesta and Insight bowls in Phoenix, the Holiday Bowl in San Diego and the Pinstripe Bowl in New York. Big 12 fans help the economies in all of those cities.

This notion doesn’t have to be exclusive to football. Iowa State fans especially have over the years treated the Big 12 tournament in KC as sports-getaway week. They don’t need Missouri in the conference to set up headquarters at Kelly’s in Westport.

In its 16 years, the Big 12 essentially has developed three centers: The corporate headquarters in Dallas, where most agree the football championship game works best; the midpoint in Oklahoma City, which embraces its championship events, especially baseball; and the Kansas City basketball nerve center that rewards the league’s most passionate hoops fans — those at Kansas, Kansas State and Iowa State — with traveling ease.

No matter the conference membership going forward, the centers don’t change. If the league grows to 12 and reinstates a football title game, the best venue in the country is a few miles’ drive from the league office, Cowboys Stadium.

And by far the best basketball environment is in Kansas City.

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**Posted on Thu, Oct. 20, 2011 11:04 PM**



## Kansas coach Bill Self: Life would go on without Missouri

By [Steve Wieberg](#), USA TODAY

Updated 15h 32m ago

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Bill Self is hoping – not necessarily praying – that Missouri stays put.

On a day when Missouri's board of curators was meeting a short distance away, still chewing over a decision on whether to move the school from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference, Kansas' basketball coach made it clear Thursday that he'd prefer the Tigers stay put and continue to engage KU in what he called "one of the best 5-10, at worst, rivalries in the country."

Should the Tigers jump . . . well, Self says he and the Big 12 can and will live without them.

"It's not the same situation as it has been in months past or 18 months ago, where the league is in jeopardy," Self said, speaking during the Big 12's preview of the upcoming college basketball season. "I feel good about our league. I think our league's probably stronger today than it ever has been because you have key players in our league that seem to be on the same page more than they ever have been."

Missouri, if it moves to the SEC, would become the fourth member in 16 months to choose to leave the Big 12 – following Nebraska and Colorado a little more than a year ago and Texas A&M at the end of August. But the league appears to have firmed up its remaining nine schools, most notably Texas and Oklahoma, announced the addition of Texas Christian and sorted through additional replacement candidates if Mizzou moves on.

Texas coach Rick Barnes was more pointed about that possibility.

"I don't care in terms of they stay or go," he said. "I care about (MU basketball coach) Frank (Haith, a former Barnes assistant), and Missouri's been a good member of this league. But if they don't want to be here, I don't want them here. I don't think anybody does. If they think they can go elsewhere and it's better for them, let them go. And we're going to be fine because there's people out there who want to be here."



## News and notes from Big 12 Media Day

By Steve Walentik

Posted October 20, 2011 at 11:30 p.m.

### **Missouri Coach Frank Haith takes his turn on stage at the Big 12's annual Media Day on Thursday at the Sprint Center in Kansas City.**

Here are some news and notes from Thursday's Big 12 annual Media Day, starting with the elephant in the room at the Sprint Center in Kansas City:

- I'm speaking, of course, of the possibility that Missouri will be headed out of a league that in the past year and half has already lost Nebraska, Colorado and Texas A&M. It wasn't just reporters that wanted the opportunity to ask MU Coach Frank Haith about the situation. So too did some of his peers.

"A couple," Haith admitted when asked if any other coaches had inquired about the situation. "But they understand this thing is out of my control. It's not in athletics. It's above us right now. It's up to" Chancellor Brady "Deaton and the people he has to answer to."

It's unclear if those individuals have made up their mind about what Missouri should and will do. The University of Missouri Board of Curators will meet again in closed session on Friday in Kansas City with conference affiliation expected to be their primary topic of discussion. The New York Times earlier this week reported that Missouri leaving the Big 12 for the SEC was "imminent" and "inevitable."

I already shared some comments Texas Coach Rick Barnes made during his press conference about a potential departure. He had more to say during one-on-one interviews later in the day.

"Missouri's been a good member of this league, but if they don't want to be here, I don't want them here," he said. "I don't think anybody does. If they think they can go elsewhere and it's better for them, let them go. We're going to be fine because there's people out there that want to be here."

He continued with some more general thoughts on conference realignment.

"I said early, I think egos get involved," he said. "I don't think there's an athlete on their campus, I don't think there's many fans overall at the schools that have left — and coaches — that want

to leave. I think if you really could put everyone on a lie detector test and ask the ADs or, I don't know about the ADs, but the coaches and the student-athletes, I think they would tell you they love this league. They like what it's about. But the fact of the matter is they didn't have a chance."

- If only conference realignment were the only off-the-court matter Haith had to discuss yesterday. But as expected, he also fielded questions about the still underway NCAA investigation into allegations of rules violations at Miami that surfaced in a Yahoo! Sports story published in August. Among them was the charge that Haith acknowledged and expressed gratitude for a payment disgraced booster Nevin Shapiro made to help secure the commitment of recruit DeQuan Jones.

Haith grew briefly agitated after several questions in a row about the situation and its impact on recruiting efforts as he tries to build his program at Missouri.

"I've handled the tough questions a lot," he said. "I'm only worried about what I can control, so I'd like to talk about basketball right now. OK?"

One of his players, senior guard Kim English, marveled at just how cool Haith has remained amid several storms that have hit since he took the job in Columbia in April.

"Once he got hired, people didn't know who he was. They saw his record at Miami and they just hounded him," English said. "He withstood it, looked in right in the face, right in the camera and said, 'I'm the coach here. This is how we're going to do it.' From the SEC stuff to the NCAA stuff from whatever happened at Miami to with Laurence going down, he's never withered away in his approach. It's, 'We're going to do it like this. We're going to do it the right way. My players are going to graduate.' He's never changed from that first meeting."

As for how Haith broached the Miami investigation with his players, English said: "He couldn't speak a lot on it, but he just simply told us what was being said and that the truth will come out. That's all we needed to hear. Once we heard it out of his mouth, what media tweeted, what ESPN said, it meant nothing because the truth will come out."

English doesn't sense the proverbial cloud said to hanging over the MU program while the Miami investigation remains unresolved.

"I don't even feel it," he said. "I don't feel it. He's at practice every day. We lift weights every day. I get Cs on my math tests. The days are going the same. I'm sure he's having trouble sleeping, but he's been the same with us. I don't see how it would be any different. ... We're still running the same plays that we would have been running if it wasn't happening. He's the head men's basketball coach at the University of Missouri, and he's doing a great job at that."

- Not all the chatter at Media Day involved Missouri. Another topic that got some discussion was the unlikely choice who was named Big 12 preseason player of the year. That was, of

course, Baylor sophomore Perry Jones, who was not unlikely because of a lack of talent but rather because he possesses so much talent that everyone expected him to have been drafted into the NBA by now. He made the surprising decision last spring to return to Waco despite being projected to be a top-five pick.

Jones said it wasn't really that difficult a choice. He talked it over with his parents, who were supportive of whatever decision he wanted to make. He then decided he valued the chance to play at least one more season with his teammates at Baylor, postponing his chance at a multimillion dollar contract.

If there was anything hard about the decision, it was keeping it secret from his teammates during the two days between when he made it and when he appeared at his press conference announcing he would be returning to school.

"I just wanted to save the suspense for them to see what they would say when I went up to the stage," Jones said with a mischievous smile. "I actually went up to the podium with a Jordan shirt on. I didn't have on a Baylor shirt or anything like that. I went up to the stand, and I thanked everybody. I thanked all the (people at) Baylor. Then I said I was going to stay another year, and they just went nuts."

- Jones, last season's Big 12 Freshman of the Year, was just the league's most recent rookie sensation. If anything, he accomplishments paled in comparison to those of former Texas freshman Kevin Durant and Kansas State freshman Michael Beasley or even Blake Griffin as a rookie at Oklahoma or D.J. Augustin as a freshman with the Longhorns.

There are more well acclaimed talents joining the league this season, from Baylor forward Quincy Miller to Texas guard Myck Kabongo. But maybe the best of all is Oklahoma State freshman LeBryan Nash, a 6-7, 230-pound small forward tabbed as the Big 12's preseason freshman of the year.

"No question, he's got good players around him, but no question we need LeBryan Nash to play well. We need him to be great on the court to make everybody else better, to score points, to do a lot of different things," Cowboys Coach Travis Ford said. "But he has the talent to do that. And he's going to be in position to do that as far as how our offenses are run and things like that.

"But it will be a work in progress, it is a work in progress. And as soon as it becomes habit of playing hard every second of every play of every practice, competing every second of every play of every practice and playing both ends, then the sky's absolutely, positively the limit. I don't think there's a better freshman in the country when he learns that."

- Iowa State has brought in a talented crop of newcomers all by itself as Fred Hoiberg looks to make a swift move up the conference standings in his second season. But the majority of those players already bring college experience. The Cyclones have added Michigan State transfer

Chris Allen, Penn State transfer Chris Babb, Southern Illinois transfer Anthony Booker and, most heralded of all, Minnesota transfer Royce White, who never played a game for the Golden Gophers but was voted the Big 12's preseason newcomer of the year.

It should make for a fascinating chemistry experiment as Hoiberg tries to form them into a cohesive team along with returning players such as Scott Christopherson and Melvin Ejim.

"The great thing about it is a lot of those new players were in our program last year," Hoiberg said. "They were building chemistry together playing on the scout team every day. ... They worked out together on game days. They watched our games together when we went on the road. So it's not like you have four freshman coming from different parts of the country. You have four guys that have spent a lot of time together, and they've already gone through some of those growing pains that some of our freshman are going through right now."

- There were plenty of people who thought Frank Martin would be out at Kansas State almost as quickly as Michael Beasley, the one-and-done talent his hiring helped the Wildcats hold onto after Bob Huggins departed for his alma mater, West Virginia, after one season. But he's proved a far better coach than anyone gave him credit for, leading the Wildcats to three NCAA Tournament appearances including one Elite Eight in four seasons on the sideline. As he begins Year 5, it's clear he has become the face of the Kansas State program. Or faces, as the cover of this year's Kansas State media guide suggests.

Martin was asked how long it took to shoot the pictures on the cover during his time on stage Thursday morning.

"Four years' worth of pictures, or four processions, regardless," he joked, "depending on where the photographer was at."

In reality, Martin said they shot the cover this spring.

"Our promotion department, our SIDs, they do a wonderful job at K-State. And they came up with the idea, and I was fine with it," he said. "I've gotten -- through e-mails and phone calls and, now that I'm a Twitter guy, through Twitter messages, nothing but positive remarks. I can't go in our locker room, our players are killing me. But it's a credit to our people at K-State. They come up with some great ideas, and if that works, that's what it was meant to be."



## Texas Coach Rick Barnes weighs in on realignment

By Steve Walentik

Posted October 20, 2011 at 10:31 a.m.

**With the University of Missouri Board of Curators meeting Thursday and Friday at UMKC, Missouri fans are anxious to see if their discussions will finally lend clarity to the Tigers' future conference affiliation.**

Realignment was also on the mind of Big 12 basketball coaches meeting across town at the Sprint Center Thursday morning for the league's annual media day. Texas Coach Rick Barnes had a lot to say on the subject during his 10-minute press conference.

He began by saying the Longhorns always wanted to remain in the Big 12.

"I've never thought that the Big 12 would ever go away," he said. "I think we've got the best athletic director in the country. And from day one, when it started, the talk of all this expansion started years ago, we met as a staff, an athletic staff, and DeLoss" Dodds "made it clear that his number one goal was to always keep the Big 12.

"And with that said, there's no question at the University of Texas we could have gone anywhere we wanted to go. But his goal, regardless of what anybody might say, has been to keep that league together."

He believes the Big 12 will be strong going forward with the schools that are committed to the league.

"The sad fact is that egos get involved," Barnes said, "and I've never understood, because I think every team in this league, the ones that are in it, the ones that have left, have something to be proud of."

He didn't sound concerned about speculation that Missouri is on the way out and headed to the SEC.

"Believe me, if somebody wants to leave, let them leave," he said, "and there will be other people that will want to be a part of it if we choose to do that."



## Congressman wants hearings on realignment, other NCAA issues

The Associated Press

The top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee is urging the panel to hold hearings on antitrust and other issues in college sports, including the recent series of conference realignments.

"It has become increasingly clear to me that the combination of issues and challenges facing intercollegiate sports have reached a tipping point calling for congressional attention," Michigan Rep. John Conyers wrote to the committee chairman, Texas Republican Lamar Smith, in a letter released Thursday. The committee said in a statement that it is reviewing Conyers' request.

**Several major colleges have recently announced plans to switch conferences, including Syracuse and Pittsburgh from the Big East to the Atlantic Coast Conference, and Texas A&M from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference. Missouri is also exploring leaving the Big 12, and the Big East wants to expand to 12 football teams.**

Critics have voiced concerns that the shuffling could lead to a handful of 16-team "superconferences" that could break away from the NCAA or dictate looser rules to stay competitive. The moves have raised new questions about the role of money in college sports.

The NCAA did not immediately return email and telephone messages Thursday, but president Mark Emmert recently told The Associated Press he was concerned about the perception that money is driving the decisions, saying, "this is not the NFL, the NBA, it's not a business." He urged school presidents to consider factors besides revenue when choosing conference affiliation.

Conyers also wants to look into due process for athletes, the NCAA's use of athletes' images in video games without compensation, limitations of athletic scholarships, and the costs to players from injuries suffered during games among other issues.

# COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

## UM curators end private meeting about new president search

Thursday, October 20, 2011 | 3:47 p.m. CDT

BY The Associated Press

**KANSAS CITY — The governing board for the University of Missouri System has ended a private meeting about its search for a new president.**

After Thursday's closed meeting of the UM System Board of Curators, Chairman Warren Erdman said no announcement about the presidential search was planned.

*The board is searching for a permanent replacement for Gary Forsee, who stepped down in January to care for his ill wife. Acting President Steve Owens has said he's not interested in the job.*

The curators had their meeting about the presidential search at a hotel on the Country Club Plaza before reconvening for an open meeting on the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus.



## Autistic children have distinct facial features, study suggests



Courtesy of the [University of Missouri](#)

*Images like this helped researchers determine differences in the faces of children with autism, when compared to those without the developmental disorder.*

By Kimberly Hayes Taylor

**We may be a step closer in understanding what causes autism, say University of Missouri researchers after finding differences between the facial characteristics of children who have autism and those who don't.**

Kristina Aldridge, lead author and assistant professor of anatomy at the University of Missouri, began looking at facial characteristics of autistic children after another researcher, Judith Miles, professor emerita in the School of Medicine and the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, mentioned, "There is just something about their faces. They are beautiful, but there is just something about them."

"Children with other disorders such as Down syndrome and fetal alcohol syndrome have very distinct facial features. Autism is much less striking," she says. "You can't pick them out in a crowd of kids, but you can pick them out mathematically."

When researchers took three-dimensional images of the children, they discovered autistic children have a broader upper face with wider eyes, a shorter middle region of the face including the cheeks and nose and a broader or wider mouth and philtrum -- the area below the nose and above the top lip.

Aldridge analyzed 64 boys with autism and 41 typically developing boys ages 8 to 12 using the 3-D images of each boys' head. She also mapped out 17 points on the face, such as the corner of

the eye and the divot in the upper lip. When the overall geometry of the face was calculated and the two groups were compared, she noticed statistical differences in autistic children's faces.

Researchers also noticed even more differences in a smaller group of autistic children.

"They showed differences in clinical and behavioral traits as well," she says. "That would tell us about multiple causes of autism."

Aldridge says the images provide a clue to what happens in the embryo during the middle of the first trimester of pregnancy when the face begins to develop. It may help researchers understand if something environmentally or genetically is happening in the uterus during pregnancy that causes autism.

"This is clear support that the cause of autism is likely happening before birth," Aldridge says. "This allows us to start looking at those hypotheses more directly."

# COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

## UM System curators approve new employee retirement plan

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BY Zach Murdock

**KANSAS CITY — The UM System Board of Curators approved a range of new projects, including a new retirement plan, Thursday at a full-board meeting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.**

Among other issues addressed at the meeting, curators voted to approve a renovation project to MU's Gwynn Hall and established a new MU degree program called the Bachelor of Health Sciences, Athletic Training.

The curators took no action regarding the University of Missouri System presidential search or MU's athletic conference affiliation.

Curators met first, acting as the Presidential Search Committee, for 10 hours Wednesday night and Thursday morning in a closed-door executive session at The Raphael Hotel in Kansas City. Board chairman Warren Erdman said the committee would be doing routine business and no action would be taken.

The curators' open session full-board meeting began at 1 p.m. in the University of Missouri-Kansas City student union.

The first item on the agenda was a review by Betsy Rodriguez, UM System vice president for human resources, of the proposed new employee retirement plan.

No new information was introduced to the curators Thursday, but at an Oct. 4 meeting in St. Louis, Rodriguez presented a final proposal for consideration of the curators.

The current plan is based on a defined benefits model, which specifies what percentage of an employee's paycheck goes into the retirement plan and guarantees the employee a certain amount upon retirement.

The new plan combines some elements of a defined benefits plan with a defined contributions plan, in which some retirement income would be put in investments selected by the employee. It would not guarantee a certain amount of return upon retirement.

Curator Don Downing was the only dissenting vote. He said even though he disagrees with the plan, he was pleased with the transparency of the board and of Rodriguez's discussions.

"I think the process has been extraordinarily transparent and fair, and I really appreciate that," Downing said.

The new retirement plan will take effect for new employees in October 2012. Rodriguez will make a recommendation on a vendor to handle the new retirement plan investments at a Dec. 8 meeting, and the curators will continue to wrap up details of the plan throughout the first half of next year.

The curators also heard a briefing of the system's financial standing and an analysis of fiscal year 2011 from Nikki Krawitz, UM System vice president for finance and administration.

With the end of federal stimulus funds in fiscal year 2013, fewer state appropriations and more state money going to disaster relief around the state of Missouri, Krawitz acknowledged the system's financial hardships.

"Despite the challenges from decreased state funding and increased enrollment, the university has been able to strengthen its financial standing," Krawitz said.

In the light of difficult financial times, Downing said it appears the system has managed its finances well. Krawitz said continuing to build the system's net asset base is essential for being able to take on more debt in the future and maintain the UM system's credit rating.

The curators also heard reports on internal and external audits, though no action was taken.

The curators approved several other action items, including:

- Creation of a new MU degree program called the Bachelor of Health Sciences, Athletic Training. The degree will integrate athletic training courses in the physical therapy program.
- Retaining Strategic Investment Solutions, Inc. as an investment adviser. The five-year contract term will require board approval each year. SIS is an independent investment firm with 31 retainer clients and \$422 billion in assets under advisement.
- Creation of a commercial paper program that would allow Krawitz and UM System treasurer Thomas Richards the authority to issue commercial paper notes up to \$375 million. The notes could be used to finance or refinance capital projects.
- An \$11 million renovations project to MU's Gwynn Hall. Primarily funded by campus facilities and maintenance dollars, the project will include major renovations to the inside of the building, similar to the projects at Tate and Switzler halls.

The curators will reconvene tomorrow morning for an additional open session, which will include a report from Interim UM System President Stephen Owens, the University Health Care system annual report and a Chancellor's panel discussion.

Curators are scheduled to enter another executive session following a short press conference at 10 a.m. Friday.